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# Cultural relations between Switzerland and South Africa, 1948-1994



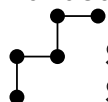
*The Dollar Brand Trio, St. Gallen 1962 (© Richard Butz)*

**Conference, Basel, 3–5 May 2023**

Programme

[www.hkb-interpretation.ch/south-africa](http://www.hkb-interpretation.ch/south-africa)

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## Wednesday, 3 May 2023

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[Basler Afrika Bibliographien](#), Klosterberg 23, Basel

- 09:30     **Welcome**  
Christian Vandersee (BAB), Veit Arlt (UniBas), Martin Skamletz (HKB)  
*Chair: Veit Arlt*
- 09:45     **Georg Kreis (University of Basel)**  
Introduction: Switzerland and South Africa:  
The History of National Research Programme 42+
- 10:00     **Chris Walton (Bern Academy of the Arts)**  
Tracing the Paths of Culture: Switzerland and South Africa
- 10:40     *Coffee*
- 11:10     **Chats Devroop (Tshwane University of Technology, Pretoria)**  
Shalati's Swiss Sojourn
- 11:50     **Heidi Brunner, Dag Henrichsen, Susanne Hubler Baier and Lisa Roulet (Basler Afrika Bibliographien)**  
"Solidarity": Glimpses from the Entangled Archives
- 12:30     *Lunch*  
*Chair: Jasper Walgrave*
- 14:00     **Thomas Patrick Chapman (ETH Zurich)**  
Interpreting Max Kirchhofer's "Compact Urbanity" in Apartheid-Era South Africa
- 14:40     **Denise Bertschi (EPFL, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, Arts of Sciences Laboratory)**  
"Please Ensure the Gate is Properly Closed". Questioning the Swiss Presence in Apartheid South Africa through the Swiss Social Club in Cape Town
- 15:20     *Tea*  
*Chair: Chats Devroop*
- 15:40     **Richard Butz (St. Gallen)**  
When South African Jazz Came to Switzerland. Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Chris McGregor & The Blue Notes and Joe Malinga, the Anti-Apartheid-Movement and "AfriKaribik" in St. Gallen
- 16:20     **Atiyyah Khan (Cape Town)**  
A Surprising Friendship: Looking at the Ongoing Collaborations in Jazz Between South African and Swiss Jazz Musicians Through a Post-Apartheid Lens up to the Present Day

[Bird's Eye Club](#), Kohlenberg 20, Basel

- 20:30     **Jazz Concert: Swiss-South African Jazz Indaba**  
First Set: Feya Faku Quintet. Feya Faku, trumpet/flugelhorn; Sisonke Xonti,

tenor sax; Keenan Ahrends, guitar; Romy Brauteseth, bass; Dominic Egli, drums / special guest Makaya Ntshoko

21:45 Second Set: Plurism – Intlanganiso. Feya Faku, trumpet/flugelhorn; Mthunzi Mvubu, alto sax; Sisonke Xonti, tenor sax; Raffaele Bosshard, bass; Dominic Egli, drums/percussion

## Thursday, 4 May 2023

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[Basler Afrika Bibliographien](#), Klosterberg 23, Basel

*Chair: Stephanus Muller*

9:30 **Jasper Walgrave (Bern Academy of the Arts / Fribourg University)**

The Swiss Representation of South African Culture through Literature:  
The Case of Peter Sulzer

10:10 **Astrid Starck-Adler (University of Basel) & Dag Henrichsen (Basler Afrika Bibliographien)**

“Europe’s tribal wars”. Lewis Nkosi on Provincialising the Global North and Swiss Encounters

10:50 *Coffee*

*Chair: Chris Walton*

11:20 **Paula Fourie (Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University)**

“Ek wit, opdat ons ’n sneeuwit Andorra het, julle moordenaars”: Max Frisch’s *Andorra* as Afrikaans Protest Theatre

12:00 *Lunch*

*Chair: Chats Devroop*

14:00 **Steff Rohrbach (Bern Academy of the Arts)**

The Cafe Africana in Zurich. From Cape Town to Ichertswil

14:40 **Lineo Segoete (Maseru)**

The Ignorant Schoolmaster: The Swiss Missionary Edouard Jacottet and the Sesotho Language

15:20 *Tea*

*Chair: Stephanus Muller*

15:40 **Féroll-Jon Davids (Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University)**

“‘Coloured’ nature... isn’t that easy to shake off”. The Effects of Apartheid Ideology in the Life of Opera Coach Gordon Jephtas

16:20 **Hilde Roos (Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University)**

Mimi Coertse, Gordon Jephtas and Deon van der Walt: Opera, South Africa and Switzerland during Apartheid

17:00 **Book launch**, with apéritif

[“Sorry. I Am what I Am.”](#) *The Life and Letters of the South African Pianist and Opera Coach Gordon Jephtas (1943–92)*, ed. by Hilde Roos, F.J. Davids, Chris Walton. Basel: BAB publishing house

## Friday, 5 May 2023

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[Basler Afrika Bibliographien](#), Klosterberg 23, Basel

*Chair: Chris Walton*

- 09:30 **Annemie Behr (University of South Africa, Pretoria)**  
Vignettes from the Travels of Things: The Hans Adler Collection at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg
- 10:10 **Stephanus Muller & Willemien Froneman (Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University)**  
Singing Cowboys and Alpine Goat Herds:  
The Passaggio of Nature to Culture in Afrikaans Yodelling
- 10:50 *Coffee*
- 11:10 **Roundtable discussion**
- 12:00 *End of the Conference*  
*Farewell Lunch in [Restaurant Anatolia](#), Barfüsserplatz Basel*

## **Abstracts & Biographies**

### **Georg Kreis (University of Basel)**

#### **Introduction: Switzerland and South Africa:**

#### **The History of National Research Programme 42+**

**Georg Kreis** is professor emeritus at the University of Basel. He has published widely on international relations, the wars of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, nationalism and migration. From 1996 to 2001 he was a member of Independent Expert Commission “Switzerland – Second World War”, and from 2001 to 2004 he was the President of the Steering Committee of the Swiss National Research Programme 42+ “Switzerland-South Africa”. For 16 years he was also the President of the Swiss Commission against Racism.

### **Chris Walton (Bern Academy of the Arts)**

#### **Tracing the paths of culture: Switzerland and South Africa**

The project “Cultural relations between Switzerland and South Africa, 1948–1994” at the Bern Academy of the Arts, funded by the Swiss National Science Foundation, was initiated not least to complement the earlier work undertaken by NRP 42+ (under the auspices of Georg Kreis), which had already revealed the extensive economic and political connections between the apartheid state and democratic Switzerland. The earliest traces of Swiss culture in South Africa date back to at least the 1830s, though it was not until the 1960s that an extensive cultural dialogue began – both formally and informally. This paper explores the overarching issues involved, and discusses the problems that arise when engaging in a research project across two continents while trying to avoid replicating the inequalities of the past, and at a time when the Covid-19 pandemic closed all archives, libraries and universities and made travel largely impossible for many months.

**Chris Walton** studied at the Universities of Cambridge, Oxford and Zurich and was a postdoc at Munich University. After ten years running the music division of the Zentralbibliothek Zürich, he was appointed professor and head of the Music Department at the University of Pretoria. He returned to Switzerland in 2008. Today, he lectures in music history at the Basel Music Academy and runs two research projects at the Bern Academy of the Arts.

### **Chats Devroop (Tshwane University of Technology)**

#### **Shalati’s Swiss sojourn**

This paper examines an aspect of the complex relationship between Switzerland and South Africa during the apartheid era. It focuses on Shalati Joseph Khosa, a black South African composer whose musical studies were sponsored by a Swiss mission in Limpopo. Although Switzerland’s neutrality towards the apartheid state remains questionable, some non-governmental organisations helped the disenfranchised in South Africa. At the height of this convoluted situation Khosa’s stay in Lausanne is examined. As a composer of African music, he is here theoretically framed within Roman Jakobsen’s communication model.

Using Jakobsen’s phatic function, it is argued that composers like Khosa simply move from one phatic music to another. The phatic function refers here to a medium of communication that serves to establish and maintain social relations, rather than to convey meaning. In Khosa’s case, his music served as a means of communication and connection between both South Africa and Switzerland.

This paper highlights the intersections of music, politics and communication in a historical period

before 1994, and by analysing Khosa's experiences as a composer and student in Lausanne, this work contributes to our understanding of the role of music in shaping social relations and cultural identity. Overall, this research highlights the importance of cultural exchange and the potential of music to transcend political and social barriers.

**Chatradari 'Chats' Devroop** is a research professor in the Faculty of Arts and Design at Tshwane University of Technology (TUT), Pretoria, South Africa. Devroop served as a discipline (performing arts) and research leader at the University of KwaZulu-Natal before moving to TUT in 2022. As an artist-cum-scholar, he is familiar with technology in his field and aware of the media shifts that have come to define the arts in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. Devroop is a widely published author and a performing artist in diverse music genres.

### **Heidi Brunner, Dag Henrichsen, Susanne Hubler Baier and Lisa Roulet (Basler Afrika Bibliographien)**

#### **"Solidarity". Glimpses from the Entangled Archives**

The BAB houses a range of archives and collections which relate in one or other way to the primary topic and subtopics of this conference. We provide glimpses from some of these collections.

### **Thomas Patrick Chapman (ETH Zurich, Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture)**

#### **Interpreting Max Kirchhofer's "Compact Urbanity" in Apartheid-Era South Africa**

The Swiss architect and planner Max Kirchhofer is well-known in South African circles for having designed the "new towns" of Sasolburg and Secunda. Both projects were completed during the period of high apartheid (1960-1980) as company towns for the state-controlled energy company SASOL. Kirchhofer and his wife Tanja (née Labhart) graduated in architecture at the Eidgenössische Technische Hochschule (ETH) in Zurich in the 1930s and participated in the fourth Congrès internationaux d'architecture moderne (CIAM) conference in 1933 before emigrating to South Africa and setting up a practice together.

Max Kirchhofer's work has often been analysed in scholarly discourse linking modernist urban planning with apartheid, given his role as a contributor to CIAM's "Functional City" thesis and as a de-facto consultant to the apartheid state. Alternatively, this paper aims to investigate how the Kirchhofer office played a significant part in the liberal urban design culture which emerged during the high apartheid period in South Africa. Our argument focuses on key collaborations with liberal actors as well as civic projects like the Sasolburg town centre, which emerged as a multi-racial space in spite of apartheid laws. While previous architectural studies have judged the design of Sasolburg for its subscription to segregationist planning laws, this paper makes the case that the town centre and adjacent public spaces were designed with more progressive ideas in mind. Drawing on extensive secondary literature, Max Kirchhofer's annotated photographic archive as well as interviews with former collaborators, the paper investigates how urban design practices of this nature might be re-evaluated against the backdrop of apartheid.

**Thomas Patrick Chapman** holds Master's degrees in architecture (2008) and urban design from the University of the Witwatersrand, both of which explored the reintroduction of publicness into the post-apartheid city. Before entering professional practice, Chapman worked as a researcher in the fields of oral history and civic engagement on the Sophiatown Project, a 5-year initiative funded by the South Africa-Netherlands Research Programme on Alternatives in Development (SANPAD). He founded the award-winning architectural practice "Local Studio" in Johannesburg in 2012 and is currently enrolled as a doctoral candidate at ETH Zurich in the History and Theory

of Urban Design at the Institute for the History and Theory of Architecture (gta) under Prof. Dr Tom Avermaete.

**Denise Bertschi (EPFL, Swiss Federal Institute of Technology Lausanne, Arts of Sciences Laboratory)**

***“Please Ensure the Gate is Properly Closed”*. Questioning the Swiss Presence in Apartheid South Africa through the Swiss Social Club in Cape Town**

The article analyses the cultural life of Cape Town’s Swiss Club through its visual culture as represented in architectural details and printed matter (an inhouse published magazine), revealing their activities (such as the rifle club or men’s choir) as well as the economic net in which they were entangled, which included several Swiss banks and the Swiss South African business club. The Swiss Club’s seemingly mundane existence in Cape Town reveals political, economic and cultural relations between apartheid South Africa and the Swiss presence in the country.

A second perspective on this cultural life is given by the audio-visual testimony of the club’s house-keeper, who tells the history of this private enclave – but also of the racist discrimination that he has faced over the years, from being accused of theft to being deprived of the keys; thus he is a caretaker, but with limited access.

Furthermore, through the lens of Gertrud Vogler (1936-2018), an important Swiss photographer of social justice movements, this paper contrasts the visual culture of the Swiss Club in Cape Town with Vogler’s visual archive of anti-apartheid protests in Zurich. The tension of far-away conflicts, protested against in Zurich, is thereby placed in relation to the racist conflict on the doorstep of the Swiss Club in Cape Town. Based in Green Point, Cape Town, the cleanly kept clubhouse and its cultural life thus reveal territorial and racial conflicts. Founded in 1923, its very existence constituted a caricatured proof of the close, continuing relations that Switzerland maintained with South Africa through the earliest days of the apartheid regime and beyond.

**Denise Bertschi** is a doctoral researcher and artist at the Arts of Sciences Laboratory at EPFL Lausanne. Her artistic research is located at the intersection of visual culture, architecture and history. She has twice been awarded the prize for the “Most Beautiful Swiss Books”, in 2019 and 2022. Her work has been widely exhibited in Paris, Zurich, Winterthur, Seoul, Johannesburg and Los Angeles. She was previously a Getty Research Summer Fellow (Los Angeles) and artist in residence with Pro Helvetia and La Becque.

**Richard Butz (St. Gallen)**

**When South African Jazz Came to Switzerland. Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Chris McGregor & The Blue Notes and Joe Malinga, the Anti-Apartheid-Movement and “AfriKaribik” in St. Gallen**

Abdullah Ibrahim, then “Dollar Brand”, came into exile in Switzerland in 1962 together with Johnny Gertze and Makaya Ntshoko. Their type of jazz was hitherto unknown to Swiss jazz aficionados and made a lasting impression on the local jazz scene, especially on the then young pianist Irène Schweizer. Soon afterwards, Ibrahim was followed by Chris McGregor and The Blue Notes, who played fresh avant-garde jazz of a kind never before heard in Switzerland. In around 1980, yet another South African jazz musician turned up in Switzerland – the saxophonist Joe Malinga – and recorded with both Swiss and international musicians.

My paper tells the story of how these musicians came to Switzerland and of their musical activities in this country. I examine how they influenced Swiss jazz. I also create a link to the Swiss anti-apartheid movement. This is shown by the example of the St. Gallen branch of the

movement and its cultural activities under the title “AfriKaribik”, which also presented musicians from South Africa. This presentation will be accompanied by music and illustrated by several rare documents.

**Richard Butz** was born in St. Gallen in 1943. He has lived and worked as a bookseller in Switzerland, London, and for five years at the University of Sierra Leone in Freetown in Sierra Leone. He has published several books, taught the history of jazz at the Jazz School of St. Gallen for 35 years, and has organised some 500 concerts, many of them featuring musicians from South Africa.

### **Atiyyah Khan (Cape Town)**

#### **A Surprising Friendship: Looking at the Ongoing Collaborations in Jazz Between South African and Swiss Jazz Musicians Through a Post-Apartheid Lens up to the Present Day**

South African jazz musicians have had a long-standing relationship with Switzerland and Swiss musicians that stretches back to the early 1960s. This relationship continues to grow at a rapid pace, and yet this more recent history, post-Apartheid, has not yet been documented. It is important to recognise how fruitful these exchanges have been and to recognise the beauty in them, not only in music but in human connections made.

This presentation aims to examine this “surprising friendship” between musicians from both these countries.

What are some of these collaborations? How do they endure financially? What motivates them to continue? Who works behind-the-scenes to make these happen? – are some of the core questions at the heart of this study. Since no formalised study of these relationships exists, numerous new interviews with artists and cultural workers were carried out for the purposes of this presentation.

Currently, Switzerland has stronger ties to South Africa than any other country in the world in terms of jazz. While both countries are vastly different – culturally, politically and economically – what is remarkable is this ongoing exchange and friendship between musicians that continues up to the present time. The outcomes have revealed an equal, balanced exchange that is exciting, is happening in real time, and is set to continue far into the future.

**Atiyyah Khan** is an arts journalist, researcher, DJ, archivist, record collector and events-curator from Johannesburg, based in Cape Town. In 2010, she was awarded the Pulitzer Fellowship earning her an MA in Arts Journalism from the USC Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism, based at the University of Southern California (Los Angeles). She is also the co-founder of the music and art collective Future Nostalgia. As DJ El Corazon, her sets explore music beyond boundaries, forming connections that link South Africa to the rest of the world. She has given podcasts and sonic lectures and currently works for various publications documenting South African arts and culture.

### **Jasper Walgrave (Bern Academy of the Arts / Fribourg University)**

#### **The Swiss Representation of South African Culture through Literature:**

##### **The Case of Peter Sulzer**

The philologist Peter Sulzer (1917-2009) was the Director of the City Library in Winterthur from 1966 until his retirement in 1982. His real passion, however, was South Africa and South African literature. He applied for positions in South Africa on several occasions, but nevertheless remained to the end of his career in Winterthur. He published several books on African and South African issues (the first of which, *Schwarze Intelligenz*, 1955, investigated the views of society on black Africans, mostly the South Africans whom he considered to constitute the black intellectual



elite). He translated many South African authors from English, Afrikaans, Sesotho and in some cases from other languages too. These translations were sometimes published as novels (i.e. the seminal 1926 novel *Chaka Zulu* by Thomas Mofolo, translated by Sulzer into German from its English translation in 1953, and again from the original Sesotho in 1988), at other times as anthologies of short texts (*Glut in Afrika*, 1961 and *Südafrika. Moderne Erzähler der Welt*, 1977). Sulzer was regarded as one of the most important philologists specialising in South African literature in Europe and he opened Swiss eyes to South African culture. However, as with the case of the famous Swiss ethnologist René Gardi (1909-2000, [www.africanmirror.ch](http://www.africanmirror.ch)), Sulzer transmits a particular vision of South African literature and the issues in it. In the 1970s and 1980s he was active in “friendship societies” that defended the apartheid state from what they saw as “misinterpretations” on the part of the international campaign against apartheid. The life and work of Peter Sulzer enable us to reconstruct how representation through the arts was used to construct an image of South Africa in Switzerland and played a role in the battle for Swiss public opinion. The extensive archive of Sulzer’s correspondence at the Winterthur library offers a unique insight into this process.

**Jasper Walgrave** graduated in history, political sociology and development studies, then worked in the arts sector in Portugal, coordinating projects between Mozambique, Cape Verde and Brazil. From 2003 to 2006 he was project coordinator for the SA-Flemish project for Community Arts Centres, based at the South African Department of Arts and Culture (DAC) in Pretoria, and from 2007 to 2019 he worked for Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council, initially in South Africa, then later in Zurich. He is currently completing his doctorate as part of the SNSF project “Cultural relations between Switzerland and South Africa, 1948–1994”.

### **Astrid Starck-Adler (Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse) & Dag Henrichsen (Basler Afrika Bibliographien)**

#### **“Europe’s tribal wars”. Lewis Nkosi on Provincialising the Global North and Swiss Encounters**

Lewis Nkosi (1936-2010), the renowned novelist, journalist and literary academic from Durban, spent his last 12 years in Basel. Previously, he seems to have had only brief encounters in Switzerland itself. Yet the German edition of his first novel *Mating Birds* (1986) was published first in Zurich and his personal relations with and imaginaries concerning Switzerland were shaped, it seems, by South African jazz musicians and his favourite author, James Baldwin. In this contribution we trace some of Nkosi’s early engagements with and within Switzerland.

**Astrid Starck-Adler** is Professor Emerita of German and Yiddish Literature (University of Basel & Université de Haute Alsace, Mulhouse). Together with Dag Henrichsen, she edited the volume *Lewis Nkosi. The Black Psychiatrist. Flying Home! Texts, Perspectives, Homage* (Basel, 2021).

**Dag Henrichsen** is a Namibian historian and archivist based at the Basler Afrika Bibliographien. Together with Astrid Starck-Adler, he edited the volume *Lewis Nkosi. The Black Psychiatrist. Flying Home! Texts, Perspectives, Homage* (Basel, 2021).

Paula Fourie (Bern University of the Arts / Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University)

#### **“Ek wit, opdat ons ’n sneeuwit Andorra het, julle moordenaars”: Max Frisch’s *Andorra* as Afrikaans Protest Theatre**

“Ist’s wahr, Hochwürden, was die Leut sagen? Sie werden uns überfallen, die Schwarzen da drüben, weil sie neidisch sind auf unsre weißen Häuser”, Barblin, one of the young protagonists of *Andorra*, asks the Priest in the town square in the play’s opening scene. Barblin is

whitewashing so that the townsfolk should have “ein weißes Andorra”. Thus Max Frisch introduces an important symbolic distinction in his eponymous play between those who are white, the apparently good and innocent, and the blacks, the fearsome evildoers next door. Premiered in November 1961 in the Schauspielhaus Zürich, Frisch’s *Andorra* made its way to apartheid South Africa in July 1964. There, Swiss immigrant Mario Schiess staged an Afrikaans translation by Wilma Stockenström and Ants Kirsipuu that hewed very close to the original German. But when, in the receiving culture, audiences were confronted with the ideal of a “wit Andorra”, the categories “white” and “black” resonated with new meaning. “Is dit waar, eerwaarde vader, wat die mense sê?” Barblin asked on the stage of Pretoria’s Little Theatre. “Hulle gaan ons aanval, die Swartes daar oorkant, omdat hulle jaloers is op ons wit huise.” How were white Afrikaners in the audience to know that Barblin wasn’t referring to black people, the other that was uppermost in their minds? Informed by translation theorist Lawrence Venuti, this paper performs a “symptomatic reading” of Stockenström’s and Kirsipuu’s translation to examine the “domestic remainder”, the textual effects produced in the translation that resonate only in the receiving culture. Through an analysis of Frisch’s play, this paper finally posits *Andorra* as an early (and rare) example of Afrikaans protest theatre.

**Paula Fourie** holds degrees from the universities of Pretoria and Stellenbosch. She recently published a biography of the South African musical theatre composer Taliep Petersen. She has also published scholarly articles, plays, poetry and photo essays, and is active in professional theatre, having worked since 2012 alongside her husband, the South African playwright Athol Fugard, on productions of his plays in New York and Cape Town. She is a research fellow at Africa Open Institute at Stellenbosch University and a postdoc at the Bern Academy of the Arts.

### **Steff Rohrbach (Bern Academy of the Arts)**

#### **The Cafe Africana in Zurich. From Cape Town to Ichertswil**

After the Sharpsville Massacre in 1960, living conditions for the black population of South Africa worsened. Some musicians came to London with the South African musical *King Kong* to get passports, giving 201 guest performances and often staying in Europe thereafter. With the help of their friend the young Basel graphic artist Paul Meyer, who had lived in South Africa for two years, the jazz pianist Dollar Brand and his later wife, the singer Bea Benjamin, came to Switzerland in the winter of 1962. When Dollar Brand finally got an engagement at Zurich’s Café Africana, bassist Johnny Gertze and drummer Makaya Ntshoko followed – their trio, originally founded in 1958, was thus reunited. Bea Benjamin managed to lure Duke Ellington to the Africana after his concert on 19 February 1963 – and four days later, they recorded together in Paris. The following year, the LP *Duke Ellington Presents The Dollar Brand Trio* was released, the Duke invited Brand and Benjamin to the USA, the pianist became a world star, and the singer primarily supported his career. Their recordings – some with Ellington at the piano – were not published until 1996. From 1968 onwards, Brand called himself Abdullah Ibrahim. Brand was followed in 1964 by Chris McGregor and his sextet “The Blue Notes”, who had received passports from the apartheid state after an invitation to Antibes. Both the Dollar Brand Trio and the Blue Notes had a major impact on the Swiss jazz scene – but Brand, Benjamin and the Blue Notes moved on to London, where there was a large African community and probably a better environment for them.

In 1973, the pianist McGregor played with “The Brotherhood of Breath” in Willisau; three members of the Blue Notes had left, but McGregor’s band now included Englishmen and an Austrian. This performance, just like the group’s subsequent concerts on the Swiss scene, came as a shock, a mystery and a revelation in equal measure: an irrepressible power spoke from their mixture of township music with enigmatically functioning free jazz that turned what was usual on

its head.

Conversely, there were hardly any jazz musicians from Switzerland – neither men nor women – who performed in South Africa during apartheid. They travelled on their own initiative to southern Africa, but not to the pariah apartheid state. This only changed when the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia opened an office in Cape Town in 1998 and began the active promotion of an exchange in both directions.

**Steff Rohrbach** was for seven years responsible for jazz at the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia. He has also been involved in cultural management, communication and organisation for numerous institutions and festivals including the Montreux Jazz Festival. From 2015 to 2023 he was responsible for communication and project management at the Jazz School of the Basel Music Academy. He has published many interviews, essays and reviews, including for the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, *WOZ Die Wochenzeitung*, *Die Weltwoche* and elsewhere.

### **Lineo Segoe (Maseru)**

#### **The Ignorant Schoolmaster: The Swiss Missionary Edouard Jacottet and the Sesotho Language**

This paper is a reflection on the paradoxical role of two historical educators. It discusses the relationship between ignorance and emancipation, and the implications of power and mutual learning associated with them. It relates the stories of two educators who at first do not have much in common except a certain similarity in their names.

First, we have the Swiss missionary Edouard Jacottet, a self-proclaimed linguistic expert on the Sesotho Language. Jacottet is identified as the architect of Sesotho orthography as it is today. He is also praised for having paved the way towards a semi-independent local clergy and highlighting the value of local cultures in colonial Lesotho. However, his power has had enduring consequences for creative writing and literacy development among the youth of the country. Secondly, we have the theories and practice of the French academic Joseph Jacotot, protagonist of Jacques Rancière's text *The ignorant schoolmaster*. This paper analyses Jacottet's work in Lesotho through the lens of Rancière's figure of the ignorant schoolmaster. We then circle back to the expressions of coloniality evident in Rancière's text as exposed by its application to the Lesotho setting. By staging Rancière/Jacotot as Jacottet's mirror, we ask; can the idea of an ignorant schoolmaster serve as an emancipatory narrative that absolves the likes of Jacottet of their "sins"?

Jacottet is part of a long legacy of Swiss missionaries who lived and worked in Lesotho throughout the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, the full extent of whose influence has been greatly underplayed if not overlooked.

**Lineo Segoe** studied as an undergraduate at Limkokwing University in Lesotho and as a postgraduate at Vanderbilt University in Nashville (TN) as a Humphrey Fellow. She has been active variously as a curator, writer, translator and cultural consultant in Africa and the USA, and has spoken at symposia and workshops in Switzerland, Austria and Germany. Her research interests include curriculum development and education practices.

### **Féroll-Jon Davids (Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University)**

#### **“‘Coloured’ nature... isn't that easy to shake off”. The effects of apartheid ideology in the Life of Opera Coach Gordon Jephtas**

This paper takes the 28-year correspondence between the South African repetiteur Gordon Jephtas (1943–1992) and the South African singer May Abrahamse as a basis to discuss Jephtas's evolving opinions about his classified racial status as a coloured individual under

apartheid and the factors that triggered these changes. We find that Jephtas was initially pessimistic about his colouredness, regarding it as a drawback. But as he integrated in Swiss society in the 1970s and became established in the community of the Zurich Opera House, a shift in his views becomes perceptible. By the end of this correspondence, Jephtas was finally declaring himself proud to be a coloured South African. This paper posits that cultural identity is not fixed, and that while our environment contributes to identity formation, identity itself is ultimately shaped and re-shaped by individuals themselves.

**Féroll-Jon Davids** is the principal clarinettist of the Cape Town Philharmonic Orchestra, a part-time clarinet lecturer at Stellenbosch University, and an assistant researcher for the Bern Academy of the Arts. He studied at Stellenbosch University and also spent semesters at the Universities of Georgia and Montana State in the USA. His Master thesis for the University of Stellenbosch, *Gordon Jephtas (1943–1992): A coloured life in opera*, was a biographical account of the life of Gordon Jephtas that investigated how modalities of apartheid thinking and practice influenced his self-perception as a classified coloured individual.

**Hilde Roos (Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University)**

**Mimi Coertse, Gordon Jephtas and Deon van der Walt: Opera, South Africa and Switzerland during Apartheid**

This paper will document the cultural relations between Switzerland and South Africa as these manifested in the careers of three South African musicians who enjoyed illustrious yet diverse careers in the opera industry in Europe and the United States during apartheid. The first is the soprano Mimi Coertse who was hired by Basel Opera for her very first professional contract to sing Mozart's Queen of the Night in September 1955. This production catapulted Coertse into singing this role more than 500 times throughout her career, bringing much fame and fortune. The second was pianist Gordon Jephtas, who worked as repetiteur, vocal coach and assistant to the opera conductor Nello Santi at the Zurich Opera House between 1972 and 1977. Having access to the finest opera singers Europe had to offer, Jephtas forged a reputation as an excellent repetiteur and accompanist. He went on to work with the world's foremost opera singers in the USA in the 1980s. Thirdly, in 1985, tenor Deon van der Walt chose to settle in Zurich where he lived until his untimely death in 2005. He often sang for the Zurich Opera House, but the city served as a base from where he travelled throughout the world. He is thought to be the first South African to become a truly international opera singer, as he sang at most major houses from Vienna to New York, London, Paris, and Tokyo; this in spite of the cultural boycotts that were in place against South African artists during this time.

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**Annemie Behr (University of South Africa)**

**Vignettes from the Travels of Things: The Hans Adler Collection at the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg**

Hans Georg Adler (1904-1979), a German Jew, emigrated to South Africa in 1933, where he established himself as a prominent cultural figure. He is best remembered as the chairman of the Johannesburg Musical Society, which became a vital African node in a network of musical

patrons. Thanks to Adler's efforts, some of the most renowned international performers of western art music visited Africa. These included Isabelle Nef (1956), Maria Stader (1963), the Lucerne Festival Strings (1965), and Heinz Holliger (1969), all from Switzerland. Karlheinz Stockhausen's visit to South Africa in 1971 was a highlight of Adler's career. Shortly before his death in 1979, Adler bequeathed his personal collection of musical instruments and library contents, which included books, musical scores, and rare manuscripts, to the University of the Witwatersrand. The collection comprises 19 musical instruments, including several harpsichords and a 19th-century travelling piano, which speak to Adler's particular interest in early music. It is housed at the School of Arts. Materials related to his music patronage are kept in a separate archive on the Wits campus and include correspondence with agencies, institutions, and individuals worldwide.

This paper presents vignettes that draw on testimonies from these archives to examine the meanings of Adler's personal collection of musical instruments and texts and the movements of instruments that accompanied visiting artists on their tours. Following some of Arjun Appadurai's ideas in *The Social Life of Things*, we reflect on the different "regimes of value" that cultural materials occupy at different stages in their careers as commodities of "transactions across cultural borders".

**Annemie Behr** is a senior lecturer in musicology at the University of South Africa. She has researched extensively into Jewish musical cultures in South Africa and has published articles and reviews in *Tydskrif vir Letterkunde*, *Litnet Akademies*, *Musicus*, *Journal of the Musical Arts in Africa*, *Tempo*, *Fontes Artis Musicae* and *SAMUS*. She has served as secretary of SASRIM (the South African Society for Research in Music) and as reviews editor for *Muziki*.

### **Stephanus Muller & Willemien Froneman (Africa Open Institute, Stellenbosch University) Singing Cowboys and Alpine Goat Herds: The Passaggio of Nature to Culture in Afrikaans Yodelling**

By entering the sound world of Afrikaans yodelling, this paper explores the Swiss-South African connection through an unlikely go-between: American country music. We trace a genealogy for 20th-century Afrikaans yodelling, starting with the Swiss travelling families of the 19th century and the uptake of yodelling and Swiss stereotypes in minstrelsy, and continuing on to the influence of these practices on American Country music – particularly on Jimmy Rogers's so-called "Blue Yodels" on 12-bar blues that found their way to South Africa during the 1930s and influenced South African musicians like Charles Jacobie, Santa Vorster, The Briels, Jimmy Stone and Nico Carstens. Taking up the research that connects yodelling with a particularly racialised form of ventriloquism, Blackface, and building on the work of linguistic anthropologists, we delineate forms of Afrikaans yodelling as species of indistinct "speech-sound". Finally, the paper connects Afrikaans yodelling to a signifying practice characterised by the particular ambiguities of the racial Afrikaner imagination, in which the "Other" is vicariously posed and denied as self, through the use of the yodelling voice as sonic cypher of both Swiss (and therefore European) referents, while performing, simultaneously, the strangeness of the (racial) other as necessary to the discovery of the Afrikaner voice.

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**Willemien Froneman** is a former co-editor of *SAMUS: South African Music Studies* and Head of Postgraduate Studies at the Africa Open Institute for Music, Research and Innovation at Stellenbosch University. She holds an M.Phil in Musicology from Cambridge University and completed her PhD on *boeremusiek* – a vernacular genre of Afrikaans folk music – at Stellenbosch University in 2012. She writes on music, affect, racial politics and the avant-garde in South Africa, and her work has appeared in *Ethnomusicology Forum*, *Popular Music*, *Popular Music & Society*, *The RMA Research Chronicle*, *Cultural Geographies*, *Social Dynamics*, and *Twentieth-Century Music*.