

## Themabela Vokwana Interview with Christine Lucia by e-mail (November 2021)

1. Kindly provide a brief background about your life, especially on your formative years in music education.

This is about my formative years, because there's so much about the rest of my life, later on. I was born in London on 27 June 1947. My father was a clerk in a Tea Warehouse Company in Philpot Lane in the heart of London. My mother stayed at home, but before she married, she was a secretary at His Masters Voice studios in Hayes, Middlesex. (This later became EMI.) Her closest friend at HMV was Evelyn Langler, my godmother, who managed the HMV archive. My mother liked classical music and played the piano, my father preferred jazz, and his 78 records included Paul Robeson's rendition of 'Old Man River'. My first school was a state primary school in Southall, west London, and at the age of 11, I went to Ealing Girls Grammar School. Here I studied 'O'-level English, French, Latin, Maths, Physics, Chemistry, Biology and Art to the age of 15, and then 'A'-level French, Latin and Music. I had begun private piano lessons when I was seven and did most of the practical and theory grade exams until I passed Grade VIII at 15 and then I went on to take the Performer's ATCL (Associate of Trinity College London) when I was 16. Alongside this, I had started the viola when I was 13, and was playing in the back desk of the violas in Ealing Youth Orchestra two years later, in works such as Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, Sibelius's 2nd Symphony and Shostakovich's 5th Symphony. I often faked it, playing every other note in fast passages! But the extraordinary tolerance of my inexperience and the glorious sound of the orchestra around me, somehow dragged me up to a higher level of playing. I sang in choirs throughout school, as well, and in primary school we played in recorder ensembles and percussion bands - the usual fare in 1950s Britain - and in class singing we used the *Oxford Song Books*, which in those days had the tunes written in both staff notation and tonic solfa notation, I remember.

A big feature of extra-curricula music activities in London were music festivals (eisteddfods), which I took part in throughout the early 1960s, occasionally winning a trophy, and building my confidence at playing in public. My school's orchestra sometimes joined Ealing Singers to perform works like Fauré's *Requiem*, Lambert's *Rio Grande* and Britten's *War Requiem*. I remember that Britten came to one of our rehearsals; a very shy man. I played piano in his *Noyes Fludde*, and for a school carol service one Christmas, I wrote a short piece for harp as an interlude somewhere. Everyone thought it was by somebody famous, which was very flattering, but no-one encouraged me to compose anything else, and so I didn't. (The only small things I composed later were instrumental music for drama productions at Rhodes and a church anthem.)

It was western classical music and British folksong pretty much wall-to-wall, as far as music education was concerned. At home when we had family gatherings, we'd sing folksongs, musical hall songs and either my brother or I would vamp out the accompaniment. I also had a long-standing duet partner, a friend from up the road, who had the same music teacher that I did, and we romped through duets by Moskowski, Dvorak and others. But I also loved pop, and I listened to *Top of the Pops* faithfully on the radio every week. I even went to hear The Beatles (live!) once, but I really remember very little except screaming myself hoarse with thousands of other teens in miniskirts. My mother and godmother took me to the Royal Opera House where I saw Fonteyn and Nureyev in *Giselle* and *Swan Lake*. And the whole family made an annual trip to see the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company perform Gilbert & Sullivan at

the Savoy Theatre. Once, they did *The Yeoman of the Guard* out-doors, in the moat of the Tower of London.

I adored growing up in London, with its rich musical life, multicultural population, shops, traffic, noise and grime. Whenever I go back to London, usually on some train trundling through switches and tunnels, it feels as if I'm going back into the womb. The *sound* of London affected me deeply in my formative years, from the hum of a distant major arterial road that I heard from our house, to the clamour of the Proms, to buses and taxis and street hawkers. And the sounds of people's voices: Oi! Watcher step, luv! Blimey. Oo d'you fink you are, then? (This is more or less how I used to speak, too, when I was a teenager.)

2. I am aware you went to Oxford, and also trained as a concert pianist. Could you shed some light on this aspect of your life?

For someone with my fairly ordinary, slightly lowish middle-class background, getting a place at St Anne's College Oxford to read music was a huge surprise: to me, my family, and my school-teachers. I didn't think I was that good, and in fact, I only applied to Oxford because my Southall boyfriend had gone to Keble College and he encouraged me. I 'went up' as the saying goes, in October 1965 and 'came down' in June 1968. I totally absorbed the new-found intellectualism because at home, we had few books and we hardly ever had discussions about anything except mundane things, and so Oxford was, to paraphrase Stefan George, like breathing the air of another planet. At the same time, I was terrified of failing. My school education was a very good one: with hindsight and by comparison with what I now know to be the norm in most music education systems, especially in South Africa, it prepared me very well for Oxford. It was not an unusual music education for its time and place; and music was not for the talented few, but for everybody.

My early years were spent in a London rebuilding itself after WWII and establishing the Welfare State and going into the swinging 1960s there was an overriding ethos of accessibility, at least in our part of London, for the local County Council paid my tuition and residence fees at Oxford in full, even leaving me a bit of spare cash each year to go Youth Hostelling in Europe. My school education had also been completely free. The upper-class privileged air of Oxford was therefore something to be reckoned with, for me, and had it not been for the Principal of St Anne's College consciously mixing people from different class backgrounds, and the encouragement of my two music tutors, Rosamund McGuinness and Bernard Rose, I might not have survived. I felt inadequate, I worked incredibly hard, and somehow I managed to get an upper 2nd. (Not everyone may be aware that all undergraduate courses at Oxford were three years, and culminated in a BA degree regardless of the subject you did.)

The Oxford music degree course was nothing like a general Humanities BA but consisted of quite high-powered music courses, all the way, with only one non-music subject: translation from a European language (in my case, French). Music lectures were optional, but I attended most of them because the people giving them were brilliant. My favourite lecture course was Harmonic Practice in the 18th and 19th centuries, given by Sidney Watson. I had weekly tutorials in Harmony & Counterpoint with Rose and History of Music with McGuinness. These trained me to write style studies from the 16th to 19th centuries and to write an essay a week on the history of European music from the Middle Ages to the early 20th century. Bernard Rose advised me to copy out music by composers from Byrd to Reger - copying as a way of learning, not in order to disseminate the music - and to write fugues using subjects

taken from Gédalge's *Traité de la fuge*. This was the only text book we ever used. He taught me how to orchestrate, and he expected me to attend Magdalen College Evensong, which he conducted, so that I could get the sounds of 16th- and 17th-century choral music into my ears. I also joined Keble College choir, the first Oxford college choir (I think) to admit women. David Lumsden ran an aural training course which I didn't really need because I had very good ears, but it made them even better. Being a good pianist before I went to Oxford gave me a head start when it came to the only place where my pianistic skills were needed: score-reading. We learnt to play two- and three-part vocal music from the 16th century using Soprano, Alto, Tenor and Bass clefs (including C-clefs). We worked through string quartets, quintets and sextets, figured bass from Bach, Rameau and Handel's music, string orchestra scores, chamber orchestral scores, then finally we played through full orchestral and choral scores. I will never forget, during one 3rd-year score-reading class, listening to two fellow students play Debussy's *La Mer* from full score, on two pianos.

That was my music education, at least the bare bones of it. Anyway, by the time I left Oxford, I knew an enormous repertoire of Western classical music and I could hear more or less everything written on a complex music score inside my head; I could play this complex score on the piano; and I could also play by ear almost anything I heard externally. It was just lucky that I had this pianistic talent before I went to Oxford, because there were no 'piano lessons' as such, on offer there. If you wanted this, you had to do it privately and as I learnt long afterwards, some students went up to London to study with someone at the Royal College of Music or Royal Academy while they were at Oxford. I could have had lessons with Lamar Crowson at the RCM! In fact, it was from him that I learnt, when I met him years later, that this is what some Oxford and Cambridge students did.

I remember being asked questions in my final viva voce exam by the panel of professors, most of them editors of the New Oxford History of Music: as if I'd just written a PhD! They queried some of the things I'd said in my exam papers - as if these were carefully considered pieces of writing! I guess after three years of essay writing they should have been, shouldn't they? And after fielding this, I had to sight-read a full orchestral score on the piano. All a bit terrifying. But as with everything else during those three years of study, there was no dumbing down, we had almost no recordings to fall back on, and you really had to know music by playing it or reading it and read everything there was to know about it. Thank goodness for Corky McGuinness, who taught me to how to do this, and to write well. She made me read my weekly essays out loud and she immediately caught me up short if she detected any sloppy phrases or vague claims.

3. What lessons were learned from your early and university music education which you think influenced your outlook and praxis in music education during your subsequent stay in South Africa?

The music education I describe above felt so normal, to me, and I felt so average a student within it, that when I became a teacher I thought that this is what everyone should have, with no limit to the level they could reach. So perhaps the main lesson I learnt was that with hard work, good teaching, a bit of talent to begin with, especially a good ear, and access to facilities and resources, anyone could achieve what I had. So I thought. My view of music education from my own experience of it was, of course, quite narrow. After coming to South Africa, I experienced music and environments for learning music that I had never dreamt of. I was fairly familiar with different jazz and popular music styles and some folk music from Europe and America, but I knew next to nothing about 'world music', let alone African music. I was curious about Africa, because my father's father had lived in Ghana in the early

20th century and sent back curious artefacts and I had a stamp collection that taught me about countries all over the world. I loved poring over the atlas to see where they came from.

Perhaps it was a good thing that I came to South Africa with few preconceptions about non-western music other than the way it was represented in 19th- and 20th-century classical music. The Other hit me smack between the eyes when I arrived in Makanda (Grahamstown) in January 1974, not in the form of music, but in the form of life. It was shocking to me, the poverty, the constriction of most people's lives, the rampant inequalities, and the fact that most people spoke a language I didn't understand. I began to realise that love of music and education was some kind of common ground, or bridge but I had no idea, yet, how to use that realisation. Also, I was in tow with my first husband, David Bunyan, and we weren't planning to stay in South Africa all that long.

Before I came to South Africa, I had done a one-year teaching diploma at Durham University, during which I did 12 weeks of teaching practice in a working-class mining town, Consett, County Durham. I loved this, because it was so different from Oxford and even though I could barely understand the students on account of their strong Northumbrian accents. They tried so hard, I pushed them to their limits, and they were great fun. It was winter term: I got up in the dark and went home in the dark, there was a window of light for about three hours in the middle of the day. I had to wear a skirt, not trousers and remember not to sit on another teacher's favourite chair. But I loved all this ritual. I stayed on in Durham (1969-70) to start an MA thesis on Schumann at Durham University, but before I could finish it we went back to Oxford where my husband did an M.Phil. in English.

Among other part-time jobs I got in Oxford was tutoring for the Open University, which was another learning curve: my students were factory workers, shopkeepers, plumbers, hairdressers, twenty or thirty years older than me and from all over the country. They questioned everything: Why are we learning this medieval church music stuff? What instruments were the peasants, you know, working class people, playing in the 16th century? In the old days, how did you survive as a composer if you didn't have a patron?

During those years (1971-73), I took piano lessons from a colleague at Oxford High School who steered me through a Royal Academy of Music performers licentiate (LRAM). If I had not met David, who brought me to South Africa when he got a lectureship at Rhodes in 1974, I might have tried to get into the world of performance in the UK, or even conducting. I could not quite imagine myself as a university lecturer, however, in a country where there were hundreds of musically educated people to compete with. I imagined myself teaching in school and/or privately and having some kind of life as a performer on the side. Whatever lessons I learned, and however I put them into practice in those early years in South Africa, then, it felt at first like a very alienated environment in which to do so.

4. Please give a "sketch" of your professional life in South Africa when you arrived in 1974, till post retirement, being part of Africa Open.

As a performer: cellist Ishbel Sholto-Douglas and violinist Norbert Nowotny and I formed the Rhodes Piano Trio, which helped me to get established as a pianist, never mind keep me sane. As a teacher: I worked at Diocesan School for Girls and Victoria Primary School and I did some part-time lecturing at Rhodes. I also finished my thesis on Schumann's chamber music at Rhodes, as a PhD, in 1979. The year before that, however, I had met Andrew Tracey, newly arrived in Makanda, and after that my worldview changed rapidly. I joined his

Steelband and started to immerse myself in African music, both local and continental, through his incredible knowledge. I almost got a job as Andrew's Secretary at the International Library of African Music (ILAM) in 1981. I was interviewed, but not appointed because I had no secretarial experience. There was no full-time job available at Rhodes, either.

At the end of 1982, Hubert van der Spuy asked me to fill a temporary lecturing post in 'history and form' at the University of Durban-Westville, and since I was by now divorced and did not have a job, I moved to Durban and did this work for two years (1983-84). I survived it because of my friendships with Surendran Reddy and Melveen Jackson, among others. In 1985 I moved to the (then) University of Natal Music Department to take up a lectureship in music theory. It was great being in an environment where there were well-established scholars and musicians such as Chris Ballantine, Veit Erlmann, Beverly Parker, Betsy Oehrle, and Isabella Stengel, people I could really look up to. But eventually, I wasn't happy with the limited change I could effect as a lecturer at UND, although I did try. I was introduced to African choral concerts in this period, by another colleague, Bongani Mthethwa, and I wondered why this fabulous music wasn't in the curriculum. Bongani sent me to hear the Ford Choirs finals at the Standard Bank Arena in Joburg at the end of 1987, which was I think the first time I heard a piece of music by Moerane. So, although I was promoted at the end of 1988 to senior lecturer at UND, I went back to UDW in 1989 to head up the Music Department. It was a difficult choice, but I was now a full Professor (the first female full Professor in South Africa, I think) and I knew that I would have more power to make the radical changes to curricula and teaching methods that by that time I felt were necessary.

I did this work at UDW from 1989 to mid-1997 and was then asked to go and head up Rhodes Music Department - I seemed to be getting a reputation for change management. I left UDW reluctantly, because we really had something good going there (more on this later), but I was tired of working 12 or 14-hour days making a music department shine amidst a flaky university administration, maintaining what we'd worked so hard for, and fighting to keep the department from closing. This was a time of dramatic transformations, closures, bold and often unworkable and un-thought-out ideas sweeping across the post-1990 South African educational landscape.

Rhodes was challenging in other ways: a dysfunctional music department in a functional university (the opposite of UDW). The music students were predominantly white and educated in Cape schools; it had a small ill-equipped music library, some rather entrenched ways of doing things, and a quasi-family atmosphere that I found a bit restricting and even unprofessional. Rhodes was also such an a-political campus compared to UDW. It was also a very different university, in post-apartheid South Africa, from the one I had experienced as a newcomer and part-timer in the 1970s. But it was me who had changed, not Rhodes. It was a small university, however, with a highly functional administration. (I even met my second husband, Michael Blake there, in 1997. He was one of the composers I invited to help us develop the composition course. That's where I thought the focus should be: African music, jazz, composition.)

In 2001, I was invited to apply for the Wits 'Chair of Music' (as it was advertised), where I had a few months earlier served on a committee looking into the future of the Wits Music Department. Working the same changes there was a very different prospect, not least because, as I arrived, the Department ceased to exist and became a Division within a School

of Arts, the Chair suddenly vanished (an administrative sleight of hand) although I remained a professor, and I found myself faced with ugly legacies of departmental politicking. All this and Joburg! I was side-lined as HOD in 2003 and was glad when I was offered early retirement at the end of 2007, really, because this gave me a chance to finish all the research projects I had begun, and to start new ones. In 2008, Wits gave me a Visiting Professorship to see my postgrad students through, and in 2009 Stellenbosch University offered me an (unpaid) Honorary Professorship, so I had a place from which to conduct research and apply for research funds. I was, and remain, very grateful for this academic home. Michael & I had moved from Johannesburg to the Cape in 2008, and I after two or three years I was already working on the Mohapeloa Critical Edition project.

5. Your PhD is on Schumann, and you wrote an article in 1995 SAMUS on Schumann's Tonal Analogue Revisited. Thereafter, you seem to have abandoned Schumann altogether. This is an interesting shift. Would you be keen to give light to this? Does it have anything to do with your later shift, looking within to SA musicians: Volans, Reddy, Mohapeloa, Moerane?

This question really makes me think about the hidden connections between apparently very different things in my career. These connections are intuitive, right-brained and it is perhaps no accident that I admire Jerome Bruner's book, *On Knowing: Essays for the Left Hand* (1979), which is a wonderful book for any teacher to read. I have always loved Schumann. It's not just his music and his inspiring life as a pianist, composer and critic but the way his music endures, speaks to each generation anew. When I studied his chamber music for my PhD in the 1970s most of it was not yet recorded and it was considered second-rate, showing an unfortunate decline from the heights of his vocal and piano music, symptomatic of his mental deterioration. I tried to change that view in my PhD. Nowadays, the works are frequently played on the radio, in dozens of different recordings. (Nothing to do with me! This music has just found its time.) So perhaps my love for championing composers whose output, or part of it, was neglected, spilled over into my interest in very different music: Abdullah Ibrahim's, Kevin Volans' music of the 1980s and 90s (in the hostile environment of South African compositional politics), Reddy as a composer (rather than a whacky virtuoso), Mohapeloa and Moerane as giants in a field most people had never taken seriously before. It's not so much a shift from Schumann to something different, then, as a continuation of the same concerns in different contexts.

Another connection between what I do now, and Schumann, is that he was one of the first people to call publicly, in the pages of the *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik*, for a critical edition of Bach's music. This project was begun in 1851 and was the first of its kind, leading to hundreds of other editions over the next 170 years. This was obviously very important to me, as I've said elsewhere (Lucia 2016/17b, 2016/17c, and 2021b). A closer and more kinaesthetic connection originates in playing rather than editing music. Long before I read Roland Barthes' essay *Loving Schumann* (1979) I sometimes felt that when I played Schumann, he was playing, not me. Writing about the intimacy of Schumann's music, Barthes observes how, in his experience, 'Schumann's music goes much farther than the ear; it goes into the body, into the muscles by the beats of its rhythm and somehow into the viscera by the voluptuous pleasure of its *melos*: as if on each occasion the piece was written only for one person, the one who plays it' (Barthes 1991, 295). This sense of proximity to someone beyond the music is what I've felt now and then with all the composers I've written about or edited. I never met Mohapeloa or Moerane, but I knew Volans and Reddy well, and I met Ibrahim twice.

The kind of kinaesthesia I'm referring to here does not come from personal or historical knowledge, however. It comes from immersion in music while you're playing or transcribing and typesetting it, note for note, word for word. I've just written a piece for *SAMUS* where I talk about my total immersion into scores as a student and how this plays out in making the Moerane Edition (Lucia 2021b). Talking of words: quite aside from Schumann's song output with texts, his instrumental music often has literary ciphers - musical letters denoting names or places - to the extent that musical meaning at times becomes analogous to verbal meaning (Lucia 1996a). Words are so important to me, although as T.S. Eliot points out, they are so slippery. I love writing but I find it extremely difficult. The texts of Moerane's and Mohapeloa's songs haunted me as much as the music did, although they use words so differently. Both composers occasionally felt so close to me, on days and evenings when I worked for hours on end. It was as if I could turn around and see them. So I was delighted when I discovered several Schumann scores in Moerane's surviving library.

6. As I followed your teaching career and writing from the mid-1980s onwards, you seemed at variance with the admission practices and curricular offerings as was the case in most universities in South Africa. Your subsequent work was on issues around Ethnomusicology, equal representation of cultures in the curriculum in a university setting etc. Give details of your pedagogical philosoph(ies), teaching priorities and commitments from 1983 at Durban Westville, Natal University (1986?) and back to Durban Westville, then as head.

I like the understatement of 'at variance'. Yes, well. At the beginning of the Durban years (1983-97) I was much more politically aware than I had been 10 years earlier. I joined the Black Sash, went on protest marches and was arrested for holding a placard that read, 'Unban the UDF'. In the Special Branch detention centre, I came face to face with the verbal violence of interrogation and was threatened with deportation. I read about South African education in *Race Relations Surveys* and other books I found in the Ecumenical Centre and in libraries. The dire inequalities of school music education prompted Betsy Oehrle to convene a conference in 1985 out of which grew the Southern African Music Educators' Society (SAMES), and I edited the first two volumes of SAMES conference proceedings. (It was set up partly in opposition to the exclusivity of the SASMT, for which one needed a musical qualification to join that most people didn't have.) I attended Ethnomusicology Symposia, studied *tabla* with Deepak Ram and was exposed in a number of ways and by many generous people to various South African musics.

In 1987 I visited the UK and USA and interviewed a number of academics in music education and ethnomusicology about multiculturalism: John Blacking, Abraham Schwadron, Bruno Nettl, Bonnie Wade, Nazir Jairazbhoy, Bennet Reimer and others. It reinforced my sense that although some areas of the US and UK had a high number of ethnic minorities whose backgrounds were catered for in the curriculum, these caterings were in no way comparable to the experiences of the 85% black majority of South Africa. Furthermore, there were still strict admission criteria in place right across the board for fully-fledged music students or 'music majors' in the UK and US, equivalent to Grade VII or VIII theory and practical.

Through all of this, I became acutely aware of two different senses in which the word 'multicultural' was used in the music education sphere in the 1980s and this shaped my pedagogical philosophy. One referred to people from different cultural i.e. racial backgrounds sitting together in the same class; these were therefore multicultural classes. The other referred to adding non-western music or 'world music', as it was beginning to be called, into

a curriculum mainly comprising western classical music for students who might be entirely white; these were called multicultural curricula. The difference, to me, was that although the latter recognized 'difference' and made people more culturally aware, and I strongly supported the idea of a musically diverse curriculum, it brought about only cosmetic change in black people's lives and did not develop *their* potential for greater opportunities and upward mobility. The former implied a much more radical change: in universities, it implied changes to admission criteria so that people from different races who had not received the same level of music education before coming to university, could sit together in the same class. What those students were taught - whether it was only western classical music or a multicultural curriculum - was not the main issue (although I believed it *should* be a multicultural curriculum). The main issue, for me, was levelling the playing field at the point of entry to university.

It is difficult to describe how I applied this as a 'philosophy' at UDW in 1989-1997 in a paragraph or two and to do so, I have to go back to UDW in 1983-84. The music department in those days was mixed up in the concrete jumble of the campus, which was bleak, architecturally. When I went back in 1989 a beautiful new, custom-built music department had just been completed, on the edge of campus, overlooking the Umgeni River. In 1983 it was awful: our offices had to double as lecture rooms and were always left open. Several books that I'd brought from home in desperation at the poor resources were stolen. The 'Resource Room' was a classroom with a few old books and scores (mostly of recorder music) and LP records. This was my first encounter with the reality of apartheid-era funding. One was expected to teach with almost nothing, students who had themselves been through an 'almost nothing' kind of schooling. That some of them were musically talented and intelligent seemed something of a miracle. It was also a miracle having the Royal College-educated, English-sounding, brilliant pianist-composer Surendran Reddy as a colleague. This alliance was what kept me going in the fight - as I had begun to think of it by now - against low expectations and racist attitudes.

My teaching commitment at UDW in 1983-84 was 'music history' and 'form', which I tried to make more like 'historical musicology' and 'analytical musicology'. I tried to use real musical examples and get students to think, as did Reddy, who taught harmony and counterpoint. To be fair, the HOD (Hubert van der Spuy) did recognise our worth, including our worth as pianists. We often worked together, and off campus, people would meet Reddy and I together and ask me, 'Is he your piano student?' - because we could not possibly be a mixed couple, besides which I was much older than him - to which I replied, 'No, I'm his student'. Because I reached heights of piano playing at this time, through knowing Reddy, that I never reached before, or since.

I was very happy at UND for the first two years (1985-86) because the campus was run by politically liberal whites rather than Broederbonders (at UDW), because I had intellectual colleagues, and because the music library was one of the best in the country. New ideas for teaching music theory including African music and jazz were welcomed, and even - when we pushed him - new ideas for the lunch-hour concerts that HOD Gerrit Bon planned. When I first arrived in 1985 it was mostly he and his friends playing. Here we were amid Zulu, Indian and popular music of all kinds and with changing curricula all round, and all we heard on UND campus was a limited diet of Western classical music. I put a proposal at a staff meeting for a multicultural L-H concert series that was strongly supported by the staff, and Bon caved in. Later that year he applied for the Chair at UCT and came back saying that he'd

told them all about our wonderful multicultural concert programme at UND. ‘You were all with me at the interview’, he said.

There were positives and negatives about UND Music Dept. I didn’t like its ‘use’ of African students to make it look transformative. Great jazz players came in who had no background in music theory or history, a jazz diploma was instituted, but still, there was a certain academic level to be reached even here, and by students who in some cases had not finished schooling and had had no formal training in music. I got a bit tired of being made to feel I was holding such students back by not giving them good music theory marks, or even not being willing to ‘push them through’. There was a scrap with the Brubecks over marks I gave Zim Nqawana. Wasn’t he going to study with Max Roach in the US? Wouldn’t I look silly when Zim was famous one day, for holding him back? It was an attractive proposition, then, to return to UDW as HOD and to make the kinds of transformations, establish the kinds of solidly grounded programmes, that I felt were more realistic and more transparent.

Teaching at UND, nevertheless, was good and I was able to draw examples from wherever I could and make them interesting as ways of composing, which was a little closer to the idea of style studies I’d learnt at Oxford. I began to think of what I was teaching as ‘compositional technique’ rather than ‘music theory’, which I have long found a highly problematic term, as I’ve explained elsewhere (Lucia 2007c). I also taught modules in history of music. UND had a course where students had to study set works in detail relating to a particular period they were studying in general and I remembering teaching *Don Giovanni*, *Das Lied von der Erde* and a course in Wagner. While we were listening to Mahler, the class could look out of the window and see fires burning in Chesterville, just as when I was teaching late Beethoven piano sonatas at Rhodes in the late 1970s we suddenly all rushed off to ILAM to hear the Chopi Xylophone Orchestra. It’s hard to ignore the irony of listening to western classical music when the ship is clearly sinking, but that’s what I felt, strongly, as did most of my students. The only thing to do was relate Mahler to what was happening all around us, in KwaZulu Natal, which was not, I found, too difficult to do. Making classical music relevant in South Africa meant putting it into a much broader sociological, economic and cultural perspective. Cutting it down to size, if you like, not letting it dominate the discourse. But not throwing it out with the bathwater, either.

Therefore - and I feel as if I’m oversimplifying and essentialising - when I went back to UDW in January 1989, I started trying to revamp the entire BMus degree course, from top to bottom, with the help of my colleagues. This affected its content, how it was taught, and who could access it. Those colleagues - some of whom were brought in to replace others during the first couple of years - were completely committed to this process. They included Melvin Peters, Deepak Ram, Nollene Davies, Melveen Jackson, Sallyann Goodall, Ros and James Conrad, Colleen Philp, Denise Macpherson, Glenn Meyer, Musa Xulu, and librarian Heather Gale. To them, the production of a new kind of South African music student who was empowered, articulate and almost overwhelmingly black and was not only being groomed for music teaching, was a top priority. We were also well aware that in this transitional era in South Africa’s history, all skills you learnt at university had to be in some way transferable, for there was a dire skills gap out there in the workforce, and there were many new government departments (for example) being set up, that desperately needed black graduates in *any* field.

UDW 1989-97 was for me the best of times from a collegiality and student development point of view, perhaps because it was the best time for South Africa: a time of hope, a time of

the rainbow nation, when anything seemed possible and where radical change was actively encouraged and supported. What we did, structurally, was create a two-year diploma stream for 'foundation' students who have never done 'music theory' and didn't even have matric in some cases, but had (in the main) glorious voices and good ears. The second year of this was the first year of BMus so there could be a smooth upward transition, even if this meant that some students had to spend five years getting a BMus., with the funding needs this implied. (There were new funding needs right across the board; a lot of my time was devoted to fund-raising, but UDW administration was generous.) We also made an alternative three-year BA (Mus) route for those who didn't want to do what a 4th-year BMus required, for our policy was that of open access, but not open graduation. Flexible entry and exit was what we had in mind, and I remember making and rejecting numerous graphs and diagrams, to conceptualise this, never mind having endless discussions about how to audition for potential in this new kind of student, and what content to put into the new courses.

The old music courses were reimagined as follows: World Music I, II, III (history of music), which was taught as four modules a year, each focussing on a different world culture with an emphasis on South African music; Compositional Techniques I, II, III (theory of music), which included some of the conventional harmony and counterpoint teaching but which we also tried to link, at the same time, to what students were learning in world music and where exercises were not entirely based on western classical music; Performance I, II, III (1st and 2nd instrument; and the 2nd instrument could be an ensemble rather than a solo instrument); and Aural and General Musicianship I, II and III. The latter course was not just about ear-training, it was also about how to play in an ensemble, and how to use music in the community. Under the aegis of 'AGM', especially at 3rd-year level, students started little music groups all over the townships. The person who helped enormously in this endeavour was Susan MacLennan, our Cultural Projects Officer. For we not only put on a huge range of concerts, we had projects of all kinds, that Sue managed.

Another superb colleague was someone appointed to the teaching and learning centre (I think it was called) at UDW, Chrissie Boughie, who had a radical idea about what was in those days called 'Academic Development' (AD). In a nutshell, there were no disadvantaged students, as far as she was concerned, only disadvantaged teachers; and AD was not just something you did for 1st-year students; it permeated the whole degree course until students could study completely independently. We had to retrain ourselves as teachers, and as she gave us workshops on how to do this, some of the things I'd learnt along the way about teaching came back with a flood: teach from the known to the unknown, from simple to complex, from concrete to abstract; teach from where the students are at not from where you are at, don't assume any prior knowledge, explain what to you is self-evident; get to their level and get quickly up from there, don't assume, in other words, that the way you were taught music is how you should now be teaching it. I thought the way I'd been taught was pretty good, but I felt challenged and my colleagues, who had mostly been taught music in South Africa, felt even more so. We applied this new 'AD' approach everywhere, not only in our teaching and course design but also in our personal dealings with students and their group activities. We started a 'food fund' for those who had long trips to the Westville campus from Kwamashu, Umlazi, Chesterville, Chatsworth, Mount Edgecombe, Inanda, Phoenix, or even Pietermaritzburg and who would fall asleep in lectures for lack of sustenance. We found bursaries. We set up small performance groups to cater for every kind of student. The practical staff taught how to look after your instrument and how to practice by yourself as well as everything else to do with performance. We had a brass band, steel band, opera group, jazz band, Indian music group, and a huge UDW choir that was multi-racial in its

student body and multicultural in its repertoire. (This was the first time I heard Mohapeloa's *U Ea Kae?*)

At his Inaugural Address as new Vice-Chancellor at UDW in 1990, Professor Jairam Reddy held the Music Department up as an example of what other departments could achieve. And we not only achieved it - our graduates are now all over the world - we wrote about it, too. Sallyann Goodall gathered together all the evidence about our work and its philosophical situatedness and we wrote a multi-authored set of short articles for *SAMUS*. It was rejected by the then, editor, sadly, because it was not about 'musicology'. However, when Goodall took over as HOD after I left in July 1997 to go to Rhodes, she read a paper at the Musicological Society's Annual Congress that year called 'Herding the Sacred Cows in New Pastures: Teaching Musicology in South Africa Today', that reinforced everything we had stood for and especially what she developed at UDW as a teacher mainly in the World Music I, II and III courses. The sacred cows were, of course, the tenets of Western Classical Music so dear to most people, the new pastures the world of black South African youth.

Our approach to WCM was not to throw it out but prize it out of its comfort zone where it lay with thousands of books, scores, CDs and journals, and make space for other musics, even though there were far fewer and in some cases almost no resources available for them. We dredged through Ethnomusicology proceedings, *SAMUS* articles, South African doctoral and masters' theses, the literature on world music coming out of the US, which was already fairly substantial, as was the literature on popular music and jazz; and we drew upon our own research. (One outcome of this dredging was *The World of South African Music*; an outcome from teaching compositional techniques was *Music Notation: A South African Guide*.) I remember how Nollene Davies brought her research informant, Shiyani Ncobo, into the classroom to teach *maskanda* guitar as a second instrument. Deepak Ram and I gave a paper on teaching *tabla* - which was also as a performance instrument at UDW, as was *bansuri* flute - in a university context (Lucia 1995a).

The students we taught were the first generation of post-apartheid students, most of them (but not all) black, most of them highly musically talented but without prior opportunity to read music or books on music, and without much experiences as performers outside of school or church choirs. They had huge potential, but it was not easy, for us or for them, to carve their way through a structured degree course like ours, and there were problems all along the way. From a music educational perspective, however, those UDW years were incredible, and it was a tragedy when the new Minister of Education Kader Asmal, decreed in 1998 that there should only be one music department in KwaZulu Natal instead of three, and when, almost by default, this became the music department at UKZN. It was particularly ironic in light of the fact that in 1997, the three departments themselves had lobbied the *universities* to amalgamate, initiating a series of negotiations under the auspices of a body called ESATI, the Eastern Seaboard Association of Tertiary Institutions. These negotiations came to nothing, at the time - because of senior admin staff clinging to institutional (not departmental) power - but when the UDW and Technikon Natal music departments were closed, no-one lifted a finger. And now, of course, there is only one university in KwaZulu Natal, just as we had originally suggested.

Again, I'm over-simplifying and of course, I am still angry at the waste, for the unique programme we had, in a beautiful music building, that afterwards housed mathematics - another shocking waste - and at the way that it all ended, brutally, for UDW students.

7. This time was during the height of apartheid. What hurdles did you have to go over internally in your department and externally at faculty and through encounters with colleagues at SAMES, the Ethnomusicology and Musicology groups all of which seemed to have own ideas of what transformation meant. Some were more conservative while others kept sailing against the current seeking inclusivity.

I think that I might have addressed some of this already and I also do so later. Of course, after all this time, I cannot clearly remember details about getting new courses approved officially, although they all went through Faculty and Senate without too much drama, as far as I recall. I don't think any of the places that I've worked at has archives where Minutes or even old syllabuses or course material and course outlines, might exist. One can tell a fair bit from looking at old university Calendars, however. I threw away all my old diaries where I kept records of discussions with colleagues, so all I have are snapshots in my mind, of countless meetings, most of which were collegial, most of the time. The transformation of musicology and ethnomusicology more broadly in South Africa was handled by other people at the level of societies and conferences and has been well documented in *SAMUS*.

8. You then went to Rhodes and Wits, just as apartheid was ending and democracy in its infancy. Your experiences here considering that the social and political landscape had changed.

Apartheid ended very slowly, but a key moment was February 1990 when all the anti-apartheid organisations were unbanned and exiles began returning to South Africa, so I experienced the 'infancy of democracy' at UDW, before I went to Rhodes. I remember making a stirring speech to the student body just before the 1990 academic year began, using Wordsworth's quote about the French Revolution: 'Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive, But to be young was very heaven'! Then I found out that Bongani Mthethwa had been murdered in a canefield outside Durban. Excessive hopes and fears: those years between 1990 and 1994 were the most bloody in South African history. Afterwards, I read somewhere that more people died through political violence during this period than between 1948 and 1989.

The transformational practices I've described above were set against a backdrop of extreme violence in the townships surrounding UDW: one of our students, Kevin Ngongoma, was shot by a former school friend at point-blank range, with an AK47, just because he was lucky enough to attend university. Students frequently slept over in the practice rooms, to which we turned a blind eye, because transport home was too far, too expensive and sometimes too dangerous. One student told us when he was nearing the end of 3rd-year BA that he had managed his studies all the way through by missing one day a week of lectures, during which he had a part-time job. It was never the same day, he said, which is why we never noticed.

There were often protests and police in riot gear on campus and frequent arrests. We used to run after students being dragged away by police and hurriedly get their student numbers, so that we at least knew who had been arrested. Once I got word of a group of students that were rampaging around campus and we were told by the university admin, 'Lock your doors'. The outer door of the Music Department was plate glass and I wasn't sure if it would withstand knobkerries. I asked students and staff who wanted to, to leave; I left the front door open, and stayed by it, so that when the gang arrived I said 'Hi, come in'. They toyi-toyed their way around the building, banging on doors, and eventually they ran out again. One female student, huddled in a practice room, was upset because they tried to take her flute, and they pushed her around. That was very unfortunate, but otherwise, nothing serious occurred. On another occasion, Alan Boesak came to talk on campus and I was asked by someone in

another department if we could host him. The Recital Studio, which normally seats about 150 people, was crammed to the hilt with about 500 people. I can't remember if anything went wrong, but I don't think so. The UDW Combined Staff Association (COMSA) was a radical organisation in those days. I was a member and at one time Vice-president. Committee members included Ashwin Desai and Adam Habib. I joined a COMSA group that went up to Joburg to hear UDF leaders speak. (I fell in love for a couple of days with one of the firebrand speakers: Mohammed Valli Moosa.) All in all, it was a radical and highly democratised, campus.

Returning to Rhodes in June 1997 felt quite tame, by comparison. It was still the Mandela era and more important, people in music departments were still wary of Kader Asmal's closures. I was encouraged not only to make the changes we then gradually started to make to the BMus degree courses, but also to make overtures to other universities in the region, so that we could all argue, if need be, that we had a different focus. Ours was pretty clear to me: African music, because of ILAM, and therefore integrating Andrew Tracey and other teachers into the core teaching in the Department was a priority, as was establishing an ethnomusicology stream in the BMus. Jazz and composition were also things Rhodes could focus on, I felt, because there were very good performers in Makanda, and the smallness of the department, together with the existence of an annual National Arts Festival, gave us the chance to develop these areas. My thinking was that you don't need huge resources to do this, because writing large-scale pieces was not what most contemporary composers were doing. I was supported by most colleagues, and especially by Christopher Cockburn, through all these changes, but they led to some very personal difficulties for me, after I met Michael. The Rhodes student body did not change much at undergraduate level while I was there, and there were few black music students. One, I remember, had been unsuccessful at his audition in the Music Department before I arrived, but came back while I was there: Sibusiso Njeza. His main problem was that he didn't have much of a theory of music background, but we helped him with this and a few years later, after I'd left Rhodes, Sbu graduated with a distinction in his major, voice. The postgraduate body at Rhodes was quite multi-racial: there were students from all over Africa, and one of them was Musa Nkuna, my former student from UDW, who did an MMus in composition with Michael.

At Wits, as with everywhere else I worked, I loved the students and the teaching most. We made some good changes to the BMus to include ethnomusicology and popular music, attracted more post-graduates, made student access more open (Marion Freedman was a particular support in this, but really, everyone agreed with it), created a foundation course for students with not enough notation background, and made some good appointments: Lara Allen in ethnomusicology, Nishlyn Ramanna in jazz, and Grant Olwage as post-doctoral fellow, after which he became a lecturer. Carlo Mombelli, Clare Loveday and Zoliswa Twani were my doctoral students, Thomas Pooley and Liza Key (and yourself!) were among my masters students. We set up an Introduction to Research course for Honours, Masters and Doctoral students and I think this is still going. The diversity of what everyone was researching was amazing, typical of Johannesburg, whose social and political landscape was the most rapidly changing of anywhere in South Africa; and Wits was very much a research-oriented environment.

One thing I must add about the years of transformation: it was never an easy task to let western classical music give way, which it had to, to music more relevant to the country and to our students and to reflect new research. Some people felt pushed aside, personally, along with the pushing aside of this music; and some of them were unable or unwilling to do

anything else. Perhaps this is less of an issue now, than it was in the 1980s, 90s and 2000s? Then, it was not only the music, it was the centrality and lingering influence of its colonial institutions (concerts, grade exams, orchestras, private music teaching, etc.) that made re-thinking the position of WCM in a new curriculum so difficult for some people. It was even difficult for students sometimes and I remember a delegation of students coming to see me at UDW in 1990 or 1991 who resented learning about ‘things they knew’, like Zulu music, or popular South African music. They wanted more of ‘what we were never allowed access to before: western classical music’.

At Rhodes, alongside students who did *mbira* and *uhadi* bow performance, who played jazz piano and performed works by John Cage during the late 1990s, Rhodes continued to host Mrs Radley and Associated Board exam candidates in the department. Year after year. That was the counter-culture, never very far away, waiting, perhaps, for a time when it might become the main culture again.

9. Having recently retired, what words of wisdom would you impart to scholars and heads still deeply involved in the system. What do you see as a major challenge to full transformation in the SA tertiary music teaching and leadership landscape.

The real transformation has to come from university managements. After my experience with ESATI in the 1990s and Wits’ riding roughshod over some academics in the 2000s including its new VC, Norma Reid Birley, who sued the university when she was sacked in 2002, forcing Wits to pay an out-of-court settlement of R1.1 million ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norma\\_Reid\\_Birley](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norma_Reid_Birley), accessed 20.1.22), I am left with rather little faith in university admin. Perhaps, on a completely different note, there was more money available for transformation in the 1980s and 90s than there apparently is now? That would make it much more difficult, now. I think one of the main challenges to full transformation in tertiary music studies, as I’ve explained elsewhere (Lucia 2020b), is the appalling state of music education in schools. When we started SAMES in 1985, we never thought that 37 years later we would still be making the same complaints about music in black schools. In many ways, it’s far worse now. I think our hope lies in music education online.

10. Your being English and female in a leadership that was largely Afrikaans and male (I assume), what challenges or opportunities did that afford you?

I only worked at English-speaking universities, therefore not being Afrikaans-speaking was never an issue at work. It only came up with the first CHUM meeting I attended, in 1989. (CHUM was the Committee of Heads of University Music Departments.) I found myself with a group of people who spoke only Afrikaans, although almost half of us came from the US, Britain, Ghana, or Kenya. When Gerrit Bon objected, saying, ‘I’m an Afrikaner born and bred but in due consideration for some of our colleagues here, who can’t join in the conversation, we should also use English’. CHUM chairman Bernard van der Linde said, ‘If you want to come to our meetings you must learn to speak our language’. After the political unbannings in February 1990, the language issue was never raised again: that year’s and subsequent CHUM meetings I attended were conducted only in English. CHUM was a little playground where people boasted new facilities, new staff, new courses, rising student numbers: a pointless verbal competition, because we were unable to cut any political teeth with government.

Given what happened to Reid Birley at Wits, I suppose I should have been more worried about being a woman, and from the UK, but I wasn't appointed at such an elevated level and I'd been in South Africa for 15 years before my appointment as professor at UDW. I never felt disadvantaged as a woman, really, but when I attended my first Senate meetings and I realised that very few people noticed me, I do recall deciding to wear a red jacket and to sit right opposite the Chairman, to be certain that I would be seen if I raised my hand. I did the same at Wits and Rhodes. Power dressing is something women often have to do.

11. You could also think of some parting shots you would like to share not covered by these questions.

For the first 20 years of my career in South Africa I considered myself a concert pianist first and a researcher second. This was how most people saw me until the mid-1990s when I found I couldn't keep up the level of playing I once had without practicing extra hours a week, which as an HOD I did not have. I was getting much more interested in research anyway, and so I stopped performing, in the early 2000s. (I still miss it terribly.) I was a late starter, then, as far as research and publication are concerned, and with hindsight, I wish I had begun publishing much earlier instead of wasting all those years playing the piano, which counted for nothing in academia. No-one told me how vital this would be for my future career, and I loved performing. I also found change management and the world of university music education fascinating: this got me head-hunted three times but this, too, counted for nothing as far as my final job was concerned.

Research aside, even if you're a top researcher, you still have to watch your back, because the weighting of values attached to people in universities - on which appointments and promotions depend - is still completely opaque and far too dependent on inter and intra-departmental politics and criteria that change with every new person in charge. Universities are laws unto themselves, in short, for all that they are state institutions and there are really wonderful individuals within them. They are accountable, ultimately, to the tax-payer, but people often do not behave as if they had any duty except clinging to individual power. The way postgraduate degrees are awarded is a case in point: supervision, programmes, expectations, are all hugely opaque: it is often only when a PhD is examined, for example, that any criteria come to light. The student and supervisor are all too often shooting in the dark until then. Look at how wide the standards of Hons, Masters and Doctoral degrees are, as a result: this is appalling evidence - because of the financial and human cost involved - that there is no common standard of expectation or teaching.

Last tips: Keep a paper trail, especially where your dealings with other people are concerned. We are trained as musicians and scholars, not people managers, but many of us end up having difficult colleagues or managing people without any training and largely without institutional support. I remember great support from three people in particular, at difficult times: John-Butler-Adam at UDW and Mike Smout and Ian Macdonald at Rhodes. When you are appointed, you often have no idea what vacuum you are expected to fill, what happened in a department before you joined it, or how to protect yourself. Don't send long e-mails of complaint to your boss: this marks you out as a complainer. Send short, one-issue e-mails that show you are already intelligently dealing with something difficult.

When I was asked to be acting HOD at UND while the permanent HOD went on leave and I asked him what I had to do, he said, 'Deal with things as they come up, and what you can't deal with [this was before e-mails], throw in the waste-paper basket'. When I was appointed

HOD at UDW in 1989, I asked the Dean of Arts if there was a handbook for new HODs. He laughed and said, 'You just pick things up as you go along'. The downside of that is that some of what you pick up, sticks.

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