## SOUTHERN exposure

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# A STORY OF A SOJOURN IN SOUTHERN AFRICA, A PLACE FULL OF CONTRADICTIONS AND NAGGING PROBLEMS, BUT STILL ONE OF GREAT HOPE AND POSSIBILITY.



# DURBAN, South Africa-

There's a certain finality in writing this farewell piece that I've been avoiding, amplifying even my usual procrastination about facing the blank page. After six months in South Africa and a scant three weeks in Zimbabwe, I'm about to make my re-entry to the U.S. So now is the right time to reflect on what's transpired musically.

The story starts with my brief encounter in a Paris bistro over 15 years ago with exiled South African photographer George Hallett, who I once again ran into by chance in Cape Town just before leaving here at the end of 1998. George had done an intimate series of portraits of many of the key artists, literary and cultural figures in South Africa before he went into exile, including a host of musicians, many of whom joined him in exile, such as jazz artists Johnny Dyani, Abdullah Ibrahim, Louis Moholo and Chris McGregor (some of these photos are only now being published for the first time in South Africa in the new Jazz Heritage magazine).

It was George who first pointed out to me the political role of jazz in the liberation struggle, and the status of South African jazz musicians as cultural heroes who re-Africanized that African-American music called jazz in a way that overrode ethnic divisions, linking the music to the aspirations for freedom of the South African people as a whole. This was an African music that avoided the pitfalls of tribalism and in so doing subverted the apartheid state's divide-and-conquer political strategy. Ironi-

cally, the type of jazz now widely heard throughout post-apartheid South Africa, while also not be doing the reverse by re-Americanizing South African jazz, without the struggle context or the improvisational freedom that implied the earlier music's connection to the larger freedom struggle. Instead, the emphasis is on "smooth jazz," an American formula that shears off the rough edges of the music, producing utterly predictable tunes that some cynics sarcastically refer to as "snooze jazz."

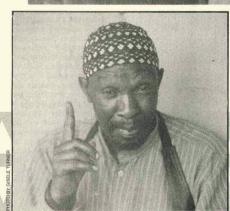
Anyway, back to George... I had made a bon voyage pact with him back in Paris that we would both get to visit a liberated South Africa someday (and "someday" seemed as close as we could get to even imagining a timetable for the overthrow of apartheid) to toast each other again in freedom. Though he'd visited me once in the States, and I had arranged a photo exhibit for him there, I'd lost track of his whereabouts after he moved to Amsterdam. Then in my visit to Cape Town, I found myself at the District Six Museum. This grassroots museum is dedicated to preserving the memory of the once-thriving community of District Six whose culturally diverse residents, among them many musicians, were forcibly relocated (along with one out of three South Africans who have been similarly uprooted) by apartheid politricks. In the case of District Six, this displacement was done not only as a land grab, but, as was also the case with Sophiatown in Johannesburg, because of what it represented as an enclave that operated outside the official racial politics of It was there that I encountered an historical photo exhibit put together by George focusing on the cultural life of District Six. Could it be that he was back in Cape Town? I inquired about his whereabouts and was gladly given his phone number. It seems he'd returned from exile a few years ago, and was now engaged once again in a variety of projects, including lately being the official photographer for the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. I phoned him that day, and the following night we to asted the New South Africa, a place full of contradictions and nagging problems, but still one of great hope and possibility.

George had initially been invited back to photograph key figures in the transition to majority rule, doing portraits of all the top ANC leaders, including Nelson Mandela, who aside from George, was the other person responsible for me being in South Africa. Over a year ago on a whim I had written a letter to Mandela explaining that I'd like to come to see the New South Africa. I told him that I was one of many Americans who had been engaged in the international struggle against apartheid, enclosing a photo of myself at an anti-apartheid demonstration that I organized in the '80s which involved a group of us surreptitiously slipping into an auditorium where the South African ambassador to the U.N. was about to speak as an apologist for apartheid. Each of us concealed a letter under our clothing which when we stood up and spread ourselves out unfurled to spell STOP THE KILLING. Others had signs proclaiming the Shell boycott then in effect. Since I teach courses in "World Music"

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Top: Portrait of Johnny Dyani by George Hallett; center: anti-apartheid protest at the U.N. (author Ron Sakolsky at left); bottom: guitarist Madela Kunene was not asked to play for the Mandela birthday concert.

and "Music and Resistance," I asked Mandela if he could recommend any South African universities which might be interested in having me teach there during my upcoming sabbatical at no cost to them.

Feeling somewhat naive to even harbor the remote possibility that he might reply, I posted the letter and promptly forgot about it. Though he didn't personally reply, sure enough after about a month, I received a letter with an official wax seal from the Office of the President of South Africa signed by the Director General of the Ministry of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology to whom it had been referred by the President. He recommended that I apply to the University of Natal in Durban. So that's how I ended up doing a six-week seminar on "Music and Social Change in the African Diaspora" (focusing on Trinidad, Jamaica, Cuba and Haiti), along with a series of lectures at Rhodes University in Grahamstown on "World Music and the Cultural Imperialism Debate." These gigs were my ticket to South Africa courtesy of the Office of President Nelson Mandela.

When I got here I was pleased to find out that the "A Gift to the Nation" concert

was about to be held to honor Madiba (as he's affectionately called here) on his 80th birthday in three different cities, one of which was Durban. Though I had puzzled over why Mandela and the ANC had not come to the aid of framed people's poet Mzwakhe Mbuli (who I would eventually interview in Pretoria Prison and whose trial has now been postponed until Feb. 5-18—see story in The Beat, Vol. 17#6, 1998), I was enough caught up in the "Madiba Magic" that I hoped for the best.

The concert, however, was a disconcerting harbinger of things to come. Perhaps the most disappointing thing about it was its emphasis on African-American superstars at the expense of both African artists of the caliber of Salif Keita and Ismael Lo and local South African musicians like Ringo Madlingozi (who later that year was to win a Kora Award), Yvonne Chaka Chaka, Malathini and the Mahotella Queens, Lucky Dube, Boom Shaka, Jonas Gwagwa and Dennis Mpale (now deceased). Though advertised and waiting in the wings, they ended up being guillotined at the last minute in favor of U.S. acts like Kenny Lattimore, Chaka Kahn and Stevie Wonder.

As the always-astute music writer Steve Gordon noted in a postconcert autopsy he did for the Mail and Guardian, the sole South
African content at Joburg Stadium was supplied by kwaito groups TKZ and
Skeem who were added as filler largely because they could perform to DAT
backing tapes, while the instrumental bands were spending 30-minute
changeover times setting up their equipment. In Durban, at Kingsmead Cricket
Stadium at least maskandi musician Phuzekhemisi did get to perform with his
band briefly as the opening act to a thin crowd, though local Zulu guitar master
Madela Kunene was never even asked to participate though he says that he
would have loved to have done so. As to Salif Keita and Ismael Lo, who
traveled to South Africa at their own expense, they were not given an
opportunity to play and only found out about a Joburg party supposedly thrown
as a thank you for all participating artists at Mandela's Houghton home by
reading about II in the morning papers the day after it happened amid splashy
photos of Mandela embracing Stevie Wonder. The West Africans were not

Fortunately, however, the Mandela Bash fiasco was counterbalanced in my mind at a later date in Soweto by the "Tribute to the South African Music Heroes" concert at the end of August. It was the first jazz festival at Orlando Stadium (once the scene of many anti-apartheid rallies) since 1964, and the over 4,000 Sowetans who participated were having a fine time of it; dancing on the grass, singing gayly, greeting friends and comrades and exuding one of the most positive vibe I've ever encountered at a festival. As for the cultural

only not invited to the reception, but didn't even so much as receive thank you

heroes present whose music was being celebrated—Hugh Masekela, Abdullah Ibrahim, Miriam Makeba, Jonas Gwagwa, Caiphus Semenya and Letta Mbulu, along with relative newcomers Jimmy Dludlu, Busi Mhlongo and Sibongile Khumalo—they did not simply bask in this adulation but put everything they had into the music realizing the historical importance of the event. In return

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notes for their trouble.

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they had the audience in the palms of their hands in what can only be described as a mutual love fest. (Some of these same musicians appeared in Durban shortly thereafter to entertain the visiting Third World dignitaries at the Non-Alligned Movement Conference, but the public was not admitted).

When the Soweto crowd rose en masse to form a train in response to Masekela's trumpet/vocal on "Stimela" or danced joyously to pianist Ibrahim's resistance anthem "Mannenberg" (a fitting tribute to saxophonist Basil Coetzee who had died earlier in the year whose name

will forever be associated with the composition) or swayed to trombonist Gwagwa's stately "Flower of the Nation;" it was a combined remembrance of the years of struggle, the artists who fled into exile, some of whom returned and others who died, and a continuing promise that better must come.

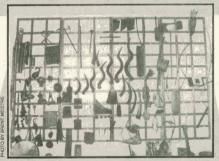
Even the often-aloof Ibrahim, who has been known of late to condescendingly lecture his South African audiences on jazz history, seemed deeply touched by the exchange between the audience and the artists on stage. I was having so much fun myself dancing with everyone in the crowd that I didn't even use my press pass to go backstage.

The event was not without its contradictions however. After all it was sponsored by DeBeers and each artist was given a DeBeers diamond as an award. In the past DeBeers' music awards would have gone to artists of European descent, and so this recognition of black South African artistry was progressive to an extent, but the DeBeers record during the apartheid years was abysmal and no doubt they saw this event as an opportunity for an easy public relations coup. The oppression of the coal miners sung about by Masekela in "Stimela," could have just as easily been applied to the diamond miners working for DeBeers. As Caiphus put it upon receivwhat is rightfully ours." In Orlando Sta-

dium, surrounded by corporate logos where there were once ANC banners affutter, a well-scrubbed young scion of the DeBeers family-presented the awards. He countered Caiphus' remark by saying that DeBeers' vision was for every South African to be able to afford to buy a diamond someday, but his corporate spin just didn't ring true with the audience.

a side from jazz, the most ubiquitous music in South Africa right now is kwaito (unless you're in Durban, where, because of its 40 percent Indian population, you can also readily find binargar. quawvali and Bollywood filmi). Kwaito is the youth music of the moment which distills African-American rap and house, Jamaican ragga and South African rhythms into a slow, pulsating bas-heavy groove. Lyrics range from the sexually explicit party music of "Dangalaza" (Spread Your Legs) by self-styled kwaito king, Arthur (who I caught at a gig he did with the female artists Abashante in Durban) to tough-assed outcries from the dispossessed. These latter outcasts from and renegades of the Rainbow Nation might turn to





Jimmy Dludlu, above, appeared at a jazz festival in Orlando Stadlum. Below: a display of traditional instruments at the International Library of African Music.

the gangsta lifestyle or else speak out against what Eugene Mithethwa (now of Trompies but who once toured the world with reggae artist Lucky Dube's band the Slaves from 1989-94) calls the "Mickey Mouse Freedom" of the New South Africa. Other kwaito artists like Bongo Maffin who have done a remake of Miriam Makeba's version of "Pata Pata," or Boom Shaka who have done an unorthodox version of

the classic liberation song "Nkosi Sikelela," bring a neo-traditionalist element into the idiom on occasion. Currently faced with a lack of distribution in the States, interest in kwaito as world music could change rapidly if kwaito ever goes international. A start might be for EMI to push for Stateside distribution of its new cd compilation, Kwaito Hits, which features all the top stars of the genre.

In a sense, kwaito offers a ready-made diasporic identity for South African youth, linking them to African-American hip-hop in a big way or, in its d'gong incarnation, supplant-

ing the defiant South African reggae of the struggle years with a post-apartheid dancehall music set to lyrics in is'camto, the underground township patois. Kwaito's almost-certain entry into the diasporic youth scene could get the outernational dialogue flowing in some interesting new directions or else it could simply fall into the latest youthmarket niche doldrums. Time will tell, but with the startling success of Youth FM (YFM) in Joburg which plays primarily kwaito in the country's biggest regional radio market being buttressed by a new governmental cultural policy mandating radio to play 20 percent local content (with an ultimate target of 40 percent in the year 2000), and the first edition of the new Y Magazine with its cover photo of TKZ being quickly snapped up off the newsstands; it seems kwaito is primed to be South Africa's newest popular music phenomenon.

hile jazz and popular music were my emphasis while here, I also managed to do a little "applied research" on traditional music as well. The day before leaving for South Africa I received a postcard from Pete Seeger which was to lead me into months of detective work. It seems he was interested in finding the origins of the children's song "Abiyoyo" which he has popularized over the years and which has of late spawned a children's book and videotape. He knew that it was South African, but he

wanted more detailed information so he could return some of the modestly mounting royalties he has received from the song to the African community from which it sprang to be used as they see fit.

y first stop in this quest took me to
Andrew Tracey's International Library of African Music (ILAM) in
Grahamstown at Rhodes University, originally established in 1953 in Msaho,
Roodesport near Joburg by his father, Hugh

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Tracey, the doyen of African traditional music research and documentation. It was here among Tracey's amazing library of African books, musical recordings and traditional instruments that I found the African Folk Songs book published in 1947 which contained the "Abiyoyo" transcription recorded by Seeger under the heading "Lullabyes." But, alas, there was no additional information about its origins. All of the authors of the book were now deceased and the publisher out of business. Dead end.

I then contacted Dave Dargie, whose book Xhosa Music I had found at ILAM though it is now sadly out of print, and I was able to eventually visit him at his thatch-roofed home nestled amid the waterfalls and escarpments of Hogsback's Amatola Mountains, the landscape which former resident Tolkien used as a literary model for his hobbit fantasies. Dargie could offer nothing definitive on its origins, though if it was Xhosa he had lots of ideas on how the money might be used vis-a-vis university bursaries to low-income students of African traditional music or cultural tourism with a focus on music (his particular interest is in Xhosa women's mouth-bow music and overtone singing, something that is only now surfacing outside South Africa, though not in traditional form, thanks to Melt 2000/B&W's recent release Power to the Women by Madosini, an artist of whom Dave spoke very highly.)

Finally though, I was able to connect with Rob Allingham, the American expat and steamengine aficionado who is now the sound archivist for Gallo Records in Joburg. After much investigation of his sources and contacts, he was able to find a reliable elderly songwriter/ musician in Umtata (a city located near the birthplace of Nelson Mandela in the Eastern Cape) who remembered hearing the song as a child. So we had finally ascertained that it was definitely a Xhosa cradle song. However, since it was public domain as we expected, there is no individual composer to whom royalties can be given, unlike the earlier instance when Seeger was able to return some of his royalties from "Wimoweh" to the widow of composer Solomon Linda. So the next move is Pete's....

Speaking of Solomon Linda, the song he recorded with the Evening Birds was not called "Wimoweh" but "Mbube," and the popularity of that tune was so influential that the style of Zulu choral music associated with it came to be called mbube. These days it's known as iscathamiya, and since I have been based in Kwazulu Natal I've been fortunate to be able to attend several all-night iscathamiya sessions in Durban, a city which is a center for the music. This is where its best-known practitioner, Joseph Shabalala of Ladysmith Black Mambazo fame, lives.

While Ladysmith are international stars who only occasionally perform here, it is in the worker hostels, YMCA social halls or churches, and in the spontaneous singing that I heard at

leastonce a day in the streets of Durban, that the Zulu vocal tradition continues to proudly shims in fact, I was told by insiders that Ladysmith's success has inadvertently had a somewhat detrimental effect on the scene, producing wannabes who have their eyes on the international market rather than the community from which the music springs and has led to acrimonious rivalries between iscathamiya groups as to who will get the next shot at the global limelight.

This night at the Beatrice Street YMCA in a seedy part of downtown Durban I unwittingly seated myself alongside Joseph Shabalala himself at the guests' table. He took the first opportunity to introduce himself by saying, "Perhaps you've heard of me?" He told me that at one time he used to sing at this hall and on the iscathamiya circuit in general, but Ladysmith was eventually kicked out of the competitions

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for winning too often. He attributed the success of Ladysmith to his composing. Any choir can sing beautifully he said, but it is the composing which sets a band apart.

Joseph sat regally beside me, watching the performances and chatting with well-wishers in this dilapidated hall at the top of a rickety stairway. The low wooden stage offered cramped accommodation for the 10-to-12-member choirs. It had two gaping ruts on either side which the musicians carefully sidestepped when they did their choreographed moves. The wooden floor by which they approach and exit the stage had three places where there were no floor boards, but the old run-down table at

which the adjudicator sat had a genteel white tablecloth thrown over it, offering a faint touch of class, as did the sharp sport jackets and dapper white gloves worn by the participants who, with their exuberance, transformed the dismal Y into a bustling showplace and community center.

The judge himself remained impassive during the performances in spite of the ritualized pleas of each choir to take special notice of them and the clapping and ululation of their girlfriends who during rehearsals came up on stage to give gifts to their favorites. At the end of the evening when the judge announced his decision, Shabalala showed me a piece of paper where he had previously noted his choice. Of course, he had picked the winner. As to my choice, he said he liked their sound, but they were too raw and percussive to win, too much like the old ngoma style that preceded the more delicate tiptoe approach of iscathamiya. Who was I to argue?

# HARARE, Zimbabwe-

I was only able to get away to Zimbabwe for three weeks, but that was long enough to give me a juicy taste of the Harare music scene.

Amazingly, music in Harare continues to sparkle despite the chaotic situation presently existing in a country clearly in the throes of massive upheaval. Fortunately, I managed to slip into Zimbabwe just before the shit really hit the fan to the tune of arson, sabotage, massive labor strikes (now officially outlawed), antiwar demonstrations (with slogans like "No Go Congo") and government repression by the military at home. Ever since Zimbabwe became involved in a war in the Congo on the side of the Kabila government this year (with a troop deployment presently at 6,000 men), the economy has been seriously on the rocks. The inflated Zim dollar was set at as much as 38 to \$1 U.S. while I was there, and the soaring price of necessities such as fuel (and consequently public transport), cornmeal (from which the dietary staple of Zimbabwe, sadza, is made), and paraffin (the kerosene which is used for lighting, cooking and heat by most Zimbabweans) has led to increasing unrest. In this context, workers have seen a 60 percent erosion in their pay packets in the past two years and inflation is running at 40 percent.

It seems that, to paraphrase Bob Marley, Africans still need to liberate Zimbabwe, but Mugabe, who has been in office now for 18 years has ignored the mounting opposition to his rule, and to top it all off on the eve of November's 67 percent fuel price increase he was pictured in the newspapers entertaining none other than visiting dignitary Michael Jackson and telling a nationwide television audience that he wanted his son Robert Jr. to grow up just Continued on page 79

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like the superstar. There was, of course, no mention of the fact that Jackson is presently being implicated in illegal importation of South African elephants for his own private zoo at his palatial estate in California. Suffice it to say that we are now a long way from the early Mugabe euphoria of 1980 that was evoked in last year's Bob Marley issue of The Beat.

Michael's sister Janet, meanwhile, had her own private audience with Nelson Mandela as part of her much-publicized Velvet Rope Tour of South Africa. While Mandela has recently condemned a controversial poster of his head transposed on a photograph of radical troubadour Bob Marley's body, shown while he is rolling a joint (a poster that the ANC has sought legally to suppress), he seems to have no problem linking his presidential aura to the bloated Jackson family starship. Go figure.

I began my excursion into the Harare music scene ironically by focusing on Congolese music. While Mugabe might be seeking the spoils of conquest in the Democratic Republic of Congo, it is Congolese music that has conquered Zimbabwe, not to the exclusion of the still-vibrant mbira-based chimurenga music, but as its closest competitor. One of the biggest draws these days on the club scene in Harare is the Lubumbashi Stars band, which takes its name from the city in Eastern Congo where much of the fighting is presently centered. The Stars do a regular Sunday night downtown

party gig at Sandro's.

African rumba, long a Zimbabwean mainstay, unlike the Parisian variety more familiar to Western audiences, doesn't jump right into the uptempo improvisations of the sebene but builds up to it gradually with sweet and sultry vocals. While I was to see other African rumba bands in my Cape Town visit (the Africa Hamma Band at Club Green Corner and the Young Bakuba Band at Mama Africa), it was a bit strange to be at the Lubumbashi Stars gig in Harare on the same day that the city of Lubumbashi itself was occupied by Zimbabwean troops. Nevertheless, the Congolese audience, fortified with a contingent of seemingly well-heeled Zimbabweans, was, at least for the moment, lost in the music as the war raged elsewhere.

As anybody who has heard Congolese music knows, though the lyrics might be in French or Lingala, the rhythms are immediately captivating even if you don't speak the language. So it's no surprise that English-speaking Zimbabweans have always enjoyed it. Yet not knowing either the colonial or the African language, something was always lost for the locals. It is this linguistic situation that partly explains the phenomenal success of Simon "Chopper" Chimbetu. While Chimbetu is Harare's current darling, he is a musician whose origins date back to the Marxist Brothers Band of the early 80s (so named because a group of ex-combatants decided that Simon could buy out their instruments to form a band). At the peak of his career, Chimbetu went to prison for four years for car theft, but upon his release he has been more popular than ever, and his latest recording "Lullabye," with Orchestra Dendera Kings, was the flavor of the moment during my visit. His deft ability to complement Congolese rhythms and dance steps with Shona lyrics has gained him a huge following which was in full effect at the crowded Tube Club that night as the band played non-stop till the wee wee hours. Similarly, on a more poetic note, rising star Leonard "Karikoga" Zhakata has also been successfully drawing from the same Zimbabwean/Congolese vein, and he too is a mainstay of the Harare club circuit.

Like the likembe is to the development of the finger-picking style of Congolese guitar, the mbira is to guitar lines of chimirenga music. But for the Shona people the mbira holds a special place that relates both to spiritual possession states and historically to the music of the wars for liberation. These two threads of Shona music were first blended into coherent popular music by Thomas Mapfumo. Though an international star, when at home Thomas is a hard-working musician who plays several gigs every weekend in Harare and its highdensity suburbs. Ask any cab driver where he's playing that night and they'll take you directly to him. Within a day of my arrival I was hearing him for the first time on his home turf in Highfields at the Willows Night Club. Though afforded only a postage stamp-sized stage, he managed miraculously to weave in and out (both vocally and physically) of a 14-piece band, complete with three mbiras, three horns, three dancers, and his brother hidden in the back on congas.

Later that week, Thomas was one of the main draws (along with the likes of Simon Chimbetu, Andy Brown, Oliver Mutukudzi, John Chibadura, Ephat Mujuru, the Mighty Four Brothers and the Lubumbashi Stars among a host of others) at a 24-hour Zimbabwean Musicians Day pungwe (and chibuku drinking binge) at the Gwanzura Stadium in Highfields, with the big guns arriving in the early morning hours after playing their Saturday night gigs elsewhere. Conspicuously absent from the bill was "Mbira Queen" Ambuya Stella Chiweshe who it was reported in the newspapers was refusing to be part of the show because "her experiences in the past had dissuaded her from participating," saying that she would perform at a farewell concert of her own at Harare Gardens the evening prior to the Musicians Day gig and the day before she was to leave for her other home in Germany. Unfortunately, that concert was a technical disaster with both the sound and lights constantly failing (I counted 10 times before around 2 a.m. when Stella finally graced the stage). By that time every other scheduled band had given up and most of the audience was long gone.

Fortunately, I had seen Ephat Mujuru's warm and earthy acoustic mbira set earlier that evening at The Book Cafe because I never got to hear him perform in Harare Gardens with his electric band as he valiantly but futilely fought the technology on stage before finally calling it a night. Amid persistent rumors that the sound/ light system had been intentionally sabotaged by some vindictive members of the Musicians' Union still angry over Stella's public rebuke, the crowd slowly filtered out of the park.

In spite of such mishaps, Harare stands out as an exceptional place to hear live African music with a wide array of bands performing every week from Wednesday through Sunday night all over town, even in your own backyard. And it was one such backyard gig that led me to an old friend. One evening, I heard the sounds of reggae drifting across the street from the Earlside. I had arrived back in Harare a day earlier than scheduled after climbing Mount Chimanimani and seeing the Great Zimbabwe Ruins, and was now trying to decide where to go that night for music, when the Zig Zag Band's rootsy sound drew me out the door. I'd not been at the gig for 10 minutes when I heard someone scream, "Ron!" and I looked down to see an old Zimbabwean friend from the States, Priscilla Sadomba, beaming up at me. I'd been trying to get in touch with her ever since I'd gotten to Harare but the phone number that I had for her always just rang off the wall with no reply. Like me, she also had originally not planned to be in Harare that day and had at the last minute that evening been persuaded by a friend to come to the Earlside, a place that she had never been before. I hadn't seen her since she returned three years ago and we celebrated by going to hear Oliver Mutukudzi at the Mushandira Pamwe Hotel in Highfields (across the road from the Stadium), a club featuring unadulterated Zimbabwean music and some of the most brazen pickpockets in town.

Tuku, as he's called here, has just been slated as one of the headliners of the first-ever South African WOMAD in February. He is a major Zimbabwean star of the caliber of Mapfumo, although lesser known in the U.S. His music is brighter and less introspective than Mapfumo's, and he himself is less remote and has more of a man-in-the-street appeal. The band featured, along with Mutukudzi on his flaming purple guitar, two no-nonsense female vocalists who can sweat out a tune in the best Zimbabwean tradition. Thanks to Priscilla's running translations of his Shona lyrics, which highlighted the daily struggles and joys of city life in Harare, Tuku's place in Zimbabwean music as a voice of the people became increasingly clear. Though most of his many recordings are just locally available in cassette-only format (as is the bulk of Zimbabwean music), he has recently made a key contribution to the newly released cd Mahube: Music From Southern Africa, a project with international distribution which cleverly interweaves a variety of music from Zimbabwe and South Africa into an Afro-jazz context.

As for Priscilla, for the next few days before my departure, we, along with our respective partners, were an inseparable bunch. What a great coincidence to run into each other amid the crowded byways of Harare nightlife, but, of course, in Shona there is no word for coincidence. \*

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