

Reino Ottermann en / and Maria Smit, Hoofredakteurs / Chief editors, bygestaan deur / assisted by Izak Grové, Winfried Lüdemann, Heinrich van der Mescht en / and Caroline van Niekerk. *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiekwoordeboek/South African Music Dictionary*. Tweede, hersiene en vermeerderde uitgawe/Second, revised and enlarged edition. 2000, 296 pp. ISBN 1-86890-019-3. Kaapstad/Cape Town: Pharos. Prys/Price: R69.95.

In the nearly thirty years since the publication of the Vaktaalburo's pioneering bilingual *Musiekwoordeboek/Dictionary of Music* (1973) there has been a marked transformation both in terms of musical ontologies generally and the identity of the South African nation-state in particular. On the one hand Philip Bohlman (1999: 17) has neatly pointed out in his contribution to the anthology of essays entitled *Rethinking Music* that 'music may be what we think it is: it may not be', while on the other hand Sabine Marschall (2002: 117) reminds us that 'nations are not naturally in place but are invented and in need of constant maintenance'.

So when one opens the covers of the *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiekwoordeboek/South African Music Dictionary* published in 2000, one's expectations are — not unreasonably — rather different from those that may have been aroused in 1973. What indeed might one legitimately expect a South African music dictionary for a new millennium to be? A dictionary of South African music(s)? A music dictionary for South Africa? With the stunning wealth of diverse musics that are endemic to our country, a dictionary of South African music(s) would indeed be welcome, meeting an urgent but as yet unfulfilled need, while a well-planned music dictionary for South African use would be equally welcome, provided it was able to meet the diverse needs of its multicultural users. So whatever specific use might be intended for a South African music dictionary, it would surely need to take into account the sheer fecundity and plurality of our musics, celebrated with such enthusiasm and acclaim within the global community.

In the event this dictionary turns out to be neither of the above. As 'second, revised and enlarged edition' of the Vaktaalburo's *Musiekwoordeboek/Dictionary of Music* of 1973 (p. iv; the front cover declares it to be 'revised and greatly enlarged'), its 'main aim is to promote the standardisation of Afrikaans and English terminology within the music education system of South Africa' (p. 5). What this presumably really means is that the dictionary's intention is to provide Afrikaans-speakers with a standardized vocabulary for speaking and writing about music — in itself a perfectly unobjectionable end.

This is, then, not really a 'South African music dictionary' at all. According to the editors (Introduction, p. 6), the intended target group is

mainly music pupils, students and teachers, as well as music lovers. Authors of textbooks, musical reviews and articles, newspaper and other magazine articles, especially in Afrikaans, as well as people in public media such as broadcasting, were also included in the potential users' group.

Fair enough — perhaps. But as a result the title of the *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiekwoordeboek/South African Music Dictionary* is entirely off the mark and highly misleading. It is also, we believe, insulting to a majority of South Africans of all colours and languages (both within the academy and outside it) whose musical interests and activities extend far beyond the boundaries of what Lydia Goehr (1992) has called the 'imaginary museum of musical works'. The words 'bilingual', 'Afrikaans' and 'English' in the title would certainly help define the dictionary's legitimate purpose more accurately.

Although this is emphatically *not* a 'South African music dictionary' in any satisfactory sense of the term, let us go along for the moment with the premises on which the dictionary is predicated. How well does it deal with terms from 'Western music culture'? On the whole, rather well. The editors have managed, within their limited scope, to get many things right: hundreds of terms have been added to those included in the original version of the dictionary. *Plainchant* is thankfully no longer translated as *gelyksang* but more sensibly as *cantus planus*. There are also appendices giving the names of notes in six (European) languages, the Afrikaans transliteration of Russian composers names (rightly including names of famous Russian singers and instrumentalists as well), names of orchestral instruments, and so on.

But there are also some surprising omissions and lapses. The Introduction specifically calls the reader's attention to what it calls the 'problematical' case of the term *canon*: 'There are so many different names for the different types of canon, particularly in Latin and the European languages, that one has difficulty in distinguishing the various types. An effort has then been made to simplify and only note the most common names' (p. 7). Yet despite having given attention to several rather obscure meanings for the term *canon* (including this definition: 'a portion following the Sanctus in the Roman Catholic mass'), the editors have chosen to ignore one of the most significant usages of the term in late twentieth-century musicology. This is *canon* in the sense of the repertory of Western musical works that over the past century and a half has been deemed to form the conceptual framework of Western musicology and which has increasingly been called into question during the past twenty years or so. One is left to question what kind of (Western) musical education some South African students are receiving in our institutions.

A random search for terms currently used in the analysis of twentieth-century music that one might expect to find revealed no entries for *set theory*, *integral serialism*, *pitch class* and *pitch-class set*. And several entries under late Renaissance and Baroque terms are suspect. It is curious that the meaning of the term *a cappella* is given as 'unaccompanied' rather than 'in the style of the chapel' (and hence by extension, though often this was not historically the case, 'without instrumental accompaniment'). *Hoog-Barok* (there is no entry for *High Baroque*) is defined as 'middle Baroque' ('Middel-Barok'). There are two entries for *ripieno* but none for *ripienista* or *ripienist*. *Coro spezzato* finds an entry but not *cori spezzati*, the more acceptable usage of the term; the definition given is 'di-

vided choir' rather than the correct translation 'broken choirs' (for *cori spezzati*). The entry for *Bach trumpet (Bach-trompet)*, with a parenthetical definition 'a term used for Baroque trumpet or clarino', gives no suggestion to the unwary reader that this term is a total misnomer for a high trumpet used in some modern performances of Baroque music and that it is a nineteenth-century invention, completely unknown in Bach's day; furthermore, during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries the term *clarino* referred to a register rather than an instrument. Another curious omission is *maestro di cappella*, found in any number of historical contexts from the sixteenth to the eighteenth centuries. Yet the less frequent term *maître de chapelle* is included.

And although the editors explain that the dictionary's function is 'mainly to **translate**, rather than to explain' (p. 5), it is surely not too much to expect a degree of explication in the interests of redressing common misconceptions. Take the case of the term *adagio*. Here it is translated simply as 'slow', without any qualification, despite the fact that its meaning has shifted considerably over the years and was highly ambiguous until the nineteenth century. During the eighteenth century the term usually implied first and foremost that unnotated embellishments were called for on the part of the soloist, hence a relaxation in the tempo. In fact, the flautist J.J. Quantz devoted an entire chapter to the subject of playing an Adagio in his famous *Versuch einer Anweisung die Flöte traversière zu spielen* of 1752. Should a student confronted with the term in a piece of seventeenth- or eighteenth-century music simply interpret it to mean singing or playing slowly, thereby missing the point of the marking? The least one might expect is that the term be defined along the lines of 'at ease, i.e. slow'. (And one might wonder how many South African music students receive appropriate instruction, on the basis of this inadequate definition, in singing or playing an eighteenth-century Adagio.)

Another example is the supposedly well-known term *forte*, which really means 'strong' and only by implication 'loud'. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it frequently referred to a 'normal' dynamic in contradistinction to *piano* which indicated an echo effect or was an instruction to players — as often found in Bach and Handel's scores, for instance — that the passage in question was an accompaniment to the soloist. Once again one might argue that it is too much to expect a dictionary of this nature to indicate these niceties of meaning, but surely one of the aims of a dictionary is to enlighten.

In the Introduction (p. 6) we are told that the *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiekwoordeboek/South African Music Dictionary*

concentrates on terms from Western music culture. A small number of terms used in the indigenous African musics in South Africa, which pupils and students will commonly encounter, have nevertheless been added.

This statement reveals a patronizing (if not downright offensive) attitude. For a start, it assumes that twenty-first-century South African music students, writers of newspaper and magazine articles, media representatives and so on, are

deemed to need only to know about 'Western music culture' plus a token smattering of indigenous African musical terms thrown in for good measure — this in a hard-won pluralistic and democratic society! And the dictionary's basic premise finds itself on even shakier ground, since there is no reason to assume that a majority of Afrikaans-speakers in the country as a whole is interested primarily in 'Western music culture', especially within a rapidly-changing educational system.

In short, it is difficult to understand the altogether dated rationale behind this dictionary, even given its unobjectionable intention (and largely satisfactory realization) of providing an authorised list of Afrikaans musical terminology. How is it possible in our present stage of historical, political and cultural development that the editors of a South African music dictionary could have called upon a 'circle of collaborators' (!), numbering well over thirty South African academics, not one of whom is black, is an ethnomusicologist, is a specialist in popular music, or is a recognised authority on indigenous South African musics? What kind of message does this send to South African music students and authors of music articles in the media? That the music of their own country may be regarded as some kind of afterthought? And how can it be assumed that Afrikaans-speaking students are unlikely to come across terms in their musical studies that lie outside the imagined orbit of 'Western music culture'?

So it is entirely in keeping with the exclusivist nature of the dictionary that one finds an entry for the medieval *istampita* but none whatever for *isicathamiya*, that highly acclaimed home-grown South African genre within which Ladysmith Black Mambazo has carved out an astonishingly successful international career. Some other uniquely South African forms of music-making that receive no attention in the dictionary — not an exhaustive list by any means — include *bubblegum music*, *kwaito*, *makwaya*, *marabi*, *mokorotla*, *mqashiyo* (all mentioned in the second edition of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*) yet *maqam*, *maquam*, *mascherata*, *matraca* and *mattacines*, obscure terms the South African student is unlikely to come across, are all there.

The publishers' blurb on the back cover tells us that this is 'an authoritative new dictionary for all music lovers, learners, teachers and lecturers' (emphasis added). Even on its own terms the *Suid-Afrikaanse Musiekwoordeboek/South African Music Dictionary* is no more than a qualified success. That there is a need for such a dictionary is undeniable, but it could, and ought, to meet that need far better than it does. Its limited, outdated concept represents a lost opportunity to have created a truly *South African* music dictionary.

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