

WORKING MUSIC: AN INVESTIGATION OF POPULAR, NON-SPONSORED,
ORIGINAL MUSIC PERFORMANCE AS A CAREER.

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ABSTRACT.

This dissertation investigates the working experiences of musicians who play original music as a form of employment. The study describes the venues and locations of music performance, including music clubs, concerts and festivals. This is done from the point of view of a concert-goer who is aware of the labour processes occurring at these shows, as well as the infrastructure and support necessary to make such events occur.

The music investigated is original popular music which does not afford the artists any other forms of sponsorship apart from the earnings received from performances.

The musicians interviewed are thus people who play music as their sole form of income, or aspire to be this position. The experiences of these musicians, as gleaned from loosely structured interviews utilising open-ended questions, allow the study to make some generalisations about what it takes to play music as a full-time form of employment.

This is the focus of the study, particularly the fact that music is not only a skill and talent to be developed, but also that music is a unique job which has its own stresses, strains and rewards. Problems experienced by the musicians, as described by the musicians themselves, cast a clearer understanding of the way in which this form of work is run. The actual mechanics of music performance, such as the prohibitive costs of equipment, and the dealings with club-owners, are discussed. Technology is evaluated in terms of its impact on music performance as a career.

Some record companies were also approached in an attempt to understand the constraints and problems faced by these commercial enterprises. The perceptions that these companies have of local original music artists is contrasted with the perceptions that the artists seemed to have of the companies. This makes for interesting comparative material, and allows the study to identify some obstacles between artist and industry.

The study concludes with a description of the local music industry and a discussion of some of the reasons why it has developed in this way, as well as a look at some suggestions for change.

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Unless specifically indicated to the contrary in the text, this entire dissertation is the original work of Robert Ian Boake.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS USED

ASAMI: Association of South African Music Industries

DAT: Digital Audio Technology

IBA: Independent Broadcasting Authority.

IFPI: International Federation of the Phonographic Industry

MUSA: Musicians Union of South Africa.

SABC: South African Broadcasting Corporation.

SAMRO: South African Musicians Rights Organisation.

GLOSSARY OF UNUSUAL TERMS OR PHRASES

Air guitar - Correct motion of arms is occurring but the sound can not be heard.

Aliwal - Late night music venue in Durban.

A&R - Artist and Repertoire. Person responsible for being aware of potential acts to sign to a record label.

Arrangement - The allocation of instruments and voices to specific tasks during the music performance.

Archi-Ball - University of Natal [Durban] music concert.

Battle of the bands - Competition in which bands compete for prizes based on opinions of judges.

Big bad basslines - Loud and powerful playing of electric bass.

Booked band- The band selected to perform for the evening.

Catchy song - Easily remembered tune or lyric.

CD - Compact disk.

Covers - Songs performed by bands which did not compose them.

Cover charge - Amount one has to pay at the door in order to see the band perform.

Cracking it - Achieving widespread acclamation and financial wellbeing.

Cycle jobs - Movements of bands over regular intervals in which they swop residencies.

Demo tape - A cassette demonstration of what a song or band sounds like.

Doing Zappa, Hendrix, Led Zep... etc - Performing the music of...in that particular style or manner.

Door - The process of making sure that entrance into a performance is controlled.

Drifters - Club in Pietermaritzburg.

Dude - Person.

Frontman - Lead vocalist.

Gear - Musical equipment.

Gig - A performance or show.

Hottest band - Band which sounds best, is currently admired the most.

Jam and Sons - Music venue in Durban

Lineup - The musicians and instruments playing in a band.

Live show - A performance in which music originates from musical instruments being played.

Local band - Band based in South-Africa.

Mixer or mixing desk - Electronic equipment which allows for the manipulation and allocation of music in certain combinations.

Muso - Musician

Nicked - Stolen.

Original music/band - Music composed by the performer.

Pulling a cover off - Musical rendition of someone else's song is acceptable to audience.

PA system - Public Address equipment which amplifies sounds and makes them audible to large numbers of people.

Radio friendly - Popular music that is well received by average music appreciating public.

Residency - Performance of music in which bands remain located within one specific music venue for a protracted period of time.

Reverb - A sound-effect which ensures that the sound of a voice, instrument lingers or draws on.

Rift - Late night music venue in Durban

Rig - Musical equipment required for an artist to adequately perform.

Roaring killer guitaring - Style of music performance.

Schlepping - Superfluous effort.

Set - The duration and list of songs that a band will perform.

Sequencer show - Computer aided performance which allows artist to sound like a larger band.

Sound-check - Process of making sure the band is ready to perform.

Smugglers - Late night music venue in Durban.

Splashy Fenn - Annual music festival held on a farm in the Drakensberg.

Synth - Music synthesizer.

Wannabes - People aspiring to be...

Wah-wah - Guitar music effect.

Wings - Club in Johannesburg

LIST OF ARTIST AND BAND NAMES *signifies South African band.

Ba'agisane *
Big Mountain
Blue Chameleons *
Blood, Sweat and Tears
Boomtown Rats
B-World *
Brubeck *
Clout *
Crowded House
Del Segno *
Diesel Rotgut *
Durban City Orchestra
Eagles
Eight-Legged-Groove-Machine *
Foreigner
Freeloader *
Free Taxi *
Johnny Clegg *
Landscape Prayers *
Led Zeppelin
Lucky Dube *
Mango Groove *
Midnight Oil
Mike Smith *
Paul Simon
Police
Plagal Cadence *
Scooters Union *
Savuka *
Skokianna *
Soul Vitamin *
Soundgarden
Squeal *
Steely Dan
Sting
St Legend *
Subtropical Fits *
Tananas *
The Famous Curtain Trick *
The Revealers *
This is This *
U2
UB 40
Underground Press *
Urban Creep *
Whitney Houston
Zap Dragons *

CHAPTER ONE - INTRODUCTION

Motorists pausing at the robots on the Natal Technikon corner in Botanic Gardens avenue, were able to notice something in October 1994 which has not been part of Durban's social scene until very recently. Large billboards along the brick wall advertised the arrival of international music acts. It was as if these colourful posters were competing for attention in terms of brashness. The entire wall was smothered with colour, a wonderful sight for the public who had never before experienced such an event. This musical mosaic was composed of a dancing *UB 40*, interspersed with snatches of *Jethro Tull*, and to top it all, a cluster of *Sting* posters which captured the Man Himself in mid air.

However, if one looked more carefully, there were other less noticeable artists advertised on the same wall. The bright international advertisements for well known and established artists were flanked by much cheaper black and white photostats hastily churned out by local bands, and handed to friends. The brighter posters actually attracted more attention to the wall than the local posters had ever received before.

These competing posters that people casually glance at from their cars or on their walks, are only the surface of a busy "underground" which is composed of creative people, who are involved in a unique form of work which is that of a musician.

Local musicians survive in a number of different ways. They perform to audiences which range in size from 20 bored people in a nearly bankrupt club, to 20 000 people who are just plain ecstatic to be part of a stadium crowd which awaits an international artist. Local artists have had to compete with the recorded music of these overseas artists on the radio, in music shops, and in the venues at which live original music is permitted. While stadiums are packed with fans of international artists, local music receives comparatively little support. For the price of a good *Rolling Stones* ticket [R250, South African tour 1995], the audience could attend about 50 local gigs.

Local artists, therefore, face constraints in recorded music and live music, not just due to international competition, but also because there is a large lack of awareness of the business in which they are competing.

Part of these constraints is the lack of acknowledgement of the performance of music as a form of labour. The act of playing music on a full time basis is a unique "career," with it's own problems, conventions and rewards. It is not recognised as such, and unfortunately this can lead to exploitation of the musicians.

Although musicians are engaged in a form of employment that is intrinsically creative, as well as having the appearance of being a leisure activity [or maybe because of that], they are not granted the status of "being employed". The production of a musical commodity in consumable form occurs within music performance.

This dissertation attempts to find out what activities are involved beneath a simple poster which advertises a gig. Who are the musicians, and how do they live? The study goes into the clubs, into the concerts, backstage at the events, and talks to the people involved in music as a job, to find out exactly what it entails.

CHAPTER TWO - AIMS AND METHODOLOGY

2.1.Aims

This dissertation aims to investigate the local original music industry by paying specific attention to the experiences of the actual musicians. The stresses, strains, rewards, incentives and problems of this form of employment will be examined. Unfortunately this study cannot be exhaustive. This is due, firstly, to the number of local musicians that are springing up every day, and secondly, due to the fact that I can only hope to focus on a limited spectrum of the broad range of issues that are prominent in this field.

I wish to focus on "what it takes" to play original music full-time. However, the people with whom I spoke are not necessarily always in this position. Most of them aspire to it, or have had a certain amount of experience in this career.

This is a dynamic industry which is very unstructured as well as unregulated. It is run by word of mouth, can subject working people to serious abuses, and is a vastly under-studied and under-researched area. For this reason the study can only hope to highlight some of the areas and issues that occur in this industry as well as to conclude tentatively on the music performance industry. It is thus neither exhaustive nor conclusive, but to a large extent it is descriptive of some of the commonalities of experience that local original musicians have undergone. The study is also exploratory in that the industry is under-researched. Indeed, many people do not see it as an industry at all. Many people fail utterly to see the link between "Industrial Psychology" and "Music as a Job". Similarly, people don't necessarily view musicians as employed people. It is precisely this mindset that I wish to break, since it is the basis of many abuses against musicians.

Where possible I will attempt to explain through interviews how these musicians work, both on and off stage, and how the labour process that is involved in music production occurs. For example, the amount of rehearsal that goes unnoticed and yet is an every day part of a working musician's life, is an important working issue. The promotion process, which is necessary to lure a sufficient audience into the venues to sustain the livelihood of the musicians, is another example of a factor which is not ordinarily considered

to be part of a working musician's job.

Due to the fact that the area of study is so unstructured, the methodology needs to be able to deal with diversity. I have utilised a methodology that welcomes diversity of opinion, and attempts to approach the problem from more than one particular angle. Thus I have deemed it fit to inquire from record companies and those currently involved in industry, about their perceptions of the major obstacles facing bands who are attempting to survive on original music alone. This "industrial" perspective is contrasted with the perspective that I receive from the working musicians themselves.

I have had limited first hand experience in running a band and playing gigs. I have also been interested in the local music scene in Durban for five years now. I hope that this qualifies me to direct the study and the interviews toward the areas that I understand are important to the musician, and which he or she would want to have examined and discussed.

I used the interchangeable "he or she" in the sentence above, but as far as the "culture" of the original music movement is concerned, this is primarily a male dominated career. I will thus be using the masculine pronoun throughout this work and I do not intend it to be offensive to anybody. Of the local original bands that I have seen, I only know of a very limited number of female performers, and they all appear to be in similar roles within the structures of these bands. The popular-music performance industry, therefore, appears to be more of a "brotherhood" than a "sisterhood". I paid limited attention to this gender aspect of musical performance, but it is not one of the primary focuses of this study.

The main focus of this work is to uncover some of the rarely expressed issues which form an integral part of the life of a working "muso". These issues are normally internalised by the musician fraternity and seldom expressed to the public. "Working a nine hour night" is not what one would expect to hear, as a description of the life of a musician. Perhaps this is due to the traditional glamour surrounding performance. The people on stage look happy, and "into" their music. Alcohol and marijuana are ever-present, with more serious drugs looming in the background. These substances detract from the idea of

music as a job.

The misperception that some people have, of musicians not really having to work in order to survive, affects the musician. Apart from the fact that the general public may perceive them in this way, bands also face ignorance in their business dealings. For example, one of the bands that I interviewed was told by a lawyer that the musicians should be grateful for the amount of cash they would receive in a settlement, because all they ever did was: "park on the beach." [D.B. ; 26] This gross misconception of what working musicians do is probably well captured in the lyric of a Dire Straits song: "You get your money for nothing and your chicks for free." So then, what do these musicians really do?

Due to the fact that musicians form a subculture, a close-knit group that often spends working time according to a completely non-conformist definition of what work entails, the nature of "working music" is a mystery to many. This mystery is often conveniently exploitative for some. Many musicians, especially those starting out, do not know what to expect from a club-owner or a record company. Unfortunately, they fall prey to the many traps which lie in wait for them. This is not merely due to exploitation on the part of the club-owners, but also to some extent, it is due to ignorance on the part of musicians.

Musicians should be recognised as a working group, and entitled to certain benefits and respect, in place of the high degree of ignorance that people exhibit in their knowledge of music as a career. The first step in this process entails uncovering and exploring musical occupations. If this dissertation can help in any way to co-ordinate and to assist musicians, then I will have accomplished something significant.

The study is thus also intended as an aid to others who wish they had the opportunity to assess what it would take to be a full-time musician. Above all, it is an effort to show that music is not at all as glamorous as it appears to be, and that it is a demanding and difficult form of skilled employment in which to be involved.

Due to the nature of music as art and, more importantly, as commercial art, I must take the audience into account. To be considered as a working musician, one must have an audience; be it the baby-sitter who puts on a record at 02:00 while she raids the fridge; or the devoted club person who makes a point of following her favourite band to the dingiest darkest, most evil smelling hell hole in Point Road; or the business executive who taps her fingers on the roof of her car in a traffic jam, while the radio sweetly churns out hit single after hit single. The relationship between the audience and the marketing powers such as the radio and record companies will, therefore, be examined.

2.2. Methodology

The methodology that I use is strongly qualitative, based on the fact that the body of study, or the research object, is very unstructured and flexible. The methodology takes into account the host of different experiences of these working musicians.

2.2.1 Research problem

This study is an investigation of original, popular, non-sponsored music as a form of employment in Durban South Africa. The research uses individuals who make their living by music alone, or who have experience of this, as the unit of analysis. However, input from record companies is also used as an information source. The musicians interviewed may be solo artists, or members of bands and music groups. They may also be involved in production expertise and studio work, but they are all involved in music as a skilled form of employment.

This is my focus, particularly the fact that this is not just a skill but, importantly, it is a form of work. It is a large, yet under-researched, industry that presents wide opportunities, especially now that South Africa has become an internationally accepted democracy. The research is predominantly exploratory. However, primary goals include a description of the current music performance industry.

The goals of the study can be summarised as follows: to describe "popular original music" as a job; to understand the dynamics of the music performance industry; to dispel any misconception held by the public;

to highlight the problems currently occurring within the original music career; to tentatively propose some solutions to obstacles faced by original musicians.

2.2.2 Pilot interviews

I conducted a number of loosely structured interviews with people from all aspects of the music industry, including: two producers; a concert promoter; a studio technician; a sound engineer; and several musicians. Interesting findings about the nature of the music industry resulted, particularly the fact that most people interviewed are involved in more than one aspect of music.

The tool used in the pilot interviews, namely a loosely structured questionnaire of open-ended questions, was justified by the diverse and informative responses which I received in these interviews. I then used the results of the pilot interviews as a basis with which to construct the final questionnaire. This final questionnaire was ultimately used on the musicians interviewed for the dissertation in the months of September, October and November. A similar questionnaire was constructed for interviews and correspondence with record companies. These questionnaires are included in the index of the study.

2.2.3 Theoretical framework

The research is situated within the meta-theoretical framework of Realism. Within the framework, I unpack the way the industry is constructed by examining the experiences of the musicians within broader structural forces. The dissertation thus looks at the social forces such as technology, politics and economics and the impact that they have on full time musicians. Special attention is given to the importance of technology in affecting the recording and performance aspects of original music.

The musician is perhaps more symbolically reliant on and reactive to social forces, than working people in other careers. One sees it in the dark pulsing club. The stage is the frontier. The musician performs facing the spotlight of society and experiences the feedback directly. A deriding, clapping, screaming, society is on the dancefloor. This is the music industry.

2.3. Research design

2.3.1 Interviews

The research design entailed data collection by a series of in-depth, loosely structured interviews employing open-ended questions to allow for the collection of comparative material based on the experiences of those interviewed.

The interviews were loosely structured in that they always covered common areas and I almost inevitably asked the same questions of each respondent. The fact that the questions were open-ended often led to the respondent venturing into uncharted or unexpected territory which was informative. I have attempted to keep this spontaneity in the interview, especially since I did not know all the necessary questions to ask. The musician was aware of what affects him, and naturally veered toward these issues.

Often in an interview the subject started talking and continued animatedly, unwittingly answering questions still to come. This was too valuable to interrupt, structure or to limit. I opted for the more difficult option of transcribing the interviews that I have held in minute detail. Pauses, laughter, jibes at club owners, swearing, optimism and despondency have all been captured on tape, and transcribed, but this is unfortunately far too extensive to be included in this document.

2.3.1.1 Musicians

I selected several musicians who are either currently doing very well for themselves, in that they are able to survive on their own music as a full-time form of employment, or have nearly achieved this state but are being hindered in some way.

Fourteen formal case studies were undertaken although I must have spoken to more than one hundred people on a less formal basis. Two of the case studies are four-piece bands, thus the total amount of musicians formally interviewed is actually 20.

The musicians whom I interviewed are touring people who happened to be in Durban at the time, as well as people based in Durban. This study did not set out to be a study of what it takes to play music in South-Africa, because it focuses on Durban musicians. However, many of the musicians that I interviewed have spent extensive amounts of time performing in Johannesburg and other city centres, thus the study does cover a large number of live original-music venues which are not based in Durban. The information received from these musicians may thus be applicable to other cities apart from Durban.

This is probably the case, since the nature of playing music as a full-time job ensures that the musician moves around from city to city on a regular basis. As a result of these movements, the interviews actually deal with Johannesburg rather well, and this makes for interesting comparisons. Whether different cities engender different live music movements is an interesting question, but outside the spectrum of this research.

2.3.1.2 Limitations

I acknowledge that the study is limited in some ways because I was only able to access certain contacts, and they are in no way representative of every original musician's experiences and problems. Although a large degree of agreement on certain issues was prevalent, this was not always the case. Indeed, one of the most valuable things that the interviews have yielded is disagreement between people involved in the industry.

I was reliant almost exclusively on bands and musicians that one would associate with clubs in a more traditionally commercial sense and, as such, the study is limited to a certain type of performance area. It excludes some bands and musicians who perform often without having to *survive* on their music alone.

To avoid falling into the trap of ending up interviewing 20 excellent white rock guitarists or personal friends, I attempted to choose a broad spectrum of people to interview from jazz bassists to funk-rockers, to *Urban Creepers*, to metal-heads, to popsters and, of course, some excellent white rock guitarists. What they all have in common is that they wish they could receive a greater recognition for the fact that this is

a job for them; a job that entails hard work and discipline.

Music is a skilled form of employment, with a unique labour process. It demands, among other things: dedication to an instrument; long hours of private and group rehearsal; an ability to work with people on a very close interpersonal level and a high level of capital investment for equipment. Decisions about promoting the band, task allocation within the band and even personnel decisions such as the traumatic hiring or firing of a band-member make this a unique job. The fact that the musicians usually love what they are doing should not detract from the financial rewards that this form of employment merits.

I am aware that my musical upbringing has influenced the way I perceive the music scene, as well as the fact that I am strongly entrenched in the late 20th century music movements. "Popular music" is synonymous with America and Britain and their histories though, and I attempt to understand commercial music in this light.

2.3.1.3 Record companies

By approaching the recording industry, I have hoped to show the more business oriented decisions that go into "signing" a band. I attempted to get some of the big record companies involved. EMI, Gallo and Tusk were all considered. These recording companies were sent questionnaires and they posted their replies back to me. I personally interviewed representatives of three local record companies. These were: Gallo [subsidiary of Sony]; Third Ear Records and Natal Records.

The questions phrased, were specifically designed to allow record companies opportunities to state their cases. They were phrased in a manner designed to allow the record company as much discretion as they wanted, in order to describe how they go about deciding who is eligible for a record contract, and who is not. The companies are often accused of not supporting local music, and being "corporate sharks". This was an opportunity for them to reply.

2.3.2 Participant observation

I used participant observation as a prime information source. From May 1994 onwards, I attended as many concerts and gigs as possible. I also got actively involved with the musicians to see what it meant to be in their shoes. For example, I carried a bass guitar for a bass player at two o'clock on a Saturday morning down a Point Road pavement which can only be described as "hissing." This was after a gig which saw the band leaving unpaid. I also carried a heavy keyboard for *This is This*, a three-piece original rock band, as well as power amps, mike stands, and guitars for other bands. I am now very familiar with the physical labour processes within music performance.

I tried to become as involved as possible in the lives of the musicians, by asking the bands how things were going as I met them from gig to gig. In some cases, I was "with the band" and I was granted unique access to some of the interpersonal conflicts that take place within a band. This enabled me to understand, with far more clarity, the issues that were raised in interviews at a later stage. For example, I was able to pinpoint an exact event and ask the musicians about it, "What did you think of the sound last night?" [D.B. ; 3] or "How did you find your gig last night?" [B.W. ; 1]

Apart from the actual performances attended, I also observed much of the setting up processes involved. On some occasions I was present long before the show began, and long after it ended. On one occasion, I watched bands arriving with their trailers of equipment at Smugglers Inn at two in the afternoon; bands leaving with trailers of equipment at two the next morning. I was thus able to observe the actual physical process of setting up, sound-checking, performance and dismantling.

I was fortunate enough to monitor some bands' progress over the months that I watched them. For example, I saw *Urban Creep* materialise out of a two man sequencer show doing Police covers at the Aliwal Lighthouse for a tiny crowd. [17\12\93] I then watched them gain new members and perform in other venues, including: an Howard College lunch hour concert [30\05\94]; a packed Rift nightclub; Jam and Co; a subdued Africafe in Smith Street [16\09\94]; an Archi-ball [2\09\94]; a beachfront concert and a Springtime concert [1\10\94] in what once was, and may again become, the regular attention of the Sunday

Times back page. I also saw them performing: with Johnny Clegg in a packed and sweaty student union hall [17\09\94]; with *Midnight Oil* to a full stadium audience [26\10\94]; and finally on television [19\11\94 ; C.C.V.10:00 pm] as one of the support acts to *Sting*, the man whose songs they were singing for "negative money" [U.C ; 22] less than a year ago.

My consistent attendance of *Urban Creep* gigs enabled me to compare the various shows according to many different criteria. Importantly, I was able to see the band performing the same songs with similar fervour through a lineup/membership change and in many different venues, to differing responses. The *working* aspect of the band came to the forefront strongly. Many parts of the actual production process of making music were acted out again and again in different formats. On different occasions, I saw: a pub band; a cover band; a club band; a support band; a concert hall band; a stadium band; and a band on television. All of these different formulas of the job have a host of associated conventions. These conventions distinguish one form of music performance from another. I was able to discern some of these conventions through observation, as well as an in depth interview with the band. [27\09\94]

I also observed *B-World* performances on numerous occasions. These performances were in a group of venues ranging from a jiving Archi-ball [2\09\94]; to a disinterested Rift [5\11\94]; and on television, on the same bill as *Urban Creep*. [19\11\94]

Including the two bands mentioned above, I have observed over 50 separate performances of local, original music in the last six months. Most of these gigs featured only one band for the evening, although sometimes three or four acts appeared consecutively at one concert.

I also spoke to members of the audience on a very informal basis asking them what they thought of the bands, and what they knew about the musicians. All of these observations were informative in that I was able to observe the culture of working music in action.

2.3.3 Secondary sources

The secondary sources of information utilized, include: videos of overseas bands on tour and some of the ways that these tours were set up; newspaper clippings of gigs coming up and reviews of local and international bands; magazine interviews with international artists; radio interviews conducted with experts in the music business and musicians, as well as radio advertisements of concerts; gig posters stapled to notice-boards; music pamphlets stuck under wind-screen wipers; and monthly circulations in music shops.

I was also able to ask artists about their *own* observations of other gigs. For instance, a member of *Urban Creep* told me about Lucky Dube playing a *Sting* cover at an international concert in Johannesburg, at which *Sting* was the headline act. Even though this was not a formal interview, it was still interesting. This type of information, although not directly relevant to the study, enabled me to build up an idea about the structure of the music performance industry.

I conducted a literature survey to search for comparative material, and to examine some of the issues that came up in the interviewing stage. Even though there is a conspicuous absence of material on this subject [an inter library scan revealed that no other dissertation has been done on local original South African music as a form of employment] some of the issues which are discussed in texts such as autobiographies of famous local and international artists were applicable. The literature on issues such as culture was also informative. A chapter is included in the dissertation, to describe how the literature study was done, and what the findings were.

2.4 Analysis

Data was analyzed interpretively in this inductive research approach. I moved from conjecture, to data collection and finally to analysis. The analysis was sociological in nature in that it attempted to understand the unique experiences of musicians as a working group within society. I chose certain *working* issues which were prominent in the interviews, and which I had observed first hand at the actual workplaces: the clubs and the gigs. I then looked at all the musicians' experiences of these particular issues, gathered them together under certain headings, and this resulted in a comprehensive description of what it takes to play

original music as a job. This overall description was informed by the large amount of varying tales and complaints from the various musicians and members of the industry.

As previously mentioned, there is input from many different disciplines of music in this study. These disciplines encompass the full spectrum of music: from Jazz to Hard Rock; Funk to Folk. The analysis, therefore, has rich material to draw from. Due to the fact that most of the musicians are able to compare playing cover versions to originals, the study is able to pick up valuable comparative information, about these different forms of work. Unfortunately, the material can only be analyzed in the light of fulfilling limited aims. The number of categories under which the information is analyzed, is thus limited.

The study concludes with my own findings and a further hypothesis about the nature of music as a career opportunity in current South Africa. Hopefully, this preliminary study will contribute to further research in this area.

CHAPTER THREE - LITERATURE REVIEW

In preparation and during this research project, I approached the librarians of the Natal University [Durban] E.G. Malherbe Main Library and Natal University Music Library, and inquired from them about the fields of interest to be investigated. During the interviewing stage of the dissertation, I was referred to works by some of the respondents. The theses and dissertations section of the Natal University Music Library was also consulted as a source for research.

I conducted an inter-library search at the University of Natal Durban Main library, and it appears that no other dissertation has been done on popular music as a form of employment in all the main Universities of this country since they were formed. The references yielded by the scan were predominantly historical and musicology works which were more applicable to areas of study not related to this dissertation. These studies related to music as a form of art, and related issues. The survey did yield a lot of historical material on developments in music in South Africa.

At an initial stage, I read as many autobiographical works as possible, to see how these musicians' careers had progressed, and the way they had experienced performance as a form of employment, the central concern of the present study.

In Miriam Makeba's autobiography, My Story [Makeba: 1988], the struggle for survival in a then-segregated South Africa was interesting. Similar stresses which acted on Makeba, are bound to be operative in the lives of the musicians, whom I am studying. I discuss this in Chapter Five. Although the genre of the music was very different to most of the musicians whom I am studying, it was worthwhile for the insights it gave me in terms of providing examples of some of the forces acting on musicians, irrespective of musical style.

I then turned to *Nirvana's* biography, Come as you are, [1993] by Michael Azarrad, to contrast Makeba's experiences from as different a point of view as possible. The desperateness of this band to escape a rural logging town in America was well captured. The strain of inter-personal relationships on tour, in-band creativity debates are well captured. These guys were desperate musicians. They were playing simple,

driving songs, on bad equipment, in bad venues, and living under appalling conditions. The working part of an original band is accurately dealt with here.

Importantly, this biography highlighted the differences between popular culture in South Africa and America. Large groups of people would gather around the practise rooms of the band, even before they became famous. The drug culture and alcohol use in music are graphically portrayed. Another important contribution of this text was the description of the publicity machine that goes into making a band. From negotiations with management company Golden Mountain, to the amount of co-ordination necessary for a European tour, *Nirvana's* rise is well described. Important elements which seem to be lacking in South African music were uncovered almost immediately. For example, record label Sub-Pop Records was completely in touch with music on the ground level. They were in the clubs with their bands, they were a real part of the audience, and they believed in the artists that they had signed up. The progression of a band from demo stage to platinum album sales is well covered in this book, and along the way, the dynamics of the industry in which they are involved are illuminated.

Other aspects, such as the important involvement of an entire infrastructure of campus radio and local radio stations, are also dealt with. These stations were fervently interested in what the local audience is hearing in the clubs. Demo tapes do not lie in studios and wait for approval. They are handed around like hotcakes, and the band is recorded quickly and effectively. This biography was valuable from a comparative point of view, in that it uncovered important differences between popular culture in South Africa and popular culture abroad. These differences are mentioned in the discussion in Chapter Eight.

Other biographies were also consulted to see if they illustrated similar aspects as the *Nirvana* biography. Is That It? [Geldof:1986] describes the problems experienced by the *Boomtown Rats* while they were starting out, and the mechanics of a band. Personal descriptions by Geldof of all aspects of music performance, from soundchecking, to looking for places to sleep, are humorously described. Is That It? also describes differences between the performances to stadium sized crowds and small clubs.

'Scuse me while I kiss the sky, by David Henderson [1990], is also valuable in this respect because it shows the movements of a single musician, Hendrix, through bands and eventually into a solo career and the life style of someone living on his music. The hardships of Hendrix's early musical career are described in detail by Henderson. The biography looks at the inter-musician rivalry and relationships that occur between the upcoming musicians at some points in Hendrix's career. For example, Hendrix's relationship with Eric Clapton and Mick Jagger are described. Other important aspects which are portrayed in 'Scuse me while I kiss the sky, [1990] are the inter-personal relationships within *The Experience*, and the performances of Hendrix's music in many different venues. The personal strain of touring, financial stress and regular relocation are discussed throughout these descriptions of Hendrix's life.

Further insights into American and British popular music were provided by Lester Bangs' Psychotic Reactions and Carburettor Dung. [1990] This was relevant to the study because it portrayed the audience's side of the culture of popular music evocatively. The work deals with Bangs' reviews of concerts that he attended, and his own personal lifestyle, which is solely oriented around music performance. These concert descriptions, and record reviews capture the culture surrounding popular music.

To understand the relationship between South Africa as a relative newcomer to the popular music sphere, and the countries that this particular form of music came from, I looked at Edward Said's work Culture and Imperialism. [1993] The debates which Said highlights, principally around culture, have important applications for the process under which art is constructed. Issues about originality in music which were brought forward in the dissertation interviews often had their groundings in these very debates. Said's book helps to explain how culture from certain countries, impacts on and effects other countries. This has direct implications for this dissertation. The impact of South Africa's past, and its affects on both the composition and appreciation of music in this country relate to Said's work. [Said ; 1993] Musicians find themselves limited in their repertoires because they find that the most commercial music, or the easiest music to survive on is cover version music.

During a discussion with Professor Ballantine of the Natal University Music Department, I was referred to several texts in the library of an historical nature. Works such as Ballantine's Marabi Nights [1993] had important contributions for my dissertation, in that they described how style and culture from overseas can be emulated, and how something unique can arise. The book describes some of the ways in which African Jazz music evolved by assimilations of some American influences.

Ballantine [1993] describes some of the ways in which black people living in the urban centres created their own unique blends of music. The development of an African Jazz from the 1920's through to the 1960's is dealt with here. Current popular music in South Africa undergoes the same process of cultural emulations and assimilations. These cultural forces have a direct impact on music as a job because they determine that which is popular, and that which is not.

Historical works such as Coplan's In Township Tonight [1985] also looked at these issues. More importantly, this work yielded valuable information about how some basic elements within music as a job, actually evolved through the years. Coplan focuses on some of the industrial centres which sprang up when gold and diamonds were discovered. The musicians, who roved around on the streets in these centres, soon found work in "shebeens" - places of illegal liquor sale. The working relationship between drink, club owners and the musician is described in its earliest forms. This was early "working music":

By the 20's and 30's the churches, schools, drinking houses, parties and dance halls of the black locations were producing a new generation of performance professionals. Versatile musicians absorbed almost everything, played for almost everyone, and gave birth to an authentically South African Jazz. [Coplan: 1985 ; 5]

The space which music fitted into, in the social structures of an early South African society, is described. Many of the issues applicable to music then have not changed at all. For example, the development of music as a drawcard for the shebeens is clearly still an important part of the current musician's working life. The shebeens have changed only very slightly:

To stimulate business, shebeens featured regular weekend parties where enormous quantities of liquor fuelled enthusiasm for continuous music and dancing. At first the entertainment was provided by the customers themselves, but by the 1920's hostesses began to hire musicians. [Coplan: 1985 ; 93]

The economic relationship described by Coplan between shebeen owner, musician, and audience appears to be very similar to the present relationship existing between the club-owners, bands, and audience in the commercial clubs in Durban. Coplan's book also illustrates the beginnings of a professionalism in music, by describing situations in which musicians were able to support themselves solely through their playing. [Coplan: 1985 ; 94]

Another type of literature that I engaged with, was that illustrated by Wilson's How to make it in the Rock Business [1987], which provides musicians with advice about the way in which they should go about a career in music. This type of literature was helpful in that it depicted the breadth of the industry, from performance of the songs to distribution of albums. Many of the practical working band "basics", from decisions about band repertoire to decisions about which publishing deal to make, are included here. As far as the very practical issues about how to do this job, and what an original music career entails, this text is informative. Similar literature in this field, such as The Key To Successful Songwriting [Dempsey : 1985] was also examined.

Some of the social and structural forces involved in a musician's life in South Africa were investigated in Top Forty music annual - The First Decade. [1990] This work describes the highest success levels reached by bands pursuing original music careers in South Africa, and lists the problems unique to our musicians.

White's Lost in Music: Culture Style and the Musical Event [1987] was consulted because it described several issues directly applicable to the study. Many aspects of a band performing in a residency, from leadership issues to repertoire are documented. This work provided another direct insight into music as a form of employment. The relationship between alcohol sales, club management, and the resident jazz band

is described in a step by step practical manner which was valuable for my own research. These experiences of the band within a club setting, are exactly what this dissertation sets out to examine and describe in terms of a working life.

White's book was also valuable in that it discusses the relationship between songwriters and artists, and management. Thus, the dynamics of the industry around these people is described. The relationship between the managers of the songs, and the producers of the songs [musicians] are an important part of music as a job. These issues are examined in Chapter Six of this dissertation, which discusses the perceptions held by South African record companies about the musicians.

In White's book, Struthers deals with the rapid advances in technology, and the impact that this has on the working life of the musician. It was informative, and shifted some of the focus of this study onto the equipment aspect of the performance of music, and the importance for the musician, and the industry as a whole.

To understand music as a job, I intended to investigate popular culture, and the way in which popular culture and music go hand in hand, and to describe the centrality of marketing and promotion and the correct image of the band within the social setting of music as work. Useful works consulted included those by Frith [1988], Music for Pleasure, and by Chambers [1985], Urban Rhythms and Popular Culture.

Frith [1988] looks at music as a form of commodity, described through a series of case studies. The trappings of a popular culture that sells music, and which popular music represents, are well described and form an important part of this dissertation. The fact that Frith reviews concerts in this text also provides relevant material about music performance culture, and the live setting of music as a job.

Urban Rhythms and Popular Culture [Chambers: 1985] traces developments in "pop" music and in so doing, is able to single out characteristics about popular culture, from its mass accessibility, to its transience. For

Pop music is a field of continual novelties. In some cases these merely involve the latest twist in marketing strategy, the quick business eye for a possible trend. More frequently, fresh proposals represent a real intrusion upon an earlier organisation of the music and its surrounding culture. [Chambers: 1985 ; xi]

These descriptions about the nature of "pop" music as a cultural movement are important for any study which attempts to look at the music as a form of employment, because the employment itself is based on, and a function of that culture.

One of the most significant findings of this literature review, is the lack of material which deals with music specifically as a form of employment, although the histories and effects of music performance are discussed in many works. The dissertation thus had to draw information from areas of literature which are important and informative, but do not deal with the central focus of my study. This would appear to indicate that my study is engaging in a unique way of understanding musical performance and could be expanded upon.

CHAPTER FOUR - THE CONCERT

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this Chapter I will describe the places where musicians play their music, do their job, by describing some concerts and gigs that I attended. The purpose is to provide a background for the study, as well as to provide some starting points for a discussion on the working culture of a live performance. The activities that musicians are involved in, and their experiences of the musical production process are subsumed within this "culture of performance".

In a sense, the concert is the best frame of reference for the study because this is where it all comes together for the musician. It will thus tie in directly with the issues that the interviews in the next chapter explore, giving the reader a location of what the musician is talking about. The stage, the lights, the sounds, the roar of an appreciative audience, all inform the day-to-day experience of the musician. The descriptions which follow are thus of the actual concert. I also included some information from the interviews conducted with other observers of the concert, the bands who performed, and the person who was involved with the provision of the sound equipment.

4.2 DESCRIPTIONS

4.2.1 The Archi-Ball - 2nd September 1994

The Archi-Ball is a University of Natal event aimed at serving charity. It is also a platform for local original music, and is held in the most eccentric of venues including, over the last four years: abandoned cinema complexes ripe for demolition, dilapidated colossal brick factories with green acid swamps, mangled painting factories with rusting staircases, and the more dangerous part of Durban station.

The crowd that frequents these events is largely composed of University students from both Pietermaritzberg and the Durban campus as well as Technikon students. The audience is traditionally large [around 3 000 to 4 000] and the concert occurs from about 22:00 to 02:00 with some exceptional years such as 1994, still having live music booming at 04:00.

This is an event predominantly frequented by young white people and represents neither the composition of the campus in Durban nor the population of South Africa. There is thus still a "segregation" of the music appreciating audience. Whether this is a result of the compartmentalisation of Apartheid over the last decades or a result of the fact that different cultures have their associated music preferences is debateable. It is probably a combination of the two. The music preferences themselves are important, but the associated culture of such an *event* is the determining factor.

For example, a large amount of drug-taking is a commonplace occurrence here, with people literally "tripping" over one another into the slime and grease associated with these venues. The geographic locations of these events normally fosters a relaxation of some restraints which would possibly be in operation in a club setting. Marijuana is an integral part of these events. The common alcohol sale that one expects of live concerts is also present on a large scale. This makes the Archi-Ball a unique musical event in Durban with its own associated flavour of music and atmosphere.

Infrastructure

In the actual setting up of these concerts there are normally problems with infrastructure such as electricity and other essentials. This year was no exception with many "power-trips" occurring and presenting a nightmare for sound engineer Shane, who started his long lonely journey for an alternate power source in the afternoon, and reached his destination around five o'clock in the evening - just in time for bands to do a quick soundcheck.

Paul Darley, a sound-specialist interviewed, spoke about this:

Shane went up there to check out the power requirements. Got there. Found that there was absolutely horrendous power. Nobody else thought about this. So when the show came on, all the lights started tripping elsewhere. Fortunately, the music continued, because Shane had spent five hours putting it all together. [P.D. ; 19]

In 1993 the Archi-Ball was held in the Durban station, and the rights for entry as well as the final signing of indemnity occurred as the first people had already begun to arrive. The equipment was as always...late,

and the soundchecks as always ...sketchy. It appears as though this may have become a norm in the music performance business, with musicians arriving up to two hours late for practices, and soundchecks occurring in the most unprofessional manner. The Archi-Ball isn't this bad though, and things normally miraculously turn out to be slickly organised.

In a gig such as this, the main P.A. sound, which includes: power amps; a large mixing desk; monitor speakers and microphones, is usually supplied by the venue. The venue organisers may also supply a drum kit. Typically, the band will arrive with their own special requirements such as guitars, and keyboards, which are far more personal tools than the larger, bulky, non-specified amplification. The personal instruments of the band are not normally lent out, as they have a unique feel and function. Sometimes only the main owner is in touch with the mechanisms involved with his instrument. There is thus also a close bond between the musician and his instrument.

For example, the funk-rock sound of *B-World* requires a certain sound which is well produced by a Fender Stratocaster guitar through a Fender Twin Reverb amplifier, and a Jim Dunlop Cry Baby wah-wah pedal. The drummer may prefer a certain kind of snare-drum sound as well as his own cymbals. The vocalist may only be happy with his own special microphone, or reverb unit. These are the some of the specialised pieces of equipment that the band will arrive with at a concert such as the Archi-Ball.

Particular equipment demands make the Archi-Ball a very different venue to play at compared to a standard club gig. In a club setting, the band may have to hire out the P.A. sound themselves, bring in their own drum kit, set up monitors, bring in microphone stands and microphones, advertise the facts of the gig and ask a friend to help at the door. In addition to this, each member brings his own piece of equipment along. This makes concerts and festivals a lot more enjoyable to play than club gigs.

Musicians who had experience in the Archi-Ball and other gigs claimed that there was definitely a difference between the two formats of music performance. A professional drummer with experience of both fields had this to say about original *club* performances:

It's a whole day, and it's exhausting. It takes it out of you. You get there and the club-owner is not there. You come last, you know. [I.J. ; 5]

He felt very different about festivals and concerts and pointed out some of the factors which made concerts more enjoyable for musicians:

Well, for a start, you don't have to set up your own equipment. It's not your responsibility. That's the main thing. It's not like you have to stay behind or anything 'til 05:00 packing up or anything. And moneywise, it's generally better. [I.J. ; 16]

Other artists described the efforts which they have to put into "non-music" tasks in order to actually play the music at a club gig:

You got to get transport so you can move the gear. You got to pack it all up. Into the bakkie. From there, into the venue, onto the stage. Then you are finished playing. And its another job. You got to take it all down again. [M.S. ; 7]

Some musicians claimed that club gigs became easier once the band got to do them regularly, because the band became more practised at setting up the equipment. I asked these artists about their side of the setting up process in a club gig:

We know exactly where the stuff belongs and where it goes, and I tell you, that cuts your setting up time in half. [D.B ; 31]

According to some artists, being organised gave them extra time before the setting up process began.

This band is quite organised. We normally get there around five o'clock. [U.C. ; 18]

It would seem that as music performance becomes more of a stable form of income for the artists, so the skills and responsibilities necessary to do this job become more developed. The process of setting up, which involves the transport and the actual placing and preparation of equipment, is becoming more structured.

When I asked Paul Darley, who works for a sound-hiring company, about sound provision for these big concerts such as Archi-Balls, and whether they were always a problem, he replied:

Well, it seems to be less and less that way inclined. We have sort of found a formula, and we tend to rely on that formula now. [P.D. ; 19]

There is thus an important difference in the processes involved in preparing the equipment for different forms of live music production. Club gigs leave far more up to the bands. The infrastructure for live music concerts may be developing, but there are still problems. This is further investigated in Chapter Five where the experiences of the musicians are dealt with in more detail.

Music support

The 1994 Archi-Ball was held at the Paintball Arena off Point Road. The necessary slime, drugs, alcohol and scantily clad young girls were all present, with a long long cue extending down the road adjacent to the looming industrial hulks of cranes that extruded from the gathering fog.

The venue was packed with people from the ages of about 16 to 28. Many people within the audience were not interested in the local original music but rather were there for the accompanying crowd and its associated style, a phenomenon never absent from clubs. People thus sat in little groups virtually out of earshot of the music, but close enough to be associated with the event. Similarly, some people simply did not stop moving, traversing the venue continually, making friends and glancing every now and then at the bandstand when a loud percussive sound or chord was struck, or a permeating lyric sung.

On the other hand, this was starkly contrasted by the throng of fervent live music supporters whose eyes were glued to the stage; who critically watched the bands, commenting to one another in drunken and sober, stoned and straight voices, on the relative strengths and weaknesses of the talent that was being presented to them. Many of these people were musicians themselves and members of bands that were playing in Durban at other venues at the time. There was thus a large split in the music appreciation propensities of the crowd: some taking a keen interest, others a detached indifference.

The alternative to the live music blared challengingly from upstairs. This glimmering ultra violet light could be seen from downstairs: local music territory. A nightclub was playing recorded music on the same site. Many chose this as their preferred haunt for the evening; deciding not to stray downstairs but rather to dance to imported music from other countries that was currently the vogue overseas and in some social circles in Durban. The competition between local live music and recorded music from abroad is dealt with later in this study.

It would be impossible to understand all the motivations which brought the audience to this event. The people at this concert were all present for their own particular set of musical reasons. Others, however, were simply there to sell food to the mass of people who started to get hungry at around 12:00. The same opportunists could be seen grinning from their food-tent after the *Savuka\Creep\Ba'agisane* concert.

[17 September, 1994]

The Show

The bands that played at this Archi-Ball were of excellent quality and represented a shift in the local music industry toward a more professional, and commercial, approach. *Urban Creep* were the first band that I watched play and they were captivating.

Their lively show had the crowd cheering for more, a crowd incidentally that was limited to about 500 people with direct visual vantage points of the stage. Other people who wanted to see what was happening were interested ...but prevented from moving, as were some unfortunates who found themselves suspended in a musical limbo between imported overseas music upstairs and local sounds below them. The staircases were so congested that some spent up to 30 minutes gradually making their way downstairs or upstairs. While all this hustling occurred, the sounds of *Urban Creep* drained away as their set finished and a new band from Johannesburg took the stage.

B-World, a funk-rock band that has been together for about a year, were very entertaining. The audience were most appreciative and responsive. Some danced furiously to the beat while others [probably musicians] stared in admiration or with happy critical frowns [What can I find wrong with this band?].

Even though the sound system was not of the best quality, and the venue was not spacious and comfortable, the audience had a good time, to local original music.

This band has come under serious criticism and praise for their image and music, which is very reminiscent of a band overseas which plays the same style of music. The debate which people go through while watching a band such as this, normally centres on the originality of the music. All bands have influences, and most influences of popular music come from overseas, from the popular music capitals. It is thus a question of whether a band which is able to duplicate another band's character almost exactly, should be criticised or praised. The magic name, which causes instant swearing from *B-World* if you say it to them, was being hurled to and fro in the audience in both snide, and reverent tones. Certainly, music will always be categorised, but is there really a need for people to do something different to that which is being done overseas? This issue is investigated further in Chapter Eight.

As a job

On the agenda of a working band, the Archi-Ball would be a high paying, high exposure opportunity, with one of the more appreciative audiences a band can expect to find. It is also the focus of a competitive ethic amongst bands.

These bands compete for the status of being the final act of the evening, since this is taken as an indication of the band which the organisers rate as the hottest band available for the evening. The order of appearance also impacts on the audience's perception of the bands, because they are accustomed to understanding that the final act is the climax of the evenings entertainment. On this evening, this was certainly the perception, with people gravitating toward the stage as the concert progressed. Questions such as, "When are the main dudes playing?" could be heard from people far from the band area.

Apart from the hype attached to the final band, other circumstances contribute to this part of the entertainment being well received. Typically, the amount of beer rammed down throats, and other substances indulged in, has reached its highest levels by the time the final band appears. This makes for a more receptive and spontaneous crowd which is easier to perform for. This was also observed at the

Clegg concert mentioned below.

The order of appearance is accompanied by a pay differential. The headline act usually receives the highest wage for their efforts. This amount steadily decreases down the order until it is minimal for those bands who are just plain ecstatic to be there, or otherwise feel unjustly treated in their ranking.

In the interviews that were conducted with two headline acts, this competitiveness was finely honed and present. For example:

When I sit there and watch [name of band], I cant actually imagine that I am watching a band that comes from my country. [U.C. ; 26]

Even management gets involved in this type of criticism:

[Name of band] don't play covers, they play copies. The same tune with different lyrics.

[B.W. ; 4]

As previously mentioned, this inter-band competitiveness largely hinges on the perceived originality that the bands have of one another. It appears from the interviews conducted, that this is one of the most prevalent factors used as a criteria within audiences to judge bands, and by bands to judge one another.

One of the artists present in the audience at the concert claimed:

To me the *Blue Chameleons* were the most original band there. For one thing, they were so eccentric. They were essentially doing *Zappa* without knowing who *Zappa* is. [N.vdS. ; 28]

This artist continued by explaining when this inter-band competition was the most rife:

There's a lot of competition, especially when bands are trying to crack it, or are on the border of cracking it. There's a lot of niggling. [N.vdS. ; 29]

Apart from a strong sense of competition, other factors also distinguish these large gigs from smaller club gigs. The concert gig is the highlight of a professional musician's career due to the exposure, as well as the lack of a need to do the groundwork required in other gig formats such as club gigs. It is the best possible form of the job:

It's a lot shorter, you do like about eight songs. It's a full-on adrenalin thing. That is how it should be, and that is what people dream about when they start to play music. Not the smoky bar with beer-bottles smashing around your head. [I.J. ; 15]

Around five o'clock on a now very foggy morning, I stumbled into a ghostlike, amp-carrying *B-World* and requested an interview in the afternoon. They agreed to meet me at the soundcheck at Smugglers Inn at two o'clock. For a band that had driven down to Durban the previous afternoon, soundchecked and performed a demanding set at this large concert, the amount of time to the next soundcheck was only seven hours. If one subtracts the hour still remaining of packing up equipment and driving to the house of Pat and Belinda where they were staying, it becomes six hours. Assuming they unpacked the car upon arrival there, for fear of having equipment stolen, which means they would have had to repack it when they left for Smugglers at 1 o'clock, the leisure time away from the next soundcheck was only approximately four hours: possibly time for a meal, and a quick sleep.

The activities which these musicians are involved in, include the physical effort of moving equipment around, and the stresses of travelling to get to the next gig. Such intense activity in small time spaces is a feature of this career. A concert such as this was part of the survival mission that an original music band takes on once it leaves other forms of employment and even other forms of music behind; one of the many performances in their careers which depend on the appreciation of others for survival.

Through the descriptions above it should be clear that the nature of an original music concert makes it a vastly different job to that of the original music club gig. This concert was a single example of the many performances that these original bands have to have on their agendas; agendas composed of a smattering of performances often very distant from one another in travel terms, but sometimes very close in temporal terms.

The *culture* of the Archi-Ball also makes it a unique venue for live music. This culture is demarcated by dress, style, drug taking, and a place to be hipness that would make outsiders extraneous at once. It is also very representative of overseas vogue, with T-shirts proclaiming proudly who the favourite bands of the wearers are. It could possibly be said that many of the people at the Archi-Ball were very strongly linked to an alternative sub-culture that has roots in overseas trends. This was incomparably different to the culture that I experienced at the Savuka concert a while later.

4.2.2 University Concert - 17th September 1994

Arriving at this concert I was surprised to find at 20:00 that it was still not very well attended. From the number of music venues that I attended, it seems that the starting time of concerts and of individual gigs is being delayed further and further with many shows beginning at 22:00 and ending at 02:00.

Those that *were* in attendance were a group of young white Engineering students in white hardhats who were stumbling around in black rugby pants and playing "fascinating imaginary basketball" with a crumpled beer can. This immediately led me to ask whether this was the normal crowd which one could associate with a *Savuka* concert, or whether there happened to be some type of engineering convention on campus at that precise moment. Judging by the amount of hi-aces arriving with these students, I initially assumed the latter.

However, as the evening drew on, and first act *Ba'agisane* took to the stage, the student union building rapidly filled up with a large audience. The audience initially was largely composed of white young people but the proportion of black people escalated rapidly until it was a truly mixed crowd. This was still not representative of the population of the country, possibly due to the fact firstly that this was a student concert which immediately tips the scales in favour of a whiter audience; and, secondly, the price of tickets at R20 for outsiders and R15 for students was prohibitive for some of the poorer sections of the population.

The order of the evening was drinking and dancing by most present, with the crowd growing until people could not stand without having somebody really sweaty standing really close to them. *Ba'agisane* played a slow repetitive rhythmic style with member after member in the band having chances to show his virtuosity, through a jamming system that repeats the same phrases again and again until all have had a chance. This was well received by the crowd who bayed for an encore.

Following the exit of this band from the stage, the theme music for Radio Five could be heard proclaiming that we were living the best years of our lives, and this gave some intoxicants the opportunity to sing along in agreement. The sound quality of this gig was a vast improvement on the normal gig sound that audiences would have expected from Durban original live music in some other venues a short time ago; either distorted or merely unintelligible vocals, accompanied by screeching instruments searching for that elusive component: melody!

Perhaps the R15 ticket prices justified the great improvement, as well as the fact that an internationally renowned artist was going to perform as the headline act, and shoddy sound was simply not a possibility. A newer *Urban Creep* with a replaced rhythm section then took the stage. These two new members were previously in the widely acclaimed *Landscape Prayers* which played complex instrumental crossover music. The proficiency of these musicians can be exemplified by the fact that they had only had two 13-hour rehearsals and one gig before this one. Between this was a serious amount of travelling to Johannesburg and back. The gig went off without a hitch from the audience point of view, but what the audience sees and what happens on stage are very often distinct pieces of musical performance. This aspect of musical performance is examined more rigorously in the next Chapter of this study.

In *Urban Creep* on this particular evening, the leader of the band's actions appeared to be articulated to the band members as well as the audience, guiding them through sometimes familiar, and sometimes tricky waters. For example, on a long extended playout of a song, the other members were conducted by the rise and fall of the vocalist's arms. This is to be expected in all bands, but on this occasion it seemed as if the newer musicians were heavily reliant on these directions.

In another song, during a rest in the music, the drummer kept time for the other members by quietly tapping his sticks together. The audience may not even hear this. It is an internal mechanism which the band is more aware of than the audience may be. The band is, therefore, aware of the leap of another member to signal the end-point, or the nod of somebody indicating a solo bar to begin as a directing thread throughout the music. The crowd normally sees a band having a good time. The nods and the gestures are perceived as a part of the music.

The crowd reaction to *Urban Creep* was, as always, enthusiastic...apart from a few Johnny Clegg fans who were already singing his songs at the tops of their voices, and when a lull came in the live music they would immediately demand that Johnny take the stage at once. This was done in jest though.

On the whole, the *Urban Creep* set was a stunning musical performance. The audience, by this stage familiar with some of the *Urban Creep* routine were able to shout requests and dance to their favourite song. The sound quality was again strikingly good with the audience able to hear every word from the vocalists Chris Letcher and Brendan Jury. Vocals are often regarded as the least important feature of soundchecks but in this case the professional standard of mixing gave the crowd a very pleasant mix of instrument and vocal.

Once this band finished playing the hall was already becoming stuffy and sweaty, with drinks spilled on the wooden floor [and many drinks were spilled] turning instantly to slime traps and potential slipping areas, as many unsuspecting dancers were soon to find out. Many people flooded outside to regain some fresh air in the cooler Jubilee Gardens.

It was interesting to note that on the stage were two drum kits in different positions separately "miked" up. Different mixing desks were in operation for the Clegg concert and the *Creep* concert before. It appeared as if there were two different sound setups completely independent of one another on the stage. This was confirmed when we spoke to a member of *Ba'agisane* carrying an old four channel mixer after the concert. Thus it appears that although some basic sound requirements, such as P.A. sound are provided, bands sometimes have to make use of their own resources. This was also noticed at the *Midnight Oil* concert later

in the year.

When we returned to the hall as the crowd was chanting "Johnny, Johnny" there was a time of about ten minutes when the tension within the crowd was rising. Perhaps this is a deliberate ploy on the part of the final act to make the crowd wait for them and become restless. There was also the added complication that the beer had run out a while earlier, and reinforcements were to arrive shortly to quench the inevitable thirst that comes from dancing for two hours.

By this stage many of the men present had taken their wet shirts off and had draped them around their pants [some discarded these] while some simply lost their t-shirts in drunken ecstasy. Sweaty people milled around watching the stage which had darkened as their restlessness increased.

When the music finally and subtly began with some string sounds of a keyboard, I was immediately aware that the sound system now in use was much, *much* better and a *lot* louder than the one which was previously used by the support acts. It felt like the Enterprise was getting ready for takeoff! The hall was now very dark, and the crowd silent. The clarity of sound was astounding, and this must have had an impact on the motionless audience who roared into frenzied action as the first song began its rhythmic journey and the spotlights exploded the stage into colours.

Immediately, many people broke into Zulu traditional dancing. They were, unfortunately, not traditional Zulus but initially a crowd of about 20 white Cedara agriculture college students. This was easy to tell since they all wore the tell-tale Cedara caps, t-shirts and black pants. They were, however, not the only people doing this dancing which we have come to associate with Clegg. It was widespread within the audience. This part of the concert was the most frenetic and active part, with many people singing along in unison with every chorus. The fact that we had heard these songs before on the radio, and seen Clegg on TV, added a dimension of "superstardom" to the concert.

It occurred to me that this was the least expected audience that I expected to see at a Clegg concert, let alone be singing along in Zulu, and I thought back about this a week later when I attended a Sunday

afternoon at the Rockadilly Diner in the Berea Center.

The Clegg concert was held in such good spirit. White couples danced in mostly weakly imitated tribal dancing [in a few cases brilliantly reproduced tribal dancing]. People slipped and fell on the quagmire floor and crushed beercans, bumped into one another drunkenly, white and black people together sang.

When this concert finally ended after several encores by *Savuka* [who now appear to be a predominantly white band] people tiredly made their way up the steps to outside. Somebody started to sing "Sho-shalosa". This was immediately taken up by a large part of the crowd with such gusto that it became almost deafening. It got louder and louder still until segments of the black audience broke into dancing and chanting upstairs. The white people did not seem to do any of this though, and seemed pre-occupied with finding their cars and getting home.

It appeared that this dancing was far more exclusive than the singing which had come before. Perhaps for those chanters this was an affirmation of the roots of Clegg's music, a performance for those on the staircase and those stuck below in the hall, to show where Clegg's music came from, and a demand for the origins thereof to be recognised, and not just the final musical product.

This was a cross-cultural concert with ideas blending, dancing styles being swapped, English lyrics juxtaposed with Zulu lyrics, "mixed" couples dancing intimately, and a strong contingent of white people who I would ordinarily have stereo-typed as the conservative crowd having the times of their lives as Radio Five promised they would. It was most unusual and on a different planet to the Archi-Ball experience which I had previously had.

4.2.3 Aliwal Lighthouse - 18th September 1994

After the *Savuka* concert ended at 00:30, we went to the Aliwal Lighthouse for coffee only to find yet *another* brilliant local original band beginning their second set [of three] at 01.00. *This is This*, is a three-piece hard rock band with all songs and lyrics composed originally. This was not always the case, as job security demands saw the group playing covers for a time, but it appears that now the band will only play

original music:

Well it's got more difficult now that we're only playing our own stuff. [D.Birch ; 9]

The style and feel of the music, as well as the culture surrounding it, is light years *away*, not better or worse, from that of the *Urban Creep* I had just seen minutes before. Yet it is still entirely local and original. Where else in the world do you hear South African colloquialisms like, "Fuck you, China!" in a lyric? This type of lyric is accompanied by blistering, roaring, killer guitaring; big bad basslines; and hard, punctuating drumming. The musicianship in this band is of extremely high standard, just as the bands I had previously viewed were musically excellent.

The two remaining sets were pulled off wonderfully. The sound system was down-to-earth compared to the mammoth Clegg equipment I had just seen glowing in the dark at the Student Union hall. A simple mixer and P.A. system with a few speakers accompanied by the necessary backline equipment [the guitar amps and monitors owned by each musician] was all that was present apart from the actual instruments themselves: the drum kit, the guitars and the keyboard. The vocals were difficult to discern, but that is also partially due to the genre of the music.

All in all, this close-knit small coffee bar had as much atmosphere as the Clegg concert, but it was admittedly a small smoky club atmosphere, where you buy the lead guitarist a beer and ask him how he got that brilliant harmonic sound in the last song, at which stage he responds in great detail.

The audience that frequents the Aliwal are often the "last stop before I collapse at home" crowd who have gone to movies or parties or other concerts earlier in the evening and now just need a cup of coffee for the road. The atmosphere is often a little more laid back than in other clubs.

Sometimes, however, if a really good band is playing and have extensively advertised this fact, they will receive a lively rowdy audience who will fill the Aliwal to its capacity. The acoustics of the club are not always of excellent quality though, and it is better suited to a quieter type of band such as the *Famous*

Curtain Trick who would croon the evening by in the corner. On this occasion though, it looked like *This is This* were doing *just fine* in the limiting venue.

Compared to the tremendous applause for *Savuka*, the Aliwal audience with its loud clapping and occasional loud whistling seemed completely different. They were also responsive here, but not as much as one would expect from the quality of the music they were being offered. One of the ironies is that it could be due to the fact that this music has attained such a high standard that people associate its sound with that of a cover band. The musical arrangements are so well thought out that one could believe that this was a band that could not possibly be local, especially since they are musicians who have had to survive on cover versions until now. Perhaps the invaluable experience of lead singer-guitarist-songwriter David Birch who is from abroad could explain this overseas feel. Yet this is unique South-African music even though inspired by countless overseas influences, and the musicians playing it are on the survival line, since it is their only career, and there are only about five venues in Durban that cater for this music.

As a job, this gig would entail a considerable amount of effort from the musicians in setting up, packing up, soundchecking, driving and of course, performance. For the people who walk in from the night air and glance at the band as they order a coffee or a beer, this is just a band performing, doing what bands do. The patrons discuss the R12 movie they just saw two blocks away at the Metro, and spend another R10 on drinks. The band who may have been at work from about 11:00 onwards can expect about R5 from each person entering.

When *This is This* finish their final set, Birch continues to play a solo number accompanying himself on keyboard. The immediate assault on the senses of the preceding band is a thing of the past, and the relaxed piano and strings float with a softer singing voice. This almost inaudible melody gently drifts below the animated conversations which have risen in automatic response to the opportunity granted them by the lull. In this instant, as the music dies down in the Aliwal at 02:30, it is once again a dingy coffee bar as the band starts to pack up the equipment and carry it to the old combi waiting outside in the dark.

4.2.4 The Rift

Another venue at which original music is often performed, is the Rift of St Georges street. This has had a host of original bands over the last years, but the location is problematic. If one were to analyze the phrase "die-hard music fanatic", the operative word here is die. The area is traditionally unsafe, with the scurrying yellow police vans of the area virtually a permanent fixture. People running with guns are a commonplace occurrence, and serious mob fights and unrest have occurred here regularly. The venue has still enjoyed popular support though, and is one of the venues one would associate with original music in Durban. Apart from the location problems there are other problems within this venue.

Appalling ventilation when packing a capacity crowd, as well as a split in the club between live music on the one side and recorded music on the other side, are seriously degrading the value of the club from the point of view of local music. Due to this fact, the pounding of the musically more powerful sound system on the recorded music side penetrates the band room. This leads to strange combinations of music particularly when a quiet band is playing and somebody comes in from the loud side.

While watching the *Famous Curtain Trick* with its sweet crooning melodies and subtle understated guitaring, one can be greeted by a roar of aggressive *Body Count* from next-door. This musical oxymoron often deflates the mood of the live music in one rapid door swing...We are just some young South Africans sitting in a club watching somebody play something at us. The mood is gone. This club symbolically exemplifies the struggle that original music is involved in to make its way into the musical consciousness of an audience that often prefers recorded music.

4.2.5 Battles of the Bands

On some occasions, though, attention is *focused* on the band room. This could be due to the fact that a band from some other city is in Durban and people are interested in seeing this new band in action. On the other hand it could be a "battle of the bands" in which the crowd gets to follow their favourite band through several rounds of competition over perhaps two weeks of three evenings per week, leading up to a grand finale anti-climax in which the winning band receives an often mediocre prize. This is usually less than the cumulative amount of *normal expected earnings* that they should expect for the amount of playing

that they have just unwittingly done for the club.

The club owner, one would imagine, is battling to contain his laughter at the amount of people these bands have brought in, each paying an entrance fee of R6 as well as consuming *at least* R5 worth of alcohol. The eight larger than usual crowds that this attracts, as well as the guaranteed packed finale are definite earnings for the club, over and above the usual crowd who are dedicated to the recorded music next door anyway.

It appears that the only added overheads that this has for the club may be the additional hire of sound equipment that is not already owned, or additional petrol money for the club owner who needs to make far larger bank deposits more regularly.

This could justify a far larger amount of prize money, or at least a minimal appearance fee for the bands. Perhaps the blatantly exploitative nature of these competitions is the reason why they are not really attended by working musicians unless the prize money or exposure is so rewarding that the inconveniences are outweighed by the benefits.

When the benefits are not that prominent the people who play at these gigs are often younger musicians who stare starry-eyed at the club owners' golden cloth that he waves so alluringly: exposure, exposure, exposure.

Problems more generally associated with battles of the bands, and not limited to any particular club, are the wide ranging artistic deviations in repertoire that occur in these competitions. One could find [as occurred in the City Hall competition in July 1994] that gospel bands and jazz and fusion and funk and rock all compete with one another under one roof within three hours. The judges then face the problem of deciding who was the best band: no easy decision.

At the Umhlanga festival [April 1994] thrash metal virtuosity was pitted against folk rock charisma, and gospel honesty against grungey roar. The virtuosos were the victors. The prize for *Wastelands* efforts: a keyboard. For the second band, a smaller keyboard, and in third place - for *Freeloder* - a keyboard small enough for guesting drummer Antony Ellis to wave rapidly with his left hand while his other hand was raised in a mocking fist salute. The cost to enter this tent, a mere R10. Beer sales, astronomical. The crowd, huge and drunk.

It would appear that musicians earning a living by their music alone are more aware of these issues than other musicians who are playing for enjoyment only. The fact that most bands who make their living from music alone are not present at these fierce little battles is evidence that this is occurring already.

4.2.6 Rockadilly.

On a drizzly and unhappy Sunday afternoon [September 25] I took a walk to the Rockadilly Diner in Berea centre where I was to meet bass-player Logan Byrne for an interview. The Rockadilly Sunday afternoons have been an excellent venue for young bands to play for free and get the experience of playing to a crowd which is interested in hearing original local music. An addition to this was the "feature band" who gets paid for playing a set or two.

The Sunday afternoon muso club under the enthusiastic organisation of Harry from the Rockadilly went through different states of support. It was initially broadly welcomed as a brilliant idea, and was thus very well attended. However, after some impromptu cancellations by bands, leaving Harry in a deadly musical vacuum minutes before the shows were to begin, interest began to dwindle.

This was partially a response to a lack of organisation in the bands that played there [people trying to string together a few songs at the table, just so they can play on stage] and a dwindling support response from the audience. In broad Australian accent:

Sorry folks. It uhm seems like *Diesel Rotgut* are too hung over to play today after last nights' concert. They are here, but uhm they arent really here, if you know what I mean.
And so now, uh I would like to play something for you myself. [18th Sept 1994]

He hauls out his harmonica, and plays an "harmonica storm" for about five minutes, while I am sure he ponders just who is in the audience that he can get involved in a simple 12 bar blues jam to tide him and the audience over.

But the audience can only take so much of the impromptu bad blues jam which is often rustled up when an unexpected gap appears in the lineup; and soon, people start to lose interest. I asked an established artist why he thought the Rockadilly sometimes lacked support. He replied:

That's because there are too many little unrehearsed people going up, I mean you have got to have your shit together. [D.Birch ; 19]

Birch was also quick to point out that there are occasions when a really good vibe exists, such as the time when he performed there. [D. Birch ; 19]

Sundays are always different in the Rockadilly. A more musically oriented crowd who support local music, drink beer, and enjoy the relaxed atmosphere is usually present. The cover charge is R3. On this particular day, the club is almost deserted: except for a most extra-ordinary sight which one would never associate with the Rockadilly culture. The Rockadilly with its yuppie techno, slick dressing, weekday amusement, was a different place on this particular afternoon. A disco-dance outfit called *The Revealers* were living up to their name. They were playing flat out American dance music with an infectious 1970's disco vibe. On the dance floor were their support base: a screaming, yelping, whooping, dancing throng of avid young black supporters having a great time. There was no place for Harry's harmonica here! It was disco, disco, disco. Very repetitive guitaring, a pumping bass and keyboard synth sounds drove the now sweating crowd to dance distraction.

In an original music venue that traditionally caters for young white middle class wannabe's in the week and a more relaxed folk club/blues culture on a Sunday, here was a black cover band playing to a young, black, and in some cases barefooted audience. Where did they come from? Who were they? Why were they here? With these "revelations" or questions in mind, Logan and I walked home to a lengthy interview.

4.2.7 Urban Creep at the Africafe - 25th October 1994

At about 22:00, on the evening before the *Midnight Oil* concert, I drove down an abandoned Smith Street to a music venue. *Urban Creep*, fresh from their appearance up in Johannesburg at a combined *Midnight Oil*\Savuka\Sting\Dube\B-World concert, were playing to about 15 people in the Africafe. One of these people was a woman so drunk and noisy that I had to move my position so that I could hear the vocals.

The sound was raunchy, with the guitar of Chris Letcher really enjoying the venue. The band fired through a set, and two small girls stepped onto the dancefloor and danced to their favourite songs. This was a raw small-club performance. Between songs, one could hear the solid crack of a hectic pool game being contested in the corner.

In a way it was great to get this close to the performers. To see the set list, see the guitarist battling for space on the constricting stage, hear a band joke between songs. The band was brilliant. The venue was central, warm, comfortable and free. Nobody was here.

4.2.8 Midnight Oil and Urban Creep - 26 October 1994

Thousands of eager teenagers parked their cars and swarmed into a sopping wet Westridge Tennis Stadium, while stage helpers frantically ran to and fro and covered the front-line monitor speakers with large black and blue plastic sheets. Wet computickets worth R50 were slopped into the gatekeeper's waiting hands while people "downed" their drinks at the gate because alcohol was prohibited within the stadium. The rain was belting into the stage at an angle and the audience was more than a little nervous that this gig was not going to happen. While the rain intensified and people started to jostle for a position near the stage, I strained to see past wet heads and saw four distant figures running onto the stage. A hyper-*Creep* fired into the same set I had seen performed the evening before, under very different circumstances.

When we saw that Letcher was playing air-guitar [correct motion but no sound] due to atrocious mixing, my friends and I had only two words to say: "Ah, no!" He may as well have been doing ballet. There they were on the big stage, a hyper-active Jury with a turned-down viola. A bobbing Ross Campbell, playing on just cymbals. The convention of the support band having less than full sound taken to its absolute

extreme. The drums and bass were barely audible. Then the vocals began, and this sounded as if it was the only part of the music that had been sufficiently soundchecked. The crowd felt differently though, and the mere fact that music was starting was enough to cause an appreciative surge forward.

It is quite something to watch a band perform in a club one evening to almost no applause, and then to find yourself being shoved in a mass of thousands who applaud loudly after each song by the same band. The Westridge stage was giant in comparison to the one of the previous evening, and the band looked less comfortable in this non-familiar setting. Even for a band that has mastered its club act, this is always another big transition in performance. This factor is investigated more carefully in the next chapter.

At the Westridge concert one could actually hear the soundman, who was not in sight, but seated far at the back of the stadium, fix each aspect of the sound gradually while *Urban Creep* played. This started with the drums, gradually moved to the guitars, and finally the mix was as it should have been. Unfortunately the band had almost finished their short set. Of all the ironic twists that an original band has to face, another one awaited *Urban Creep*. As they waved their goodbyes and said their thankyou's, the rain abruptly halted. Umbrellas were folded up, raincoats dropped to the ground.

As the drying crowd awaited the final artists, people started pushing toward the front areas. The stage darkened gradually, as the Clegg stage had darkened on the 17th of September.

A lone figure stood at the back of the stage clad in customary Australian garb, including the necessary fly repellent hat. He started to play the didgeridoo. This man stalked across the stage motioning toward the rest of the band to join him. The other members glided quickly in the darkness toward their instruments. The sheer sound-power of a full-concert rig pounded into our stomachs as the band shunted into the first bars of the opening song. Suddenly, lead singer Peter Garret's pointed bald head and white shirt were the focus of rows of lighting that anticipated his arrival. The guitars were perfectly audible, the vocals crisp, the drums pounding. Nothing was wrong, apart from the treatment of *Urban Creep*.

Garret strutted and jumped his way robotically through the entire set, completely at home with the occasion. He paused every now and then to talk to the crowd:

Anybody who has a Whitney Houston ticket, tear it up! She is working for Pepsi.

On another occasion:

RBM, keep yer bloody hands off St Lucia!

And again:

You still like your own music now you hear? Don't go buying the British stuff. People kill to get to the top of that commercial pile, and they are dead in a day! Replaced by someone else. You hang on to your own culture now, you hear!

Garret was outspoken about music in South Africa retaining its own unique culture, and not emulating the fickle British rock scene. This is one of the crucial debates that South African music is currently going through. Is it possible for us to produce something unique *and* commercially viable? Can South Africa produce a band such as *Midnight Oil*?

Under Garret's frantic hands, which described hard geometric shapes in the air, the audience was very responsive, but not as ecstatic as one would have expected them to be. Many people simply stood still and sang along with the radio-friendly songs that have been imported into our country for many years now. In front, where we were, tempers rose slightly every now and then because of the lack of space. This may also have accounted for the lack of dancing in the audience. Compared to the Clegg audience, these people were statues. Perhaps the lack of alcohol sales within the stadium accounted for the relative rigidity of the audience.

The overseas act performed with a slickness and professionalism and confidence that needs to be captured by our bands. There is talent in Durban that matches if not exceeds that of *Midnight Oil*. The infrastructure is what is sorely lacking. Sound, lights, and stage experience are not comparable, yet. The audience is also not aware of the fact there is a wealth of original material happening in this country. They

are willing to pay up to R90 a ticket for an international artist, but not R10 for a local artist in a club.

We then got back into my car and drove to the Aliwal for coffee, where we listened to folk singer Mike Smith accompanying himself on guitar. These originals were for free.

4.3 CONCLUSION

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the local music performance industry so that the reader is aware of the feel of a performance, and what is going on behind the scenes. Venues from Coffee Bars, to Archi-Balls, to Stadiums, to Clubs and their associated forms of performance have been described. Many aspects of music, from equipment to inter-band rivalry have been mentioned. The audience responses in the different venues was also included. These descriptions should give one a good idea of "what it takes" to play original music as a career.

The chapters which follow deal with interviews conducted with every local musician mentioned in this chapter. The experiences of the musicians themselves are thus what follows. These experiences should be considered in the light of information from this chapter, since this chapter embodies the formats of "working music."

CHAPTER FIVE - WORKING MUSIC

INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes some of the important characteristics of "working music" as a job. It attempts to provide an answer to the question: "What factors make music a job?" It focuses on the nuts and bolts issues of musical employment by looking at the musicians' experiences of the production of music, and the processes at work in the job. It deals extensively with issues mentioned in Chapter Four - The Concert.

The term "musical production" in this dissertation does not refer specifically to the job ordinarily associated with production and engineering techniques or arrangement and sound manipulation done by a central co-ordinating person or people. Instead, it is used in a far broader sense, associated with production as a form of a larger process. In this sense, "music production" refers to what is happening when the lights hit the stage, and the sounds of a band hit the audience. It also refers to a dingy rehearsal room where arrangements to songs are painstakingly thought out; as well as to the actual physical performances of these songs on the stage. "Musical production" encompasses all the processes which are required for the performance of the music. Thus, the surrounding industries such as lighting and sound provision, promotion, advertising and radio, are all necessary components of an original music production. This is one of the central points of the dissertation; specifically, that music as a form of employment is composed of a host of fragmented non-musical tasks which together constitute "working music".

The emphasis of this chapter is on the fact that although original local music performance may not *look like a job*, it *is* a job which is composed of many different aspects. When combined, these aspects form a special labour process unique to this production.

The second part of the chapter examines the careers of the musicians interviewed and explains how some of these people have had to take up other forms of backup employments to support their music.

5.1 Production Process

This chapter aims to show how musical production is a performance commodity, with real workers doing a real job. The number of categories to be investigated is thus limited to those aspects that have important bearings on music production as a form of employment.

5.1.1 Forms of production

The descriptions in the previous chapter include music occurring in festivals, clubs and concerts. These spheres of performance differ importantly in that the musician experiences them as distinct employment opportunities.

a] Clubs

Clubs normally involve the artist bringing much of the equipment required for the performance, depending on how dedicated the venue is to music production. For example, the Rift has now got a band room, permanent power systems, and a mixing desk booth at the back of the room to facilitate easier mixing. Other clubs simply have a stage. Others have nothing. There is also a difference in the related activities around the performance. For example, bands may have to advertise a club gig themselves, physically making posters and sticking them up in area where they will be visible to the target audience. Concerts would entail the promoter doing such things.

The club gig is the survival base of original bands. When no concerts are happening, these artists still have to make a living, and this involves finding a club that will accept them, and do business with them. The club is thus normally the smallest workplace that the musician will find himself in, often with the least reward.

The duration of the sets is normally longer here, since the band may be the only entertainment of the evening. The owner may even expect up to four sets of music, which is very difficult for an original band.

[U.C. ; 3] The pay for club gigs is relatively lower than the other forms of musical employment.

According to John Ellis, the durations of the sets in South Africa is longer than that expected overseas:

You see, another thing is that the bands play three sets a night here. This is unheard of overseas. [J.E. ; 5]

Dave Birch agrees:

Also a lot of it is that you are stretching your playing time. Instead of playing just one set, you are forced to play two or three. [D.Birch ; 30]

The standard rate for a band on a club evening, appears to be between about R400 and R750 presently. [U.C. ; 3] [N.vdS. ; 5] The type of clubs which original musicians perform in are described in Chapter Four

b] Concerts and festivals.

Concerts often involve less work for the bands in the pre-production phases of setting up and sound-checking, because there is normally some central body involved which is attending to these issues. Similarly, the organisers of concerts and festivals normally are out to make money for themselves, and thus will advertise extensively on radio, in the press and by printing flyers and posters.

The band is able to focus more on the actual musical performance, a blessing for these musicians. The set durations are also shorter since many bands are congregated in one location. This means that bands are able to play with more energy, and are able to focus on their best material at the gig.

However, the business of putting on a live show involves a careful manipulation of the sounds of the bands according to the wishes of the promoters. As mentioned in Chapter Four, this sometimes leads to the support band being seriously disadvantaged. This was evident at the *Urban Creep* performance at Westridge Tennis Stadium, [26th October 1994] and the Clegg performance at the University. [17th September 1994]

A similar disparity in sound quality was evident in a television production of the Johannesburg concert which featured: *Sting*, Clegg, Lucky Dube, *B-World* and *Urban Creep*. The difference in sound mixing and overall sound quality of the day-time bands, *B-World* and *Urban Creep*, as compared to the evening

rendition of "Roxanne" by *Sting* was striking. One would expect a certain amount of standardisation of performance when bands share the same stage. Even though bands that were performing in clubs do sound bigger and better in some instances, they are hardly ever granted the privilege of having the same volume output as the feature artist. This is done in order to consciously boost the levels and stir the audience into action when the international artist arrives on stage. The importance of performance technology is dealt with in Chapter Seven.

I asked some artists to describe performance on large stages for huge crowds. Logan Byrne, a bass player who featured with local band *Scooters Union* as the supporting band for *Mango Groove* and *Crowded House* on separate occasions, had this to say about the different feel of a live performance:

Yah, reality really only struck a bit later. But we pulled it off. After seeing all those people with their hands in the air... [L.B. ; 10]

The support band for *Foreigner*, *St Legend*, also had problems with the much larger scale of performance involved and the different production setup:

Suddenly you're out on a stage seven nights in a row in front of 10 000 people. [J.E. ; 5]

Ellis describes the awkwardness of being made mobile by a technology not usually utilised by South African bands:

You've got this wire rig on your guitar, so you can go wherever you want to, but you don't know where to go because you are not used to it. So you're so used to being squashed into this tiny space. Like in little clubs. Suddenly, you've got to impress the people with your visual appearance.

[J.E. ; 5]

One could easily imagine how an artist would feel daunted when playing in a format of production to which he is unaccustomed. Ellis attributes this daunting feeling to a lack of experience in bands:

There's no place to go play stadiums. *Urban Creep*, I mean they work in a club, *Zap Dragons* too, but I doubt if they are going to pull it off on a big stage. [J.E. ; 6]

The production process described in Chapter Four has dealt with venues from: concert stadia to coffee bars. It has dealt with the very large range of venues that original music appears at, and the associated working aspects of music in these settings. As mentioned in the previous chapter, bands frequently have to adapt themselves to the circumstances of the performance. A band can find itself in a club on one day, in a stadium the next and on television a week later.

Another completely different aspect of production is the recorded music process, which is the sphere where the product of the band stands the chance of becoming a mass commodity. This is dealt with as a separate issue in Chapter Seven. However, even the recording sphere of music needs to be supported by a performance aspect. David Marks, a person experienced in the record industry claims:

There is only two groups in the history of Billboard, that have ever gone into the Billboard 100, that aren't groups, that are just studio groups. And in fact one of them, *Steely Dan* became a group after they got the hits. [D.M. ; 3]

Marks emphasises the importance of live performance in a music career. He estimates that of the 25 000 musicians in South Africa, only about 1000 are making a living as recording artists. The other 24 000 are not able to survive by recording, thus they do so by performance. [D.M. ; 4]

5.1.2 The need for travel

The bands that are involved in original music as a serious form of employment raised the issue of having to travel extensively in order to survive on their music alone. Due to audiences that get tired of hearing the same band. [J.E. ; 3] [B.W. ; 2] and a lack of music venues, bands are thus constantly on the move in order to find places to play, and people to play for. It is often a well-travelled original band which stands on the stage before the audience. Dave Birch spoke about the need for travel:

Well it's got more difficult since we are playing just our own stuff. Once we have established a regular circuit of smaller gigs, not just in Durban, but also in and around Natal, then I think it's feasible to make a living, to make money and live. It's a living though, and that's all, and it's not going to make you big bucks. [D.B. : 9]

B-World, a band based in Johannesburg described how much they travelled:

Last week. We drove on Thursday night, we basically had two hours off that whole weekend, and then we drove back from Cape Town. It gets really hectic. We travelled 3000 kilometres in two days. [B.W. ; 5]

Urban Creep also said this:

But to do that we have had to travel extensively, probably at least four to five times per month to Johannesburg. [U.C. ; 2]

When I asked *B-World* if they played often and were busy, they replied:

Yes, we have to be, we play every weekend. Johannesburg, Cape Town, Bloemfontein, Durban. [B.W. ; 2]

This extensive travel is also a cause of stress amongst the musicians, especially those with families, and wives:

Yah, it's a lot of schlepping. A lot of being away from your family, not having household comforts that most people are accustomed to. You have to keep moving. You can't put your feet up at night and watch TV and relax. You have to think all the time. Fuck, where am I going to sleep tonight? How are we going to get home? What is happening tomorrow? [I.J. ; 15]

In Chapter Four, the description of the Archi-Ball shows some of the activities which a band from Johannesburg could possibly be involved in. This issue is again dealt with in the section below entitled: *Gigging conditions and Health*.

5.1.3 Originals versus covers

A comparison needs to be made here: cover versions or renditions of other peoples songs versus original music. This distinction is of interest because the two musics are entirely different as jobs. Original music takes longer to get together because the arrangement is being created from scratch without any guidelines as to how the song should be structured, or arranged. It is thus a more intensive process. There has been a pronounced shift in the amounts of original music in Durban over a very short time, almost directly coinciding with the general election, and the political changes that have occurred in the country. For example, in 1992 there were approximately four or five original bands in Durban who were gigging on a regular basis. These were *Scooters Union*, *Plagal Cadence*, *Saint Legend*, *Soul Vitamin*. Currently, there is a large amount of bands which are springing up in every neighbourhood and advertising gigs.

Original music does not benefit from radio exposure in South Africa due to a lack of interest from profit-oriented record companies who choose the more viable option of importing and distributing overseas hits. This means that original songs performed live are not recognisable at first to audiences, and as soon as they are recognisable, the audience starts to want something newer:

You find in this town, that you can go around in circles. I mean we actually had to make special trips to Cape Town in December. [N.vdS. ; 9]

I expand on this aspect in Chapter Eight in a discussion of "Culture and Imperialism".

It is thus essential that original bands maintain a brisk change of locations in order to remain interesting to the audience. This demands that bands keep moving rapidly, as described by *B-World* and *Urban Creep*. Cover versions, on the other hand, are easier to learn, to rehearse, and to perform since the entire song format is worked out already, and the catchy arrangement which made it a hit overseas is an immediate success with the crowd. The crowd gets to hear what they hear on the radio, and buy from CD shops, and the band gets an easy response depending on how authentically they pull the song off. It is not simply a case of the musicians being able to learn covers more easily, but due to the entire culture of a cover performance it is also easier to get gigs, and to get residence gigs which are much higher paying than the average original gig, and a much more stable form of employment.

A band engaged in continual original gigging, and travelling extensively to Johannesburg can expect R1000 a month per member. [U.C. ; 2] A band involved in cover versions and secure residency is assured up to R12 000 for three members. [D.B. ; 21]

However, original bands that do manage to become well known and have some form of recording can command higher prices from clubs:

As soon as you get your album out, your credit rating shoots up. I mean I know that in their lineup [*Tananas*] their minimum wage is R2500. [N.vdS. ; 10]

There is also a less travel involved for a cover band, as opposed to an original band which has the burden of petrol costs to facilitate all the touring necessary to survive.

Although there are definite advantages to playing cover version music, the musicians interviewed all expressed negative comments about the creative criteria in cover music:

The residency has everything set up, so it looks like the easiest way to make a living as a musician; but its soul destroying. A mental drain. [U.C. ; 19]

In Durban there currently seems to be a "cycle" in which cover bands rotate residencies. Birch claims that this format is not possible for original music:

I don't think the cycle applies, the cycle is really for cover bands because how could a band playing originals play in a spot for three months? It's not healthy for the band. [D.B. ; 29]

Some musicians claim that cover music is a necessary training ground for original musicians. Ian Jeffries, a professional drummer, mentions that the cover band is a good place for prospective original musicians to learn their trade. He claims that some of the necessary mechanics in performance such as the ability to learn song structures, are learnt in cover music. [I.J. ; 4]

Most of the musicians interviewed were involved in cover bands before they got involved in original music:

Ya, we've all been in a couple of cover bands before this, only recently people are turning to

originals. [B.W. ; 3]

According to the bands above, original music is a new form of musical employment, and still very uncharted. The structure of this form of employment is still being moulded, and a large deal of uncertainty exists in both the venues and the artists as to what this job really entails. For example, Dave Birch mentions the fact that club owners cannot decide whether they want originals or covers played in their venues:

All the older places who are now becoming venues for original music are managed by people who wouldn't have anything to do with original music previously, only cover bands. So they keep blowing hot and cold: one week they think original is cool; next week they say, "Can you guys play a few covers?" [D.B. ; 17]

Birch recalls the story of how his band is asked to do covers in a venue that has just started to become known as an original venue. [D.B. ; 17]

Very recently, there appears to be a new format for original music in which a "mini-residency" occurs. For example, at the Aliwal Lighthouse there are currently bands playing on Thursdays, Fridays and Saturdays. Each ^{COVER} original band plays for a day or two per week, and then the other original band plays on the subsequent day. In essence, it is as if the bands return every week for a one-off gig.

The structures of the employment agreements in cover bands and original bands are also different. Due to the fact that original bands are moving around so often, the agreements are often non-formal and verbal. The cover bands are negotiated by agents for large amounts, and for protracted periods of time:

They're after the three month cycle jobs where they get a big check; their ten percent. [D.B. ; 29]

According to Birch, every three months these cover bands re-negotiate their contracts via agents, and play a large scale version of musical chairs, setting up for three months in a club and waiting for the next big shakeup. [D.B. ; 29] Due to the nature of the music, a regular crowd can be attracted, and thus the club owner is assured a certain amount of alcohol sales which is the determining factor of the wage of the band. Bands thus get an important reputation for "pulling crowds", a tune club managers like to hear.

Original bands normally negotiate through a manager, or an articulate band member who attempts to get the best deal possible. The amounts negotiated are much lower, and normally only pertain to a couple of evenings at the most.

Importantly, the musicians interviewed who are currently involved in cover version music on a full-time basis claimed that they would rather be playing originals:

When the money is good, it's soul destroying. When you are playing music that is from yourself, that is part of you, that you dig, you end up sacrificing something financially. [I.J. ; 8]

Some of the reasons behind the disparity between original music and covers are discussed in Chapter Eight, in a section which deals with "culture and imperialism." The reasons which some of the musicians gave, indicate the importance of history, and the fact that South Africa has predominantly been involved in cover music in the popular music sphere. The fact that covers are *accepted as the norm in South African popular music* has impacted on the way in which musicians perceive popular music. Ellis attempts to explain why the cover scene is so much more entrenched than original bands:

All we are exposed to here are duos, one man bands with computers in clubs. All the bands grow up playing covers. So you come up with the idea that you have to play covers. [J.E.; 4]

Cover version music is not limited only to the club environment though. As a result cover musicians sometimes have more options for employment than original musicians. When asked about what fields of employment he was involved in, Jeffries claimed that he was involved in a "show". Upon further investigation, it was found that this was the backing music to a Natal Playhouse production involving music from past eras:

Well, I'm not doing anything else. I suppose the show that I am doing is like a job. The show for instance is a financial decision to cover the rent and that for a couple of months. So basically this is the kind of show that I take on.

I asked him to clarify what the show entailed:

It entails being, well to a certain extent it is just like a job. You have to be there early in the morning, and make yourself available and as professional as possible. [I.J. ; 2]

It thus appears that cover version music, and "shows" such as the one that Jeffries is involved in are sometimes very structured and more formalised than original music which leaves the band up to its own devices to uncover gig opportunities. It also seems as if the cover version sphere of employment is more regular than the original sphere:

There are eight shows a week. You really don't have much time off at all. [I.J. ; 2]

Jeffries takes opportunities such as these performances for the Playhouse to help with finances, but he still spends a lot of time in music involved with cover versions in bars. He has been involved in several different original projects, including *Soul Vitamin* and *Urban Creep*.

I asked a sound technician involved in the provision of sound equipment to both original and cover music bands, as well as a performer in both spheres, if he noticed any differences in the respective forms of performance:

The cover band was just, well it just holds no challenge at all. It holds a challenge in that you have to get the song to sound right. It holds no challenge on a creative level. You are just reproducing something else. You lose touch with how to construct music. You become so technically oriented that you don't recognise a song any-more. [P.D. ; 8]

During protracted periods of time in which Darley went in to check on his equipment, he noticed the following about cover bands:

Well, ja. What you notice about them is that there is a progressive downward spiral. They become worn out over a period of time. They tend to start at a certain level, slowly but surely they drift into obscurity. Basically they are only going through changes in members. There is no end- point really. You see people playing six nights a week whatever, playing

the same thing. Ah, man. What is the end-point really? Besides earning a "similarish" figure for ever and ever. This is the difference you see. I would say that originals should be played at one-offs. [P.D. ; 11]

5.1.4 Performance

The performance of an original music band, as mentioned above, does not normally occur within one venue for more than a couple of consecutive evenings. There is only a fleeting chance for the public to get a look at the band. The performances are usually short and concise. They are shorter than the repertoire of the cover bands.

As mentioned in Chapter Four, the actual moment when the music starts up, is the culmination of many different factors which are unseen, but which are most important since they are the reason that this music is a form of employment, and not just a fun activity.

These factors include: transport; equipment costs and hire; rehearsal time and room hire; personal years of dedication to the instruments; setting up of all the equipment and sound-checking before the gig. A single performance, although it is very fleeting [two to three hours] embodies considerable effort on the part of the musician. To achieve a standard of excellence, these bands are not able to do anything else with their days:

That's the major thing with gigging in Jo'burg and that. You know, a decent gig for an original band is a whole days work. It's like getting there at sometimes 10:00 am. Setting up your equipment. Doing tedious sound-checks. [I.J. ; 5]

Most bands have a very personalised approach which they use in the way in which they go about setting up, but there are certain common areas. All bands like to be organised smoothly. They also all like to achieve a good sound at the sound-check:

This band is quite organised. We normally get there around 17:00, sound-check for about two hours 'til 19:00, go home, come back to the club at about 22:00, play til about 01:00, get home at about 03:00. [U.C. ; 18]

I asked another artist how his band went about preparing for an average small-club gig, such as the Aliwal club discussed in Chapter Four. He claimed that the pre-production time involved in carting gear and setting up this gear is about five hours. Time spent actually singing and playing guitar, is minimal in proportion to the time spent in preparation for the event. Yet, the actual playing of the music is the part which people regard as the job of the musician:

You might get there at six o'clock. Ready to play at 22:00. That means getting ready at 17:00, packing everything into the car, get to the Aliwal at 18:00. Setting up, lets say a basic setup, that's three hours already. Then get through some songs, feel completely comfortable with everything, that's already about three hours, more than the time you play anyway. [N.vdS. ; 12]

Other tasks, such as the printing of posters, which sometimes occurs an entire week before the gig are also a part of the performance. At this particular club, the musicians often have to personally extract cash from the patrons due to the fact that the club does not organise the door management. These tasks surround musical performance.

During the actual performance time, "when it all happens", the band on stage is normally infinitely more aware than the audience of what is going correctly, and that which is going curiously astray in the music. Due to the fact that these bands rehearse the material so often, and attempt to decide on and improve on musical arrangements, they are usually very aware of where they located musically in the song. For example, if they have just completed a chorus, or a leadbreak is coming up, all members know their location

and role within this production process.

If somebody is not sure of where they are, they watch somebody else to confirm their location. The drummer waits for a lifted arm, while the bassist is watching the guitarist. Clarity of song location is normally facilitated by the vocals, which have a guiding role in the song, and the actions of the frontman. Due to the fact that a careful comment directed away from the microphones will not be picked up acoustically above the offstage sound booming at the crowd, there is a certain amount of freedom for members to confer during the song. "Leadbreak" or "Chorus" can actually be said loudly on stage without affecting the audience's perception at all. A simple nod to the guitarist does the same job. These non-verbal, and careful verbal cues are a skill to be developed, just as important as playing the instrument.

Intra-band communication and functioning is a part of the show that the audience may not even be aware of. On Paul Simon's Gracelands Tour in Durban [1991], it was possible to see Paul Simon raising eight fingers to Ray Phiri before a solo to indicate the duration. On some occasions, Simon walked across the stage to various members and chatted to them quickly about what was going to happen in the song. This "direction" is the central co-ordination of musicians who have sometimes never played together. This is discussed in the description of an Urban Creep concert at the University of Natal in Chapter Four.

5.1.5 Rehearsal

Rehearsal is the basis for performances and possibly one of the least-recognised forms of work in music. To a club owner who claims that the band is only playing for an hour, the reply would be that this took months of rehearsal to get ready. It is the grounding, and the place where the physical effort and talent of musicians are planned and co-ordinated into a comprehensive structure in which each member knows his part within this unique division of labour:

I'll tell you what man, some of the stuff that *Landscape Prayers* did was hectic man. You know, the nitty gritty music itself? Hectic! Sometimes we practice three times a week. So, that's nine sessions for one song.

The artist continued and explained how band confidence has to be bred in these rehearsal stages:

Some of the changes are difficult. There's a lot of stop-start, sometimes it takes us three weeks before we are confident enough to play a song out. It's not the kind of band where you can haul a song a night. [N.vdS. ; 11]

Especially when cover versions are not being done, this is the most crucial yet least-recognised part of the employment relationship between the members of the band and ultimately the clients or club-owners.

For a cover version band, a rehearsal would be an attempt to see how accurately a band can adhere to an already proven formula, whereas an original band rehearsal is a search *for* a formula.

This crucial part of the job goes unpaid, and the musician can only hope that the audience will perceive the quality of the product by the overall effect of the performance. I asked some bands how often they rehearsed. *B-World* said:

Practice, sound-checks, it's never really in a routine so it's hard to say. Normally we practice every day from about 12:00 to 18:00. It's like a creative rehearsal, you know? Not just playing the song again and again, but more like lets see what we can come up. Lets work on this. Like, sometimes, Ross pulled his tendon last week, a stress related thing, and this meant that we did nothing for a week. [B.W. ; 5]

When I asked *Urban Creep* the same question, they replied:

As often as possible, normally about five hours. [U.C. ; 18]

Due to the fact that this part of the job is unseen, it is not always adequately rewarded. The amount of time that the musicians need to refine and actually maintain their skills is not even considered by the owner of a club who hires them. If anything, the club owner only appreciates the skills of the band via a series of consequences. For example, the band practises hard, thus they are more confident, thus they are more pleasing to the crowd, thus the crowd buys more beer and frequents the club more regularly, and thus the club owner likes the fact that the band is well rehearsed. An established musician claimed that the maintenance of musical skill at a certain level was very important for him:

But one of the more depressing things is, there is a certain amount of time that you need to put in just to keep even, you lose it fast. [D.Brubeck ; 6]

The need for rehearsal was mentioned by all the bands. In some cases, musicians involved in more than one project would be involved in rehearsal all day, and then with another group in the evening:

I have been rehearsing in the day til about 14:00, then I go home, and start rehearsal at 17:00 again. [L.B. ; 9]

Rehearsal thus has a large potential for filling up a musician's entire day, and is an integral part of that life.

5.1.6 Capital for equipment

The amount of capital required for music performance is one of the most limiting factors of original music in South Africa. Some of the reasons why our equipment is so expensive are dealt with in Chapter Eight. Apart from the equipment-cost differential between South Africa and other countries, other factors directly linked to the particular structure of a South African original music career necessitate higher costs. For example, because clubs are not always geared towards live music, bands often *have* to have equipment which would normally be seen as the club's responsibility. The importance of technology for the musician is also an important factor in determining the shape of the job. Certain standards of sound need to be maintained in order for the musicians to be accepted by the audience. These standards are normally very closely linked to technology and this is discussed in Chapter Seven.

I asked bands if there was any level of equipment or expertise that they thought a band required before going professional. *B-World* claimed:

You definitely need a certain minimum standard of equipment. Microphones, P.A. equipment, transport and stuff. We try to make money. It's all money you know. [B.W. ; 6]

The amount of money required for any musician to be feasibly professional, means that the job of playing music is capital intensive. It requires the presence of an expensive P.A. system, and equipment up to R70 000 for one band, [U.C. ; 3] or very large amounts for even one member:

25 to 30 grand. I've got the simplest stuff in the world [J.E. ; 18]

Thus there is a definite requirement for capital in this business. It once again relates to the quality of the performance directly, because the best equipment sounds the best! Musicians are also in the unenviable position of not being able to obtain bank credit because their job is not recognised as a form of employment. One prominent band were in serious debt the last time I spoke with them.

If one looks at the amount of capital that is required for a band to perform, then it is clear that this is not just a job that can be done without a significant amount of financial outlay. For a single member to be a part of a band, for example, a drummer, the required equipment is worth about R 20 000. [U.C. ; 3]

One would assume that forms of musical production which have higher capital outlays would receive higher wages. This is not always the case. There are large-scale disparities that exist between the wage received by performers of original music, and DJ's [Disc Jockeys] who play recorded music:

If you think, a DJ has about R10 000 to R15 000 worth of equipment that he takes to a gig; and the average DJ charges about R750 a night. For us to ask for, and they feel quite generous in granting this, is about R400 a night. We go in there, we bring, and this is a conservative estimate, about R60 000 of equipment with us as a band including our own P.A. system. [U.C. ; 3]

Bands look after their equipment very carefully because it represents a considerable investment on their part. Thus, bands do not leave equipment in dangerous places, since it is highly sought after and frequently stolen. *This is This's* leader claimed:

It's money, you know. That's all money wrapped up in gear. How many dudes do you know of who just lose their stuff? It's gone, it's nicked. You've got to be economical with everything. You just can't afford to be careless. Something done in a lazy way is going to cost you in some other way. [D.B. ; 34]

5.2 Working Conditions

5.2.1 Gigging conditions and health

Due to the venues that the original band plays at, especially at clubs, there are specific working conditions that occur regularly enough to be described as the work environment of working music. These often lead to adverse health conditions for musicians. Apart from the actual stress of having to keep travelling and moving around, the musician is also subjected to health hazards within the club:

When you play in a club, there's usually bad ventilation. Uh, a lot of smoke, and if you are doing two or three sets a night, drink usually. The main problem all of us have in the band is like a permanent post-nasal drip, not from taking drugs, but just from being hot and then cold, hot and cold. Sweating, breathing in smoke all night. [D.Birch ;29]

The musicians occasionally suffer from stress-related illnesses:

These last two weeks have been incredible stress! I have had an ulcer for two years now.

Stress illnesses happen. Seriously, ulcerations and so on. [U.C. ; 19]

It is interesting to note how some of the musicians spoken to actually wanted to get away from the audience between sets. This need for privacy was mentioned by more than one musician. Brubeck claimed that his worst gigs were under these circumstances:

Well, what can I say? The sound is bad, the ventilation is non-existent, it's too crowded so there is no place to go between sets. [D. Brubeck ; 21]

Jeffries confirmed this:

Another thing is it's emotionally draining. It's not like you can go backstage and go home.

When you are playing like that you are going back out into the audience. You are sitting at the same bar as them, and you are listening to their crap. [I.J.; 10]

The time spent in a club environment determines how adversely the health of the musician is affected. In some bands such as cover bands, the musicians perform up to six nights a week, for five hours a night. If one wants to understand the impact of these circumstances on a musician's health, it is useful to draw a comparison between music performance, and the normal "going out for an evening" which the audiences

do. When people dance for an entire evening and drink and smoke, they invariably go home completely exhausted. Doing this for a living, is a very difficult occupation. In a cover band, the problem is exacerbated:

Smoke, physical problems. Overexposure for a start. It's a killer. You get tired of playing Top 20 stuff. You end up sweating out for like four to five hours a day that you have to play for. You have to deal with people when they are really ugly; the least appealing. At two or three a.m. they are really ugly. Drinking. A lot of people are really out of it. It usually becomes a sort of jester performing. That kind of thing really gets to you. [I.J. ; 9]

The band thus has conditions threatening to physical health to deal with in the club. Apart from the physical problems such as hearing loss, perpetual coughs, post-nasal drips, drinking habits, there is the sheer *dirt* of clubs:

You also get dirty unloading your equipment. Every now and then we just sit down and clean all the cables, because they get caked in beer and shit.

Musicians are also exposed to human interactions that are not always safe. Due to the location of the venues, and the substances consumed at these venues, sometimes the band is not an entirely happy functioning unit. Interactions with the audience are not always civil:

Yah, look I've had people coming up and sort of, they want to sit and start hitting the drums. You actually have to push them, or hold them away. [I.J. ; 9]

In some cases, the audience actually forgets that the band is a professional group of people, and may start to become abusive:

Richard used to say to people, "Hey, take it easy we are here to perform for you."

[I. J.; 10]

Jeffries recalls an instance where a band member lost his temper as an audience member bumped into him roughly:

This big dude stumbled back into him, and knocked over his mike-stand. He actually threw, well "put" his guitar down and grabbed the guy and pushed him back. Then this big

commotion broke out. It got really hectic. [I.J. ; 10]

These interactions are sometimes extremely dangerous. When guns start to be produced, the band is more than aware of these dangers:

Jo'burg, the guy started to pull a gun on the band. Simon got really impatient with the guy.

There was some dude who was very, very stressed out. You could see that he hated his job, really stressed out, just waiting to explode, you know. So we said to Simon, "Don't worry, lets go, lets go, lets go!" There is a lot of that as well you know. A lot of fucking bullying. Little musicians have no chance. [I. J. ; 18]

Most of the musicians interviewed had a great love for what they do. They claimed, however, that the most stressful aspect of the job is the financial side. I discuss this below in the section dealing with the relationship with employers. Financial stress is one of the reasons why musicians are so aware when they are not receiving their full wage, or the promised amount:

The biggest stress is money. Financial security. I can deal with everything else. I can deal with not sleeping for two days at a time. I can deal with the travel, seven hours at a time, I don't mind taking shit from these ou's [points at rest of band], but when you literally earn half of what the union says a local sweeper has to earn! No way. [U.C. ; 21]

5.2.2 Intra-band relationships

The internal dynamics of a band are also stressful. In any working relationship where creativity is the basis of the labour; relationships are sometimes be strained. The living conditions under which original bands have to survive sometimes make matters worse. All the artists interviewed agreed that there was a very close inter-personal relationship in bands:

It's an intimate thing. It's more emotional than other jobs. It's not just a business thing. In music it's emotional, and a kind of spiritual thing as well. It takes everything you have got. It's not like you can switch off, it's always there. [I.J. ; 14]

This was also claimed by *B-World*, *Urban Creep*, *Landscape Prayers*, *This is this*, *The Famous* *Curtain Trick*, most musicians that I spoke to:

Its like *Landscape Prayers* is a little love affair. [N.vdS. ;36]

The subject matter which musicians deal with is also very susceptible to causing conflict within bands. Because the creative inputs of the musicians all form the musical product which is the commodity, it can be an especially tender task to co-ordinate and constructively criticise musicians' individual inputs, especially if a strong difference of opinion arises. For example, one member of the band may have a certain drum beat in his head, while the other has a different idea. It is difficult for the members to come to exactly the same idea in the end without at least a slight compromise from both. The task of dealing with musical ego's does not always exist though, and some more professional bands have found better means of communication, [N.vdS. ; 4], have a stronger authority figure, or have a worked-out structure which all are happy with. [B.W. ; 24]

An aspect of potential conflict between band members is the strain brought on by the need for extensive travel, and touring:

Stress related kinds of things. You get run down. And it takes its toll on the band. It's like being in a relationship. It's like a love-hate relationship. You are always living in close proximity, like squatting on people's floors and so on. It's very trying. You have to try to be very diplomatic and patient with each other. [I.J. ; 13]

5.2.3 Inter-band conflict and relationships

Conflict between bands and a rivalry for public attention appears to be a part of the job of playing music. [See Chapter Four for a description of the two headline acts, and the pointed comments made about one another.] There is fierce competition amongst the bands to be considered as the "hottest" band around. This would explain some of the "niggling" which was witnessed at certain concerts. Such competition appears to be more prevalent in the younger bands around. [N.vdS. ;29] This competition is apparently even fiercer

in Johannesburg:

Yah, it's healthy. Danny said at Wings that 50 percent of the audience is there to watch you fuck up, watch you fall, so you had better play well, or else! [N.vdS ; 29]

There may also be competition between younger bands and older bands as evidenced by *B-World's* comments to sceptic older bands:

So what have you achieved, got to show? [B.W. ; 23]

However, it still looks as though the fiercest competition is between bands of similar age groups and competing for the same audience support. In attempting to describe how they had experienced the Archi-Ball, *B-World* claimed:

Last night was a different story. [B.W. ; 24]

When I tried to clarify whether this was competition, they replied:

Not really, but there was something happening between the bands. [B.W. ; 24]

Perhaps this is *B-World's* way of claiming that they felt pressure being the last band to play in the evening, and that there was a rivalry happening which they were aware of. I tried to capture this aspect in Chapter Four in the description of the Archi-Ball.

Even though inter-band rivalry seems to be a strong feature of this job, there are also strong positive points of the relationship between the bands. Band members sometimes lend equipment to one another in times of crisis, as well as helping out with sound-checks and advice about the music.

5.2.4 Relationship with employers

Most of the bands interviewed indicated that the relationship with the club was not formalised in a contract, but most often it was verbally dealt with. [U.C. ; 16] There is a difference between the original music and the cover version music in this respect, because the cover version circuit is more regulated through written contract. Birch, who had been involved in both fields claimed that the money difference in the different spheres meant that agents were not attracted to the original music circuit, because it did not pay well enough. [D.B. ; 29]

There also appears to be a reluctance in the South African musician sphere to be involved with contracts in contrast to America, where the employment relationship is far more regulated, according to Darius Brubeck:

You mention the word "contract" and everyone gets super-paranoid and it has to be as thick as a telephone book. In the states we do everything by contract. It is simple and understood by both sides. [D.Brubeck ; 10]

The relationship that exists between the club owner/manager and the musicians is an important and controversial issue amongst these musicians. It appears that there is a mutual dependence between club and musician. The musician needs exposure and a form of employment. The club needs a clientele that only music can really guarantee. The unit of currency between the owners and the musicians is alcohol.

So Bob tells me that we are pulling people, but they aren't buying drinks, so he is not better off. And, can't we play some of the older stuff? Get some of the older people back in here. [D.B. ; 24]

Depending on the amount of alcohol that is sold while the music is being performed, the relative strengths of the bargaining powers of band and manager are shaped. The amount of "drawing power" that the band has, in the perception of the club owner, will determine what type of wage negotiations occur:

We were tuning the owners, "Do you want to keep us? It's going really well here, we've been offered a deal with Shunters, and soon we're gonna have to say yes or no". I told them what we had been offered and said, "All you have to do is match it, we don't want more, all we'd like to do is stay at this place". [D.B. ; 22]

A history is, therefore, very important for a band. To investigate this informal bargaining forum I asked the musicians if they had ever had any "trouble" with managers and owners. This was enough to start most musicians up. Mike Smith claimed:

But looking at it straight up, I have come across bad times, bad people. Who just want to rip you off! And they tell you, "Oh well, it's exposure." To hell with exposure! This is our

job. You are paying him to uplift his business. You are there to promote the business. He knows it, but at the same time he plays blind to it. [M.S. ; 1]

Smith continues with an explanation of what happens when musicians start to get difficult when they don't need the gigs financially:

He said to me, "You are full of shit." So I said to him, "No, I am not full of shit, I am telling you what I am about. I'd rather sit in my home and lay down and get fat instead of coming to make you fat." [M.S. ; 3]

The perception of musicians that clubs are only interested in making money is a common element in all the interviews. Some strongly expressed views convinced me that there is a lot of resentment of some club owners in particular. Byrne claimed that:

They are just there for the money, bar takings. [L.B. ; 3]

However, this was by no means something common to all club owners. When I asked Byrne whether club owners were interested in promoting the bands in their venues, he claimed:

Some go out of their way, and some don't really give a shit, you know. Like advertising is not even on their agenda. Which sucks badly because they judge you by the amount of people that you bring in. [L.B. ; 3]

Byrne also claimed that musicians eventually start to learn how this relationship with club owners works.

Ya, you learn to deal with club owners. You learn to deal with people. [L.B. ; 8]

According to a person involved in the provision of sound equipment to many different bands; the bands themselves are actually targets for being exploited because they are not yet familiar with the business.

So, you get the young guys or whatever, and they are also ideal targets for exploitations. So from the contract basis, they don't know how things should be done. So, therefore, the agents just kind of hand-cash people and you might agree to an amount and you might find the other person agreed to a different amount. [P.D. ; 8]

B-World also agreed that it is a learning process which bands have to go through before they are able to deal with club owners:

Basically we learn to drive a hard deal. As much as possible, you learn those kinds of things and how to deal with them. [B.W. ; 7]

B-World claim that the number of bands one has been involved in is an invaluable experience in learning about the relationship with agents and with managers. [B.W. ; 7]

However some situations can not be rectified by any amount of experience at all. When I asked Brendan Jury of *Urban Creep* what he does when he has trouble with a club owner he had this to say:

Try not to get shot. It's like three in the morning... Well, actually the club owners we have dealt with have been quite straightforward and honest. [U.C. ; 23]

As an example of when things didn't go completely smoothly he explained:

The bouncer wanted to shoot our bass player. I went up to the owner and said, "Sorry, I forgot, we tried hard, how about paying us anyway?" And he said, "Yes sure. You played well." So, although they were gangsters they were not that bad. [U.C. ; 23]

There does appear to be a lot of trust in the relationship between club owner and band. *Urban Creep* also mentioned the fact that some managers have been extra-ordinarily nice to them.

The members of *Landscape Prayers* also claimed, [U.C. ; 24] that they had experiences of clubs which were very kind to the band.

I asked some other artists to explain instances in which they felt they had been unjustly treated. These are some of the responses:

[Name of club] ripped us off. He said that he agreed to two bands playing, booked by Lars for a certain fee. Then it was going fine then he said, "That's it." We only had a week left. We were fired. It took him about five months to pay us. [L.B. ; 11]

[Name of club]. He owed us R1000. We did two nights there. Didn't pay us. Hardly anyone rocked up. But then again he didn't advertise. [L.B. ; 12]

Thus it appears that the issues being raised by the musicians are problems involved with the extraction of payment and the nature of the agreements. Due to the informal nature of the agreements it seems that the musicians have trouble enforcing agreements already entered into.

This happens in many different genres of music. For example, a jazz bass-player had the same problem. Bongani Sokhela claimed:

Those guys, we were a trio, so we told them that the band, each member of the band is supposed to get R60 according to the union. These guys wanted to pay us R60, the whole thing. [B.S. ; 3]

Sokhela further expressed a disdain for not being treated professionally:

The most heartbreaking thing is when a venue manager won't pay you. Especially in time, or say like straight after the gig he won't pay. Or he promised a certain amount of money, and he won't pay you that amount. Club owners think they can just use us, pay us peanuts because they think they are helping us out to get exposed. But its a job. Like a doctor in the hospital. [B.S. ; 5]

Van der Spuy felt that this type of treatment was hindering him making a living out of his music:

The thing is, I'd like to see it as a full income, and they just see you as a nobody, you know? [N.vdS. ; 5]

On some occasions the treatment of club owners of bands verges on sadistic:

It hurts when you put in all this effort, and not getting paid. It's so heavy. You get R20. The other night the guy told us, "Guys, because we didn't have that many people tonight, there were few people so I'll try to help out. So, I'll give you R20 for the band to buy

sweets on the way home." [B.S. ; 9]

From Sokhela's experience, it appears as though bands sometimes have very little power in this relationship. The owner makes a promise, and then is granted an opportunity to assess the audience while the band is performing. Then, at the end of the evening, he has the option of paying them according to these criteria and not the specified amount. Bands do appear to be very aware of the club owners methods of operation though, especially the more experienced people. It was interesting to note that particular club owners were identified again and again by musicians from different spheres of music altogether. In a way, these bands can boycott the problematic clubs, but they may then be replaced by other acts who need the money.

It appears as though the relationship between club owner and band is determined almost **entirely** by the amount of drinks sold. Even a large crowd that frequents a club regularly to watch a band, will not merit the band being well paid, or indeed keeping its residency spot in that club, if they are not a crowd with drink buying power. David Birch explained the conditions under which his band was forced out of a gig:

So all his cronies don't like us, but we are still getting this big non-drinking young crowd in. He wanted yuppies, people who will buy the drinks. [D.B. ; 24]

The strange occurrence, where the priorities of the club owners and managers are automatically placed above those of the musician needs to be investigated further. It is possibly due to the misconception held by club owners that they are dealing with non- professionals. Perhaps they see it as the band expecting money as a token of generosity instead of a living wage. I asked some artists about this matter.

So when I see a club asking for money at the door, and then sort of saying that they want us to play for nothing, I kind-of just think to myself, "Ok, is this bullshit? What is going on here?" [D.B. ; 19]

There is also a misconception of what musicians actually do. Even in a formal legal meeting, a certain band was asked why they were complaining about the amount that they were being offered in a settlement when they had been unjustly treated:

Then the guy from R.J's starts up and says, "You know dudes, five or six grand for parking on the beach for a month! Sounds pretty good to me. What's so shit about that?"

[D.B. ; 26]

This misconception of what musicians actually *do* coupled with an exaggerated importance attached to the value of exposure by these managers regularly seems to be the basis of such exploitations:

He wanted to put on all the best bands that had been through the Rockadilly, and then he said something like, "Because the S.A.B.C is there, don't anyone expect to get any money."

[D.B. ; 20]

This sentiment is echoed in all the interviews.

In this town especially, Durban, is like, you get screwed over by the club owners.

[N.vdS ; 5]

Otherwise, like the Aliwal, you play and the whole attitude is that they are doing you a big favour. So you are getting screwed over big, big time. Not to mention [Owner 2] at the Hard Rock. He just decides to fire you on the spur of the moment. Absolutely no respect whatsoever for musicians. [N.vdS ; 5]

Here is an example of two different bands' perceptions of one or two particular club-owners. The grounds for complaint from the musicians range from: 1] matters of organisation which will detract from the band's earnings:

[Owner 1] likes to for instance guarantee a hundred rand, like when we played last time. We said we want R100 over and above the door you know. So if you make R 400 at the door you get that, but then, the other weekend, there was no-one at the door. It shouldn't be the bands responsibility, it should be his job to do the door. [N.vdS. ; 7]

Sometimes, due to poor management by the club-owner this can lead to bands actually making a loss on the gig:

And in that time, we have gone from playing half covers, half originals as a duo with a sequencer at the Aliwal, for negative money sometimes, because people simply won't pay the door fee and [Owner 1] didn't feel like organising the door. [U.C. ; 22]

2] unkept promises:

From [Owner 1], it's always indecent treatment though. Always less money than promised. He'll say he will do us a favour by doing the door. I mean, he is getting money. If 60 patrons come in there, they will buy three beers each, and he will get that money. We shouldn't have to pay for his till, and that's what we are doing. [U.C. ; 24] [Owner 2] from the Hard Rock still owes us I think R300, from the last time we played there. Which we will never get. [J.E. ; 20]

3] problems with the way the band's music is treated:

That happened at Hard Rock once on a Sunday night. They came over and said: Hey turn down! And we had warned [Owner 2] before that we were a progressive fusion band and that we could offer him a demo. He said "No dude, I know what you guys sound like." But he obviously didn't. He is totally ignorant about music in every way. [N.vdS. ; 6]

4] or problems of a general nature:

[Owner 1], I found to be the worst to work with because he consistently, on a long term basis, undermines musicians continually! [U.C. ; 23]

I mean I've actually sat in there for an hour before, and he has said to me that he would be with me in ten minutes. So, I go up to the counter after an hour to ask, "Where's [Owner 2]?" "Oh, he's gone!" Meanwhile I'm sitting there like a pratt waiting. [D.B. ; 12]

However, as mentioned above, there is also a large degree of trust among bands and club-owners. Often things do work out exactly as agreed upon:

I mean on the gigs we are doing now, they are all original gigs and so far we have had no problem. All the guys have paid. Some don't pay on the night, but they eventually do.

[D.B. ; 28]

There are occasions, according to the bands, where they have been given very good treatment by club owners. The artists mentioned that in these cases, the club owners go out of their way to make life a lot easier for the bands, and to see to the band's comfort. For example, *Urban Creep* and the members from *Landscape Prayers* all had good things to say about particular clubs:

Jam and Sons is a blessing for Durban; it seems now like a very good idea. [N.vdS. ; 6]

Clubs that go out of their way to organise administration of matters which are important determinants of the band's income, are always praised:

For example, at Wings, you play there, *Landscape Prayers* plays there as often as we can.

There is always somebody on the door. You are always guaranteed a percentage of the door. [N.vdS. ; 8]

The bands all expressed a positive attitude to fixed rates of payment that were not apt to be suddenly changed:

I find it is great, we played at a place called Drifters. There they put you up for the night, and they pay the band R500, which is a great guarantee. [N.vdS. ; 8]

5.2.5 Artists' understandings of Employee protection

Many of the artists were aware of the fact that there was some form of protection of their careers, but most of them were sceptical about getting involved:

If you are a member of SAMRA, apparently, regardless of where you play, they've got to pay you, the owner of the club, it's in the constitution has to pay a minimum wage. But

how many musicians in this town know about, or are actually members of SAMRA?

[N.vdS. ; 8]

What was most interesting was the union MUSA's [Musicians Union of South Africa] involvement in the better-quality high-paying gigs, including support gigs to overseas stars:

Well, we have just joined MUSA, you have to join it to get good gigs. To do UB40 we had to join. [U.C. ; 17]

Another artist, who was desperate to be the support act for this same gig, was turned down bluntly because he was not part of this organisation:

"No, look, don't talk to us, if you don't belong to the union, then we will not deal with you. Thank-you. Click." Same thing happened to *Zap-Dragons* in Cape Town. They had to join there and then.

[M.S. ; 13]

It appears from the artists' side as though the better gigs, and the money making gigs are currently more important on the Union's agenda. Artists are finding themselves being forced to join in order to participate in the very big concerts, and promotion gigs.

I spoke to a representative of MUSA, Les Muzulu, and asked whether the artists' perceptions were accurate. I was told that anybody who was not a member of MUSA would *never* support an international act. [5 December 1994] This statement led me to ask whether MUSA was involved in the club scene on a more local level. I was told by Muzulu that MUSA had plans to become more involved in the club scene but as of now they were not. The union appears to be chiefly involved in co-ordinated operations with SABC [South African Broadcasting Corporation], SAMRO [South African Musician Rights Organisation], and ASAMI [Association of South African Music Industries] For example, the drive for a quota system to be enforced on the broadcasting contents, was one of MUSA's areas of involvement.

However, it still appears as though the sphere of music which this dissertation is involved with is mostly unprotected. The Union appears to have targeted the one area which is more structured and lucrative for artists, and enforced its presence with an iron hand. This type of strength is necessary for the union to grow. I was assured by Mezulu that the Union was involved in smaller scale performances, by running workshops, organising task groups and working out guidelines and rates for performance. For R60 and two passport photos, anybody who wishes to become a member will receive information on the rules, rates and guidelines under which performance should take place.

5.3 Breakdown of Occupations of the Respondents

The purpose of this section is to describe what these musicians who were interviewed actually do for a living. Typically, the question asked of the respondents was, "What careers or jobs are you involved in? Do you survive on music?" [Q.1.1; see appendix] This was asked in order to ascertain whether it was possible to survive on music as a sole source of income.

Of the 20 musicians interviewed, a large proportion are involved in occupations other than music performance alone, in order to survive. Two respondents are involved in record companies. [D.M.][D.C.]; one is involved in a sound-hire company [P.D.]; one is an engineer [M.S.]; two are music teachers [N.F.] [N.vdS.]; one is an associate professor and teacher [D.Brubeck]; two are involved in non-original music [J.E.][I.J.] although they were previously part of original music projects; one is involved in production, engineering and some live sound, but predominantly performance [D.B.]; one works in a music shop part-time [L.B.]; one is a full-time student but supports himself through music alone [B.S.]; and eight musicians are full time performers. [U.C.][B.W.]

5.4 Music supported by other occupations

For some of the people who are involved in forms of employment that do not entail regular performance, the nature of their non-musical occupations was often referred to as a "support career" for their music. An inherent contradiction occurs within a musical career in these cases.

One of the key characteristics of an original-music career, is that it is barely able to finance itself. The musicians thus seek alternative incomes to support their music. The financial benefits which accrue from a stable non-musical career provide musicians with the ability to purchase equipment, buy studio time, pay for travel costs, even to pay for an album production. An alternative income is also valuable in that it provides musicians with the bargaining power to decide when and where they will play, and the amount which should be received in payment for the performance.

Unfortunately, the musician is usually unable to spend the required amount of time on the musical career,

due to the demands of the "support career". This contradiction sees the musician financially equipped for music, but with no time or energy left for music performance.

One respondent was involved in a completely non-musical career as his support base. He claimed:

Every day I am an engineer. I have always been a *working* person. Music has unfortunately become my second fiddle. I am not a professional musician. So I have never actually had the need to say, "Well, let me play there and there and there to survive," you know.

[M.S. ; 1]

Although this musician still performs regularly, he does not rely on music as his only form of income. This particular musician was also very vocal about the problem of attempting to be involved in two distinct spheres of employment:

I don't sleep until 10:00 am every fucking morning and, sometimes I am going to get up and scratch my backside and say, "Mmmm, what am I going to play?" No! 07:00 to 17:00 I am working, it doesn't matter on a Saturday or Sunday, and thereafter I have to come and rehearse and write my songs. And then I have to come and play them for *you!*

[M.S.;2]

For Mike Smith, the demands of his engineering job make it very difficult to concentrate on music as much as he would like to. We sat in his house and listened to an entire album of catchy songs that cost him R11 000 to have recorded, including session musicians and production. [M.S. ; 8]

He told me how he would have to rush from work to the studio and lay down a vocal track very quickly because he couldn't spare the time off. The existence of a non-musical job in this musician's life is thus sometimes a hindrance to the musician's musical career.

Although the record company to which he is signed on a professional level has not really done much with these songs yet, this man was able to finance the recordings with money earned from his more conventional engineering job. The availability of a spare source of finance can, therefore, possibly be to his benefit.

He is able to play the music that he wants to play, without having to play what he is told, or where he is told:

So for me it was just like taking the music out there and playing it. Saying "howzit" to the people. [M.S. ; 1]

Apart from the advantages of having more options about *what* he plays, this musician can also decline unsatisfactory deals:

Anyway, I told the guy, "No. Sorry Sir," in a nice way. I put him onto my manager and told him, "If the guy does not want to pay that, he can forget it!" [M.S. ; 2]

This musician has the advantage over other musicians of being able to choose who he plays with, and be more firm about the amount of money demanded for a gig, whereas other musicians who depend on the gig for a living wage are not able to do this. He faces a dilemma, in that he cannot spend as much effort and time on this "creative license" which the engineering salary affords him in his music, due to the demands of the engineering career itself:

At this stage, you know, it's just a hobby. I work everyday, and that's how I stay alive. My main aim is to be a professional musician. [M.S. ; 16]

The contradiction prevalent here is referred to above. The longing for a more professional involvement in music is a common theme in the interviews. Van der Spuy claims:

I teach first and second year history and I teach guitar at tech and at the university. So that's just a kind of side thing which allows me to play. I'd love to be a full-time musician, I'd love it. [N.vdS.; 1]

I enquired further whether his teaching job supported his music. He replied:

Oh Ja! Totally, completely. I mean I just see going to tech everyday as, well you get into it, but it's like a steady income, a security blanket which allows me to play. [N.vdS. ; 1]

It can be said that music performance is a top priority for those who are not able to do music as a job. However, the necessity for financial security has meant that the artists have often been forced into other jobs which are sometimes fields allied to music performance.

When asked about his main form of income, Logan Byrne claimed that it was music. [L.B. ; 2] This musician is also currently working at a music shop [Coastal Music] as a means to supplement his income. Before working as a full-time musician, he was a customs official. [L.B. ; 6] The pension which he received once he left this job tided him over for a short while, and enabled him to buy equipment while his musical proficiency and earnings increased. [L.B. ; 1]

Byrne explained how the transition from a more orthodox form of employment to a musical job may be difficult:

I got money from the music early on, but not real bucks, you know. And then a couple of bands later, money is more like it should be. Not really. But it can be OK. [L.B. ; 1]

Byrne also described some of the difficulties experienced by an unestablished musician attempting to break in to a music career:

Ja, I didn't get paid for any of my *Subtropical Fits* gigs. I didn't really get paid well at all. My guitar was really wasted. So then I bought my first one. So they actually paid off half for me because I wasn't getting paid for the gigs at all. Sometimes I didn't have any money. [L.B. ; 5]

B-World had similar things to say:

No, just music. You just play, play, play. The first few months are very difficult. [B.W. ;6]

It's very difficult, we haven't got the bucks. We just managed to pay the rent. The first couple of months are going to be kuk bro, it's an incentive you have to follow. It took us how many months? We weren't making fuck-all, just scraping through, paying the rent

barely, but now it's cool. We know we can do this. [B.W. ; 21]

From the interviews above, it appears that a time of hardship normally precedes the stage where musicians are able to survive on their music.

5.5 Part-time Work and Original Music

B-World is involved exclusively in original music performance as a form of employment, just as *Urban Creep* is. It was thus interesting to ask these bands what other options they had as far as employment opportunities are concerned. An important point mentioned by *B-World* was in connection with survival on music and the problem of taking on part-time work. When I asked them what they did in order to survive, they claimed:

Just music, and you can't even do part-time work in the meantime because suddenly in three weeks time you don't exist in that place anymore. I started giving guitar lessons, but normally they have to be a one-off; because you never know where it will be next time.

[B.W. ; 22]

It appears that once the musician devotes himself to a full-time occupation in original music, other non-performance careers are very difficult to sustain. As the guitarist of *B-World* said [above], part-time employment, such as giving guitar lessons, is difficult to maintain due to the fact that original bands need to keep moving in order to survive. *Urban Creep* also spoke about the need to travel in order to survive.

A full-time career in music appears to reduce the opportunities for bands to find alternative employments, even music-related employment:

When I was in *Landscape Prayers*, I was working in a restaurant and teaching some dudes.

It was stressful! Then I was fortunate enough to get into *Urban Creep*, enough to concentrate on the music full-time. We have to, you see. [U.C. ; 1]

It is thus an all or nothing devotion to music. One has to be completely submerged in it in order to survive on it. In a sense it is as if the musicians have to cut off their life-ropes from safer jobs before the music as a form of employment can sustain them. Hence all eight musicians involved in full-time original music performance do nothing else apart from this, because they are simply unable to spend time on anything else.

[B.W. ; 1] [U.C. ; 1]

Dave Birch also spoke about this aspect:

All the time we're writing new stuff. A lot of the time we are carting gear around. We are busy. If I'm not doing that, then I am writing. I devote, apart from a few snatched hours with my wife and kid, I spend all my time on music. I don't have a T.V. Occasionally I listen to other bands on tape, all the rest of the time I'm working at what I do. That's my job: full time musician. [D.B. ; 18]

Musicians who are established within their particular sphere of music, and educated in music are fortunate enough to have music teaching and performance as their "twin professions". This is possibly one of the more compatible twin careers to have and seven of the musicians mentioned it as a form of income at some stage in their music careers. [B.S. ; 19] [B.W. ; 22] [U.C. ; 1] [N.vdS. ; 1] [D.Brubeck ; 1] [N.F. ; 1] Ellis did not mention this in the interview, but I am aware that he is involved in teaching guitar.

Darius Brubeck claimed:

If someone is supporting themselves through music, they will invariably have a variety of different sources of income. [D.Brubeck ; 1]

He then explained how it was reassuring to have a steady flow of income:

Primarily I am one of the lucky few who has an academic appointment. By *lucky* I mean that I have a steady income, I have a cheque that comes in at the end of every month whether I have a gig or whether I don't have a gig. [D.Brubeck ; 1]

This musician is thus involved in many different spheres of music including: associate professorship; jazz studies lecturing; director of the centre for Jazz and Popular music; freelance broadcaster for the SABC; "And then, there's gigs." [D.Brubeck ; 1] This final category of "gigs" also appears to be wider than one would think. For Brubeck it includes anything from weddings to a concert with the Natal Philharmonic and the Jazz Quartet.

On asking Brubeck whether the other jobs all supported his playing of music, he replied:

What you are saying is true, but there seems to be something skew in putting it like that.

Oh, I know why. It's because everything else that I mentioned I was doing, I was doing anyway, and then I got the job. [D.B. ; 2]

Thus the financial security came only after Brubeck was already a committed musician.

5.6 Composition of a Music Career

There may be a tendency for musicians who are in the industry for longer, and who gain valuable experience in the music sphere to extend their involvement in music from performance to a host of allied streams, as Brubeck has done. This phenomenon of musicians being involved in more than one musical job is an interesting one. To be a full-time musician may entail being involved in a host of related musical fields of employment. For instance, Birch claimed:

Ah, now I am mainly playing, but I've been working in a studio, recording engineering. So

I do that, and I produce groups to a certain extent. While I was with Ron, I also tried some live sound. [D.B. ; 2]

According to this statement, a music *career* is composed of a *group* of fields of employment, many of which are not necessarily performance fields. If one examines the career of Birch, separate fields of employment such as performance, engineering, production and live sound constitute a complete *music career*. Each one of these fields of employment is composed of a group of tasks. An examination of one particular field of employment in detail clarifies the tasks involved.

From the responses of the musicians, it is clear that the descriptions of the performance field encompass a lot more than the playing of an instrument or singing. The many tasks which constitute performance may be far from the actual moment when the music is being played by the artist. Examples of these tasks are: songwriting; arrangement; setting up processes; transport; promotion; negotiation with managers; rehearsal time; tour planning; and many others.

Therefore, music performance, with all its own unique tasks, is but one of the many components which together constitute the career of music. For example, Bongani Sokhela, a bass player, indicated that he is interested in becoming involved in other spheres of musical employment apart from just performance:

It's like I want to grow up as a player and also as a total musician, learn to arrange, write songs for other people. [B.S. ; 14]

In this case, Sokhela's desire to write and arrange songs for other people is an indication that he would like to be involved in more than just the performance aspect of a music career.

One can also expect musicians to be able to play more than one particular style of music. This ability sometimes allows the musician to be involved in a number of distinct performance projects. As a result, the musician is able to draw from more than one source of performance income.

Sokhela claimed:

I play for *Del Segno*, and I play for *Skokianna*, I play for the *Durban City Orchestra*, and the big band at the university. [B.S. ; 1]

I asked Sokhela if he called himself a "jazz bassist".

Ja, that's what I am, even though I don't want to play jazz only. I also play disco and gospel music. [B.S. ; 1]

The involvement of musicians in the performance of music exposes them to many different aspects of the music career. According to Birch:

I think you just pick it up as you go along. So, if you're interested in a particular field,

whatever your leanings are, they will come out. If you go into music full-time, and you record in a studio, you find the interest is in you, you will just go for it and you learn quickly. [D.Birch ; 7]

Once musicians begin to get involved in music, they quickly become familiar with different aspects of musical production. For example, a person involved in the composition of original material will learn how to arrange the parts for the band. This experience will assist the musician to become more adept in assisting other bands in their arrangements. Similarly, a band that is in the studio to record will inevitably be asked if they like the sound that they are receiving in their headphones. They then reply what needs to be done with the sound - "Bring up the vocals, and take some tops off the guitar". Hence, simply being in the studio equips the band to understand rudimentary production technique. Perhaps this is why many people in the performance industry are familiar with fields which are not necessarily their speciality. According to the musicians interviewed, an understanding of production aspects is necessary because many professional people such as sound engineers are not really qualified to deliver what the band needs. Ellis claimed:

We always did our own sound, we hardly ever had someone in for us. We always did our own stuff. In our experience, I mean the guys were appalling. There are so few people who actually know how to do it properly, it's ridiculous. [J.E. ; 7]

The situation in which a band becomes involved in areas of production expertise is also applicable to the recording industry. Ellis speaks about album production:

So we tried everything. Looking back now, we produced it ourselves really. It wasn't like a question of, "Oh well, you have to use this microphone, you have to do this stuff".

[J.E.; 7]

Thus there appears to be a tendency for musicians to become involved in aspects around music which are not only connected with the actual performance, but which include fields such as production and engineering. However, due to a lack of structure in the South African original music scene, musicians face the danger of becoming too involved in activities which pull them away from the actual performance itself.

The fact that the original music scene is still unstructured means that South African musicians have to have a limited knowledge of live sound, promotion, and club management in order to survive.

There are many opportunities for entrepreneurs to co-ordinate and organise South African music. For example, South Africa needs a club circuit. Unfortunately, the entrepreneurs who are the best qualified to deal with these issues are the musicians themselves because they have experienced the situation, and understand what needs to be done.

As a result of these involvements, yet another contradiction occurs within South African original music. Dave Marks mentioned this important dilemma facing South African musicians in their choice of career path. He claimed:

You see, in South Africa, the thing has been with myself also, I was a performer, I happened to write not very good songs, but they tended to be popular. But I found there was no sound. There were very few clubs. Very few venues. So I started to do it all myself. [D.M. ; 20]

Marks claims that this is the problem with music as a career in South Africa. Due to an underdeveloped music infrastructure in fields such as sound production, marketing, and club venues, the artist gets sidetracked into having to do everything.

He continued:

South African musicians tend to have to leave what they do as musicians, and start getting involved in copyright, setting up clubs, and painting walls etcetera. [D.M. ; 20]

As a result of this, South African musicians often leave performance careers to become band-managers, club-owners, producers, sound-hirers. Although this is unhealthy for South African music in that there are fewer people actually playing music, it *does* mean that something is being done about the infrastructure. This normally equips these people, who are involved in a broad array of jobs, to be more efficient than their competitors if they go abroad. Marks claimed that the overseas industry tended to be a lot more specialised:

I am generalising, but I found American musicians are very specialist. A guitar player there knows nothing else. He can't even drive a car. So many guitar players can't drive cars, its a joke. [D.M. ; 21]

Marks gave examples of South African people such as Mutt Lange, the producer of many famous and successful bands abroad, including Brian Adams and Deff Leppard. [D.M. ; 21] He also gave the example of Jimi Hendrix's producer and engineer, Eddie Kramer, who was an Afrikaner from Malmesbury in the Cape! [D.M. ; 18]

5.7 Conclusion

This chapter has attempted to describe the means by which the musicians interviewed make their living. I examined some of the relationships that exist between what the artists described as non-musical "support careers" and the musical careers themselves. A contradiction was highlighted in the discussion of this relationship. The musicians need the financial resources of a stable income in order to meet the costs of a music career. However, once the costs of a music career *can* be met, the musicians do not have enough time to spend on the music due to demands of the support career. Thus musicians often play under difficult circumstances. Their "other" job takes away from their music career time, or they can't survive on their music alone.

I then discussed how some of the demands made by an original music career - especially the need for regular travel - actually undermine the ability of the musicians to find part-time work. From this, I deduced that once artists embark on full-time music careers, they leave other options of employment behind.

Finally, I examined the "music career" and showed how it is composed of a host of musical fields of employment. For example, the performance aspect of music is only one part of what it takes to be in a music career. Other fields - such as production and live sound - are also parts of this career.

Musicians are often involved in more than one style of music, and one musical project. South African musicians invariably gain experience in other fields of employment such as production, copyright and club-management. This is another contradiction of the South African music industry, because it means that musicians sometimes have to leave their music in order to become more involved in the infrastructure of the industry. According to Marks, people in the South African music industry normally know more about different parts of the industry than their specialist overseas counterparts.

CHAPTER SIX - ARTIST AND INDUSTRY

A career in music is based partly on the physical performance of music in various working environments such as clubs, on tours, and at concerts. Another important part, which is mentioned in Chapter Seven, is the recording component of full-time music. This component includes: record companies; band management; promotion; and, very importantly, the radio stations. In order to understand the relationship between the musicians and the industry which they are a part of, I asked the musicians to tell me about some of the problems which they perceived about the industry side. I also included some input from Dave Marks. Marks has experience of many different facets of the music industry. He has been involved in sound-hire, songwriting, publishing, and concert work. What he had to say was largely in agreement with what the artists were saying.

I then contrasted this with an industry point of view, by asking some record companies what problems they had with the artists, as well as questions about the way the record companies were run. The record companies consulted were both large-scale commercial enterprises, and smaller companies.

I also spoke to MUSA, the musicians' union, in order to understand what forms of protection exist for musicians as workers. I wanted to see whether the artists' perceptions of employee protection, as discussed in chapter five were accurate, and exactly what the role of the union is in the music industry.

6.1 Artist perceptions of industry

The views expressed by bands toward the record companies were often negative and were normally directed against the band's perceptions of the policy used by the local record companies to sign artists.

6.1.1 The record company location within a music career

David Birch had some valuable inputs due to his experience in the industry abroad. He claimed that in comparison with the overseas labels, South African companies were unable to provide the same levels of support to the artists. [D.Birch ; 42] Other artists said the same thing. [N.vdS ; 14] [U.C. ; 11]

This is significant. If artists perceive that the recording industry is not behind them, it immediately limits their options as far as surviving on music is concerned. So, where recording is the high point of an overseas band's career, it is perceived as an almost non-existent option by local bands.

Birch described to me how overseas bands live on practically nothing apart from social welfare, until they receive a record contract:

I mean this is how bands exist overseas. They exist to get the deal. Up until then, they probably draw social security to keep themselves alive. You just can't do that here. There is no such thing, so you have to live on what you earn. [D.Birch ; 43]

According to Birch [D.B. ; 44] the lack of support experienced by the artists in the recording sphere has led to a tendency in bands to get involved in their own recording projects, and to by-pass the local industry altogether, since they perceive it to be inadequately structured to deal with their requirements:

Landscape Prayers is having their stuff done in Taiwan. There's a place in England where you can have it done. So you get 1000 CDs for R5000 and Nibs is going to spend R7000. So, that's your artwork and everything. [D.Birch ; 45]

When I asked *Landscape Prayers'* guitarist about this, he claimed that they were doing everything themselves. [N.vdS. ; 24] He also claimed that this way they could be assured that the amount of effort which was put in by them, would be the amount of reward that they would get out. [N.vdS. ; 24]

Urban Creep, another example, turned down a local record company offer due to advice from their producer:

Obviously we need record companies from here, and we felt the only way to do it was to get an overseas distribution, and not sign here. [U.C. ; 13]

The artists felt that the record companies had found a commercial option through importing and distributing an existing overseas product - instead of actually investing in local talent. South African record companies do not occupy the traditional space in music careers occupied by international record companies.

6.1.2 Distanced from the local artists

One of the main critiques levelled against recording companies by artists was that the companies are out of touch with local popular music because they are not actually present in the venues, and at the clubs.

One musician discussed an occasion where he was extremely well received by a huge crowd at Splashy Fenn, an annual music festival, but his record company was not even represented at the occasion. He had to phone them on Monday morning to describe the event. [M.S. ; 28]

This artist told me that record companies were not interested in what was happening here:

Man, you get record companies. They offer you all sorts of things. But you don't get guys out there. Taking time out in an evening to see what is happening. They don't do this stuff.

And yet, they should be the main ones who should be looking. [M.S. ; 4]

When the record company *is* present, the bands often lack confidence in these people who are scouting out talent. Some bands actually objected to the people who were sent to scout out musical talent in the venues:

I mean they are just totally unhip, totally divorced from what is happening. I mean, the execs that come to see us! [U.C. ; 11]

The manner of dress adopted by the record executives was mentioned by bands. They claimed that it is an indicator that these representatives of the companies are complete outsiders to the music:

They arrive in pin-stripe suits, ties unloosened, and I can't imagine how in any way they are supposed to represent or be in any way tapped into what the audience wants.

[U.C.; 12]

This view is in clear contrast to that expressed by record companies, when I asked them about this, [dealt with below].

Other musicians made similar claims about the record companies not being in touch with their artists. Ellis, a member of a band that recently recorded an album in Johannesburg, and supported *Foreigner* on their South African tour, related some of the things which had happened to the band in that time.

In one example, he speaks about a person who was in an important position in a local record company. She mistook the band for another band, and told them that she had seen their video, and was impressed. [J.E.;8]
On another occasion, Ellis describes how David Gresham, whom they had signed with, and who had been working closely around the band for a year, did not even know their names. [J.E ; 8]

Birch also claims that the record companies are detached from what is occurring at the grass-roots level in the clubs. He claims:

The record companies here are totally blind. They will sign anything that moves at the moment because they know that they have to supply the radio stations. [D.Birch ; 41]

He added that the record companies' manner of detecting talent in clubs is not of a good standard. There appears to be a disparity between the methods that these companies use to detect black talent, and white talent according to Birch:

When it comes to white music, they deem it OK to go out themselves. They haven't got the sense to actually get hold of someone who likes music and knows about it. They rather go out themselves. [D.Birch ; 42]

This is mentioned by other artists who claim that the record company would be acting with more self interest by having correctly qualified people at the performances:

What can a C.A. do? I mean that's not the case overseas. The employer needs the A&R person to be aware. An ex music-journalist, a musicology student. [U.C.;20]

Another less formal definition was given by *B-World*, who claimed that the companies needed people with musical ears. [B.W. ; 15]

These are interesting points. If they are accurate, then it would appear that the record people at the gigs are unqualified to judge the standard of the local music. It certainly is perceived as such by the bands. But then again, isn't this the way all bands, that do not currently have deals, perceive record company

executives?

Perhaps record companies could help solve this animosity problem by employing young qualified people who are deeply entrenched in the South African popular music field. Something needs to be done to bridge the gap.

The distance between company and artist is sometimes prevalent in the relationship between the production engineer and the company. In these cases, the producer is given certain guidelines as to how the final product should sound. David Birch had the first hand experience of producing a local band for a record company located in Johannesburg. According to Birch, the person who was his contact in Johannesburg kept telling him to make the band, who were a seventies-surfer-psychedelic-rock outfit, sound like *Soundgarden*, a band in a completely different genre of music. [D.Birch ; 41]

Not only did this blow Birch's mind, but it also caused him considerable stress due to the fact that the record company was totally out of touch with the type of music that they had just signed to their label. They were thus making largely unrealistic demands on their producer. [D.Birch ; 42] Ironically, what they were attempting, was to change something local into a type of music very much in vogue overseas, in order to capture the local market.

The artists interviewed were uncomfortable with the role that record companies play in a career of South African original music.

6.1.3 Commercial demands and the structure of the industry

Dave Marks, of Third Ear Records, had some interesting ideas and opinions about the South African record industry, and its perceptions of bands. He claimed that the sole motivation for these companies was simply to sell records. [D.M. ; 4]

Marks claimed that even the international record industry judges success of bands by the number of units sold. For instance, he told me how Third Ear Records was dealt with by overseas companies:

And despite the apartheid era, even with Third Ear's track record, they would still say things like, "Oh, if the group is so good, then how many units did they sell in South Africa?" [D.M. ; 4]

Thus, record companies all over the world are primarily interested in unit sales, as any commercial company should be. The important difference, claims Marks, is that the South African record companies are more concerned with selling plastic than actually being in touch with the artists, and the cultures:

In South Africa, the two just don't meet. There is just no common ground. The record industry is just not artist oriented. They just sell product. Plastic and material. [D.M. ; 3]

According to Marks, the South African record companies have achieved something significant because they have actually managed to propel bands who have no live performance base whatsoever into positions in the charts. Local bands who should be performing extensively are able to become well known simply through the utilisation of record company marketing which is aided by radio. Bands are therefore able to sell musical product even though they lack an important aspect of the culture of performance:

They have achieved quite a remarkable marketing and commercial, how can I say, not a platform, but something that goes against the grain of what the culture of music is about.

[D.M. ; 4]

One of the important parts of the culture of music, according to Marks, is that a performance support for a recorded music product should exist in order for the recorded product to be successful. He claims that the South African artists, and to some extent the record companies, have a misconception that they can export their product without supporting it overseas:

No matter how many good tapes you get overseas, without the music, without the live people, it never works. [D.M. ; 3]

Marks continued, and told me that in the history of Billboard, there have only been two groups that have

ever been on the charts without performance as a support for their recorded product, and one of these groups later did start performance as a support. [D.M. ; 3] This has important implications for an understanding of the structure of the local record industry.

In South Africa, which has been in international isolation for so long, the local record companies actually managed to sell millions of overseas records of foreign artists, to a public that had never seen them perform live. This was a massive marketing coup, since hardly any artists were touring South Africa in support of their product. The promotion of the *plastic*, as Marks would say, [D.M. ; 3] was so effective that it made artists rich who hardly knew about South Africa, and certainly had no intention of performing here.

The local talent was completely overlooked. The effect, according to Marks, is that the companies simply decided to import and market product from abroad, since it worked out to be more cost effective:

And all this seems to be very detrimental to South African music. Because when you see a band, the South African public want to hear what they know. They want to hear what's been imported. [D.M. ; 5]

These factors have shaped the way in which South African audiences view popular musical product. It is so entrenched that record companies now need not produce, they simply distribute. Ironic examples exist in bands such as *Tananas* who have their first CD imported *from France back* into South Africa. [N.vdS. ; 35]

6.1.5 Impact of industry structure on the audience

The way in which popular music has been marketed in South Africa has impacted on the audience, and this is very important. This marketing style has led audiences to understand music as the slick, finished product on the CDs in shops. It has directly impacted on popular culture in South Africa. The human side of performance is not appreciated as it should be. Marks gives the example of *Blood, Sweat, and Tears* being "booed" off the stage at the peak of their recording careers:

We never hear of that here! We just see what *Blood, Sweat and Tears* can do as a polished group. [D.M. , 10]

The frantic crowds at sub-standard international concerts held in South Africa recently, are testimony to the inability of South African popular-music audiences to actually judge what they are paying for, yet. At a recent *UB 40* concert:

Hands were waving, throats were in full cry. The prize for the evening definitely goes to the Durban audience. The band was a disappointment. You got the sense that they were stifling a yawn. There was no oomph in their performance. They were not appreciative of the crowd, which was patient when they were late on stage. [Daily News; October 9, 1994]

At this particular concert, there were also hotly denied rumours that the performance was pre-recorded. [Daily News; October 9, 1994] One wonders how a seasoned audience would have reacted to these factors. Marks compares this "blind devotion" to the responses that some local bands get in clubs:

I have gone to clubs here and seen very good bands play badly and get slated by the critics and everybody, and that is the end of the band. They just happened to have an off night [D.M. ; 11]

The local public seems to judge local bands more harshly than they judge international acts. As mentioned in chapter four, the clubs are usually very poorly attended in comparison with the international tours. Jeremy Briar of Tusk Records claims that the South African public needs to lose its inferiority complex re: South African music before the local industry can take off. [J.B. ; 2]

6.1.6 Commercial criteria

According to some artists, the commercial criteria of record companies are sometimes so strong that less commercial local bands would be used deliberately as tax deductions. According to these artists, the strong possibility of a tax write-off was enough to get some bands signed. [N.vdS. ; 19] [N.F. ; 3] Tax deductions, according to one artist, are the reason why some bands' records were so poorly distributed:

They sign an obscure band, and they print like maybe five-hundred CDs. You'll find a CD here and there and they will say that you were put out [distributed] but you haven't been selling. [N.vdS. ; 20]

The record industry has not had the need to become involved locally in spheres of commercial music which could have large scale appeal to overseas audiences. This is why the industry is inexperienced in the actual investment and promotion of popular music product indigenous to its own country. On the same account, the bands who have sprung up in the past have not always had the requirements necessary to successfully work with record companies on a joint basis.

Narine Stevens, of Gallo, claims that the company actually feels a moral and social obligation to support bands who are not necessarily commercial, but have a strong artistic value. [N.S. ; 3] The suspicion from bands about being completely avoided if they are not commercial is, therefore, not necessarily well-founded.

Some complaints from the bands are legitimate, especially since the artists involved perceive that the record companies are not giving them a fair chance. But why should fairness be a consideration? If profit is the bottom line in any commercial organisation, what should turn these record companies into welfare agencies? Importantly, this is not what the artists want. They claimed that they could identify opportunities for record companies which were a lot more lucrative than the type of business which the companies were currently conducting. An exasperated band member claimed:

There is a huge capitalist argument for investing in local original music, its export value alone, and in this country we have nothing. On a purely capitalist consumerist basis, they are cocking up, something shocking. [U.C. ; 11]

When I asked this person if he was this angry because record companies couldn't understand what *he* was doing musically, he replied angrily,

No! Not what *we* are doing. *Fuck* what *we* are doing! It has to be a down the line decision, I mean they have to sell product right? How are they going to sell product, how are they going to get that product out if they don't know? How are they going to be like Quincy Jones and connect? [U.C. ; 11]

It is thus not simply a case of bands being disgruntled for personal reasons of being overlooked musically. The bands which I interviewed, actually displayed a very high level of business sense, and urged record companies to act with more self interest. It appears from the points made above, that there is a perception from both artists, and some people involved in the record industry, that the local record industry is more oriented outward from South Africa than inward toward local talent that needs development. The effect of this is seen clearly in the audience, who in some instances are far more critical of local bands.

6.1.7 Forced local content

The South African audience's focus outward has been perceived by broadcasting interests, and in response, they have attempted to uplift local music through a quota system. This has been agreed upon by the IBA [Independent Broadcasting Authority], SABC [South African Broadcasting Corporation, and MUSA Musicians Union of South Africa.

According to one producer, the implementation of this quota system has meant that because the local industry is completely out of contact with the popular local artists, it has been forced to sign bands which are not necessarily talented. [D.B. ; 41]

For example, in one case, a local record company took out a full page newspaper advertisement to call for local talent to approach them with demo's. This would hardly be necessary if the industry was in touch with the musicians, and had an idea of what was happening in the club scene and concert sphere. Another example of the record companies' distance from local talent is portrayed in the local music sales at music festivals. At Splashy Fenn 1994 there were 32 cassettes on sale, and of these, only two were from major record labels. The rest were all independent companies formed by artists. [D.M. ; 27]

According to the viewpoints mentioned above, the record companies, which are an important part of any musician's aim to survive on music alone, are not really geared toward local talent development and support, as their overseas counterparts are. There is definitely a distance between the live artist and the company. Stevens, of Gallo, claims that this is where the promotion companies should be present. [N.S. ; 8]

Some of the biographies of international artists give a clear indication of the interest which should come from record companies. For example in Azerrad's Come as you are biography of *Nirvana* [1993], the interest of record companies was strongly present. The Sub-Pop label was in the same clubs as the artists, and working hand in hand with the bands in every aspect of production. These people were the same age as the artists, dressed the same, and in fact many of them had experience in actual performance.

This appears to be lacking in South Africa due to the record industry being highly honed as a marketing instrument of other people's product, as well as the fact that the local popular culture is underdeveloped. People appear to be uncertain about what they like, unless it is on television, or constantly on the radio. This is what makes these marketing tools so powerful.

6.2 Industry perceptions of bands.

When I confronted record companies with some of the angry allegations that bands made about them, they responded with mixed reactions. [See Appendix Questionnaire 2] Some of the responses were as follows.

6.2.1 Lack of discipline

Don Clarke, of Natal Records and C&G studios, made the point that bands require a lot more discipline before they can hope to attract record company interest:

The white groups here haven't got the right attitude. They aren't prepared to stick it out and hang in there. They aren't prepared to realise that you have to hang in there for years and years before you make it. [D.C. ; 4]

Stevens, of Gallo, had a similar attitude on this matter. [N.S. ; 19] She claimed that bands give up too easily and that the record industry was wary of newcomers who did not have an established track record.

Dave Marks, however, blamed the record industry for being too withdrawn and commercially cautious. He claimed:

The funny thing is, they wait for the record to become popular, and then when it becomes popular, they cotton onto the group. Then they start getting involved with the artist, and

by that time it's usually 15 years too late. Meantime, the guys have been on the road for ten years, the band has starved for 20 years, and then all of a sudden they jump in.

[D.M. ; 16]

When I pointed out to Clarke that there were bands currently playing who were living under bad conditions, and surviving on their music alone, he expressed both shock and a pride at what they were doing:

Well, that's exactly the opposite of what I was talking about earlier; there's some evidence of a bit of discipline. [D.C. ; 7]

6.2.2 Lack of adequate management

All the record executives interviewed, including Clarke, pointed out that there was a lack of music management in the industry. [D.C. ; 7] [J.B. ; 2] [N.S. ; 8] This appears to be a major factor mentioned by bands and record companies on several occasions. Harvey Roberts, the marketing and A&R director of CCP records, [the local division of EMI] claimed that the inadequate management of bands was a factor which was stunting the potential of the industry. [H.R. ; 1]

A band member explains the problems of the band management that the band was working with, as follows:

The net result is, you get [Name of manager] going overseas to London to do all kinds of things, booking up people at the Marquee Club, coming back, and having absolutely no idea of who to send over. [U.C. ; 15]

Apparently, this expertise is one of the key elements lacking in the South African music scene, due to a lack of experience in this quarter.

6.2.3 Response to lack of interest accusation

Jeremy Briar of Tusk Records claimed that bands always perceive the lack of interest from record companies, and that this was part of the territory. [J.B. ; 2] He also had some valuable input about the risks that record companies face when they sign bands. He claimed:

Most artists criticise the record companies as being completely out of touch with the

market - it goes with the territory. Every recording is a gamble. Full houses at live concerts does not necessarily translate into sales. The music industry keeps abreast of those trends by being in the clubs, looking at what is selling from other companies and territories. [J.B. ; 2]

Perhaps this statement by Briar could answer the question of the artist above [see artist perceptions] who was angry because the record company was not at the music festival where he was so well received. Due to the fact that the actual sale of music in the market is to some extent independent of the music's reception in the live venues, one can forgive record companies for missing some live performances. But even though this relationship between live music and sales may be accurately described by Briar, the artist still would benefit from the fact that the company is aware of how his concerts are progressing. The record company would also benefit from having good information about what is happening in the music performance sphere.

Marks mentioned the fact that the industry is not always willing to mix with the artists, due to a class distinction:

I am generalising, but within the industry, there are very creative and talented people, but they can't see their way clear to mix with the ordinary...the musicians really. Lets face it, most of them do come from the bottom rungs, you know. The industry has no connection with these people. [D.M. ; 17]

6.2.4 Problems with artists misconceptions

Stevens, of Gallo, claimed that the contract signed between the artist and the record company was very much a goodwill gesture due to the fact that artists often did not comply with the stipulations in the contracts. She gave examples of artists not appearing at promotional shows, and even absconding with funds. [N.S. ; 2]

She was adamant that the record company is not supposed to be involved in the promotional aspect of bands, which is basically the running of live shows. She claims that this is a popular misconception of bands which needs to be ironed out. [N.S. ; 3] She continued, and claimed that the record company is rather out

to judge the final product according to commercial value and market share, and that the promotional aspect of music in South Africa was strongly underdeveloped. [N.S. ; 3] This contradicts Marks' position, who claims that record companies have actually achieved something remarkable in the promotional sphere, by selling *international* artists' product which is not supported by live music. [D.M. ; 4]

Of importance here, is that some of the bands interviewed actually did *not* have the preconception that record companies are also responsible for promotion. The bands, such as *Urban Creep* and *This is This*, were clearly able to understand the different roles, as well as the fact that commercial value was the bottom line. [U.C. ; 11] [D.Birch ; 41]

As mentioned above, it was on these grounds that some artists urged record companies to be more self interested, and think bigger in commercial terms, by investing in local music. However, I am aware of less-experienced musicians who are not aware of the commercial criteria by which the record companies operate. Thus, although bands are sometimes liable to lay the blame on everyone but themselves, in some cases they have very carefully thought out arguments which pertain to the commercial success of record companies.

Stevens also claimed that artists had the misconception that record companies should be the source of financial backing for artists. She said that it is a gross misconception to claim that "money makes hits". She claims that "people make hits". [N.S. ; 20] An artist interviewed differed strongly on this point:

You need money to export your stuff, Rob. You need people in high positions to make it, to push it that extra mile. [N.vdS. ; 35]

Another artist explained the difficulty of having no financial backing behind the band:

We can't afford to do the CDs any-more, so we are going to have to do some other kind of demo. [D.B. ; 46]

A large part of modern music sales are determined by media hype, and promotion expertise. This costs money. Thus, I would have to disagree with Stevens on this point. It is my opinion that to some extent "money makes people like hits". Although there is a certain amount of talent required to produce good music, and this is independent of the financial backing of music, it is my contention that a good deal of financial support behind bands gives them an infinitely higher chance of success. Even in the day to day running of a band, financial well-being allows the band to be seen by more people. Without money, bands are limited to the areas in which they can perform. For example, *Urban Creep* had to cancel international concert bookings overseas due to a lack of sponsorship:

If we had the R12 000 we would have opened many doors and possibilities. [U.C. ; 14]

According to Harvey Roberts of EMI, the role of publishing is also largely misunderstood by bands.

[H.R. ; 2] Roberts claims that songwriting is not taken seriously enough by artists. These artists are focused more on the performance aspect of music, and as a result the creative process is stunted. This is also another important source of revenue for musicians, and should thus be a part of the musicians working career.

[H.R. ; 2]

6.2.5 Response to lack of A&R question

When I asked Stevens about some of the accusations by bands that the record companies did not have anyone present at the venues where the music actually occurs, she disagreed, and claimed that there was always somebody there, even though the bands were not able to recognise them as record company people.

[N.S. ; 4] Briar also claimed that record company people *are* present in the clubs, and that Tusk has a dedicated A&R staff. In relation to the schemes discussed above, where artists have begun to investigate the prospects of pressing their own CDs, Briar claimed that Tusk was pro-active in its A&R work, and thus was not threatened by the fact that bands may attempt to bypass local industry.

[J.B. ; 1] [see artist perceptions section]

Roberts [EMI] claimed that people from the record company *are* in fact in the clubs and at the concerts. However, he added that the live music infrastructure is sorely underdeveloped and as a result the A&R

people don't actually have that many places to go to view live bands. He claimed that due to this lack of a live infrastructure, EMI encouraged artists to come into the live studio on the premises of the company. This demo studio was EMI's way of keeping their "finger on the pulse of local music" according to Roberts. [H.R. ; 4]

Stevens disagreed with the opinion expressed by artists that the record company people present at the gigs were not "in tune" with what was occurring in clubs and concerts. She claimed that the A&R people in the industry have been involved with music for a long time and knew what they were doing. [N.S. ; 4] According to her this is also a very important step in which record companies are able to see an artist working with the audience in a relaxed setting. [N.S. ; 4]

Stevens told me that the artists must learn to perceive the record company as a commercial venture. Roberts also claimed this. [H.R. ; 3] The investment process, in which bands are supported by record companies, is a process which involves great risk. Profit is the sole motivating factor for the big companies according to Stevens, and she claimed that there is a large-scale misconception by the artists as to what record companies are supposed to do. The companies have to be absolutely sure before they invest. This point was also made by Briar [Tusk]. He claimed that the criteria used by Tusk in signing artists were: strong musicianship, and the ability to satisfy some niche demand in the marketplace. [J.B ; 1] The criteria used by Gallo to judge bands are:

- a] Can the artist be businesslike enough to keep a contract and work with the company on a commercial level?
- b] Can the artist keep the band together for a sustained period of time?
- c] Is this a viable working unit for the company to invest in? [N.S. ; 4]

Stevens also claimed that the bands had to have a viable live show, to be considered by the company. This requirement was supported by Briar [J.B. ; 1], Marks [D.M. ; 4] and Clarke. [D.C. ; 12] However, this need for live music was not stressed by Roberts of EMI, who claimed that most of the A&R work done by the company was via demo tapes received through unsolicited mail. [H.R. ; 4]

From the factors mentioned by the companies, it can be said that most of the record companies need to see an excellent live show in order to consider the artist as a commercially viable option. The record companies are not responsible for this live show though. The record companies identified the lack of live promotion as one of the key elements lacking in South African music. This shortcoming highlights one of the contradictions within the industry. Original bands are not able to organise large-scale shows themselves, because they do not have radio support, because they do not have albums. Thus, their chances of being signed are diminished, due to the absence of advantages which accrue from being signed. Stevens also claimed that her company had to deal with the unwarranted level of arrogance of artists. [N.S. ; 8]

It is interesting to note that conspicuously absent from the criteria mentioned by the companies is the important issue of the music excellence? Perhaps this is a pre-requisite which has to be met before the other criteria are even applied.

Dave Marks of Third Ear Records added a personal component as an important criteria, which none of the other companies mentioned as strongly, if at all:

That is another important thing. It's a matter of what *I* like too. That's the thing about Third Ear. We never *ever* take on music that we don't like. And it's very wide. [D.M. ; 13]

I asked a sound-engineer, who is in the music performance environment continually, whether record company representatives were present at music venues. Interestingly, he claimed:

Ya. Ya, they do. They have a very low profile. Something I discovered in my later years is that record companies are not as stupid as we think they are. They are generally aware of the trends. They choose unobtrusive people to see what is happening. [P.D. ; 24]

It, therefore, appears as if at least some of the fears that the artists expressed in the Artists perception section above can be answered. Artists who expressed concern about the unhip execs who stand in the corner with slicked-back hair are perhaps not really seeing the real talent-scouts in the clubs. There may be cases where bands feel that they are not being monitored closely because they are not aware of the

record representatives. Perhaps record companies should step up their visual appearances, to let the artists know that they are being considered.

6.2.6 Infrastructure to market.

When I asked Stevens if local record companies lacked the necessary infrastructure to market a band abroad, she said that this was not actually a problem. For example, the record company that she works for is a subsidiary to Sony who have recently re-entered South Africa, and who have an extensive network for marketing a product. [N.S.; 7] Briar claimed that record companies do have dedicated marketing teams, and are able to market effectively in South Africa. Tusk has a dedicated international marketing wing which aims to secure deals for local artists overseas, and to market them abroad. Once these marketing schemes secure deals overseas, the marketing responsibility then falls in the hands of the overseas company with which the artist is signed. [J.B. ; 1] Natal Music is linked to BMG, a massive marketing and distribution network with many famous international names to its credit. This means that if the company does secure a deal with a local artist of international quality, then the network is in place for the artist to be adequately distributed in many different countries apart from just South Africa. This tie with the international music community is very beneficial for musicians. These are positive factors. The local record companies appear to be aware of the need to market product abroad. But despite this awareness of record companies, the task of actually efficiently marketing a local band abroad has not been accomplished. Roberts [EMI] told me that even a very large company such as EMI, which has extensive contacts around the world, experiences difficulty in getting an artist the necessary support for an international release. He claimed that it is not very difficult to get the artist released abroad, but that the support systems and promotion of our artists abroad are not good enough. [H.R. ; 4]

Marks also has a sobering viewpoint. He is pessimistic about local companies' ability to market musical product. According to him the local record companies are ill-equipped to deal with the marketing and distribution of local product. Unlike the other companies interviewed, Marks seems to incorporate the development of talent into his definition of what marketing should entail:

Well, I am terribly cynical about this because the local record companies don't have *any*

infra-structures as far as *music* goes. As far as *records* goes, there is quite a good infra-structure. But that is simply from the plant, to their offices, to the radio stations and the television. That is the little cabal. [D.M. ; 15]

6.2.7 Are our Artists talented?

Stevens claimed that the artists in South Africa definitely had the talent, and she cited success story examples from *Clout* to Clegg. [N.S. ; 6] Clarke agreed with this, and claimed that we had a very strong talent. However, he added a rider that talent was no longer enough. According to him, talent is a prerequisite, but it is not enough on its own:

Commercialise art, and you create the situation where it competes against the best of the other commercialised arts, and there is only so much room for art product. Art product excludes millions of talented people. The other way to illustrate this is to say that there are some very very big, successful artists out there in the world who are far less talented than others who will never make it. [D.C. ; 10]

I asked Jeremy Briar of Tusk about the talent in this country. He claimed that in theory there was enough talent in this country to produce a super-group. He cited Lucky Dube's signing to Motown as an example of what can happen to talent in South Africa. [J.B. ; 1] Harvey Roberts of EMI also claimed that South African musicians are very talented. [H.R. ; 4] Marks agreed, and claimed that there was no doubt at all that we had the talent. [D.M. ; 17] He claimed that the manner in which these artists are being treated is the problem. According to Marks, the artists lack experience, and this is as important as the talent aspect. He claimed that the record companies are not treating the talent carefully enough. Marks then used the analogy of a boxer being taken from the townships and being thrown into the international boxing ring:

He will be murdered, if not by attitude and the way he approaches things, then purely with how difficult it is to be out there the big wide world. [D.M.; 17]

Another important factor mentioned by Marks is the talent required to actually *produce* the music.

[D.M.;17] The engineers and producers are artists in their own right. In this context, "production" is the activity involved in getting the best possible sounds on tape. Marks claims that the industry is very careful about sharing information in this sphere:

The industry is very good at guarding the skills they do have. They will only let you have a little bit. [D.M. ; 17]

6.3 Comparison between local and international infrastructure

I will draw on the experiences of artists and members of the record industry to determine some of the differences between the local industry and music abroad. This section thus focuses on some of the infrastructural problems currently faced by the local artists.

6.3.1 Differences in deals

There are a host of differences between the deals offered artists, according to Birch, who has experience in both the local and overseas record industry. The first of these, is the fact that record companies abroad immediately give the artist an amount to live on once they are signed up. This does not occur locally according to Birch. [D.Birch ; 43] This would seem to indicate that the local record industry does not perceive music to be the sole form of employment of the artist and one wonders how they expect the artist to survive.

Secondly, local companies do not make funding available for the artists to purchase high quality equipment. [D.Birch ; 43] In South Africa, with the high level of equipment costs, the artists thus have to ensure, of their own accord, that they have the necessary equipment to use for live performances and recording.

The third difference, according to Birch, is that the South African publishing companies are signed to the record companies. Where the record companies are involved in the production and distribution of physical product, the publishing companies are the companies responsible for placing the original material of songwriters and composers with performing artists. In this way, songwriters receive performance royalties

when the performer uses the writer's material.

A situation in which publishing royalties can be used directly to offset production debt of a recording artist, is unconventional, according to Birch. This would mean that if someone did a cover version of one of your songs and became famous doing it, [*Big Mountain* doing Frampton's "Baby I love your way"] because the record company is linked to the publishing company, it could use those royalties to offset your debts to them for recording time. According to Birch, the convention overseas is to keep the two different fields, publishing and recording, completely separate. This was also mentioned by Roberts of EMI. [H.R. ; 3]

Fourthly, Birch mentions some differences in publishing deals. These deals, for instance have a 50/50 split locally, but a minimum of 70/30 in the songwriter's favour is expected overseas. [D.Birch ; 43]

The fifth difference highlighted by Birch is in the royalties percentages. South African companies again do not compare well. Birch claims that the percentage of royalties offered here is eight percent, with four percent kept as a floating amount to pay the producer of the record. If the band has a producer for the record, then they get paid a 12 percent standard. In this case, the record company pays the producer two percent, and if the producer is very well known, and requires more, then this starts coming off the band royalties. [D.Birch ; 44]

Another problem, according to Birch is the fact that when bands get signed to local record companies who in turn sign the band to international record companies located overseas [as explained by Briar in the marketing section above], then the band only gets paid a percentage of a percentage of the royalties.

[D.Birch ; 44]

When I asked Stevens, of Gallo, whether local record contracts were comparable to the overseas contracts, she claimed that they were actually more beneficial to the artists, because of the fact that the record companies here actually meet the costs of the recording. [N.S. ; 9] The same point was emphasised by Briar, of Tusk. He claimed:

Yes, they are comparable, but different. The fundamental difference being that international companies pay a higher royalty, but everything is recoupable from the artist - the recording costs, videos etc. In South Africa, the companies meet these obligations.

[J.B. ; 1]

Stevens went into more detail. She claims that overseas contracts involve the record companies recouping their costs of the initial stages before the artist gets paid anything. In South Africa, the artist is paid a proportion of every sale from the very first unit sold onwards. In this scenario artists do not have to put a cent in for production costs. The record company pays all the initial stages of production, and even flies in an overseas producer if necessary. [N.S. ; 9] Roberts of EMI agreed with this, but claimed that their was an important factor which had to be understood when considering this point. He claimed that although the record companies do finance the initial stages of production, they also become the owners of the musical product. Thus, the artist actually is no longer in control of the material because ownership is vested in the record company. [H.R. ; 3]

6.3.2 Radio play

Radio stations also have a lot of discretion as to what will be played and what will not be heard. For example, Briar claims that the record companies actually have to convince the radio stations why the music should be play-listed, and the artists interviewed. [J.B. ; 2] [See Chapter Seven]

Due to the fact that the more cost-efficient popular music in South Africa is music imported from abroad, it is the powerful position of the radio which is determining the future of South African popular music. Thus it has been targeted by lobby groups who want to see more local music in this format. Radio play is extremely important for record sales, claimed Stevens. [N.S. ; 9]

The relationship between the broadcasting media and the record companies is undergoing changes due to a shift in broadcasting technology. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter Seven.

6.3.3 Quota System

The quota system refers to the amount of local music to be played on radio and television. I spoke with Les Mezulu of MUSA [Musicians Union of South Africa] which is one of the driving forces behind the implementation of a quota system, and asked her about the reasons for its inception, and the effects thereof. [5 December 1994]

Mezulu claimed that the scheme was implemented because of a lack of opportunities for local artists to be heard and seen in the radio and television media, and a consequent lack of awareness of the public of the talent that exists within the borders of South Africa. She claimed that this system was aimed at boosting the local record industry as well as allowing an expression of the local talent which until now has not had the benefit of the broadcasting media.

The local content quota system was agreed upon by important parties involved in the South African music industry. The agreement was reached between MUSA, SABC, and the IBA. [Independent Broadcasting Authority] SAMRO was also involved in these discussions. The system should have a drastic effect on the opportunities available in the industry, claims Mezulu.

The quota system has a bearing on musical employment because it determines a demand for a recorded music product. The fact that local music will be played on radio and television should see good local artists receiving positive attention from the public. At least the opportunity now exists for local artists to be noticed. There are also some negative points about this quota system, and these will be discussed below.

Mezulu said that the proportion of local music required, 80%, cannot immediately be expected from all radio stations. Thus, the scheme allows for different stations to be faced with different quotas. Radio stations who have given strong support to local music, such as Radio Zulu and Radio Xhosa, will immediately be able to fulfil this requirement. However, more popular music oriented stations such as Radio Five who only play about two percent local content will have to change their outlook rapidly.

Reasons for the different proportions demanded are: firstly, some radio stations simply do not have the material to play; and, secondly, pressure is being exerted on the radio stations from sponsors who fear a decreased listenership if the 80% proportion was demanded immediately. As far as my perception of local radio and television is concerned, I have not heard a drastic change in the proportion of local music to international music yet. The system is certainly going to change the outlook of the record industry. Record companies are now going to have to involve themselves in the actual production of local music, and this should create a demand for studio time, as well as valuable experience for bands and companies alike in the fields of production. This news was widely welcomed by artists interviewed. [N.vdS. ; 31]

6.3.4 Record company reaction

I asked record companies for their reactions to this quota system. Briar, of Tusk Records, claimed that the quota system would certainly benefit artists and companies and change the way South African music is perceived in some sectors of the market. [J.B. ; 2] Stevens [Gallo] and Roberts [EMI] also reacted positively to such a system. Stevens understood it to be an important step in shifting the awareness of people, and creating a national music consciousness. The weak national consciousness of live music support necessitates that a very stringent and intelligent marketing campaign reaches the people, she claimed. Ironically, this appears to be the most essential, and yet least developed, sector of the music industry. [N.S. ; 17] Roberts claimed that there is not enough music to fill a quota as high as 50%. [H.R. ; 3]

If a local music consciousness can be forced by way of law, claims Stevens, then that is what must happen. She said that local radio will also boost the output of local music. More local music will be able to be played on the new stations which are currently receiving radio licenses under a more relaxed system. [N.S. ; 6] The quota is obviously beneficial to record companies due to the increased demands for their services which are being made by the radio stations, many of whom have limited amounts of local music.

Objections about the quota being unrealistically high have already been made. Capital Radio claims that the quota which applies to them is completely unrealistic, and that there is not enough high-quality local talent to fill this time. Capital Radio is pushing for a reduction in the quota system. These quota systems

have definite implications for advertising sponsors. [TV1 8 o'clock News ; 7 December 1994]

The statement by Capital 604 is inaccurate, I would argue. The talent certainly exists, but due to the structure of our industry, it has not been put on tape, hence the panic from the stations.

A different opinion was also expressed by Dave Marks of Third Ear Records. Marks says that the industry should be understood from the ground upwards. He understands a necessity for musical talent to be brought out through a natural process of evolution from learning songs to small-scale performance, and then eventually on a larger-scale. Marks, thus, objects to the quota system because there is no foundation in the music industry to justify the rapid increase:

You see, the record industry and I have a huge argument. I was told the other day that I was being irresponsible because I am going against the local content thing. [D.M. ; 8]

Marks would prefer that the music process was supported from the ground up. Instead of making a demand on the musicians to supply an amount to the radio, which simply lets those who already have the financial means to have a greater input, the legislation should look at social factors such as the lack of practising venues. [D.M. ; 9] The standard of music which we will be forced to listen to, said Marks, will drop drastically, since the increased demand by record companies cannot be met by high quality material. He claims:

The quota system will simply ensure that record companies who can afford to make records will simply carry on, and those who can't will be excluded. [D.M. ; 23]

Many other social forces which impact negatively on local music should be addressed, said Marks. This would take the form of concessions, and incentives to keep people in South Africa. [D.M. ; 23] One example he gave me was of the exorbitantly priced equipment required by bands. According to Marks, we should be building our own amplifiers and guitars, and setting up our own infra-structure. [See Chapters Seven and Eight] Instead, we are rapidly losing producers. He gave me an example of some people who had applied to the SBDC [Small Business Development Corporation] and been refused financial assistance in setting up

their own amplifier design and construction business. As a result, they are now using their designs in an amplifier construction corporation in Japan. This is valuable talent which is lost to South Africa due to a lack of sponsorship and government involvement. [D.M. ; 22]

Marks urged the business establishment to take note that music is the world's largest industry - bigger than tourism. It is possible for small countries to be supported by single rock bands. Ireland is now actually financing its original bands as part of a national economic decision. [D.M. ; 22]

Marks said that the same kind of attention should be given to music as the hype attached to our sport. Sponsorships, and support from the ground up, are far more valuable than an increased demand from the top. He also claimed that the industry does not share information. [D.M. ; 17]

On the whole, Mark's approach seems a lot more practical in building the industry as well as the quality of the music. This would be better than simply creating a system in which the musicians with the money and technology automatically receive airplay, and the entrenched companies strengthen their positions.

6.3.5 Infrastructural Limits

6.3.5.1 Studios

Studios are not geared toward original music, because they have the alternative of more commercial product:

Durban studios have a really big problem; they can't operate effectively on a commercial basis, because they are undercut by the SABC. For instance, if you buy airtime at the SABC, then they will give you studio-time for free. [D.Birch ; 13]

6.3.5.2 Lack of a touring circuit

Briar of Tusk Records claims that the major limit facing bands currently in South Africa is the lack of a live circuit in which to support any record deal that they may have, or even to hone their artistry. This is coupled with a shortage of good managers, a factor mentioned by both artists and record companies on

many occasions. A problem with some bands is their total reliance on records to make a living, which is difficult for a new band, according to Briar. [J.B. ; 2]

6.3.5.3 *Overseas professionalism*

An artist interviewed had some experience of the United States bar circuit:

In the States there is an intimate little happening circuit. In every state, everything is networked. If you are in the same vein, the same category, same audience appeal, there is a happening circuit. [N.vdS. ; 30]

What enables this, in the opinion of the artist, is strong radio support. [N.vdS. ; 30] Nick Fairclough, who stayed in L.A. for three years, claimed that the amount of competition in the USA was very high. Artists are literally sleeping in their cars because they are unable to afford accommodation fees at music colleges. Bands actually have to pay club owners for the chance to be allowed to perform a set in a well-frequented club. [N.F. ; 2]

Another artist who had experience of the European club circuit, specifically France, claimed that it was extremely tough just to get a gig anywhere:

Well, it's actually much better here. When you play in a band, you find gigs much easier here. It's very, very difficult to gig there. I mean the band I played for in France, we tried for about a year to find gigs, and all we did was three gigs. Very, very difficult there, especially because over there, they all have the same sound. [U.C. ; 20]

There is a perception of a very high level of professionalism in European touring circuits:

He was telling Fuzzy that if you want a gig in Amsterdam, don't bother taking a demo tape; take a CD. No really, they are really very organised. They get hundreds of tapes that they don't even bother listening to. They want a sure thing, a CD. [N.vdS ; 17]

This professionalism is described by Birch when he talks about studios in London:

Studios in London have these in-house rocket scientists. You get something wrong somewhere....and Tchoooooch! In they come, replace the machine...Zooook, the old one is taken away, they've got it fixed in two hours. [D.B. ; 15]

Although the same artists described overseas music as a much tougher vocation in terms of competition, it is supported by a stable performance infrastructure, as well as social backup systems which make it less risky than South African original music. One of these backups is the welfare system in Europe, and social security in America. An artist who had experienced musical worklessness in France confirmed this:

Yes there is, and you are right, it makes a difference. It is a reliable form of income when things go badly. [U.C. ; 20]

Birch, who had experience in London and the American tour circuits claimed that bands actually used social welfare as their sole source of income while they worked toward their aim of getting a record contract together. [D.B. ; 43]

6.3.6 Conclusion

A distance between the local record industry and local musicians was shown through a comparison of the perceptions of artists and some record companies. The artists displayed a lack of confidence in the record companies. Some of the record companies replied by stating that the lack of confidence expressed by artists was to be expected. Another record company replied by claiming that the views expressed by the artists were based on a misperception of the role that record companies play in the industry.

Both artists and industry agreed that there is a strong lack of music promotion, band management, and live shows. This seems to be an important part of the distance between the record company and the musician. I then investigated the commercial criteria that record companies use in determining who will be signed to them. I discussed the way the industry appears to be centred around the distribution of cost-effective international product, and how this has affected the audience's judgement of local product. From this

discussion, I examined the affects of the local content quota system which has recently been implemented.

Finally, I examined some of the differences between aspects of the local industry infrastructure and that of the overseas industry.

This chapter highlights the importance of the relationship between the record companies and the artists. It is an important part of the career of original music, yet it is underdeveloped in South Africa due to social forces which have led to the record industry being shaped in a certain way. As a result, the audience is usually more conscious of the talents which enter the country from abroad. Whether a system of forced local content will be able to assist musicians, or merely entrench the powerful record companies remains to be seen.

CHAPTER 7 - TECHNOLOGY

7.1 Introduction

The nature of music as a form of employment is the combined result of many factors and interactions which affect the musician. The equipment he uses to play and compose, and most importantly of all, the technological means used to record, reproduce and distribute music, are determinants of success in the vocation of music.

Although the predominant focus thus far has been on the actual performance of the music in the club and at the concert, the "reproducibility" of this sound is something that must be included in any study of commercial music as a job. It is in this field, the "reproducibility" of music, that music assumes its commercial value.

There are thus two distinct areas to be examined here. The first technology dealt with here, and one assuming a greater and greater importance in a music career, is reproduction technology. The second, is performance technology. This technology determines the quality of live sound delivered to the audience. The levels and costs of the musical equipment used by working bands is discussed.

7.2 Reproduction Technologies

If ever there was a broad industry based on networks of promotions and reproduction of product, it is the music industry. From the inception of the song in the songwriters mind, to the first "demo" tape, to the mastered Compact Disc, to radio and television play and touring, the product of music is passed around, in different formats and media. Thus the accessibility of music, especially *commercial* music is of utmost importance.

This section, therefore, focuses on the "recording musician," something which most performers that I spoke to wanted to be or were already involved in. This recording stage is when the product leaves the musician, and is reproduced rapidly into a commodity. This is the stage where the musician stands a better chance of

making a living from his music, since touring, radio play and promotion are all based around this commodity, and the potential for revenue increases greatly. The inter-relatedness of the music industry is well described by Chambers.

From a disco or the purchase of a Walkman, to turning on the radio, and the reading of NME each week, it is the reproducibility of sound that dominates the surface of pop. Recorded music also links together a massive record industry, and its subsidiaries, to various musical choices and cultural uses. [Chambers 1990 : xii]

7.2.1 Commerciality

Commercial music is inherently tied to a marketing approach. Experience, infrastructure and an ability to market the song turn the product into a highly-valued commodity. The audience ultimately buys the product. Commercial music is thus based on mass appeal.

This is well captured by Chambers when he makes the point that, even though there are a host of institutions such as the musical press, radio play and the powerful record companies themselves, who will attempt to persuade the public to use their spending power and purchase the music, it is ultimately the consumer who decides what to buy. [1985 ; xii] This would imply that no matter how hard people try to sell music, a commercial success is ultimately dependent on audience reaction.

Struthers deals with the question of technology and music marketing:

The design of the technology used to duplicate sound recordings for eventual reproduction, the familiar disc, was not the result of chance decisions, or of technical imperatives. Gramophone discs of recorded sound and pre-recorded tapes satisfy a number of criteria for a commoditised entertainment industry.

He continues:

They can be manufactured and sold relatively cheaply, and in large quantities this can be made very profitable by economies of scale; they are semi-durable, and therefore the consumer purchases a long-lasting good, but may be persuaded to seek replacements; they

are portable, and cheaply and easily transported and stored. [1987 ; 241]

This extract captures the essence of the "commerciality" behind certain formats of music reproduction. Even though White's book Lost in Music [1987 ; 241] deals with a form of technology already outmoded [the record player] it still captures the requirements for a commercial music product. These requirements inform the musician's career, because due to the ability of technology to make a format of music available for mass sale, the musician stands to gain from mass revenues which would not otherwise have been attainable. A musician can only play so many live concerts without collapsing from exhaustion. Technology ensures that this is *not* the only means of income.

Eighteen-wheelers, stuffed to the brim with compact discs, take the singer's voice to racks in CD shops, and ultimately into lounges of houses, and DJ booths in clubs. A single recording of the artist can thus be shared by millions of people. This in turn impacts on live performance. People want to see the band whose records they have bought. The important concept here is the *standardisation* of the art that occurs. People all want the *same* record. "Have you got *the* new R.E.M.?"

Hence Struthers claims that the objective of making replicable art, or art that is able to be easily reproduced, is not to make each artwork valuable because of its uniqueness, but instead to make exactly the same thing for large scale sale to the consumer. [Struthers 1987 ; 244] This is mass production at its best.

The ironic problem with the wonderful technologies at our disposal, is that they are becoming so efficient so as to threaten this "mass appeal" criterion on which popular music is based.

7.2.2 Cost of reproduction technology

The first problem relates to the conditions of capitalist production. Due to the cost of the mass technologies, monopolies arise in the reproduction of music. Barriers and dynamics are present in the industry, as described by Struthers. [1987 ; 241] Due to the fact that this is a process of manufacture that is very difficult

and costly to set up, certain companies find themselves able to create monopolies as would occur in any other capital intensive industry. This leads to conditions where a few major companies control the distribution of most of the musical product. With the boom in music technologies, the position of these companies may be challenged, or it may be consolidated.

7.2.3 Decreased Sales

From recent developments in technology, it appears as though the actual purchasing of musical product is becoming less and less of a necessity. The technologies which I refer to here are both performance technologies and reproduction technologies, but it would appear that the reproduction technologies hold the most problems as well as benefits for musicians.

The marketing goal of making music as durable, and of as high a quality and accessible as possible, has started to turn against the record companies who are now unable to limit these technologies. Music has become so accessible that the consumer is able to receive it without necessarily having to reward the artist and producer of the work. For example, home taping duplicates a music product without rewarding the producer of the original product. Ironically, this ultimately affects the artist, by impacting on potential returns from the music.

Technology, while making music more and more accessible, is decreasing the need for the purchase of a fixed physical product by the audience. Purchases of fixed product by the audience which are still occurring, normally involve the playback system, or Hi-Fi, and then the very convenient compact disc. These are far more durable than records, and need replacing less often. On an even smaller level, the headbasher can experience beautiful sound quality on a Disc-man which fits in the palm of a hand. If one continues this "progression" of musical product into more reliable, cheaper forms, the ultimate consequence is free listening of the best possible quality.

People don't have to buy their radio time; radio licences of consumers are impossible to enforce. Yet, radio broadcasts the clearest, most pristine stereo FM versions of the same songs for sale in the shops. The artist,

whose hit song you now simply tape off the radio [Because its the only worthwhile song on the album, right?], has one more CD hanging on the rack in the supermarket.

The inconvenience suffered by the public from not having purchased the compact disc player and the discs, is the lack of control of whether or not their song will be played, and when this will happen. But the song is there, waiting for you, in the radio.

Luckily for musicians, stereo FM Radio is also of a lower sound quality than compact disc digital sound. A discussion occurs, below, on what would happen if these problems with broadcasting - accessibility and quality - were able to be bypassed.

Presently, the radio is actually one of the most powerful media of music, because it has a significant effect on the marketing of the musician's product. This was confirmed in an interview with a record company Artist and Repertoire person. [N.S. ; 6] It is thus crucially important that the radio stations are monitored, and made to pay for the convenience of having the artist's song.

The problems with "home taping" and people not needing to purchase the product because of its technological mobility, have hampered the recording industry for years. Organisations like ASAMI [Association of SA Music Industries] are formed to combat infringements of copyright. As technology has made it easier for the record company to mass produce popular music and to market it, so these technologies have been passed on to the public. The devious consumer, in his otherwise ramshackle surroundings is able to stand arms folded in front of his glowing CD player/double tape deck/radio combo and laugh hilariously as he tapes copies of his best CDs for his friends.

7.2.4 Management of Intellectual Product

White [1987 ; 167], in a chapter entitled: "Popular music and the law - Who owns the song?", discusses the

relationship between the sources of intellectual property - in other words the musicians, and the producers and managers. These managers, including the plethora of allied industries and agencies such as publishing houses and recording companies, are a necessary step between the musician, and the audience.

The song, which is the creative output of the musician, needs to be scarce enough for the public to *need* to purchase it, in order to control it. The producers, similarly, have to find some way of controlling who gets to hear the song. A sale must occur somewhere between the musician, and the audience. Without this prospect of mass sales, a music career changes completely.

In this scenario, the artists realise that all the effort at doing something unique is not going to be rewarded financially. Even if musical output by the artist remains constant, the record companies, who are the producers of the product, find it more and more difficult to survive. This leads to a breakdown in the process between the musician and the audience. One of the key characteristics of a career in music, the prospect of mass sales of the musical product, disintegrates. It is my contention that this "management of intellectual property" mentioned by Berman [1993 ; 51] will be one of the key determinants in shaping the future direction of a career in music.

In 1987 Struthers was battling to understand the implications of a technology that was replacing the gramophone record:

This control of producers has recently been challenged by consumers using the newer technology of the blank magnetic recording cassette tape. The efforts of producers to combat this challenge by technical and legal means is testimony to its financial importance to them. [1987 ; 241]

If this technology was deemed a problem for producers in 1987, recent developments have amplified this into a very large scale problem. The advent of digital recording is able to reduce music from its tonal

qualities in the stuffy club, to a series of cold on/off messages that are sucked from the musicians hands onto the busy information highway.

Within a global capitalism which rapidly decreases times and distances between people and informations, competing technologies ultimately have seized upon music as a form of lucrative information. Unless some means of controlling intellectual material is found, the future of music does not look good. The increased competition and technologies in the musical marketplace sees the broadest possible audience being reached at the least possible cost, and subsequently the least reward for the artist, and producer.

The ultimate death knell for the recording industry would come in the form of something that makes music so accessible, so well reproduced and cheap, that no reward at all will accrue to the company and the artist due to a lack of control.

7.2.5 Digital Broadcasting

This threat comes most immediately in the form of Digital Broadcasting, and is already a reality. Once this system is established, a signal encoded into digital information will be able to be received in every persons house, and translated into the best possible quality of music. It will be as though you have every possible CD ever printed in your computer from a network, a transmission line or a Digital Radio signal. There are thus definite benefits of this type of system.

The environmental benefit of these newer technologies is mentioned by Berman [1993 ; 51] who also claims that Digital transmission promises to replace less efficient forms of distributing information.

Digital transmission promises to replace less efficient forms of distributing information.

Everything is capable of being reduced to ones or zeros, wether literary text, audio or audio-visual signals, or other information, can be delivered to the home without manufacturing costs or environmental waste.

Instead of all the plastic, and paper involved in the product, it could now become information on one's hard

disk. There are definite benefits of having music in this form. Not only would it be cheaper and more environmentally friendly to manufacture, but certainly it would become easier to distribute. Fewer 18-wheelers stuffed with CDs, have to rumble through the countryside. This could mean that the artist's product would be able to be accessible to many more people than it currently is. If controlled adequately, these technologies could enable artists, who were previously unable to find their musical market niche, access to specialist audiences. As Berman [1993 ; 51] comments:

Clearly, digital technology has the capacity of giving rise to a Renaissance of musical production, with niche marketing of diverse entertainment made possible on an unprecedented scale. The term *narrowcasting* could take on a whole new meaning in terms of music delivery systems.

Narrowcasting would enable artists presently unable to survive on their music, a better chance at finding the people who want to purchase these artists' styles; provided the audience is made to pay for it.

The problem of controlling the material transmitted under this new technology is now the crucial issue of the music business. Berman [1993 ; 52] is concerned with the new "mobility" of the product.

Audio on demand is the crystallisation of the *celestial jukebox* concept. This will permit consumers to access separately and to download if they so choose, recorded music without regard to third party broadcasting decisions and scheduling.

He continues: [1993 ; 52]

Digital technology, and in particular digital transmission systems, has advanced to the stage where acts of broadcasting have become more akin to means of distribution, and less like our notion of traditional broadcasting.

In order for the record company to survive, new forms of legislation need to be devised, particularly surrounding the area of broadcast which has now assumed such a great centrality to music. It appears that the central issue with which Berman is grappling here is the way in which remuneration of the producer of the music will take place.

Berman [1993 ; 53] questions the legislation which is currently applicable to the broadcasting sphere, by asking whether we would allow someone to run off copies of CDs and only be liable for the profits of this service. According to Berman the broadcasters of tomorrow will be doing this unless the legislation is changed. Once the music has been made accessible to the broadcasters, it is in such a high quality, immediately reproducible form, that beyond this first "handing over" of the product to the broadcasters, the record company has very little control of, and hence very little return from the product. For instance, if we were able to phone the radio stations, and demand our favourite song, and they were able to download it with crystal clear clarity onto our computer/radio off a network, we would not have to buy any compact disks. Berman [1993 ; 53] thus urges legislators to catch up with the technologies at work. According to Harvey Roberts of EMI, the advent of digital broadcasting in South Africa will be a test case for the rest of the world. He claimed that the entire music industry stands a risk of being completely destroyed should this technology be inadequately controlled. According to Roberts this technology is about five years away from becoming an everyday part of music [H.R. ; 4]

Such would be the problems with digital transmission, and this is what needs to be solved. In any regard, these developments will alter the recording industry and subsequently the career of music.

7.2.6 South Africa

In an interview with David Marks, someone involved in most aspects of the music industry at one time or another, some very interesting viewpoints about the future of the recording industry in South Africa were mentioned. These were largely to do with the implementation of new technologies, and some of the historical and structural forces which determine the way in which these technological changes are to be experienced by the industry.

The future for those people of us involved in the record industry is kind of plain to see.

Radio. To be very blunt, record companies are on the way out. I think everybody knows that. [D.M. ; 33]

Marks, who referred me to the Berman article "Music at the crossroads" [1993] claimed that the South

African music industry is not actually connected with the musicians. [D.M. ; 33]

He claims that the record companies are "top heavy":

They bought more cars, more reps, more people to sell plastic, and less people involved with the culture of music and training and development. They said it is not their job. Even I believe that, I suppose they are right. [D.M. ; 34]

However, despite this "not being their job", the easier option of importing articles of no significance except profit potential has left the record companies out in the cold. This means that now, with radio improving in quality so much, and "going digital" [D.M. ; 34] the record companies find themselves without a support base from the actual musicians.

One example of record companies being bypassed by the shifts in the industry is the "Live on Five" show, in which local artists with large scale followings are given the opportunity to perform in the radio studio. Many artists, such as Robin Auld, and B-World, have performed these shows in the 5 FM studio [South Africa], and received nationwide listenerships. B-World did not have an album at that stage, and as of yet, they only have a CD single released. Other bands receive minimal scale radio play, off demo tapes sent directly from studios.

Marks claimed [D.M. ; 34] that the radio stations will build their own studios and participate more in the role with which record companies are traditionally associated. He claimed that this was already happening in London:

I heard last week. On *their* Radio Five, a lot of the day is taken up by live bands coming into the studio; bands popping in and playing live. [D.M. ; 34]

Thus, technology sees the music industry shifting toward a boom in the importance of live aspects of musical performance.

Live performance is already a central part of the careers of some of the worlds greatest selling bands. The

U2 Zoooropa extravaganza is an example of a band that broadcasts live. They are so technologically "hooked up" that they are able to facilitate a satellite link to a live broadcast of Sarajevo in the middle of a civil war to an amazed audience at their performance in Sidney which stares at the 5 metre crying woman on the screen, as the band begins the next song. A broadcast of that live broadcast then comes into our living rooms. We see Sarajevo war victims, and we see *U2* dancing in front of them on the stage, and we see an audience dancing in front of *U2*. Technology has altered the notion of music performance for ever.

Such developments show a tendency for the "live event" to assume an increased importance in the struggle for support from the mass support base that makes commercial music commercial. If this type of shift happened on a large scale, it could result in increased tensions between record companies and radio stations. The artists are affected in that they would have to be able to perform live in conjunction with the accompanying technology.

In an interview with Narine Stevens, an Artist and Repertoire and Marketing person for the local branch of a large record company, Stevens told me about some of the animosity that exists between radio and the record industry, the "payola schemes" that some smaller companies use to have their product aired, and the tremendous power that the DJ's have. She gave me the example of a top Radio Zulu disc jockey who has an audience of about ten million during "drive-time". [N.S ; 18]

As explained by Stevens, there is a careful power balance that exists between the radio stations, and record companies, depending on who needs who the most. Record companies need someone to promote their artists so that they will sell in the shops, the radio needs artistic material from the record company, and the artist needs everybody, just as they all need him.

The profit motive of record companies was strongly emphasised by Stevens, who claimed that for the big commercial companies, at the end of the day, profit is the sole motive of production because it is necessary for corporate survival. [N.S. ; 3] Despite the best possible intentions of a company, costs must be met.

7.2.7 Piracy and Copyright

The rewards of pursuing a music career are undermined from many angles. In an interview with 5 FM [S.A.] Vilikaze Crookes commented on the problem of recording piracy. She represented the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry [IFPI] which calls itself the "world trade association for producers and distributors of sound recordings." In the interview Crookes claims that only ten out of 100 songs played on the radio break even, and that these ten songs are the songs targetted by recording pirates. The association of the South African musical industry [ASAMI] is the most recent member of this organisation.

The goals of the IFPI are to combat piracy primarily, as well as to be the voice of the recording industry and to ensure that certain rights are adhered to within this industry.

[Crookes ; 5 FM, 20 Oct 1994 interview]

Crookes went on to say that in terms of piracy we have a large problem predominantly with the black music repertoire here, but that many of the ways in which it has been combatted in other parts of the world can be used successfully locally.

However, one of the issues in which SA is different to other parts of the world is when it comes to things like the broadcasting right. [Crookes ; 5 FM, 20 Oct 1994 interview]

She claims that the South African legalities are not as advanced as they should be, particularly around the issue of the rights which apply to music broadcasting. Crookes makes the important point that the owner of the copyright should have rights to reproduction and distribution, and also the right to authorise broadcast. In the absence of such a right, the owner of the copyright should at least be able to receive compensation for the broadcast of his or her work. [Crookes ; 5 FM, 20 Oct 1994 interview]

Thus it appears that the South African legislation pertaining to broadcasting is *already* lagging behind the rest of the world, even before the impact of the new digital broadcasting is felt. If we are to believe the future predictions of Berman [1993] then South African legislation is unsatisfactory in the field most important to music: broadcasting rights.

Crookes explained which rights exist on a CD. The first right according to Crookes [Crookes ; 5 FM, 20 Oct 1994 interview] is the composer's right, in other words the right of the person who made up the song to remuneration every time the song is played over the air. In South Africa SAMRO [South African Musicians Rights Organisation] is the organisation that looks after these rights.

The second right is problematic for the professional musician. This second right is "missing" according to Crookes. This right is the producer's right to remuneration for the costs and talent of actually getting the musical product from the artist into the final product.

Now this has serious implications for the recording industry, especially in the light of the future developments that may be occurring in broadcasting which could undermine the producer's other principal source of income: the sale of fixed product to the consumer.

Crookes then went on to explain that this "missing right" was actually present until 1965, at which stage it disappeared and that it was a bad thing that we did not have it because the artist loses the money eventually, due to the producer being adversely affected. [Crookes ; 5 FM, 20 Oct 1994 interview]

Thus, South African legislation needs to quickly rethink the way in which musical product is made available to the public, because there are certain "gaps" in the law which could be very negative for the music industry. In any event, the future of the recording industry is an interesting subject, because it determines the future of music performance, and it could be an important part of compensation for the performer.

Marks predicts major changes in the future:

Radio is going to have to change it's tune, excuse the pun, and record companies are certainly going to have to rethink their relationship with the artist. [D.M. ; 35]

7.2.8 Conclusion

Recording artists may find it difficult to survive because of a host of parallel industries involved in distribution of music without necessary payment to the artists or the investing parent record company. Such developments are occurring alongside the major recording industry and have necessitated the formation of many organisations and coalitions to fight them since they are killing the livelihood of the musician. This is over and above a legal system which does not recognise the right of the "producer" to authorise broadcasting and to receive payment for it. Thus, the potential earnings of the working musician are carved up again and again by technological forces in the spheres of production, reproduction and broadcast.

If one takes this development to its natural conclusion, we see the artist not being rewarded at all for his or her intellectual property, or not having a recording industry to work through because it simply can not survive financially. This efficiently kills local music as the cost constraints that face local companies are increased to even more unrealistic levels. Soon it would hardly be worthwhile for companies to invest in artists.

The artist, fortunately, is still the source of the creative element but the means by which the music gets into the home is not decided. The musician of the future may be happier to get a "radio gig", than a record contract. Depending on current forces, and who is more in touch with market demand, the listeners on the couches will flick the dials between the Radio, CD Aux, and Tape selections, and determine the wage of the recording musician.

7.3 Performance technologies

For a working musician, reliable and good quality equipment is a necessary part of the job description. Some facts just cannot be avoided: a crowd grimaces when vocals are distorting through a small P.A. system, competing with the bass, drums and guitar; a crowd can't dance if they can't hear the snare drum at all.

From the process of playing to a club audience, to the process of manipulating sounds in an audience, technology determines both the quality of the sound and the scope for experimentation of the composer.

7.3.1 Live performance

There are minimum requirements that have to be met for a band to perform regularly for money. Each member of the band has a unique instrument which he or she plays [the vocalist plays the microphone]. All the equipment should meet a certain standard, or else it may drag the rest of the working unit down. Even though bands may favour a certain sound, for example vintage valve amps and vintage guitars are highly sought after, there are requirements which are linked to technology. Voice processing units allow the artist more creative room to experiment, and the ability to capture a more professional sound.

These individual instruments often have some particular characteristic which musicians seek. For example: Marshall distortion; Fender distortion; Gibson sound; or Strat sound are all terms used to describe a certain sound emitted by certain instruments. In the guitar sphere, there is a strong reverence for classic models like Stratocasters and the Gibsons. Vintage is thus the standard here. Often it's a case of "older is better". The point here is, to get the correct sound one needs the correct equipment.

In the interview with Nick Fairclough [N.F. ; 3] I was told that the equipment necessary for musical production was one of the most important aspects, and that sub-standard equipment just did not suffice in a musical career. Fairclough told me that in Los Angeles, where he studied music for three years, musicians learn to like the sound of a particular artist, and then go out and buy exactly the same "gear" that the artist uses.

To achieve the same sound, you must have the same equipment. Fairclough told me that even that which is considered to be the most professional equipment in South Africa, is sometimes sub-standard compared to the music industry abroad. Here he was speaking about equipment such as amplifiers, mixing desks, guitars, recording machines and microphones, all items that are used in live performance.

The most striking thing, Fairclough claims, is the price disparity between South Africa, and other countries abroad. He had actually worked out that it was cheaper to fly overseas, hand-pick your instrument, and fly back, than to buy a professional guitar locally. [This is examined in detail in Chapter Eight] It is very

difficult, according to Fairclough [N.F. ; 5], for bands to reach professional standards without the correct equipment. Many of the instruments mentioned by Fairclough are instruments embodying vintage technologies, but many are also technologically oriented. For example, in the sphere of keyboards, the modules of sounds which one buys as accessories to the actual keyboard, are able to duplicate thousands of sounds, as well as allowing the artist to pre-programme and design sound especially for a specific song. A good keyboard sound [See Chapter Four, University Concert] can add a feel to the arrangement of a song which one would normally associate with studio production.

Even guitars have advanced technologically. For example, the design of more flexible tremolo systems which keep the guitar in tune despite any acrobatics has changed guitar sounds for ever, with metal-maestros all suddenly figuring out, "Hey, wow, listen to the sounds you can get if you just push this thing the whole way down!"

However, apart from these individual instruments mentioned above, which are often conservative in their technological change-rates, and which apply from member to member, certain equipment applies to the entire group. The quality and power of the power-amps and speakers, the means of conveying the final mix to the audience, as well as the clarity of the monitoring system which bands use in order to hear one another on stage, need to meet a certain standard.

Processing units are able to add reverb, or anything for that matter, to the original sound of the voice, or the drums. The "trigger" units used by professional drummers, are able to flick through a host of the sampled drum sounds which are triggered once the drum-sensor attached to the drum is hit. This allows drummers to play world-famous drums.

The technological devices which impact on the musician the most are the ones which add something which is not triggered by any movement of human origin. For example: a drum "machine" that performs the beat instead of a drummer; a sequencer that performs the bass-line instead of the bass player. These have a remarkable effect on the career of the musician, because they necessitate fewer people for the production

sound. The one man band becomes a strong reality. Fortunately, the aesthetic of certain bands relies on the excitement generated by people being seen actively involved in their instruments. However, some people claim that as long as these "two man sequencer shows are doing cool original stuff of their own" [B.W. ; 3] then they have a place in live performance on an original circuit. Other spheres thrive on technology, for example, "Techno" bands. However, these are often more involved in studio production, which will be mentioned below.

The current live original music scene in Durban does not seem to utilise computer aided performance very often. In cover band music, this is more often the case though, especially since the less members in band there are, the higher the relative salaries of the remaining humans. But, the advent of technology in the recording sphere is advancing rapidly.

7.3.2 Recording

The spread of computer technology and logic-oriented systems of recording and playback has made perfect sound reproduction possible in a way that is becoming cheaper and cheaper and faster and faster.

DAT [digital audio technology] tapes are now in use, and these comparatively tiny tapes allow perfect quality recording and playback.

The distance between the human imagination and the product has narrowed perceptibly. Orchestras of strings; applause; thunder; rain; many guitar players jamming together; the same person singing with herself in seven different halls simultaneously in different harmonies; can all be produced within seconds in a studio. Technology is developing so fast that these enthusiastic preceding sentences will be probably be laughed at in the very near future.

These performance technologies, once mastered, benefit the musician greatly in facilitating ease of production. Amazingly, the quality of playback can exceed what was put into the recording. Lazy bass drum sounds can be quantised, snare sounds can be sharpened, entire choruses cut and pasted as easily as a nursery school child would make a collage. The computer has grown so much in capacity, memory and

speed, that it is normally the "person" with the highest stature in the recording studio. It has become the "Recorder" the "Playback" system, the "Most Stable Drum Player", the "Most Reliable Harmoniser", the "Hippest Bass Player" and to top it all, the computer is also the friendliest thing in the studio. For the musician who cowers in the corner while he clutches a wooden guitar nervously, there is hope.

User-friendly computers, such as the Apple Mac with CD ROM drives and Direct to Hard Drive Recording facilities, make the transition from the computer-illiterate musician to technologically aware recording person an easier process. Technology is now an integral part of the job description - "musician".

The advent of DAT and computers in the studio has made digital quality recording a lot simpler and more compact. Sequencers and composing programmes make music a lot more accessible to many people who would not have been able to compose a few years ago. But at the same time, it has decreased the number of jobs for musicians in this field, because the computer is rather accurately able to imitate a human being playing an instrument.

White [1987 ; 189] speaks about the role of technology in changing popular music as a form of employment. Of utmost importance is the advent of the computer in all this:

The vocalist and his computer backing band is with us already. The business of convention and constraint will inevitably involve the ownership of the computer and the ownership of the computer program.

White claims that the legal profession is going to have problems deciding who owns which programmes, and which sampling is legal, and which is illegal. White also claims [1987 :255] that copyright is to be complicated by a "multiplicity of computer languages."

Apart from the existing musical jobs being complicated by the computer, they are also to be replaced. Brubeck claimed:

At this conference, Bruce Cassidy gave this interesting paper about how, and this is only

too obvious, about how the whole computer music sphere is taking over in recording. One can like it or not, it's an overall change in conditions. [D.Brubeck ; 20]

Thus, technology is an important force acting on the studio musician. It results in fewer jobs for musicians as the computer is flexible enough to do many tasks which would have been done by many people. Similarly, it also changes the nature of recording in that it allows for experimentation, and enhances creativity, as well as making composition accessible to many people who would previously not have been able to do so on more conventional instruments.

Although these developments are positive because they make music more accessible to the people, Marks warns that we must not lose the human element of production, or what he calls the "folk process". He claims:

It's become real easy for anybody with one finger and a synthesizer to get there, and it's damaging the folk process. [D.M. ; 19]

Marks also claims that without this process, music becomes too much of a business. According to him, [D.M. ; 19] any accountant, businessman, or mathematician could sit down with a series of figures on the computer and work out exactly the perfect tunes and songs, if the "folk process", which is the human basis of music, was bypassed by technology.

It appears that technology is not the only determining factor of a good studio production though. When I asked David Birch, who has experience in local studios and studios abroad, about whether South Africa was behind, he claimed:

Well, as far as I can see, technology-wise, I don't think it's too bad. You don't have to go to the best sounding studios to make great sounding music. [D.B. ; 34]

Comparative equipment prices

I asked some musicians who had experience of both local equipment buying conditions, and the conditions overseas, how the equipment prices between the two countries compared. The people interviewed, including Fairclough and Birch, both reacted very strongly to this question, and explained with some examples what the difference is. In the field of general sound equipment and P.A. system amplification, there is a very large difference:

It's absolutely crazy. You're talking thousands of rands to buy a power-amp here. There's like a huge import duty here. Like a Gibson Les Paul here is R10 000. [It is now R12 000] We've found a place in London where you can get the parts to make your own 900 watt power-amp. It costs you like R700, I think, or maybe it was even less than that.

[D.Birch ; 34]

Birch, who plays the guitar just mentioned, organised that it would be bought for him overseas by a contact, and sent over to South Africa. The price discrepancy was astounding.

I got mine for R5000 in England. That was a new guitar. There's not a very good second hand market here. Over there, you can walk into a shop in England, and come out with a Les Paul for five-hundred pounds. A Custom. [D.Birch ; 34]

It seems to indicate that up to a 50% difference can occur between the two equipment prices. The difference is applicable even to recording equipment, which is used in the studios. At some stages it sees an even larger discrepancy:

You can buy an ADAT there for some ridiculous price. Like say, a DAT machine for about three-hundred pounds. Here you are talking about R6000, for the cheapest ones.

[D.Birch ; 35]

Fairclough agreed, and claimed that it was easier, and cheaper to fly out yourself and buy the instrument personally, instead of buying it locally. All the musicians interviewed agreed with these statements, and a large amount of concern was voiced by most of them:

Write this down! Musicians can't afford to buy their stuff anymore. [J.E. ; 18]

Musicians are normally alarmed at the price difference, especially when they are expected to compete with the international sounds generated by the most up to date, and powerful equipment:

I know people overseas, who if they can save enough, they can afford to buy a Les Paul or a Marshall. Here you have to just buy the cheapest, crappiest guitars. There is a R12 000 Gibson for sale at Coastals. Marshall stacks, and that Eddie Van Halen stack, made to Eddies specifications. Have you seen it? Also R12 000. R24 000 for a rig? I mean *cars* cost less than that! [J.E. ; 19]

The prices for technology, and gigging requirements are thus very inhibiting for local bands aiming at a music career. Chapter Eight looks at some of the reasons behind this discrepancy.

CH 8 - DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In this chapter I discuss the main points isolated in observation in the clubs [Chapter Four], mentioned by the artists [Chapter Five], and by the industry and artists [Chapter Six]. The aim is to understand some of the contradictions experienced by musicians in their working lives.

Many of these contradictions are the result of a tension which exists between music as a career, and music as a creative opportunity. This tension exists because music is able to be performed under different sets of circumstances. The musicians who perform the music under these different circumstances can be either completely professional, or simply people who are experiencing the fun of playing music. Is it being performed as a job, or is it being performed as a form of creative expression? Is it possible for both to occur?

Because music is an activity which allows the artist an expression of creativity and originality, the musicians are not always recognised as a working group. This is not to say that all musicians survive only on their music. Musicians are involved with their craft on different levels. A continuum exists in which the musician is either focused on the benefits of the creative side of music, or on the fact that this is a real job with an income. However, even when music is being performed as a serious working occupation it still has the appearance of a creative leisure activity. This is one of the central contradictions of the career which leads to the musicians being treated in a certain way. The discussion below attempts to highlight some of the problems caused by the tension between music as work, and music as leisure.

8.1 Discussion

The musicians who were interviewed expressed the desire to play music as a full-time form of employment. They wanted music to be their *real* job. It is thus necessary to understand how the venues in which they play are structured to deal with these working musicians. This has an important role to play in how the musicians are treated and how they experience the performance of the music.

8.1.1 The Venues

From observations of local original musicians at work in many different clubs, as well as interviewing them on the nature of venues, a number of interesting factors have come up. It appears that there is a definite shortage of dedicated music venues in Durban. The places that *do* offer live music are not always geared for this type of performance, often to the detriment of the working musician. Firstly, the actual location of the venues is sometimes problematic. The only venue catering for local original music on a large dedicated scale was Jam and Co under the management of Hanneli Strydom. This venue went through the Durban cycle of attracting large crowds and then spartan smatterings of fans in fluctuating patterns.

Secondly, the audiences in Durban are very oriented around the hip place to be and often the hippest place to be is the most recently opened club. Venues are never really assured of a stable crowd. Jam and Co closed at the beginning of November 1994. Plans for a relaunch are rumoured.

Another factor, discussed in Chapter Five, is the lack of an awareness among venue managers of the fact that some of these musicians do nothing apart from performing music, and that music is their life. Perhaps if venues were aware of the professionalism of some of these musicians, they would be more considerate of their needs. For example, if the owner understood a meeting with a musician as an appointment, and not as a casual chat, this would be a more serious treatment of music performance.

The venues do not always see musicians as professionals because the managers are not used to specialising in the organisation of music performance as the sole attraction. Usually the venues have many functions, which all bring in revenue for the owner. Pool tables, pinball machines, recorded music and live music all contribute to audience attraction. Sometimes this is to the disadvantage of the working musician, because the management is ill-equipped to provide the necessary infrastructure for live music. For example, in the Aliwal Lighthouse, as in many other music venues, there is sometimes a lack of dedication to music alone by the venue. The designation of the venue shifts according to the day-to-day economic requirements of the manager or owner. Simply a small room with a stage and some tables for people to drink the coffee and

eat the food prepared in the kitchen next door, the Aliwal shifts from function to function. One day a pool bar, next day an intimate little get-together, the next day a dedicated music venue.

The economic constraints facing club-owners force most Durban clubs into a permanent state of flux, with most of them undergoing a metamorphosis around Thursday afternoons as band combis arrive and start to carry in speakers and microphone stands. This metamorphosis is not always complete, though, and on these occasions the band can be disadvantaged. The manager of the venue may not be accustomed to providing staff to control the door of the club when a band is performing. As a result, the band does not receive door fees unless they administer the door themselves.

Bands usually learn to understand which venues cater for the needs of musicians who perform music as a job. These venues don't see music simply as a form of creative activity for the musicians. The interviews conducted yielded information which pointed out how frustrating it is for professional musicians to be treated as amateurs. In these instances, musicians expressed a contempt for being told that they could play for "exposure", and that this would necessitate a decreased working wage. This "exposure" is the opportunity to play for a new crowd and possibly to make more fans.

It is one of the bargaining chips used between club-owners and musicians since efficient exposure is valuable for the musicians. However, sometimes musicians are not paid a fair wage, and the reason given by the club-owner is that the event has strong "exposure opportunities". When this is done consistently by managers, the bands learn to avoid certain venues. For example, the Rockadilly is one of Durban's more notorious venues; not for the people that one would normally associate with the venue, but rather for the musical management of the club. Band after band complained in the interviews about the treatment that they received as working musicians here. Many musicians claimed that they would never play there again. Sunday afternoons barred, the venue does not have a good reputation with the musicians.

Venue management is thus not always of a good standard when it comes to the recognition of the bands as working units. When venue managers have the opportunity of hiring DJs who draw large crowds, the

musician is disadvantaged. International acts performing off CD are guaranteed to have dance floors completely packed while local bands performing live original material are still somewhat of a curiosity. The Rockadilly embodies these dynamics.

The problem with venues such as this, from the musician's point of view, is the battle that rages, as ever, between recorded music and local music - between local original music and cover versions, and as always between the eating activities of the restaurant, and what is happening on the stage.

The addition of a glass soundproof panel between the dance floor and stage area and the restaurant area has not solved the identity crisis currently shared by many music venues in Durban. Rather it has exemplified it very symbolically. As a result of this type of segmentation there has been a relegation of live original music to the status of higher risk entertainment.

Because some of the clubs are structured in these ways, they make the experiences of musicians playing music as a full-time job unpleasant. The working relationship that the musicians have with the club management is sometimes strained. Musicians made it clear in the interviews how much they appreciated the opportunities to play in venues that are dedicated to their needs. These musicians gave examples of clubs in Johannesburg, such as Wings in Randfontein, which are dedicated to live original music.

The lack of venues currently experienced by Durban based musicians is detrimental to their jobs. In short, it is a shove onto the road. This means that the musicians constantly have to travel to other centres to find work. The scarcity of venues was also a factor mentioned by the record companies as a major limit to original music. [J.B. ; 2] A co-ordinated club circuit would benefit original music substantially. If this could be done, even on a local level, musicians would definitely benefit.

The working musician thus favours instances in which the performance of music is understood to be a form of employment. In instances where venues do not cater for live music specifically, the professional musician sometimes faces problems.

8.1.2 Costs

Every artist interviewed mentioned the fact that the equipment required to pursue a career in original music was so exorbitantly priced as to make it virtually impossible for the average artist to assemble an "overseas-standard rig". As mentioned in Chapter Seven, the musicians are forced to hunt down the cheapest possible deals through contacts overseas. This equipment is required to deliver the competitive sound quality necessary to make South Africa an international music force. Although the *most* expensive equipment is not an absolute essential for successful music, there is usually a certain standard that makes the sound quality a lot more accessible and pleasing, to both artist and audience.

The lack of this high standard of equipment impacts directly on the career of performance music. Musicians cannot *sound* the way they are supposed to sound, and the public spends their money elsewhere. The audiences have countless CDs in the shops as yardsticks of the standard that they understand they should be receiving in clubs. When a local band *does* get the opportunity to play on overseas-standard equipment, they receive a very pleasant audience reaction. [Chapter Four provided a detailed description of the *Urban Creep* and *Midnight Oil* concert].

Reasons for the high prices paid by musicians for equipment include: Import duties; taxes; exchange rates; lack of a second hand market; music shop mark-ups; lack of earnings for music performance, which means that the people who need the equipment the most are sometimes the least able to afford it; lack of credit from music shops. Apart from the actual purchasing of equipment, musicians are also required to hire sound equipment on a regular basis. These hiring fees are sometimes very prohibitive to the musicians.

Dave Marks claimed that instead of South African musicians buying expensive equipment from abroad, we should be encouraging our own talent to be designing mixing desks, and amplifiers here in South Africa. [D.M. ; 21] We should liven up the industry from the ground upwards instead of top downwards. He argues that the talent and knowledge for such enterprises is present, but requires a higher level of government recognition of music as a form of employment, and sponsorship from private enterprise:

The only way they can survive I believe, in the modern way, is that they have to be given

the same sponsorship and platform as any entertainer has. I don't think subsidies from government will help. I think commercial enterprises should get involved as they do with sport, and that would help with the development. [D.M. ; 21]

The musician should be recognised as a worker, says Marks, and concessions should be made for the equipment necessary for this occupation:

Why should I have to pay the same amount for a floppy disk or a guitar as the guy who is just doing it casually? I am a musician, and I can show cause. I don't want to have to pay the same price for a tape! [D.M. ; 22]

Marks' statement outlines the tension referred to in the discussion above, between music as a creative activity and music as a job. Musicians sometimes become so professional that their instruments cease to be leisure items. A guitar ceases to be just a musical instrument, and importantly, it becomes a workman's tool. Marks argues that when this stage of professionalism occurs and music becomes what I refer to as "*working music*", then the musician should be understood to be a worker who has specialised equipment requirements. Taxes which do not discriminate between professional musicians and amateurs, are a reflection of a lack of awareness from government. [D.M. ; 22]

Other ideas which would make the life of a musician easier were expressed by Marks. One of these ideas related to the needs that musicians have to travel. [See Chapter Five] Marks said that the national airways in Ireland have made important concessions for Irish full-time musicians. [D.M. ; 23] Perhaps recognitions such as these would help the careers of professional musicians in South Africa.

The impediment of equipment cost to a successful local original music industry is so fundamental that some of the factors need to be discussed in somewhat greater detail.

8.1.2.1 Import duties

Much of the equipment necessary for musical production is not manufactured in South Africa, and as a

result, it needs to be imported from abroad. When equipment enters the country, extra charges have to be paid by the importer. One of the musicians had experience in a Customs job:

Just working at customs, I could see how much it was marked up by. Nobody knows, they just buy it you know. It was marked up 220%. And then the shops add more. Say you buy an amplifier here for six grand, originally it is much, much less. [L.B. ; 6]

Musicians perceived the fact that their equipment was not regarded as a necessity for a living wage.

All the taxes that go onto music, it's treated as a luxury good. [U.C. ; 17]

I contacted the Durban Customs Office [5 December 1994] to ask them about how the prices of the equipment that passes through customs are determined. The first example I gave them was that of a guitar. They told me that the guitar price was altered as follows:

- a] 5% customs duty is added on;
- b] 15% surcharge is added on;
- c] 14% value added tax is added on.

This means that the price of a guitar increases by 34% just through Customs. This still does not explain the price discrepancies evident between Birch's London Gibson Les Paul for R5000, and the cherry-red Les Paul hanging up in Coastal Music for R12 000. Somewhere in-between a huge mark-up in price occurs. This could be in the shipping of the product to South Africa, and the transport from central distribution warehouses in Johannesburg or Durban, to Durban music shops. Finally, the shopkeeper adds on more. By the time the guitar rests in your arms, it costs double the original price, or more. I then asked about pianos and keyboards, and I was told that the same rules which applied to the guitar also applied here.

When I asked about amplification I was surprised to find a large difference to other musical equipment. The process which applies here is as follows:

- a] Amplification is considered to be a luxury item, thus immediately a 37% ad valorem charge is added on;
- b] 5% customs duty;
- c] 14% value added tax;

In this case, therefore, a very large 66% cost increase occurs in just this one location. When one looks at other factors such as exchange rates and music shop mark-ups, the high prices become understandable.

8.1.2.2 Exchange rates

That much of the equipment associated with popular music is manufactured in centres such as Britain and America and Japan, means that the exchange rates are an important determinant of the price of the equipment in music shops. During a recent visit to Bothners Music Shop, [19 September 1994] the owner told me that the price of the equipment sold is directly related to the exchange rate. Prices fluctuate according to the exchange rates of the rand, pound and dollar.

8.1.2.3 Second-hand market

Another factor, mentioned by Birch, was the lack of a second-hand market in South Africa, whereas the music markets in the popular music centres of the world, such as London, have thriving used equipment markets. [D.Birch ; 34] It seems to imply that often musicians may have to buy their equipment new here, instead of second-hand. This puts music-making out of the reach of many.

8.1.2.4 Lack of credit facilities

Other economic forces acting on the musician relate to the misperception of important institutions that music is not really a form of employment. For example, music shops are often unwilling to grant credit to musicians. In Durban, currently, there seems to be one music shop which is the one chiefly used by original musicians for credit, namely Coastal music. [U.C. ; 17]

Support bases, such as loans, which would be open to more conventional business ventures are also limited. Where other jobs would receive a courteous ear from financial institutions, for example, musicians sometimes do not have this benefit:

You can't get credit anywhere. Fuck, the banks think they are doing you a big favour by giving you a cheque. It's hectic. [U.C. ; 21]

This misperception by institutions and in society in general, coupled with other forces such as very high prices, makes the job of being a musician all the more difficult. These perceptions impact on the musician at the workplace [see Chapter Five and the discussion of the relationship with employers], and even in places where one would least expect it. A certain record company executive could not believe that some of the musicians whom I was telling him about, were actually living on their music alone. After I convinced him that this was the case, he had a very strong admiration for what they were doing. [D.C. ; 7]

8.1.2.5 Music shop mark-ups

The mark-up by music shops is perceived as very high by the musicians. When the musician is able to pay cash, the drastic amount that the music shops are able to simply "lop off" the total price immediately, angers musicians who then understand how high the mark-up must be to allow for this. To them, the mark-up seems absolutely huge:

There is about a 100 percent mark-up, import duties added on too. If you can afford to pay cash, you can get a hell of a lot off the price, but still, who has R15 000? I mean how is this 12 piece of brass worth R700? [U.C. ; 18]

These mark-ups are not always carefully done. Keyboard player Andrew Philip told me about his argument with a certain music shop in Durban. [20 September 1994] Philip owns an R11 000 keyboard. A sound module for the keyboard costs R1000. Both the keyboard and the module were available separately in the shop. The keyboard was priced at R11 000 and the module, behind a different counter, was priced at R1000. The keyboard with the module included as a special package offer were on sale for R13 000. Philip then convinced the owners of the shop that there had been some mistake, unless the physical labour of carrying the module five meters was worth R1000.

This may easily have been an honest mistake on the part of the shop, but it also highlights the ability of the shops to add on to the prices with wide discretion. [20 September 1994]

I spoke to some music-shop owners about equipment, and I received a list of mark-ups which occur as the instrument moves. The owner of Coastal Music told me that these factors are: transport costs both internal

and external to South Africa; a considerable amount of insurance; the mark-up added on by the central distribution wholesalers; the considerable customs duty; VAT; as well as the time delay which occurs between the time the order is placed to the wholesaler and the sale is finalised; and, finally, the mark-up added on by the music shop which is a standard rate. He told me that the most effective way to work out the price of American equipment in South Africa after the long mark-up journey, is to multiply the dollar price by ten. A R200 dollar guitar thus becomes a R2000 guitar. [6 December 1994]

8.1.2.6 Low relative earnings

Music as a form of income is not usually able to allow musicians the opportunity to save for such large-scale investments. Poorer musicians thus have to pay for more expensive equipment. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the average wage of a full-time and extensively travelling band is only about R900 to R1000 per member. This amount has to cover a host of demands that are made on the musicians, particularly in paying off equipment debts and maintenance of instruments. [U.C. ; 2]

8.1.2.7 Opportunity-cost of not pursuing another career

It would appear from the discussion above that the musician requires a large amount of capital to invest in and to maintain this career. [See Chapter's Five and Seven] The financial benefits of a more stable career elude musicians, unless they are able to do enough jobs involved in music to supplement the performance aspect of their music careers or become involved in a form of music more commercially accepted such as cover-version music. [See Chapter Five]

It is clear that the possibility of somebody actually being able to handle another career while pursuing working music is almost impossible. Music can be played on a relaxed basis alongside any career, but when music becomes work this is no longer possible. Music is a demanding career in its own right, and does not allow the musician much time away from the job. Yet, a music career does not benefit from the financial support associated with more stable careers. A strong financial support is necessary for the equipment and

travel requirements of working music. This contradiction is more extensively investigated in Chapter Five.

8.1.2.8 Cost of equipment hire

Apart from the need to purchase equipment, the bands also face regular overhead expenditure on equipment hire. These costs often take away a large proportion of the band's potential earnings. Paul Darley, a sound-engineer for a sound-hire company told me that it costs a band R1700 to hire a sound system for a month. However, for an evening the cost is R550. The extra cost of moving the large system around is not included in these figures. [P.D. ; 21]

8.1.3 The Stresses

The need for constant travel to survive on original music, coupled with the conditions of the gigging and the poor living conditions off the job, make music a stressful occupation. This is dealt with in Chapter Five in a discussion of working conditions.

The stresses experienced by the artists can be divided into separate categories. Some stress is due almost entirely to the working environment, which consists of smoke, noise, lack of ventilation, and sometimes personal danger. This is working environment stress. Other stress is centred around the conditions necessary for the musician to play in these clubs. These involve an extensive amount of travel, and the surrounding uncertainty about accommodation, wages and security. Such stress arises from poor and insecure living conditions. It may be a result of poverty, or due to familial responsibility not being met [the artist is not contributing to the family income, or is away from home for long periods of time].

The final category of stress for musicians, and one which makes up part of the second category, is interpersonal stress, or stress that results from the close bonds and relationships that develop when bands perform or tour together under trying conditions. Although these close relationships are positive, the inability to actually escape the close proximity to ongoing demands can lead to "band tension". Related to this is the stress of keeping the band together as a working unit. [D.C. ; 18] For example, change of

membership may be traumatic for a band. [U.C. ; 28]

All these stresses are accompanied by health problems associated with the venues, such as post-nasal drips, as well as stress related illnesses such as ulcerations. Symptoms that were mentioned were depression, irritability, constant tiredness, headaches, coughs and weight loss.

Another important factor of a musician's job is the fact that music performance normally always occurs in environments where alcohol is sold. Indeed, agreements reached between bands and management sometimes involve the serving of free or half-priced drinks to the band. This proximity to alcohol can lead to musicians drinking extensively. In some cases they have drinks constantly sent to the stage throughout an evening. Birch explains:

I mean, [Name of manager] would buy us drinks and put them on the stage. In all of these clubs, there is a kind of "pub thing" where people like to buy the band drinks. "Hey guys, buy as a Tequila!" That kind of shit. [D.B. ; 28]

Similar factors are mentioned in White's article "A Professional Jazz Group" in Culture Style and the Musical Event:

Upon arrival drinks were offered to the band and if a musician turned down a drink at any time of the night he was considered by management to be suffering from illness.

[White: 1987 ; 193]

The musicians are therefore continually working in an environment where alcohol is being served to them by customers, and this forms an important part of their job. This is dealt with below in more detail.

Some of the musicians mentioned a stress which relates to the expectations from club management about what the musician's job entails in the club. This is more prevalent in residence bands than in one-off gigs. The musicians claimed that they felt a stress at having to constantly relate to the patrons of these clubs. In some extreme cases, managers expected the bands to interact with the audience very closely:

If its because you are able to chat with the people between sets, or whatever, as long as

you bring the people, then you are a good band. I've known some clubs to say, "No, we don't like you, because you don't do your homework with the women." [P.D. ; 22]

These stresses, especially financial stress, are a significant part of a music career. The insecurity of playing a full time "non-profession" according to those around you, appears to manifest itself in many ways. Financial insecurity means that the musicians are constantly on the lookout for ways in which they could perhaps be saving money - from carefully carrying and packing equipment, to dealing with difficult venues in a more professional way.

The area of work-related stress, involving musicians, has not been adequately dealt with in South Africa. Frequently it is dealt with as a form of "negative glamour" in which the musicians are viewed as suffering artists. In this light musicians are seen as people who actually willingly play this suffering role. This is partly due to the tension discussed above between music as a job, and music as a form of artistic expression. The down-and-out heavy drinking musician who manages to become famous through one lucky break is part of a myth which emphasises the fact that musicians are *not* a working group.

This myth needs to be broken down. The unique day to day activities which musicians are involved in, constitute a job which involves considerable stresses and demands just like any other job, and this needs to be investigated further. Such an investigation into the stresses faced by musicians would make an interesting area of study.

8.1.4 Working relationship with club-owners

The working relationship which has been uncovered in this dissertation is an unstructured and sometimes exploitative one. Bands have to bargain with club-owners about the payment that will be received. Club-owners also face risks and uncertainty. The bands are not always paid according to the agreements reached, nor do they always perform according to these agreements. Written contracts are hardly ever used in this

setting - indeed there is a large irrational fear of their use by the artists. The club-owner is usually assured of an income through drinks sales generated by the music performance, but the musicians have to claim their wages from the club-owner.

An antagonism exists between artists and some club-owners who do not assist in the structures and services necessary for a gig. For example, bands express a lot of anger when the door control for money extraction is not organised at a music venue. Sometimes the deal reached between the band and management entails the band receiving the entire door fee, or the covert charge, and nothing else. In these cases, it is not in the interest of the owners to have to organise that somebody will be at the door, because the club is already assured of an income through alcohol sales. When this occurs the club income and band income are separate issues.

If the band is depending on the entrance fees as their wage for the evening, they are concerned when no structure is set in place to extract their fees. They see their earnings for the evening disappear every time somebody walks into the club for free.

Although the bands expressed open admiration for some club-owners who were going out of their way to assist in original music performance, they also expressed intense dislike for some club-owners who repeatedly dealt with them unprofessionally. Some accounts by the musicians were dealt with in Chapter Five in more detail.

The music union MUSA is not closely involved in this aspect of performance. Many of the musicians did not perceive receiving any protection at all from unions, while some perceived that there were musicians unions, but expressed no desire to join them due to a lack of faith. It appears that the word of mouth system amongst bands is the only system used by bands to avoid places where continual undermining occurs. For example, certain clubs both locally and in Johannesburg have lost their appeal for original musicians.

[U.C. ; 23] [U.C. ; 24] Thus, it appears that the actual first hand experience of venues determines whether musicians will play there again, and under what conditions this will occur. As mentioned by the bands [in Chapter Five], a learning process equips bands to deal with club-owners on a more professional level. For example, bands will learn to distinguish which deals are beneficial, and which are not. They will also learn which wages are acceptable for a certain duration of performance.

The negotiations which occur between artist and venue management normally centre around the form of the deal, and the responsibilities on each party for the gig. The pay is the crucial issue. It can either be a flat rate, in which case the band gets paid a certain amount no matter who pitches up to watch the gig, or it can be a deal in which at least part of the fee is contingent on the number of people present for the gig. These deals normally entail a tiny portion of the alcohol sales, or a substantial part of the door fee charged to patrons.

The importance of alcohol in the process of live music presentation cannot be overemphasised. It is virtually the mechanism around which the entire music performance is run. It is one of the criteria used by the venue managers as a gauge of the bands talent. It is also the source of income for both band and venue. In "A Professional Jazz Band" [White: 1987 ; 193] this relationship between performance and alcohol consumption is well described. White recounts the experiences of a professional jazz band that has signed a six month residency contract. An important part of this contract is the fact that the bands receive a large bonus if a certain drinks sale target is met. The bonus was awarded if more than 70 000 francs worth of drinks was sold in the month. [White: 1987 ; 192]

The interesting point raised by White is the relationship between bar staff and musicians. The musicians were dependent on the efficient serving of drinks for their wages. The bar staff were dependent on the band to attract customers off the street. Hence, in this relationship, bar staff and musician exist in a symbiotically structured form of employment:

Alternatively the band would complain that the bar staff were serving drinks too slowly

or inefficiently, and therefore reducing the band's potential for earning a bonus.

[White: 1987 ; 193]

In South Africa, there is also a relationship of mutual dependence between club staff and musician, but it appears that our musicians do not have as much share of the drinks sales as the musicians in White's work. The fervour with which the artists devote themselves to drink sales in White's book does not appear to be present in South African musicians. Perhaps this is because our musicians are not usually granted a large enough portion of the drink sales to warrant concern. For example, bands in South Africa would never be worried about sitting down in a chair in case it detracted from a potential alcohol sale. Some seats were even considered as "out of bounds" to band members in White's descriptions. [White: 1987 ; 193] This was due to the fact that the contract specifically made it clear that alcohol sales were very important to the band's income. Hence, alcohol sales, in different forms are the working hinge around many original music performances both local, and abroad.

In this dissertation, it appeared that apart from the significance of alcohol in the work of musicians, there were many complaints about the behaviour of club-owners toward bands. The bands mentioned specific problems about the venues and club managers that they dealt with. These complaints sometimes centred on club-owners treating musicians unprofessionally. For example, the musicians found it inconvenient when club-owners did not arrive at scheduled meetings.

The musicians also claimed that the club-owners wanted them to play for long durations of time. The artists complained that four sets are too much to expect from an original band since original music requires a far more intensive labour process than cover versions. The original musicians thus found themselves unable to play for the periods of time which a cover band could handle. Apart from the requirement for long sets, the bands also claimed that the club-owners were not really sure what they wanted from the musicians. This ambivalence was described in many interviews. The musicians claimed that the club-owners changed their minds often about whether they wanted original music or cover versions to be played at the venue. These hot and cold changes of the owners' opinions about original music were detrimental to the musicians'

experiences of their jobs since the preparation of a repertoire takes extensive rehearsal and dedication. To be told one week that the club wants only covers, and the next that the club only wants original work means that the musicians are not assured of a stable work base.

The musicians also claimed that the club-owners sometimes used "exposure" as a reason to make deductions from their wages. This "exposure" describes the opportunity for musicians to perform for a large audience, and possibly broaden their support base. For example, on one occasion [as discussed in Chapter Five], the musicians were told that due to the presence of television cameras which were monitoring the club's activities, the band would be receiving no wage at all.

The musicians expressed a dislike for gigs in which they would have to do all the advertising themselves. On these occasions, the clubs did not assist in provision of services and structures necessary to make the gig happen. Examples of this are times when bands have to build their own stage out of beer crates, because the clubs were not aware of the requirements of the band. Similar objections were raised by bands about the nature of door organisation. The owners did not organise the door administration of the club, and this was a task that musicians hardly had time for, since they had other things to do.

Some of the bands who were interviewed claimed that they had been treated unjustly when club-owners had lost their tempers. These bands were sometimes dismissed instantly by the club-owners. The bands had very little power in situations such as these. On some occasions, the bands were promised a certain fee, and this was not paid to them.

According to the musicians, many of these problems arise out of a misconception of what they actually do. The club-owners understand the musicians as a group of people involved in a leisure activity. Some of these problems could possibly be solved by the introduction of a simple routine contract which stipulates: the amount which will be paid regardless of attendance numbers; who will control the door; the presence of bouncers if required; the type of sound equipment necessary which the club will provide; the duration of

the sets.

This would be a far more professional approach to the gig. This way, the bands will be more secure about the performance, and the owners will have greater certainty about what they are getting for their money.

The musicians have to understand that club-owners also face risks, and economic constraints. Club owners frequently complain about a complete lack of professional conduct on the part of bands. Musicians could possibly improve their side of the employment agreement by making sure that they treat club-owners with the professional respect which they wish to receive. It is thus not simply a case of club-owners being unreasonable toward musicians. In order for musicians to be recognised as workers with rights and benefits, they will have to be aware of a certain level of professional conduct.

8.1.5 Music as a job

Some of the contradictions faced by musicians in their jobs are a result of a misconception held by club-managers and members of the general public about what musicians actually do. The ambiguity which exists between music as a leisure activity, and music as a form of employment, is due partly to the fact that although music has a visible creative side, the working part of music is often unseen. It is thus necessary to briefly provide a description of what a single performance entails, in terms of work for the musician. These factors are dealt with in Chapters Four and Five in more detail.

All musicians who make a living from their music are involved in a significant amount of rehearsal time. This includes personal practising time in which the musicians hone their own skills, as well as group rehearsal time in which the songs are learnt, arranged and practised until perfect.

The bands also spend an extensive amount of time travelling to the gigs and setting up the equipment. Depending on how far away the gig is, the band will always attempt to be there as early as possible in order to make sure that a feasible sound-check can occur. Due to the fact that many musicians do not have

transport, the conditions of this travel are often unpleasant. Musicians may find themselves crammed into cars which are full of equipment. The fact that South African urban centres are located far apart means that musicians sometimes have to spend a lot of time actually travelling.

Bands also spend a lot of time carrying bulky equipment to and fro. Some amplifiers and speakers require a lot of physical labour to be moved. This is a part of the musician's life which is not usually recognised or seen. The audience simply sees a set up band on stage, without necessarily noticing the large amount of equipment present.

Bands also spend time sound-checking before the gig to make sure that the sound levels are acceptable. This process entails making sure that every instrument, including vocals, can be well heard by the band and the audience.

Once the soundcheck is complete, the band performs the material which was rehearsed. This is the time spent performing by the band and it is often minimal compared to all the other activities which go into the gig.

Once the material has been performed, the band then has to unpack all the equipment off the stage, and repack it into the vehicles again. Many artists interviewed expressed a strong dislike for this task.

The band then travels to the place where they are staying for the evening. They may go back to their own homes, or to the house of a friend if they are staying in a city away from home. Upon arrival at their homes, the band may have to unpack the equipment *again*. Frequently, bands all travel back to the practise room together so that the last person in the car is not left with the burden of unpacking. At the practice room, the band may set the equipment up again so that the next practice can occur with the equipment set up already. Normally, the band will simply off-load the equipment in the practice room with the knowledge that the equipment is safe for the evening.

Apart from these activities, the band also has to spend time co-ordinating advertising and press for the gig. This may entail setting up a photo-shoot with a press photographer, or sending a prepared article to the press. The radio stations can also be consulted, and this results in the gig being advertised over the airwaves. The band may spend time designing posters and flyers which advertise the gig. They will also have to stick these posters up on noticeboards, windscreens and billboards. When a band plans to gig in a city centre away from home, the cost of telephone calls is usually high. These calls involve confirmation of the equipment required, organising accommodation, organising press in *that* city, and generally making sure that everything will be prepared upon the band's arrival.

These various activities, when seen together, form a description of what it takes to play a single gig. They show how a single music performance, although an intrinsically creative activity, has many non-musical tasks which are important parts of a music career. The musicians are thus not just able to play their instruments excellently. They also have to be able to co-ordinate the gig on many different levels. A band member is thus everything from a driver of the combi, to the person asking money at the door, to the press co-ordinator to the artist on stage. Although bands frequently hire managers, they are hardly ever in the position where all they do is play an instrument. Musicians normally work in conjunction with these managers in an attempt to cover all the different requirements for a gig.

From the discussion above it can be seen that music is a job, albeit a multi-dimensional and multi-tasked job. The descriptions in Chapter Four and Five all point toward this. The fact that music performance is an activity which depends on many other unseen supporting activities means that music is a job composed of many tasks. These tasks are both musical [rehearsal, performance, composition, arrangement] and non-musical [driving, carrying, phoning, co-ordinating, sound-check, advertising]. The job thus has many different sides to it which are not rewarded. The musicians are rewarded adequately only when the entire gig is set up, and every single aspect of the job is covered. Thus, all the equipment is set up on time, the audience arrives, the guitars are tuned, the door money is extracted, the songs are well performed due to rehearsal. Without even *one* of these tasks, the performance cannot occur as a job.

8.1.6 The Musicians

The musicians playing original music full-time appear to be primarily in their middle twenties and they are mostly male. This is an important characteristic of working music. It appears to be a career dominated by men. Female musicians, when they do perform, appear to be involved with certain musical instruments and more often than others. They thus occupy certain roles within bands which are perceived to be feminine. For example, keyboards and vocals are often the positions occupied by female musicians.

Of all the performances attended while conducting this research, the positions occupied by female performers were: one drummer, two bass players, four keyboard players, a host of backing vocalists and three lead vocalists. I did not see a single female electric guitarist.

The gender aspect of this musical profession is most interesting. Perhaps female musicians avoid the positions in bands more associated with aggression and masculine characteristics. There thus appears to be a gender-specificity within full-time original music performance. The reasons for this are difficult to understand. Chambers, in his book Urban Rhythms [1985] describes how on the musicians on stage are often male while the audience, and the focus of the songs are female. Within music as a cultural form of expression, there are styles which embrace masculine characteristics. Chambers investigates some of the different musical styles and movements within the pop music sphere and relates them to gender-specificity:

While teenage boys, specifically working class boys, were out in the streets, in clubs and pubs, and sometimes making music together, their sisters were to be found elsewhere.

[Chambers: 1985 ; 125]

Chambers points out that within the culture of popular music performance, gender-specific roles exist:

The "laid back" country rock of the *Eagles*, or the musical muscle of *Led Zeppelin*, acknowledged women [chicks] as so many signposts towards a barely disguised misogyny. But it was heavy metal that finally threw away the wraps and chopped down the ambiguities. Since it took "balls" to play this music, as the musical papers continually

reminded us, the complete celebratory rites of what some observers have bluntly called "cock rock" were fully established. [Chambers: 1985 ; 123]

Chambers thus describes some of the ways in which gender is implicated in the subject matter and culture of the music. However, this dissertation was only peripherally attempting to understand why the original musicians on the stage are predominantly male. A careful reading of the interviews held did not uncover any characteristics that could be labelled as predominantly *masculine*, but it is the perceived masculinity of the job which is important. Just as many workplaces favour women in certain employment positions, due to perceived characteristics, so original music is also structured along gender lines by social forces. Even though these roles are perceived, they are the reality which has led to the original music industry in South Africa being shaped in a way which sees male performers and female performers in distinct roles.

The performance of original music involves a host of conditions which require physical strength, rapid changes of location, extensive travel and even personal danger. These conditions are not limited to any gender. The important factor, as mentioned above is that the perceptions from both males and females normally label these conditions as circumstances under which males will be better able to function.

An extensive investigation into the reasons why women are not more involved in original music and why they are limited to certain instruments and roles would definitely be valuable.

The musicians interviewed all had been involved in music since their childhood, and it was their main aim to survive on their talents. This was not always possible as described in Chapter Five. Some of these musicians were forced into alternative forms of musical employment, in order to survive. Sometimes musicians were able to find work in careers which were more closely linked to music. These alternative careers include: teaching of music; production and engineering of music; jingle writing; cover version performances; working in music shops; session work; and live sound engineering. This is an important factor. Musicians often were involved in more one than aspect of music in order to survive. It appears that experience gained in one field is often beneficial to another field.

The other alternative open to musicians is to become involved in a far more mainstream type of occupation. These occupations are higher paying, more secure forms of employment, but they do not allow enough time for the musician to concentrate on the music full-time. As mentioned in Chapter Five, the need for musicians constantly to be on the move means that even part-time work, such as waitering or guitar lessons, is very difficult to maintain.

One of the central contradictions of an original music career was highlighted. The benefits of the alternative career allowed the musician access to capital required for equipment and the need for travel, but allowed little time for the musician to actually rehearse and perform the music.

It thus appears to be an all or nothing career. Whether musicians attempt to stay only within the music field, or to branch into a more lucrative profession, there are always negative factors to be considered. Full-time music is a battle for survival, with no security, extensive travel and, yet, the musicians are doing what they really love. There is thus a clear trade-off in this career.

8.1.6 Culture and Imperialism

It has been shown in Chapters Four, Five and Six how the original musicians face certain obstacles in the way in which their music is being received by the public.

The fact that South Africa is a music *importer* has manifested itself in the present structure of the music performance industry. The resultant dilemma which our musicians face between cover versions, which have the support of the audience, and original music, is clearly explained in Chapter Five. Economically, the musicians are sometimes forced to make a decision to play cover versions purely on financial grounds. The tastes of the audience thus always determine how the music will be received. These tastes are affected by the way in which overseas culture is still regarded as the standard by which our original music culture is judged. The promotion of the radio and the relationship between radio, music company, and music performer, is one of the important determining factors in a musician's life.

Musicians need to be known in order to sell albums, and pack venues. They simply cannot do this if not supported by the infra-structure of the industry. Hence, due to capitalist profit imperatives, South Africa is still a music colony. Even though we received our independence as a country, we are still "plantations" of the empires, the homes of popular music.

The question is, when can we start to make our own creative products and what forces are maintaining the cultural dynamics of the industry? I have tried to give some answers.

Said in his book Culture and Imperialism [1993] examines the way in which cultural forces from foreign countries can control the processes which impact on art creation. He claims that the process of creative enterprise or art, can never see somebody creating something unique. [Said: 1993 ; 2]

There is thus a relationship between the history of a country including its relations with other states, and the way in which art is constructed in that country. According to Said's argument, although the formal control of one state over another is a thing of the past, the cultural affects of that relationship continue to be expressed. Said claims:

Empire is a relationship formal or informal in which one state controls the effective political sovereignty of another political society. It can be done by force, political collaboration, by economic, social, or cultural dependence. [Said: 1993 ; 8]

According to Said, therefore, a country can be manipulated by other countries through cultural dependence.

In South Africa, a listen to the radio, and a glance at the television will confirm that South Africa is firmly in the hands of America and Britain as far as culture is concerned. The music production is thus biased toward an emphasis on overseas vogue.

Said explains how the cultural sphere, as well as particular political, ideological, economic and social practices still linger on as a form of imperialism, long after the relationships of colonialism have ended.

It is my contention that these forces, which have led to an underdevelopment of the commercial side of original music production, have led to original music being underdeveloped in South Africa. The career of original music in South Africa is thus structured as a "following career" which mimics American and British music. One sees it in clubs in which South African original musicians sing in American accents.

Said claims that the musical arts is an area in which the process of imperialism occurs. [Said: 1993 ; 12] This certainly appears to be the case in South Africa, which is currently experiencing a flood of international artists. The prices for a *Rolling Stones* ticket for the Voodoo Lounge Tour of 1995 in Johannesburg are a keen example of an economic expression of the cultural relationship which exists between South Africa and the popular music exporting "empires". Similar relationships exist between non-English speaking European countries, who also predominantly import their music and its culture from the pop "empires". This was mentioned by Briar of Tusk Records, who claimed that South Africa faces the same challenges of as other non-English speaking empires in its quest to become recognised as a world force in music. [J.B. ; 2]

From the evidence presented in this dissertation it can be seen that the performance of local original music has experienced a weakness in its commercial appeal locally, and this is largely due to the imperialism dealt with by Said, and its impact on the marketing industry due to capitalist imperatives.

8.2 Changes and Recommendations.

The emphasis of the study has been to show how music is a job, even though it may be made up of many smaller tasks "working music". An acknowledgement of this fact by the state and private sector, is the beginning of a positive change in the way the career will be experienced by musicians.

For example, the fact that music equipment necessary for a career is regarded as a luxury item inhibits musicians from survival. In contrast, it suggests that music is a luxury occupation. From the point of creativity, it is a luxury, but the vocation on the whole takes as much hard work as any career.

The infrastructure around performance of music is what is lacking. Bands interviewed and observed did not know what to do on huge stages alongside international artists using unfamiliar equipment. This can only come with experience and more performance. Sound provision for original bands is limited, as well as expertise in lighting, engineering and production. These will hopefully be affected by contact with international artists.

Rehearsal space is almost impossible to come by. Bands are sometimes forced to practice acoustically due to a complete lack of options for a complete rehearsal. Incentives such as the recently opened Bartel Arts Trust, are examples of places where talent can be honed, and developed. The locally run Trust is an organisation which is aimed at the cultural upliftment of the performing arts. It provides a venue for the performing arts. It also has the invaluable rehearsal space, and practice rooms needed by musicians. The Trust deals with many arts including music, creative writing, and drama. Organisations such as this which are dedicated to culture, are a definite plus for original music.

The musicians understand when they are being taken seriously, and when they are being mistreated by venues. As mentioned above, the musicians normally use a word-of-mouth system to find out which of these clubs is worth performing at, and which venue owners to be aware of. The musicians could possibly coordinate their findings of clubs which are continually involved in the support of original music, and this could result in a stable work base for the musicians. This occurs to a certain extent already.

The music union MUSA could also become involved in this field while original music is in its infancy, and ensure some basic job securities for the musicians. Most importantly in this sphere, the working relationship of musicians with their employees needs to be structured and formalised. A great deal of misunderstanding and antagonism could possibly be avoided by signing a contract. This is not to say that venues should be forced to pay a certain wage. Bad bands cannot be expected to receive the same wages as the excellent bands. However, the amount agreed upon before the gig can at least be formalised, as well as certain infra-structural requirements which the bands should not have to do themselves, such as door monitoring, press contacting, promotion. At least then the agreements would be more formal, and even if they were

agreements which saw the bands in weak bargaining positions due to lack of a proven record, they would be adhered to.

Studios would stand to benefit by letting artists use their facilities. Instead of charging the full rate of R200 an hour, special arrangements can be made. Live recording onto DAT tapes, through well placed good quality live microphones which are well mixed, can yield excellent quality material in a fraction of the time that a normal studio production would take. Similarly, studios could benefit from a "down-time" policy which charges half-rates for bands to record at night. They could also allow artists to enter contracts which sign a fraction of the royalties to the studios in the event that something good were to come of the songs recorded. In the meantime, the singers, songwriters, and new generation of producers get the hands-on experience necessary to make South African music into an international product.

If the information and equipment remains as guarded as it presently is, due to economic factors such as costs of production equipment, then development of the vocation will be retarded. Free flow of information should be occurring.

8.3 Conclusion

The value placed on a career by society is an indication, albeit a general one, of its worth to society. If one considers the amount of music that there is in our homes, on our streets, in our cars, then it is clear that music is a central part of our society. Yet, popular music remains in that element considered to be a near-vagrancy form of employment. As a result of this perception, the musicians face obstacles in achieving the levels of success which they are capable of.

As mentioned in the discussion above, the commercial aspect of South African music is underdeveloped. One of the important impacts of an imperialism which exists in music has been to keep South African artists out of CD shops on the scale of their overseas counterparts. The recorded side of South African music has been effectively shut down by these forces. This leaves the musicians with the other important form of employment, that focused on in this dissertation, namely live performance.

Unfortunately, the same factors which are in operation in the recorded sphere are also present to some extent in the live music sphere. Fortunately, it is easier for the musicians to be heard live than through CD recordings. Thus, although the real commercial side of music [recorded music] is underdeveloped, the artists have found a living in live work. They have accomplished this despite the fact that there is a lack of venues in South Africa due to the fact that interest appears to be limited to certain music supporting crowds.

In effect, the desire to live on music has pushed our original musicians out onto the road, on a constant gig finding mission in search of people who will listen. The financial strains of such careers actually impact on other spheres, such as the amount of stress that bands experience due to the amount of time on the road, and also the living conditions of these circumstances.

From my participation of performances, and the interviews held, there appears to be a lack of a local popular music culture in this city. The reasons are wide and often difficult to point out. Apartheid and forced segregation, international isolation, and the cultural boycott are all reasons. On a more practical level it has led to the record industry and radio being structured around the tastes of the wealthier white middle-class and upper-class consumer, as one would expect from any profit making organisation. These structures have not only been subservient to market forces, but have now become the determinants of personal preference too. They remain the instruments which determine the way in which musicians experience music as a career opportunity. In order for original music to become commercially successful, the commercial side of music is going to have to change.

The statements in Chapter Six give a clear indication of the lack of contact between the recording industry and the artists. This gap, which is clearly present, may be due to a lack of adequate band management as well as a lack of promotion companies who are involved in live music shows. There may also be a great deal of misconception from artists and companies alike as to their own roles in the industry, as well as the other party's role in the relationship. For example, a record company claimed that live promotion was not its responsibility. Surely any self interested company would want to promote its product. The catch here is that the company will do this only after signing the band. Thus bands don't get good shows until they are signed,

and they are not signed until they perform good shows.

How can a popular culture be fostered in a country where musical product is always going to be distributed according to the status quo? It's a Catch 22 situation. South African artists do have the ability and talent to perform world-class music. The large audiences at the international acts that have been recruited to perform here indicate that there is an established popular culture linked to *international* music. This music is the music we have been subjected to through the media and promotions people. Yet the same audiences that unite and brush their sweaty bodies against one another at a Sting or Whitney Houston concert, will not be seen in the clubs where bands of equal potential are performing. To add to the problem, a strong sense of competition amongst the local bands leads to extensive criticism of one another. A band such as *B-World* is slated for appearing to be too overseas oriented. Bands that look too local are boring. Good quality CDs in the home seem more enjoyable.

This leaves music in a confused state, as exemplified by *Free Taxi's* statements in the press about what the band stands for:

The band view themselves as Africans, and as such reject the emulation of American heroes in favour of hard African Rock. At the same time, they're not too keen on any of this: ethno-bongo-hoo-cha-cha, so their ethnicity is tinged with a bit of ambivalence.

[Daily News, Thursday, October 20, 1994]

There is an imaginary corridor between a complete adoption of overseas music, and a complete rejection of overseas music. Local original music is currently fluctuating between the two ends of the spectrum without yet having its own room to stand in. But this is still an imaginary distinction, because music is not so culture specific that it cannot bridge these distances, nor is music able to be accurately classified as completely local, or international. The important point is, it will not be South African *popular* music until supported as such by the audience.

The ease with which the drummer of *Tananas*, Ian Herman, learnt the entire Sting repertoire within *one*

day is testimony to the brilliant class of local musicians. He performed the entire set without a hitch, and he may meet with Sting for recording work. Many people in South Africa would never have seen Ian Herman, yet he may be the drummer on the next *Sting* CD which they buy, when the radio pumps *Sting* songs ten times a day.

The example of Herman is also a testimony to the fact that musicians are artisans who perform their art at a certain standard. Before this standard is reached, the artists are not really fully fledged musicians, since musicians are excellent artisans. Music as a job is well performed, it cannot be done in any other way. Despite the fact that musicians have talents like Herman, the audience still focuses on international acts. It is as though everyone is standing in a giant lager looking wistfully outward from the country's boundaries toward an internationally-familiar music, while the talent within remains unheard.

No band has of yet been able to enter the living rooms of the public on the same scale as their overseas counterparts have done. This has meant that playing original music full-time in South Africa means performing music in clubs and at concerts, but not on the radio or on CD players.

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APPENDIX

Artist Questionnaire

An investigation of popular non - sponsored original music as a form of full time employment in Durban South Africa.

QUESTIONNAIRE 1.1

- 1] What various careers or jobs are you involved in to survive on music?
- 2] What pre - requisites do you think one needs to have before being able to do this? Is there a certain level of experience which one needs, or a certain level of equipment?
- 3] Did you receive any formal education in music? What form did this take?
- 4] How much time per day do you spend involved in music as a form of employment? [Including practising, soundcheck, setting up equipment, negotiating contracts.]
- 5] What problems do you experience during this time? Do you ever have trouble receiving payment or the form of payment? Do you feel that these problems could occur in similar forms in other more regular jobs?
- 6] What types of deals do you make with the owners or managers that run the venues which you play at? Can you describe them, where possible highlighting the benefits and disadvantages of various deals? [a door deal. A fixed gig fee. A door and half alcohol fee. A door and bonus fee.]
- 7] Do you have a manager who does this negotiating for you, or do you do it yourself?
- 8] Please will you describe the working conditions that you work under at a typical "gig"?

9] Are you protected by any worker organisation or a member of any alliance ?

10] Can you describe what it means to buy equipment in South Africa and provide a possible explanation for this? eg Relative costs of equipment. How do we compare? Do you know why this is the case? How much did your "Rig" cost you?

11] Which venues do you play at, and can you describe the day to day activities which make up "playing a gig".

12] While you are playing do you feel any pressure to play a certain type of music or do you have carte blanche discretion? To what extent is this related to the venue?

13] Do you ever notice that certain types of music work better with certain crowds ? If yes, please describe this in detail, highlighting which crowds prefer which music.

14] Do you think that the South African audience is able to sustain local original music as a form of employment? What reasons do you have for your answer ?

15] Do you have any experiences of the audience limiting what you play to a specific sphere? Do you ever feel compelled to play cover versions?

16] Do you feel any pressure to play music that is in vogue overseas? For example, with the onset of the Seattle Sound of Pearl Jam, Paul Westerberg, accompanied by the Singles movie and all its grunge effects, did you feel audiences wanted something harder and more "grungy" from you?

17] To what extent do you feel audiences appreciate your own music ?

18] What criteria do you think this is based on?

19] Do you notice people of various different cultures and "races" frequenting your venues? Do you notice any particular patterns in the appreciation of your music based on "racial" lines? For example, do you notice that any particular population group, or cultural grouping appreciates certain aspects more than others?

20] What effects do you think apartheid has had on the appreciation of music in SA, and the music industry on the whole?

21] How has apartheid effected the nature of being involved in music on a full time basis?

22] Can you describe the way in which the South-African music industry works? Please describe the progression from the writing of original music to the performance thereof and finally the commercial aspect of this.

23] What career opportunities exist along this progression and how does one become qualified to enter them?

24] Is South Africa able to distribute local music efficiently locally and abroad? Do we have the marketing experience for this?

25] Is this changing in any particular direction?

26] What is the standard of our original music like in comparison to overseas music? [Based on your personal opinion and your overseas experience]

26] Can you describe the nature of our original music? To what extent is it imitative or derivative of overseas bands? Is there an SA "sound"?

28] Are our musicians comparable to overseas musicians in terms of performance? What reasons can you give for this?

29] Can you compare the musical culture that exists in SA as opposed to overseas? Are our musicians as desperate to make it as musicians overseas are? What reasons can you give for this?

30] What does making it mean in SA? What is the pinnacle of success to which musicians should realistically strive? Is this changing?

31] Are there any South African superstars that you know of?

32] Do you ever wish you had never played music as a full time career? At what stage did you make up your mind that it was what you wanted to do, and what was this based on?

33] Does this particular job make any emotional demands on you that are not necessarily associated with other more stable jobs? If so, please explain.

QUESTIONNAIRE 2. Record Company Questionnaire

1. What is the policy used by the record company when considering whether to sign a local original artist?
2. Does the company have a dedicated A @ R staff that is actively engaged in the local music scene, in other words actually in the clubs and at the concerts?
3. What is the proportion of local music sales to overseas sales in South Africa? Do South African bands have the talent to actually sell overseas?
4. Do local record companies have the necessary infrastructure to market and distribute local artists both locally and abroad?
5. Is there enough talent in this country to enable us to produce a super - group like U2? Who are the South African superstars? How much do they earn? For example, is Lucky Dube a millionaire?
6. Are our record deals comparable to overseas record deals? Please explain.
7. Do we have the necessary production expertise necessary to get the right sound out of a band? Do we have comparable budgets to overseas companies?
8. Do you think our history has split the people up according to Apartheid? Has this effected record companies? In other words, do you see two distinct markets? Is this due to natural cultural differences between people?
9. How does a local band wishing to get a record deal proceed? For example, from the very beginning of having the songs and playing to a crowd, to the final stage of having a CD?

10. How much does it cost a band for studio time? Does the record company sponsor this?
11. Some artists have criticised the local music industry as being completely out of touch with the people who are actually in the clubs and concerts. How do you make sure that you know which "hot acts" are being supported?
12. Do you think South Africa has enough people to sustain local original music?
13. Do CD sales decrease in times of depression or do they remain constant?
14. Has the change in the political arena brought about any change in record company outlook for the future of original South African music?
15. What are the limits that excellent local bands face? Do we even have excellent local bands? Do you notice a lack of commitment among artists?
16. How is the record industry linked to radio play?
17. Some people [Johnny Clegg] have been speaking about the fact technology has led to the internationalisation of music. In other words, the world has become a global village and all countries face the opportunity to sell to that global village. What are your views on this?
18. Is it possible to make a living in South Africa playing original music alone without having a backup career?
19. Do you notice any changes in the standard of local original music that is being presented to you for record deals?

20. Many local artists are having there CD'S pressed themselves and using channels to overseas record companies since South Africa is enjoying the international spotlight. Do you feel any danger of being bypassed as bands take their product elsewhere?