evils of the past are deliberately forgotten, one cannot efficiently prevent the continued working of the forces that made them possible in the first place. Bell does not conclude that the TRC was a failure, but he does convince us that much more fact-digging and analysis is needed for South Africa properly to come to terms with its past, a prerequisite for moving forward.

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In this book the author explores the amazingly complex and diverse evolution of music creation and production in South Africa, noting how social structure and competing academic interpretations of South African music (from ethnomusicologists, africanists, anthropologists and musicologists) influence these processes. The book offers important insights for people with a detailed knowledge of the South African music industry as well as those who are less well informed. It also provides a glimpse into a changing industry shortly before the impending liberation of millions of black South Africans. Meintjes started her research 18 months after the lifting of economic/political sanctions in South Africa. The author notes that after the fall of apartheid, access to advanced recording equipment for musicians began to increase.

The research occurs predominantly within the Downtown Studios of Johannesburg under the tutelage of producer West Nkosi, who was considered one of “the Big Five” in the South African music industry. The studio environment provides an excellent venue for analysing music production shortly before South Africa’s first democratic election. Although no longer the most popular style locally, Zulu Mabaqanga music has survived for decades by remaining true to key aspects of the music’s original sound. The author’s fluid and vivid accounts of the musical scores themselves almost enables the reader to hear the music through the text, her ability to paint such a clear picture alone makes the book a worthy read.

The study also offers an interesting review of various bands, including Mahotella Queens, Mahlathini, Izintombi Zesimanjemanje and Isibaya Esikhulu, and the ethnographic detail allows the reader an opportunity to encounter the web of negotiations that form part of the process of music production. The constraints experienced by musicians and producers under apartheid are also succinctly outlined. She notes the contemporary persistence of residual racism and unveils a series of complex social interactions inside the Johannesburg studio, exploring the effects of: racism, tribal affiliations, the linguistic diversity of the listening
audience, the demands of an overseas international market and technological manipulations on the form and ‘authenticity’ of local sounds.

To show how language diversity affects ‘studio’ culture, Meintjes argues that there is usually an empathetic response to those wishing to use an indigenous South African language. However, the author explains that communication in Afrikaans, Zulu, Xhosa, Sesotho and English is complicated by the use of locally generated dialects and the fact that the studio environment itself, produces specific (often technical) jargon. For example, in some instances individuals in the control room will code switch to get a message to a specific person, while preventing another from understanding.

Meintjes also points to disparities in the local and international definition of Zulu identity. A nostalgic view of the Zulu warrior is cherished and exploited by many in the industry as it offers both political and material benefits. What the larger external market seeks is music with a predominantly traditional and ‘live’ quality. Successful promotion of an album depends on having personnel with both the understanding of the domestic market and the experience of the international world music market.

As a successful producer and musician, West Nkosi manages to serve as a cultural broker and to guide small bands that aspire to make it big both at home and overseas. The author argues that people like Nkosi make the transition to the high-tech studio easier for South African musicians who might come from a disadvantaged community. Generally, these musicians lack extensive experience in the high-tech studio and eventually have to get to grips with the equipment and the complex music production process.

In notes provided after the final chapter of the book the author sadly reveals that many of the participants observed, interviewed and quoted in the study are no longer alive.

However, it is the merging of recent anthropological and ethnomusicological approaches, and the insightful data on the South African music industry that makes this piece of work a compelling read.

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Creating Africa in America: Translocal Identity in an Emerging World City by Jacqueline Copeland-Carson.

The title of this ethnography, although intriguing, is misleading. While the author positions the idea of transnationalism, however subtly, in the reader’s subconscious, the geographic locations – Africa and America – are treated as though