



3rd Ear Music

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DAVID MARKS - The HIDDEN YEARS ARCHIVES - 3rd Ear Music

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NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL
OF SOUTH AFRICA

Forgive and forget

Ex-spy is contrite

A white South African guitarist whose songs were too "red" for the apartheid state has forgiven the former spy and amnesty applicant responsible for his woes, writes SANDILE NGIDI

SUSPECTED "white communist" Mr Roger Lucey (68) mysteriously saw an abrupt end to his promising music career in the early 1980s. This former Durbanite, who strummed songs that exposed the injustices of apartheid, underwent spells of drug abuse and emotional turmoil when his career ended. He felt he had sung his last.

"My whole life just collapsed dramatically and I totally lost my confidence," said Lucey.

As time went on, Lucey began to feel "better" after apartheid intelligence "telly tricks" from Mr Fred Erasmus (65) convinced him that he was the man who had stopped the music.

From 1979 to 1983 Erasmus had been asked by his security branch handlers to "waste Roger and wreck his career".

Malicious damage to property and teargas throwing at the Arms Trust in Johannesburg, where Lucey was performing, followed, as Erasmus danced to the tune of his masters.

After he had his last life show held and named in Cape Town in 1984, Lucey was again "sabotaged" by his security branch after he attempted to revive his career there.

Description

"I had just distributed flyers for some shows when, out of the blue, I was called up for national service, something I had done 20 years back already."

He was later threatened with arrest for his defiance. Although Erasmus is yet to appear before the TRC on incidents of malicious damage to property and assault (relating to Lucey), Lucey and his producer, Durban's Mr Dave Marks (58), have forgiven him.

"I know that it's strange that I can't find any anger inside me towards him," Lucey said last week.

Erasmus said Lucey's gesture was a "lesson" for all South Africans.

"I appreciate Lucey for his action," he added.

Now based in Cape Town and working as a producer for e-TV news, Lucey said that Erasmus had been a victim of mismanagement.

"I believe that he is genuinely contrite and has been fairly decent with me."

Lucey said that when Erasmus, who is a single father of two, called him to talk to him 15 months ago over the telephone, he was "decidedly moved".

Markie also said he was "sympathetic" to Erasmus and that he could really see the monster that made people such as him.

He revealed that, had his 3rd Ear music company destroyed the last of Lucey's debut LP, *The Road is Much Longer*, in 1982, he would have faced "a fine of R10 000 or a five-year jail term, or both".

Marks has just released a double-CD compilation of Lucey's music.

The release is part of 3rd Ear's "The Hidden Years" music archive project, a celebration of South African music from 1964 to 1994.

The compilation was named by the National Arts Council and the story was designed by Andy Mason.

PHOTO: ANDY MASON

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