

Giving voice to the hidden years

FRED KOCKOTT

AS MUSIC lovers celebrate an inter-continental blend of sounds at the Awesome Africa World Music Festival at Durban's Albert Park today, a 40-year project that has promoted South Africa's colourful, but hidden, musical roots will receive a big boost.

The boost is a National Research Foundation Grant awarded to 3rd Ear Music's "Hidden Years Music Archive Project". After many years of battling to secure funding to archive South Africa's diverse musical history, 3rd Ear Music's Dave Marks is ecstatic at the breakthrough, which he will announce at the festival at 2pm today.

Benefiting from the grant will be hundreds of South African musicians whose work was never recorded by major recording companies, despite having attracted thousands of people to events in townships, suburbs and clubs over the years.

But as a sound engineer and concert organiser Marks systematically recorded many of these events from the mid-1960s onwards.

"If it moved or murmured I taped it," said Marks.

As legend goes, the only other people recording these events were security police. The result of Marks's work today is an amazing, catalogued recording of hidden years of South African music never heard on the airwaves or pop hit parades.

Coupled with photographs, programmes, posters, gramophone record banning orders and other memorabilia, the archive stands not only as a tribute to the struggle for freedom of expression in South Africa, but to a wide, eclectic mix of musicians, those "forgotten troubadours and minstrels" as Marks refers to them, whose influence and contribution are still felt today, in and beyond the music industry.



ABOVE: Roger Lucey, 1979. Lucey's first album, *The Road is Much Longer*, was banned by the apartheid government for 'creating a climate of protest against police and the present order of the state'. TOP RIGHT: Dave Marks in his office in the Luceys' home, where he is collating old recordings and memorabilia into a priceless archive of South African music never heard on the airwaves or pop hit parades

Take, for example, leading businessman Jannie Hofmeyr who made contact with the ANC in Dakar in the late 1980s. Who would have thought Hofmeyr was once a long-haired singing hippie?

Hofmeyr's tracks *The Question* and *Lied van die Wandelende Geeste* are among those digitally formatted on to a double CD, as are songs of former TV cameraman Roger Lucey.

"Roger Lucey appeared on the South African music scene in the mid-70s – an angry Durban rebel with a pocketful of zol and a head full of songs," reads the CD cover booklet for *21 Years Down the Road*.

Back in the 70s, when P W Botha was prime minister and Jimmy Kruger Minister of Police, Lucey's first album, *The Road Is Much Longer*, barely received a public hearing before it was banned. "The album was ignored by local radio, concerts were unaccountably cancelled, bookings scrapped, promises broken," said Marks.

Only much later, after revelations by ex-security policeman Paul Erasmus, did Roger discover how much the state had interfered with his career.

A copy of a 1982 government proclamation that banned Lucey's album is contained on the CD cover of *21 Years Down The Road*.

"The song *Crossroads*, with its theme that the authorities don't give a damn about families, and that the homes of 20 000 people will be bulldozed, builds up a climate against the authorities," reads the proclamation.

"The song *Lungile Tabalaza* ... cre-



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ates the impression of violence and torture when police force people to speak. This led to the death of Tabalaza, although it is stated in the words of the song that some say it was murder and others that it was suicide.

"The song *You Only Need Say Nothing* is equally dangerous in that the police are again shown in a very bad light. A climate of grievance and protest is being built up, especially as the words are accompanied with the beat of African rhythm to enhance the impact of the words.

The song *Yabhane* contains reference to Steve Biko and his death as 'one of many'."



From Lucey through to Kippie Moeketsi, the Freedom People's Concerts to Splashy Fen, 3rd Ear Music is meticulously putting together memorabilia and recordings in a priceless archive.

Up until now, the project was a labour of love, largely financed by the royalties Marks received for his hit song *Master Jack*, made famous by Four Jacks and a Jill. Having written the song, Marks was playing it solo at the Four Seasons Hotel in 1967 when members of Four Jacks and a Jill first heard it and wanted to use it, recalls Marks. Four Jacks and a Jill made it into one of South Africa's biggest hits.

"It went on and on, and was translated into 12 languages. I'm still getting royalties from it," said Marks. "We've often called 3rd Ear Music the house that Master Jack built."

With the new research grant, the archive's posterity is ensured. It will now also be linked to the University of KwaZulu-Natal and Killie Campbell collection, giving access to the public and researchers worldwide.

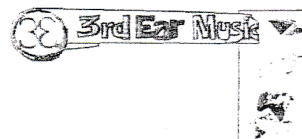
"I'll be working closely with Dr Dale Peters of the Killie Campbell museum and Prof Michael Green, a restricted songwriter of the 80s, and now English professor at the university," said Marks.

Green said that besides promoting the hidden history of South African music, the collection would be "very much be a living archive", documenting ongoing activities and trends in Southern African music. He said credit

was due to Tessa Marcus, who promotes the university's research in human sciences, for organising the research grant.

"Dr Patrick Ngulube from information studies will also assist in getting the entire collection digitally formatted so that it will be accessible via e-mail and internet to the general public, and researchers nationally and internationally."

Marks said he hoped the archive would be as interactive, as 3rd Ear Music had been for the past 40 years, producing festivals, concerts and clubs, and recording popular alternative music events that promoters at the time were not interested in.

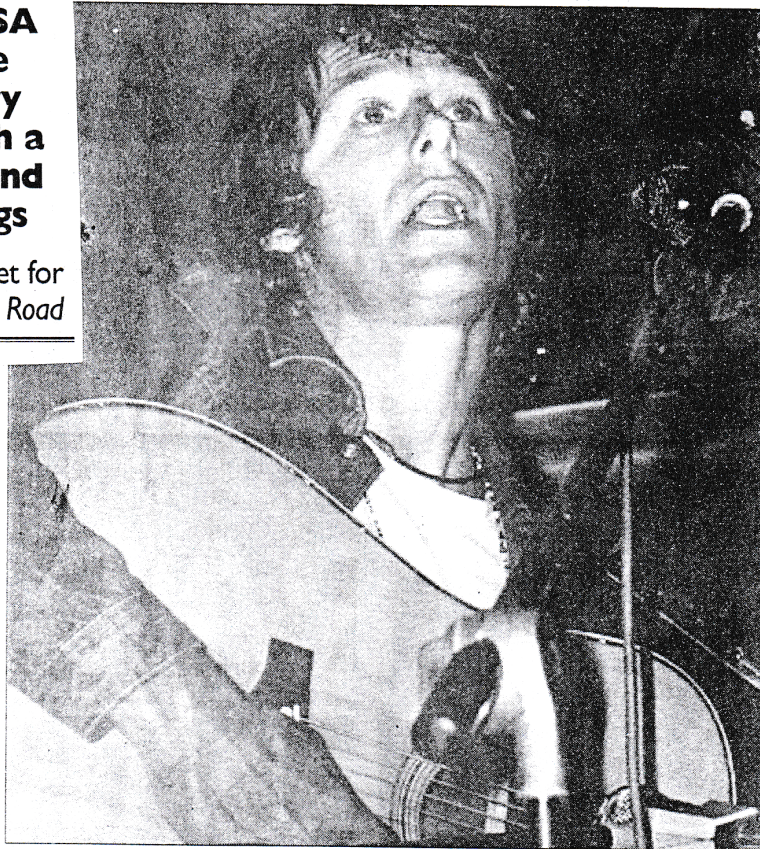


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The CD cover booklet for
21 Years Down the Road



ARCHIVE picture of Jeremy Taylor



FOUR Jacks and a Jill