Vuvuzela Magic

The Production and Consumption of ‘African’ Cultural Heritage during the FIFA 2010 World Cup*

Duane Jethro

University of Utrecht, The Netherlands

djethro@gmail.com

Abstract

During the FIFA 2010 World Cup in South Africa, a mass-produced, plastic football supporters’ horn known as the *vuvuzela* attracted worldwide fame and infamy. This article discusses the *vuvuzela*’s construction as a material and sonorous register of ‘African’ and ‘South African’ cultural distinctiveness. Specifically, it discusses the production, circulation and consumption of its ‘African’ cultural significance as a heritage form. It outlines the contested political and ideological economy – involving the South African state and football officials, FIFA, a local manufacturer, indigenous groups and football fans – through which the instrument travelled. Demonstrating the instrument’s circulation through this network, the article shows how the construction and authentication of the *vuvuzela* materially and sonically staged the negotiation of notions of ‘Africanness’ and ‘South Africanness’, as well as their complex relationship in post-apartheid South Africa, during the tournament.

Keywords

Africanness – sound – materiality – authenticity – cultural heritage – football – South Africa

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Résumé

Lors de la Coupe du Monde organisée par la FIFA en Afrique du Sud en 2010, une trompette en plastic de fabrication industrielle, utilisée par les supporters de foot et connue sous le nom de *vuvuzela* a attiré l'attention autant que la désapprobation du monde entier. Cet article aborde la question de la construction du *vuvuzela* en tant qu'instrument et expression sonores de la distinction culturelle 'africaine' et 'sud-africaine'. Il traite plus spécifiquement de la dimension 'africaine' de l'instrument en question du point de vue de sa production, de sa circulation et de sa consommation et de la manière dont celui-ci est perçu comme une forme d'héritage. Il met en lumière l'économie politique et idéologique contestée – impliquant l'État sud-africain et les représentants officiels du football, la FIFA, le producteur local, les groupes locaux et les fans de football – parmi lesquels cet instrument a circulé. En illustrant les modalités de circulation de la trompette dans ce réseau, l'article montre comment, au cours de cette compétition sportive, le *vuvuzela* a mis en scène, à la fois matériellement et sur un mode sonore, la négociation des notions d' 'africanité' et de 'sud-africanité' ainsi que les relations complexes dans l'Afrique du Sud post-apartheid.

Mots-clés

africanité – son – matérialité – authenticité – héritage culturel – football – Afrique du Sud

Introduction

Under the theme “Welcoming the World Home”, the opening ceremony of the Fédération Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) 2010 World Cup, held at Soccer City in Soweto just outside Johannesburg on 11 June, 2010, was a spectacular show of dance, singing lights and sounds branded as welcoming a global audience to Africa. It featured musical performances by African musical sensations such as Nigerian singer Femi Kuti, Ghanaian band Osibisa, Algerian pop sensation Khaled, as well as South African artists Hugh Masekela, Thandiswa Mazwai and the band TKZee. A giant mechanical dung beetle toyed with an oversized replica of the official World Cup ball, the Jabulani. Dancers performed indigenous dance routines and introduced the 10 different stadiums where the 64 matches of the world's biggest football tournament would take place, concluding their segment with the evocative line, “Africa lives in all of us, we are all children of Africa”. The dramatic display served as a vivid expression

of the World Cup slogan, 'Ke Nako', that it was Africa's time. As 'a celebration of African humanity', the FIFA 2010 World Cup was branded as a spectacle that would unite the world through distinctively African festive sounds and sensations.

The World Cup opening ceremony was compelling precisely because of the entertaining ways in which it staged images of 'Africanness', raising questions about how and in what ways such saccharine images could be persuasively mobilised.¹ What, indeed, does it mean to 'Welcome the World Home' to 'Africa'? We can approach this proposition using the observations Katharina Schramm (2010) advances in *African Homecoming*. In that text, dealing with the politics of slave heritage and roots tourism in Ghana, she suggests such statements posit the interrelated ideas of 'Africa as Motherland' and 'homecoming', which frame Africa as a romantic material and discursive locus of origin that holds out the promise of the rediscovery of 'lost' cultural identity through practices of return. These tropes converge in the concept of 'the African family', or the "the idea of a shared heritage that extends back to the time *before* the transatlantic slave trade", to time immemorial in the distant past.² This familial relation is often 'recognised' in, but also mediated through, a range of cultural expressions, such as performative rituals and material cultural forms. While these cultural forms appear to share a symbolic repertoire, they also stage different, sometimes competing, claims on 'African' subjectivity and heritage (Schramm 2010: 20–21 emphasis added). As Steven Dubin (2011) has shown, such correlations manifest, for example, in the way 'Africa' and 'Africanness' were represented by independent parties during the tournament. The *vuvuzela*, a popular South African football fan accessory, was one such object. Despite the vast difference in context and political and cultural purposes these concepts sustain in Ghana and South Africa, Schramm's observations help clarify the discursive appeal framing the kind of 'Africanness' represented by the World Cup theme and its relationship to cultural forms understood as heritage.

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- 1 My use of quotation marks when using terms such as African and Africanness, as well as other related contested concepts such as South Africanness, authenticity and cultural identity, is in recognition of the important observation made by the editors in the introduction of this special issue that these terms "do not exist outside the various discourses that produce(d) it".
 - 2 This notion of the African family has particular racialised features in the context of slave heritage tourism in Ghana. It is different from the primordial, seemingly non-racial concept of African personhood and Pan-Africanism advocated by Thabo Mbeki, for example. The dynamics of this later framing of Africanness is discussed in more detail later in the article.

This article looks at how the *vuvuzela* was, to paraphrase Schramm (2010: 22) “identified, then purified, objectified, and canonized as heritage” during the World Cup, and the multiple reifications of ‘Africanness’ and ‘South African-ness’ such a process of construction enabled. Heritage forms, as I have argued elsewhere (Jethro: 2013), are material objects cast as heritage through sacralising practices (see Meyer 2010) that distinguished them as legitimate registers of the past for the ‘hailing’ of collective identities.³ If such a process of construction could be described as magical, as the title suggests, then heritage formation is useful for understanding the seemingly self-evident yet highly constructed ways that material objects come to resonate with power as heritage. Adopting such a theoretical position, this article contributes to debates about objects in cultural studies, particularly regarding questions of authority, authenticity, ownership and popular culture (Berger 2010). More broadly, in its focus on materiality, the very plasticity of the *vuvuzela*, the article also segues with the material turn taking place in the humanities and social sciences, particularly in relation to heritage studies and anthropology (Bennett and Joyce 2013; Dudley 2013; Coole and Frost 2010; Tilley et al. 2006). Finally, considering the controversy triggered by the instrument’s sound and its place in global football fan culture this analysis of the *vuvuzela* rings in tune with contemporary debates regarding the philosophy of sound (Erlmann 2010) and the anthropology of the senses (see Promey 2014; Howes 2014). More precisely, it also adds to a body of literature addressing sound and acoustics in Africa, which, so far, has focused on the practice of religion and space, be it urban space (de Witte 2008) or public space (Hirschkind 2006). As will be shown, the sound of the *vuvuzela* reverberated in conceptual space, structuring and mediating semiotic relations between Africa, South Africa and the world, and staged the conditions for negotiating what it meant to be African and South African during the World Cup.

Comprised of data drawn from electronic and print media published before and during the tournament, the text is divided into four sections. The first section looks at the national and continental imagery developed and worked through South Africa’s bid for the World Cup, particularly in regard to President Thabo Mbeki’s Pan-African vision of an African Renaissance. The second

3 Such a characterisation explicitly collapses distinctions between tangible and intangible, material and symbolic, but is intended not to subordinate the supposed heritage value of symbolic, performative or representational realms of cultural expression. Rather it fully recognises the significance of such modes of cultural expression and production but in a way that explicitly foregrounds the materialities that they inevitably entail: for every performance requires bodies, all symbolic repertoires require means and modes of inscription.

FIGURE 1 Fans, World Cup Draw, Cape Town, 2009. Photo by Duane Jethro.

section discusses how Masincedane Sport, a small *vuvuzela* manufacturer, positioned itself as the reputable retailer of 'authentic' South African *vuvuzelas*. The third section discusses the debates about the significance of the *vuvuzela*'s sound and the arguments FIFA and South African football officials used to frame it as a heritage form. The final section addresses contestations of authenticity and ownership and engages a broader critique of the cultural branding of the tournament. Overall, I will show how and in what ways the *vuvuzela* was produced, circulated and consumed as a heritage form in the context of the FIFA 2010 World Cup and how that process of construction concerned the mediation and negotiation of ideas about 'Africanness' and 'South Africanness' in relation to the world.⁴

4 It is important to note that this genealogy is neither exhaustive nor definitive. The structure of this historical account serves principally to highlight the core theoretical claims about heritage, materiality and the senses, and the implications of such mobilisation for framing particular, official representations of African and South African subjectivity.

South Africa's Tournament, Africa's Stage

The *vuvuzela*'s worldwide fame finds its origin in the noise made around South Africa securing the right to host the 2010 FIFA World Cup, and the political, social and cultural significance of major sports events in the post-apartheid era. South Africa established a record for successfully staging international sports competitions through the 1990s into the new millennium. These included the 1995 Rugby World Cup, the 1996 African Nation's Cup, the 1999 All Africa Games and the 2003 Cricket World Cup. These events were framed by the state as being economically beneficial, and as holding out social, cultural and political import. Since Nelson Mandela's presidency in 1994, sporting mega-events had been actively drawn upon by the state as a medium for fostering nation-building, particularly because, in a country divided by deep racial divisions, sports appeared to appeal to South Africans from all walks of life (see Van der Westhuizen 2008). The 1995 Rugby World Cup and the 1996 African Nation's Cup, both staged in, and won by, South Africa, specifically helped emphasise the social and cultural importance of major sports events. The state recognised that these events presented a major opportunity to try and persuade the South African public to embrace new symbols of state, such as the flag and the new national anthem, and link sporting fervour and patriotic pride in processes of nation-building (see Black and Naughtright 1998; Booth 1999; Carlin 2008). In post-apartheid South Africa, sports mega-events were important arenas where branding practices intersected with nation-building.

Spurred on by a track record of successfully staging international sports competitions, by the late 1990s the state set about developing bids for grander global mega-events such as the Olympics. In 2000 South Africa first pitched for the right to host the 2006 FIFA World Cup. Considering that football is by far the most popular sport in South Africa, the FIFA World Cup presented the state with another opportunity to renew patriotic pride. It also enabled the state, during the Thabo Mbeki administration, to mobilise Pan-African patriotism as part of the broad initiative to awaken an African Renaissance.⁵ South Africa failed narrowly, losing out to Germany. It was a major let down. Addressing the nation immediately after the announcement in a televised address, President Mbeki expressed his "deep disappointment" about the outcome, remarking that it was not only a loss for South Africa, but also a tragic day for Africa, saying

5 Peter Alegi has poignantly described the African Renaissance as the "belief that modernity and globalization, combined with African cultural heritage, [could] be harnessed to reinvigorate the continent economically and politically" (2010: 129). See also Van Kessel 2001.

“their message and ours did not succeed to convince the majority on the FIFA Executive that Africa’s time has come”.⁶ Thabo Mbeki posited that, since the bid was issued on behalf of the African continent, South Africa’s failure could be understood as another snub in a long history of colonial oppression, since “the issue was not Africa’s readiness”, but rather the readiness of Europeans “to accept that Africa is part of the global human family” (*IOL* 12 July 2000). According to Thabo Mbeki’s reasoning, South Africa’s failure to secure the World Cup bid marked the exclusion of African persons from the global human family. Nevertheless, he expressed his faith in South Africa’s chances of staging the greatest football tournament by concluding his televised address with the emphatic statement “next time we will win” (Alegi 2010: 128). In 2001, FIFA president Joseph (Sepp) Blatter lodged a motion to modify the rules regarding how the hosting rights for the tournament were allocated. This resulted in the implementation of a continental rotation system that would start with Africa. Egypt, Libya, Tunisia and Morocco would all bid for the tournament, but South Africa was by far the favourite.

In the lead up to FIFA’s decision on the 2010 tournament, Thabo Mbeki elaborated on his interpretation of the significance of the World Cup for Africa. Firstly, he pointed out that the World Cup would propel the continent’s extraordinary transformative journey. The tournament would be “coming to Africa for the first time, coming to an Africa going through its moment of rebirth”.⁷ This was an exciting human journey, “an African journey of hope”, proceeding towards a future destiny “free of wars, refugees and displaced people, free of tyranny, of racial, ethnic and religious divisions and conflicts, of hunger, and the accumulated weight of centuries of the denial of our human dignity”.⁸ Secondly, FIFA’s decision to grant the hosting rights to an African nation marked its entry into a contract with Africa to overcome the adversities that stood in the way of reaching this goal. By deciding to allocate the rights to an African nation FIFA “conveyed the message to all Africans, both on the continent and the African Diaspora, that you are ready and willing to accompany us on our journey of hope, and gives us the strength and stamina we need to traverse the difficult

6 Statement by President Mbeki to the nation on the failure to secure the bid to host the 2006 World Cup, 6 July, 2000. Accessed at <http://www.polity.org.za/polity/govdocs/pr/2000/pro706c.html>, 28 October 2014.

7 Thabo Mbeki: Presentation to FIFA on South Africa’s Bid for the 2010 Soccer World Cup, 14 May 2004. Speech issued by the South African Presidency. Accessed at <http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/pebble.asp?reliid=3078>, 20 December 2013.

8 Ibid.

terrain that separates us from Africa's renaissance".⁹ Finally, the decision would mark the fulfilment of the restoration of African personhood at the centre of the celebration of a global humanity.¹⁰ The World Cup, provided "a global stage on which nations and peoples of the world" could gather together and reaffirm their common humanity and "experience the reality that we belong to one human family, regardless of race, colour, gender, age, political and religious belief, and country or continent of origin".¹¹ In Thabo Mbeki's estimation, the World Cup signified FIFA's entering into a partnership that would catalyse the transformation of African consciousness, restore a fractured African personhood and mark the incorporation of Africans into a global humanity.

Of the African nations competing for the rights to host the event, South Africa was the frontrunner. The World Cup Bid Book, South Africa's official contractual proposition to FIFA, Peter Alegi (2010) points out, comprised a narrative that not only entailed demonstrating South Africa's logistical capabilities, but also their capability to fashion an appealing 'African' brand image of South Africa ready for global consumption. As the Bid Book declared, "South Africa offers FIFA security through its commercial strength and advanced infrastructure, and the prospect of a joyful, happy and emotional first FIFA World Cup in Africa".¹² Moreover, Alegi explains, firstly the World Cup became a branding project engaged with the specific purpose of posturing the image of a leading, modern African nation-state to the world. As Thabo Mbeki explained in the cover letter of the Bid Book, "We want, on behalf of our continent, to stage an event that will send ripples of confidence from the Cape to Cairo – an event that will create social and economic opportunities across Africa".¹³ Secondly, as is evident, the state's commitment to the tournament was linked to Thabo Mbeki's political philosophy of the African Renaissance, as a broad attempt

9 Ibid.

10 African personhood refers to Thabo Mbeki's framing of a romantic notion of Africanness. Developed immediately after the institution of democracy in South Africa, and articulated in speeches and public utterances such as his often referred to 'I am an African' speech, his vision of African personhood denotes a subject position that is communal, Pan-African, and diametrically opposed to commonsensical notions of autonomous Western subjectivity.

11 Ibid.

12 South Africa World Cup 2010 Bid Book, pg 1/7. <http://mg.co.za/article/2010-06-11-the-bid-book-for-our-bucks> on 8 December, 2013. Scarlett Cornellisen (2006) has shown that a similar branding exercise was mobilised by Morocco.

13 South Africa World Cup 2010 Bid Book, pg 2/9, accessed at <http://mg.co.za/article/2010-06-11-the-bid-book-for-our-bucks> 8 December, 2013.

to exhibit a 'world-class Pan-Africanism' (Bolsmann 2012). As Thabo Mbeki affirmed in the preface to the Bid Book, "The foundation of this Bid lies in our resolve to ensure that the 21st Century unfolds as a century of growth and development in Africa ... the successful hosting of the FIFA World Cup in Africa will provide a powerful, irresistible momentum to this resolute African renaissance".¹⁴ South Africa's official proposal to FIFA mediated a complex set of relations between the past and the future, South Africa, Africa, and the world. The *vuvuzela* manifests as a heritage form against this background of nationalist, Pan-Africanist global posturing and resounds with this complex set of meanings in the context of the World Cup.

Masinedane Sport

The final announcement for the hosting rights to the FIFA 2010 World Cup was made on 15 May, 2004, in Zurich, Switzerland. The South African bid committee dispatched to the event included politicians, sports officials, prominent business people and former president Nelson Mandela. To emphasise their pride in South Africa's football legacy, and in anticipation of a positive outcome, delegates brought along regalia synonymous with football fan culture, such as *makarapas* (decorative hard hats) and *vuvuzelas*. The room exploded in loud cheers and stunning salvos of braying *vuvuzelas* when Sepp Blatter drew South Africa's winning bid from the award envelope. Nelson Mandela wept tears of joy, and the effervescent sonorous atmosphere of jubilation echoed across South Africa in broadcast scenes showing the public resounding in joyous, celebratory blowing of *vuvuzelas*. Rejoicing in distinctively South African festive style, the delegation claimed success as the first African host nation of the FIFA World Cup. As far as *vuvuzelas* were used to signal South Africa's victory, the occasion also served as the first major international platform where the instrument was presented to the world as an instantly recognisable sonic emblem for football culture in South Africa, Africa's World Cup host nation.

Significantly, the *vuvuzelas* which South African delegates used to fill FIFA's head office with boisterous, reverberating celebration had a fascinating history. The horns were supplied by Masinedane Sport, a small, Cape Town-based manufacturer. The *vuvuzela*'s imbrication in narratives of South African and African cultural and historical significance is closely related to Masinedane

¹⁴ Ibid.

Sport's growth and the strategies it employed in negotiating a range of state and market forces to promote the company and its product before and during the World Cup. This relatively unknown company had simple origins in local football fan culture. According to Neil van Schalkwyk, a partner in the venture, it was while playing semi-professional football in the late 1990s that he noticed that the *vuvuzela* helped create a raucous festive atmosphere at local matches.¹⁵ At the time, however, *vuvuzelas* were flimsy, rudimentary, hand-made contraptions cobbled out of metal, and were used only by a few of the most passionate football fans. There was therefore no popular, entrenched tradition of *vuvuzela* horn blowing as is known today at football matches in South Africa prior to the 2000s. After acquiring a home-made prototype, van Schalkwyk applied his nascent skills in injection plastic moulding to copy the shape of the noise-maker. He eventually cast a plastic replica that expelled a powerful, consistent B-flat note. Converting a crude, home-made noise-making instrument into a reliable, efficient, easily replicable plastic horn, van Schalkwyk transformed an idiosyncratic manifestation of local football fan culture into a marketable commodity as a kind of material invented tradition (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983). Recognising the commercial potential of his innovation, van Schalkwyk partnered with his friend and former boss Beville Bachman, and registered their company under the name Masincedane Sport in 2001.

Marketing and brand promotion played an important role in Masincedane Sport's commercial success. Initially, the company struggled. In the first year of trading, Neil van Schalkwyk calculated that the company sold around 500 units. In his understanding, weak sales could be attributed to the football public's sheer lack of interest. In the beginning, they had to create a sense of interest in the product, by, for example, handing out *vuvuzelas* for free at matches. Masincedane Sport's sales volume began to grow in 2003 in line with the increasing speculation about South Africa's chances for the 2010 World Cup. By that year they had also secured contracts to supply Kaizer Chiefs and Orlando Pirates, South Africa's two biggest football clubs, and had partnered with Proudly South African, a national branding project aimed at boosting local business, to help promote the company. One major early success was securing the contract to supply the *vuvuzelas* gifted to the FIFA technical inspectors that visited South Africa as part of the 2010 bid process.¹⁶ Through these marketing endeavours aimed at attracting the public's attention to the

15 Author interview with Neil van Schalkwyk, v&A World Media and Legacy Centre, 1 July, 2010, used with permission and consent.

16 Ibid.

vuvuzela, it appeared that Masincedane Sport actively engaged in fulfilling the claim made in their company slogan, “Creating Sporting Culture”.

The energetic and savvy marketing skills which Masincedane Sport employed in trying to attract public interest and grow their business could be related to the support and education provided by SAB-Miller, a locally based, multi-national corporation. Soon after registering the venture in 2001, the business owners successfully applied to participate in SAB-Miller’s Kick Start Small Business Programme. “Aimed at 18 to 35 year-olds from previously disadvantaged backgrounds”, the KickStart programme was launched “in 1995 initially as a poverty alleviation project” but “subsequently became a platform to stimulate sustainable enterprise development”.¹⁷ Small businesses were provided with long-term financial, legal mentoring and corporate support which in combination added significant impetus to the sustainability of participating enterprises. Masincedane Sport was one of the programme’s shining success stories. SAB-Miller “touted the Cape-based [enterprise] as being the first small black business to benefit from South Africa’s World Cup bid victory”.¹⁸ Affirming their faith in the enterprise, SAB-Miller stepped up their assistance, providing financial aid, and corporate and legal guidance in anticipation of the business’ expansion leading into 2010, by, for example, facilitating Masincedane Sport’s trademark of the rights to the word *vuvuzela*, which was employed on packaging and marketing media. As the SAB-Miller spokesperson Michael Farr pointed out, the gesture was not merely about supporting a small South African business, but about protecting the intellectual property of the South African nation. “Given the overwhelming popularity of the *vuvuzela*, SAB-Miller was keen that everybody should know that the product was created by a South African and that his labour should be respected”.¹⁹ By helping Masincedane Sport register the trademark rights to the word *vuvuzela*, SAB-Miller intended to strike a legal boundary between legitimate local production and foreign exploitation. As Michael Farr put it, SAB-Miller assisted Masincedane with his application so as to avoid the risk of “anyone capitalising on his business unfairly”.²⁰ With SAB-Miller’s assistance Masincedane Sport was able to stake a legal claim over

17 ‘SAB KickStart Enterprise Development Initiative’ accessed at <http://www.sabkickstart.net/index.php/about.html> on 18 November, 2013.

18 *Mail and Guardian*, 19 May, 2004. Accessed at <http://mg.co.za/article/2004-05-19-vuvuzela-horn-to-be-trademarked>, 20 December, 2014.

19 ‘Church claims football symbol’. Accessed at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/3766979.stm>, on 10 December 2013.

20 *Mail and Guardian*, 19 May, 2004. Accessed at <http://mg.co.za/article/2004-05-19-vuvuzela-horn-to-be-trademarked>, 20 December, 2014.

a concept for their product, claim authority as a legitimate local supplier and position the company to claim a dominant place in the market leading up to the World Cup.

Nevertheless, recognising the increasing pitch of public interest in the state's campaign to host the 2010 tournament, Masincedane Sport's owners employed skilled marketing strategies focused on entering into the fervour around the national bid. As Neil van Schalkwyk explained, "with that momentum building up [around the bid] we tried to strategically place our product you know, when they had the bid book hand over [in 2003] and so forth, leading up to the announcement in May 2004, we made sure that the product was, you know, at all the right public viewing areas".²¹ At major events related to the bid, they especially made sure that their product was in the hands of important officials before they took to the stage to promote the state's campaign. The company's greatest marketing coup was, however, the spontaneous eruption of reverberating *vuvuzelas* at the Zurich head office and televised inserts of fans all across South Africa. "I think that's where the first real media interest came about around the *vuvuzela*", Neil van Schalkwyk declared.²² The voluminous celebration that erupted in Zurich established the link between *vuvuzelas* and South African sporting culture and, as celebration of the African host nation, marked an instantly recognisable aural signifier for the African brand image of the tournament. Masincedane Sport's product slogan played on such nationalist posturing since their product slogan stated that their *vuvuzelas* made "the Original Sound of South Africa". Lobbing the *vuvuzela* into a central position in the state's campaign to host the World Cup, Masincedane Sport actively blurred the lines between culture, patriotism and marketing, mobilising a branding project that emphasised their product's 'authentic' South African sound. Masincedane Sport was not merely engaged in building its brand, but rather, was also engaged in building a case for the authenticity of its product and its legitimate ownership over it (see Lindholm 2008).

Notably, Masincedane Sport emphasised that it was not so much concerned with the cultural value of the *vuvuzela* as much as it was concerned with its value as a product that could advance economic empowerment in Africa and South Africa. Neil van Schalkwyk stressed the hard work it took to "get the *vuvuzela* to be what it is today, to create the atmosphere that is unique to South African soccer", through partnering with companies "such as Proudly

21 Author interview with Neil van Schalkwyk, v&A World Media and Legacy Centre, 1 July, 2010, used with permission and consent.

22 Ibid.

South African, Orlando Pirates and Kaiser Chiefs”.²³ He argued that now it was the turn of the state to protect and promote local businesses. Masincedane Sport exemplified this spirit of commercial support and cooperation, he said, because, for one, the company name was derived from the *isiXhosa* term ‘meaning lets help each other out’. Drawing on the spirit of vernacular knowledge of communal reciprocity coded into the name of his business, Neil van Schalkwyk issued a formal challenge to “government and business with [Masincedane Sport’s] slogan: Let us help each other – Africa 1st”.²⁴ But he also distinguished his product’s ‘authenticity’ on the basis of defining features, saying “We are the only manufacturer of the Proudly South African *Vuvuzela* and the world is insisting on the authentic *Vuvuzela*. They want nothing but the real thing”.²⁵ The use of the trademarked word *vuvuzela* was an added authenticating feature. In this way, it appeared, Masincedane Sport’s claim to legitimacy as a manufacturer of ‘authentic’ *vuvuzelas* was mobilised as part of its contest with the forces of the market and the South African state and centred around a value proposition that framed the company as South African and African.

FIFA and State Sanction

McLuhan and McLuhan point out that, philosophically, “acoustic space, always penetrated by tactility and other senses, is spherical, discontinuous, non-homogenous, resonant, and dynamic”. Sonorous space is open, fluid and binding. It is a “flux in which figure and ground rub against and transform each other” (1988: 33). In 2009, the *vuvuzela* would both affirm and disrupt such characterisation of sound during the Confederations Cup, an official international FIFA tournament that served as a trial run for the World Cup. Featuring a selection of some of the best football nations from across the world, the Confederations Cup also benchmarked global perceptions of South Africa as a host nation. It was also the first time that *vuvuzelas* became the focus of attention of an international audience unaccustomed to South Africa’s loud, boisterous football fan culture. Indeed, the buzzing drone of thousands of *vuvuzelas* trumpeted during live broadcast matches came as a shock to European players and audiences. Spanish football player Xabi Alonso commented, “We’re used

23 “Masincedane’s Vuvuzela is Destined to Be World Cup Icon”, published 17 May, 2004 and “The Proudly South African ‘Vuvuzela’ Answers World Calls”, published 20 May, 2004, accessed at <http://archive.is/mSVdW> on 20 December, 2013.

24 Ibid.

25 Ibid.

to people shouting but not to this trumpet noise which doesn't allow you to concentrate and is unbearable ... They are a distraction and do nothing for the atmosphere", while British viewers complained about the noise interfering with their viewing pleasure, saying, "It's just a nasty harsh noise and it does my head in"; "I can hardly hear the commentary ... it really sucks ... can't even hear the fans cheering ... only sounds that echoes is the high pitch trumpets blown by 5000 lunatics" (*The Guardian*, 20 June 2009). Yet many online pundits also defended the *vuvuzela*, by, for example, framing the sound as emblematic of African fan culture: "I am shocked that anyone in their right mind would attack our African values. When the World Cup was awarded to South Africa, everyone knew very well that drums, trumpets and whistles would be part of the game".²⁶ Or concerning African heritage, "*Vuvuzelas* are here to stay because its part of the African heritage, unique to South African Soccer show" (*Sport24*, 22 July 2009). But also as concerning South Africa's African cultural distinctiveness, "It is a recognised sound of football in South Africa and is absolutely essential for an authentic South African footballing experience. After all, what would be the point of taking the World Cup to Africa, and then trying to give it a European feel?".²⁷ Clearly, the meaning of the sound of the *vuvuzela*, as circulated through global media circuits, was a crucial stake in the debates about its significance as a signifier of African and South African cultural identity.

Stark oppositions were drawn in the debates about the place of this unusual, ear-piercing, persistent sound in the arena of international football tournaments. As the above quotes show, the sound of the *vuvuzela* was unavoidably rousing. It resonated. The ethnomusicologist Veit Erlmann (2010: 12) contends that resonance implies the conjunction of subject and object, "adjacency, sympathy and the collapse of the boundary between perceiver and perceived". Resonance, Erlmann claims, speaks to hearing as an embodied practice, since it is also the "mechanism that generations of scientists have taken to be at the base of how the human ear works". With potentially damaging volume (see Swanepoel, et al. 2010), the *vuvuzela*'s braying sound reverberated amongst football audiences around the world, creating a live, yet highly mediated soundscape that shaped perceptions of Africa and South Africa.²⁸ Debates about the meaning of the sound generated by the *vuvuzela* initiated questions of noise

26 Comments to 'In defence of vuvuzelas.' Published on 19 June, 2009. Accessed at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/8108691.stm>, 31 July, 2014.

27 Comments to 'In defence of vuvuzelas.' Published on 19 June, 2009. Accessed at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/africa/8108691.stm>, 31 July, 2014.

28 See Schafer 1994 on soundscapes.

and harmony, and the apparent resonance or dissonance of particular arguments about South African and African subjectivities in the context of global football fan culture. “Noise”, Goddard et al. (2013: 4) explain, “seems to stand for a lack of aesthetic grace, to be against enjoyment or pleasure, to alienate or distract, rather than enrapture it penetrates the body rather than transports the listener”. Enabling raucous debate about noise and harmony, and figuring these notions as important for understanding ‘Africanness’, arguably, the *vuvuzela* constituted a global listening public, where listening is seen as a category that encompasses “the realm of the sensory, embodied experience and the political realm of debate and deliberation” (Lacey 2013: 8). While visual culture was used by football officials to articulate narratives about how the World Cup would spur development in Africa (Manzo 2012), the *vuvuzela* created an organically generated soundscape that emanated from Africa and reverberated around the world.

It was in this context of amplifying, fierce debate about the place of *vuvuzelas* in football, particularly the broadcasting of football matches to an international audience, that FIFA and the South African state publicly staked their positions regarding the *vuvuzela*. In these instances, they mounted arguments that clearly situated the *vuvuzela*’s place in South African football culture as a matter of African cultural heritage. This is best illustrated by the complex, historically grounded arguments these bodies advanced in online promotional media published on official World Cup 2010 platforms.

In March 2009, on the official South African 2010 World Cup website, an article entitled “Get Your *Vuvuzelas* Ready for 2010” provided an elaborate account of the cultural history of the *vuvuzela*.²⁹ It cited the celebratory atmosphere around FIFA’s awarding of the 2010 hosting rights as the defining moment of the *vuvuzela*’s public profile, and then corroborated its local significance citing testimony provided by Putco Mafani, described as a progenitor of the “*Vuvuzela* movement”. The *vuvuzela* had deep historical roots Mafani explained. “First, the horn is an African instrument and back in the days it was in wars and used to mark celebrations. Because South Africans do not have access to the animal horn back then, they use the *Vuvuzela* and when it is blown, you are guaranteed to get a reaction from people”.³⁰ In contemporary South Africa, the article claimed, it was used to rally the crowds and communicate with players. “South African players know when they hear the sound of a *Vuvuzela*, it is time

29 “Get Your *Vuvuzelas* Ready for 2010”, accessed at <http://www.sa2010.gov.za/en/node/1945> on 10 December, 2013.

30 Ibid.

for action, the players are used to it and they associate it with playing ... fans would start blowing *Vuvuzelas* and for players to start playing and it used to get the mood right”.³¹ Accordingly, it was claimed, that the *vuvuzela* defined South African football culture, but also permeated fan culture across Africa. “There is a place for *Vuvuzelas* in 2010; the event will be like no other World Cup ... The use of the instrument has extended to other African countries, supporters from Nigeria, Ivory Coast were blowing *Vuvuzelas* at matches during the African Cup recently, it has become an African symbol of celebrations”.³² The claim that the *vuvuzela* was capable of forging a Pan-African solidarity in sound was reiterated by Mzion Mofokeng, Orlando Pirates’ number one supporter. As he recounted, “I remember when I was in Ghana for the [African Nations Cup], supporters of other countries kept [asking] about the instrument and they were very excited to see me blowing it and I wanted them [to know] how it is done”.³³ Extrapolating from this encounter, in his estimation, the World Cup would be a stage showcasing African solidarity bound together by the reverberating sound of the *vuvuzela*. “Come 2010 ... those who will be visiting South Africa will be treated to [the] African sound of the *Vuvuzela*”.³⁴ The article also quoted Beville Bachman, who also emphasised the *vuvuzela*’s potential to accentuate the World Cup’s African cultural significance, saying “The 2010 World Cup would not be reaching its full status of a truly African World Cup without the atmosphere which the *Vuvuzela* has created at our stadiums and other event venues”.³⁵ In sum, this official narrative claimed that the *vuvuzela* hailed from apparently ancient indigenous traditions in South Africa, emphasised its indelible historical link with South African football spectatorship and asserted its unifying power as a cohesive force of Pan-African cultural solidarity.

A similar account appeared in the article “*Vuvuzela*: a symbol of South Africa” published on the official FIFA website in June, 2009.³⁶ The article claimed that just as the Swiss rang cow bells, Mexicans initiated the Mexican wave, so too, in South Africa there was the tradition of blowing *vuvuzelas*. The *vuvuzela* was described as a “vociferous air horn that reverberates around are-

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 “*Vuvuzela*: a symbol of South Africa”, accessed at <http://www.fifa.com/tournaments/archive/confederationcup/southafrica2009/news/newsid=1073689.html> on 10 December, 2013.

nas with rare energy. It is also a proud and permanent symbol of its patrons”.³⁷ The *vuvuzela* had deep South African cultural and historical roots, having “originally been made from a kudu horn. Folklore has it that, in the ancient days, it was used to summon people to gatherings”.³⁸ The article suggested that the *vuvuzela* was a “traditional” instrument that, according to folkloristic tradition, featured in the bonding of indigenous collectivities. *Vuvuzelas* also resonated with modern South African cultural history as a material form that resonated with the pain of apartheid oppression and the black struggle for dignity and freedom. As Mzion Mofokeng explained, “When we started the *vuvuzela*, there was so much sadness in our country in those years and it brought so much joy ... All of a sudden people would go to the stadiums because of this instrument that was able to get fans on their feet and start cheering. For [a] few hours, they would forget about the reality in our society and enjoy the sound”.³⁹ Following this reasoning, it was claimed that during apartheid *vuvuzelas* manifested as a material cultural form that enabled novel sonic expression that provided both psychological relief and revitalising power. This suggested that, in contemporary South Africa, *vuvuzelas* aroused the kinds of strong emotions and sensations that defined the pleasure of football spectatorship. As Freddie Sadaam Maake explained, “It brings a special feeling to the stadiums. It is something that makes the fans want to get behind their team”.⁴⁰ It was on the basis of this kind of constructed cultural history, framing the *vuvuzela*’s connection to contemporary South African spectator traditions and “ancient” African histories of “traditional” cultural practice, that FIFA based their tacit endorsement of the *vuvuzela*. As Sepp Blatter announced, “It is African culture, we are in Africa and we have to allow them to practice their culture as much as they want to ... *Vuvuzelas*, drums and [singing] are part of African football culture. It is part of their celebration, it is part of their culture, so let them blow the *vuvuzelas*”.⁴¹

The volume of grievances only grew after the start of the World Cup, with players and audiences issuing a volley of appeals for the *vuvuzela* to be banned. Football star Lionel Messi complained saying, “It is impossible to communicate, it’s like being deaf”, a sentiment concurred by Portuguese international Cristiano Ronaldo, “It is difficult for anyone on the pitch to concentrate. A lot of players don’t like them, but they are going to have to get used to them” (*IOL*,

37 Ibid.

38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

41 Ibid.

14 June, 2010). The British Broadcasting Corporation received some 200 complaints during the first few days of the tournament, and audiences around the world struggled to contend with the droning buzz that emanated from their television sets every time they tuned in to matches. Acoustic space may have been spherical and fluid, uniting and connecting in McLuhan and McLuhan's terms (1988), but it was also annoyingly arresting, nerve-wracking and distracting. FIFA and South African football officials moved to dismiss the possibility of banning the instrument, and, instead, emphasised its significance as an African cultural practice rooted in ancient indigenous traditions and history of South African football fan culture. "*Vuvuzelas* are a cultural phenomenon for our country and for football" said Rich Mkhondo, spokesperson for the Local Organising Committee (*IOL*, 14 June, 2010). As Sepp Blatter stated, "I have always said that Africa has a different rhythm, a different sound ... I don't see banning the music traditions of fans in their own country. Would you want to see a ban on the fan traditions in your country?" (*Global Post*, 22 June, 2010). By making such statements, FIFA and the South African football authorities actively engaged in practices of heritage formation, mobilising narratives of origin, contesting and silencing aspersions about the sound's influence on viewing pleasure, and rhetorically elevating its status from a cheap, disposable plastic horn to a valorised heritage form.⁴²

At one point Rich Mkhondo described the debate as polarised, saying "Only a minority are against *vuvuzelas*. You either love them or hate them. We in South Africa love them".⁴³ Staking the controversy about the *vuvuzela* as concerning clear oppositions between South African insiders who loved them and outsiders who hated them, Mkhondo elided the disparity, complexity and even contradictory ways in which the sound structured relations amongst South Africans, Africans and global audiences. For one, the *vuvuzela*'s sound also divided South African audiences who rejected its significance as either an African or South African tradition. A selection of e-mails, letters and SMSs submitted to the *Sunday Times*, a national South African news publication, bears this out (*The Sunday Times*, 6 June, 2010). As Dr PFG Mtimkulu pointed out, "*Vuvuzelas* cannot be regarded as our tradition because they have been with us for just more than 10 years", a sentiment echoed by Gogo who said, "The ghastly *vuvuzela* is not a true tradition, but has simply become a detestable

42 Notably, the World Cup also endeared a series of conventional, independently organised heritage projects. For example, see Alegi 2006.

43 'World Cup 2010: organisers will not ban vuvuzelas'. Published 14 June, 2010. Accessed at http://news.bbc.co.uk/sport2/hi/football/world_cup_2010/8737455.stm on 15 December, 2013.

bad habit" (Ibid). This new tradition was seen as a national travesty: "Why a nation of such talented music people could embrace such a boring, tuneless piece of plastic as the symbol of their football defeats me" (Ibid). The sound of the *vuvuzela* could also unite global audiences in complex ways. In a letter written during the World Cup to the *Cape Times*, a regional South African newspaper, entitled 'United We Blow', Nathan Casey argued for its unifying power as an "international unification tool". He described an encounter with "a posse of friends that included Italians, Brazilians, Americans and English", where, "Passing [the *vuvuzela*] around like a peace pipe, laughing as my British girlfriend taught a true African how to blow it properly ... we befriended and bonded with folks from all over the world". It was a galvanising experience that rang long into the night. "We all sang and *vuvu*'d down the street, and left feeling the world was a smaller place and we could learn and teach so much during the [tournament]".⁴⁴ Situating the *vuvuzela* in Native American indigenous traditions of community building, Casey suggested that the instrument could cohere an international group of football fans by staging the communal sharing of sound in Africa. Clearly, different agents extracted different sets of meanings, about nation, culture and history, from a set of clearly indistinguishable sounds. In that sense the *vuvuzela* facilitated a politics of aesthetics that framed complex relationships of resonance and dissonance, of division and togetherness, in the reverberant droning produced by thousands of disposable plastic horns (Rancière 2004). Nevertheless, whether interpreted as resonant or dissonant, harmonious or noisy, the volume of this polarised debate added a patina of persuasiveness to official statements that the *vuvuzela* was a heritage form.

Counterclaims and Contestation

Whatever the vociferous debate about the sound of the *vuvuzela*, it is important to reaffirm that not everybody was in harmony with the arguments being made by dominant stakeholders. FIFA, the South African state and Masincedane Sport appeared to have independent vested interests in the *vuvuzela* that were interrelated around mediations of South African and African subjectivity. All of them were subject to contestation and debate that firstly concerned the authenticity of the *vuvuzela* as a cultural form, and secondly, the African and South African images and subjectivities it was meant to sustain.

44 Newspaper clipping, 'United We Blow', letter to the editor, *Cape Times*, 14 June, 2010.

Firstly, critiques about the *vuvuzela*'s authenticity as a South African and African cultural form were framed within a challenge on Masincedane Sport's claim to original ownership. Their claim was contested in South Africa by two independent parties, Freddie Maake and a denomination of the Nazareth Baptist Church, or Shembe who advanced competing claims about the origin, invention and ownership of the *vuvuzela*. For example, Freddie Maake, Kaizer Chiefs' number one supporter and an ambassador for the national football team, argued that he'd invented the first *vuvuzela* in 1965, supplementing his claim with photographic evidence. "I started with an old bicycle horn that used to have a black rubber ... I removed the rubber and blew it with my mouth". He then constructed a gigantic 4 metre long aluminium horn, or, "the father of all the *vuvuzelas* you see today" (*Mail and Guardian*, 8 January, 2010). He also claimed to have invented the word *vuvuzela*, saying, "I started the *Vuvuzela* back in 1989 and we used to call it all sorts of names, some used to call it phalaphala, trumpet and so on, but I came up with the name *Vuvuzela*".⁴⁵ Maake supplied a series of photographs and a copy of his 1999 musical album "*Vuvuzela Cellular*" to corroborate his claim. As sports journalist Phatisani Moyo testified to having seen, "The common denominator in all the pictures [showing Maake's] journey from Kaizer Chiefs matches in the 1970's and 1980's to South Africa's readmission to international football ... is that he is the only supporter holding a *vuvuzela*" (*Mail and Guardian*, 8 January, 2010). It was plainly evident that Freddie Maake was "a man with a long history with the instrument" (*Ibid*). Despite being able to provide hard visual evidence, Maake was deeply aggrieved that others were illegally capitalising on his invention. "This is my invention and it saddens me that other people are benefiting from all the suffering I have endured in popularising the *vuvuzela*" (*Ibid*). He directed his ire at Masincedane Sport, who he felt had unfairly exploited his original invention, saying "The most I have received from Neil [van Schalkwyk] is R2 500 back in 2004 ... He is making a killing while I starve" (*Ibid*).

Alternatively, the Shembe Church's claim, dating back to 1910, around the time of the Church's establishment by Prophet Isaiah Shembe was that the progenitor of the contemporary *vuvuzela* was the *izimbomu*, a ceremonial horn used in rituals of healing, worship and rites of pilgrimage. As Enoch Mthembu, the public relations officer for a denomination of the Church explained, "It was introduced in 1910 by prophet Isaiah Shembe, who is the founder of our

45 "Get Your Vuvuzelas Ready for 2010", <http://www.saz2010.gov.za/en/node/1945> accessed on 15 December, 2014.

church, to play alongside African drums when we dance and worship God".⁴⁶ The *izimbomu* was also used in rituals of healing. "We can make miracles happen when we use the *vuvuzelas* to heal sick people".⁴⁷ Finally, the horn played an important role in an annual rite of pilgrimage. Every year thousands of church members dressed in flowing white gowns for a three-day ritual of pilgrimage, blowing their horns, carrying sacred sacraments, chanting and singing as they ascended the sacred mountain, Mount Nhlankazi, in KwaZulu-Natal province. For the Shembe, the *imbomu* had sacred significance. Their concerns about its use at football matches was therefore not merely about its commercial exploitation, but the exploitation of its revered religious power. As the Reverend Goga explained, "When people are playing football and hearing the *vuvuzela*, they are getting the power of our Holy Spirit".⁴⁸ The Shembe therefore based their claim to the *vuvuzela* on this history of religious use over almost a century. As Enoch Mthembu frankly declared, "This thing [the *vuvuzela*] belongs to the church".⁴⁹

The Shembe Church took issue with Masincedane Sport's trademark, and eventually negotiated a financial settlement (*Sowetan*, 22 June, 2010). At the same time, however, Church members also publicly claimed that the *izimbomu's* theft occurred in the early 1990s following a visit from an outsider with a passion for football. As church members put it to BBC journalist Jonah Fisher, "The Shembe say they lost the *vuvuzela* back in the 1990's when a supporter of South Africa's biggest football team, Kaizer Chiefs, visited the church. Unable to take the long metal trumpet inside football grounds he re-modelled it in plastic".⁵⁰ The church therefore accused Freddie Maake as appropriating their holy horn. And indeed, Maake had confessed to having entered into a business arrangement to produce marketable plastic horns, saying "I approached someone who ran a manufacturing company and he made the first plastic version – a yellow one very much like those you see today. We called them Boogieblasts and sold them at games" (*The Guardian*, 10 July, 2010). This venture appears to have failed. Overall, what was clear is that while Freddie Maake argued that Masincedane Sport had appropriated his inven-

46 'History of the vuvuzela: the fight for the right to the horn.' Published 17 June, 2010. Accessed at <http://edition.cnn.com/2010/SPORT/football/06/17/world.cup.vuvuzela.africa/> on 15 December, 2013.

47 Ibid.

48 'Unholy row over World Cup trumpet.' Published 16 January 2010 and accessed at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/8458829.stm> on 20 December, 2013.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

tion, Maake himself appeared to have appropriated the instrument from the Shembe Church. This complex web of claims and counterclaims over ownership and theft suggested that the *vuvuzela* was a generic cultural form that could be associated with indigenous South African religious traditions but also to horn blowing traditions all over the world.⁵¹ This generic quality availed the instrument to a range of claims and appropriations that became all the more meaningful when the financial and cultural stakes were so greatly amplified.

Secondly, the image of African unity that the *vuvuzela* symbolised and sustained, an image developed and promoted by FIFA and the South African state and football officials, concealed the problematic realities in South Africa and its relationship with Africa before and during the World Cup. *Vuvuzela* horn blowing at football matches was not a universally accepted African tradition. Beyond the Southern African region, football fans across Africa enjoyed different spectator traditions such as drumming and singing, and were largely unfamiliar with the South African custom of blowing *vuvuzelas*. This is illustrated by an example, when, in early 2010 the South African High Commission in Nigeria handed over a parcel of *vuvuzelas* to the Nigerian Football Supporters Club as part of a promotions campaign. The South African ambassador to Nigeria, Kingsley Mamabol handed over the 30 *vuvuzelas* to Dr Ladipo, President General of the Nigerian Football Supporters Club, with the express instruction that they be used during matches involving the Nigerian National Football Squad, explaining that “the noisy trumpet is currently regarded as an African identity” (*thisdayonline*, 25 March, 2010). While Dr Ladipo received the parcel graciously, he emphatically rejected “the assertion that *Vuvuzela* is an African identity”, stating that “I am totally against this *Vuvuzela* nonsense. It is not our style of supporting the game. The blaring of *Vuvuzela* is a big distraction even to the players ... To support a team the players must understand your language and what you are saying to urge them on. *Vuvuzela* is alien to our football culture and we will fight its introduction” (*allafrica.com*, 14 November, 2009). To him, the South African government’s drive to get African nations to adopt the *vuvuzela* was not an invitation to participate in Pan-African solidarity but rather a kind of cultural colonialism. “Every nation in the world has its

51 The South African law firm Spoor and Fischer, specialists in South African copyright law, argued that because of the complex nature of the contestation in South Africa, it could be argued that “the trade mark *vuvuzela* has become generic and that no single party will be able to claim ownership of the name *vuvuzela* when referring to the “musical instrument” (Van Rooyen 2010: 11).

own values” he declared, “and it is totally wrong for any nation to bring its own values to suppress others just because that country is hosting the world” (*thisdayonline*, 25 March, 2010).

There were also symbolic and material problems related to the brand image of Africa and South Africa developed by FIFA and the South African state. For example, Achille Mbembe was moved to ask how and in what ways the rhetoric developed in the Bid would further the global image of Africa and South Africa, saying:

Every indication is that “Africa, the cradle of humankind” will be the dominant theme of the 2010 Soccer World Cup. On the world scene, such platitudes will only further relegate the continent to the realm of folklore. Not only does such a theme smack of nativism, it does not say anything meaningful about who we are, who we want to be, and what our proposition for the world is.⁵²

More substantively, as Ashwin Desai and Goolam Vahed (2010) have shown, there was a stark contrast between rhetoric and reality regarding the promises of development and Pan-African unity that the World Cup would spark. They argue firstly, that the outbreak of xenophobic violence “against African immigrants and refugees during 2008” and the government’s denials and “tardy response exposed a rabid inward looking nationalism”, rather than a Pan-African solidarity. As Sabello Ndlovu-Gatsheni put it (2011: 279), the tournament inspired “a strong spirit of national unity on the one hand, while simultaneously bringing into sharp focus glaring class divisions and threats of xenophobia, on the other”. Secondly, Desai and Vahed argue that the material benefits that were meant to accrue to ordinary Africans and South Africans around stadium construction (see Alegi 2008), trade and marketing were diverted to an elite minority and FIFA due to strict policy restrictions regarding development and trade. Indeed, prior to the tournament, “the actual benefits to African countries” was never made clear, and with South Africa’s commercial hegemony on the continent the World Cup simply presented another opportunity for “greater access for South African capital into the continents markets” (Desai and Vahed 2010: 156). In that case, they argued, if the South African state and football officials were really serious about using the tournament as a platform for “confronting progressive underdevelopment of Africa and its football” then

52 ‘2010 Soccer world Cup: Where is the moral argument’, published on <http://www.africultures.com/php/index.php?nav=article&no=5757> accessed on 20 December, 2013.

the real starting point would have had to be challenging “the very way FIFA functioned” in structuring the tournament as a short-term, exploitative enterprise. Portrayed as a kind of millennial capitalist moment (Tayob 2012), the World Cup was depicted “by South African political and football leaders as a catalyst for the invigoration of the economy of the African continent ... [while] the experience of African *immigrants*” as well as ordinary Africans and South Africans “betra[yed] a different reality” (Desai and Vahed 2010: 162 original emphasis). The World Cup presented a stage for the repetition of cultural and economic exploitation that state and football authorities had argued it would subvert. The *vuvuzela* therefore did not merely enable resonance, unity, solidarity, and togetherness, but also a kind of discord that excluded, marginalised, and oppressed (see Hammond 2011). Or, as Premesh Lalu has poignantly stated, “Noise has a way of engulfing truth” (2000: 97).

Conclusion

Stepping back from the cloud of noise generated about the *vuvuzela*, it is evident that the construction and authentication of this disposable plastic horn involved the production, circulation and negotiation of multiple, interrelated ideas of ‘Africanness’. Various participants had vested interests in the promotion of different, yet intersecting, notions of ‘Africanness’ and ‘South Africanness’ and worked them out in debates about the significance of the *vuvuzela*. To recap, in the first section I demonstrated how the South African state mobilised a particular Pan-African vision of ‘Africanness’ as characterising South African subjectivity through the ideological projects of Thabo Mbeki, which linked economic development to culture and heritage, and figured the 2010 World Cup as an important platform for accelerating their realisation. In contrast, FIFA and SAFA’s interests converged in their endorsement of the *vuvuzela* as a material and sonic hook on which they could mount a romantic, Pan-African brand image for the tournament. Against these two dominant forces, I demonstrated how Masincedane Sport staked and developed its commercial interest in the *vuvuzela* by playing on the very same notions of ‘South Africanness’ and ‘Africanness’ to try and authenticate their product and claim ownership over it. Tuning in to these contests over the articulation of political and brand images, the alchemy of the *vuvuzela*’s transformation becomes all the more clear: starting out as a generic instrument with a particular, virtually unknown local South African history, appropriated and then marketed as a popular fan accessory, then becoming valued as a material heritage form with supposedly South African and African significance. But I have also tried to emphasise that

control over the *vuvuzela*'s significance for framing articulations of culture and subjectivity were not the exclusive preserve of the dominant forces. I have tried to demonstrate that the soundscape generated by the enveloping drone of *vuvuzelas* not only aroused strong feelings and sentiments about sound, culture, and football but also opened an arena for viewers, fans, and audiences to engage in articulating competing interpretations of what it means to be African and South African in relation to the world.

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