



SECTION 1

1. OUTLINE

1.1 Summary

'South Africa is a place where many of the wounds have just begun to heal, where the past is not that distant. The lilting jazz of Hugh Masekela's "Free Nelson Mandela," can cause tempers to flare but they also fade. Fatigue keeps South Africa from explosion. Africa's musical traditions are as strong as ever, the clash of African rhythms and European instruments on the clean slate that was the United States is often said to have given birth to Jazz' (Scott Baldauf, 1999).

'From its birth, jazz was a dangerous music. It was performed at unregulated gatherings and drinking spots, rather than in the government licensed and rigidly controlled beer halls. Its practitioners were often classified as "vagrants", under constant threat of expulsion from the cities' (Gwen Ansell, 1955).

'And then there was jazz at night. Sophiatown and Marabastad were a place where black urban culture was erupting; and where there was black urban culture there was jazz, and everybody wanted a piece of it' (Iain Harris, 1966) (http://jazzitude.com/africajazz_southafrica.htm).

Ozone, 2004 relates that jazz music was born in New Orleans towards the close of the 19th century invented by African Americans. Jazz combines a blending of diverse cultures from all around the world in America during the time of slavery and the influx of immigrants.

In the context of improvisation that form the bases of jazz, artist create much of the music spontaneously and distinctive voices that composers stamp their individual styles, although jazz harmony is an

important element of jazz music like all music. Jazz is the most direct expression of feelings in music and it frees players from traditional musical structures and let them use their instruments in unconventional ways to produce unusual compositions.

Jazz is a combination of lyrics and rhythms driven by improvisation, which become the domain for a Jazz concept. Drawing the concept of improvisation into the built environment, the design of my scheme will integrate the structure, and the landscape by communicating the idea of freedom of speech set by jazz as a design generator. Where-in a network of courtyards, hosting miscellaneous mingling activities and spaces that are more driven by public functions, will interrelate. The visualization of jazz perception tones comes in different forms and some are deliberately distorted to contribute to the uniqueness of the music, and these tones will play a major role as one of the design motivators of my design scheme.

According to the history of Jazz in South Africa, 1966 South African jazz emerged out of a socio-cultural oppression, as a healing and transformation tool. The vibrant and seemingly indestructible Sophiatown and Marabastad in the early fifties, along with Langa in Cape Town were saturated with music everywhere; flowing out of every house, from every corner and shebeen, rhythm was the un-said word.



Fig. 1 Focus area (Department of Geography University of Pretoria, 2007).



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Sophiatown, Marabastad and Langa Shebeens were driven by Jazz at night, where groups like the Jazz Maniacs, Jazz Epistles would perform. My argument is based on the South African jazz scene, jazz acted as a platform to gather and to unite people, it acted as a point of interest for people to meet and exchange ideas. This jazz drive poses a challenge in my scheme in terms of a structure that will draw a diverse cultured community by the activities hosted in it.

Marabastad's current urban fabric still exposes the isolation that dominated during the apartheid system. To date, the area has never transformed towards a stable economy. Consequently, this dissertation attempts to incorporate a unique number of uses complementary to jazz, such as performance, recording, administration and teaching. In this context, jazz is an innovative music dedicated to the teaching and performance of South Africa's indigenous marabi which gave birth to jazz. This same jazz strives to impart the joy of music to the community and the greater Tshwane by providing unique opportunities to study, perform and listen to world-class jazz. The underprivileged society will get a chance to learn about and play jazz music on or off site, thus enriching the community with a gift of music.

The proposed project is located at the border of the Inner Pretoria CBD and Marabastad, under the jurisdiction of the City of Tshwane, consequently linking the two nodes. The boundaries of the site are demarcated by Struben Street on the northern, Potgieter Street on the eastern, Proes Street on the southern, and Steenhoven Spruit on the western. This region has a rich history of marabi, a foundation element of jazz roots. Marabastad has a high potential to act as a platform on which jazz music can mature and become acknowledged as a significant feature of city of Tshwane.

The proposed Center for Jazz in this dissertation is aimed at initiating a ripple effect of developments on the undeveloped open areas of Marabastad vicinity, thus integrating the two nodes (Marabastad and the CBD of City of Tshwane) which were detrimentally affected by the apartheid era into one urban fabric. The proposed Center for Jazz is essential in terms of building and sustaining a healthy community. It can also contribute to the cultural richness, diversity and quality of the district lifestyles, and encourages positive social interactions.