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**VOCAL MUSIC OF THE ANGLO-BOER WAR (1899-1902):
INSIGHTS INTO PROCESSES OF AFFECT
AND MEANING IN MUSIC**

by

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In his poem *The Searchlight* the young poet Joubert Reitz mirrors the feelings of grief and longing of the approximately 30 000 Boers who were sent away from their homeland as prisoners of war. He wrote this poem on the Bermudas. Joubert Reitz was born in 1881 and was the second son of F.W. Reitz, ex-president of the Orange a Free State. He was educated at Grey College in Bloemfontein where he would have received education in English. He joined the Commandos and was captured in June 1901. He was sent to Morgan's Island on the Bermudas but was removed to Burt's Island after he smuggled an anti-British letter to the American press which caused the British military to toughen up on the two clergymen, Albertyn and van Blerk. After the war he spent some time in America before returning to South Africa to study law (Benbow 1994:101).

THE SEARCHLIGHT

“When the searchlight from the gunboat
 Throws its rays upon my tent
Then I think of home and comrades
 And the happy days I spent
In the country where I come from
 And where all I love are yet.
Then I think of things and places
 And of scenes I'll ne'er forget
Then a face comes up before me
 Which will haunt me to the last
And I think of things that have been
 And happiness that's past
And only then I realize, How much my freedom meant
When the searchlight from the gunboat
 Casts its rays upon my tent”

(Benbow 1994:15).

ABSTRACT

The focus of this study was to locate the lacuna that exists between cultural history and musicology, in order to assess processes of affect and meaning in vocal music as a vehicle for understanding the South African Boer psyche and circumstances during the war. The pursuit of locating the lacuna was best served by employing qualitative research methods that reflect the phenomenological paradigm. This allowed for an in-depth understanding of the Boers in terms of their own interpretations of reality, as well as the understanding of society in terms of the meanings that people ascribe to the societal practices in that society.

A cultural-historical approach was necessary in order to highlight the experiential world of the Boers and gain some insider perspectives of the war. This approach did not, however, have much to say about the role of Boer vocal music in generating and articulating social and cultural meanings. On the other hand, the musicological approach which was based on research grounded in an examination of hand-notated musical scores, drew little attention to the role of music's meanings in the social, historical and cultural circumstances of the Boer people during the war.

After the historical context, which generated the vocal music was understood; the researcher was able to identify the lacuna as an aural void, due to the fact that affect and meaning cannot be grounded exclusively in an examination of cultural history or musical symbols decontextualised from sound. The background information allowed for the lyrics to be interpreted in melodic configurations, which were equated with particular moods, emotions and cultural meanings. This thesis thus responded to and succeeded in assessing insight and understanding into the psyche and circumstances of white South Africans during the Anglo Boer War.

The thesis concluded by proving that by highlighting the aural void it was possible to move cultural history towards an accommodation with musicology. Through Boer vocal music it was thus possible to critically shape understanding of the experiential world of the Boer during the Anglo-Boer War.

KEY WORDS

Anglo-Boer War	Music
History	Affect
Diaries	Lyrics
Memoirs	Emotive power
Songbooks	Meaning of sound
Vocal music	Group ideological
Scores	expression

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