# The invention of African art music
## Analyzing European-African classical cross-over projects

*Nepomuk Riva*

### The Black Beethoven—an African answer to the dominance of Western classical music?

Since the 1970s, a popular belief circulating within the Afro-community worldwide has held that Ludwig van Beethoven was African. Websites point to his African ancestry, his dark skin, the physiognomy of his face, his social context and the fact that his colleagues called him "black" or a "Moor." (cf. Raptorific 2010; Rinehart 2013; Owono 2015; Maarten 2017) In contrast to French composer Joseph Bologne, Chevalier de Saint-Georges (1745–1799), who was only nicknamed "Black Mozart" for his Guadeloupean descent and composition style, this discourse sees Beethoven as a composer "whitewashed" by Europeans. Interestingly, these theories also reference Beethoven's compositions. Some authors perceive West-African polyrhythmic structures in his piano works and have produced special interpretations of his piano sonatas to prove his "African roots." (ANY 2015)

There is no need to compare this conspiracy theory with the historical facts, but the discussion shows that European classical music and its worldwide dissemination today have resulted in postcolonial reactions from African contexts. The "myth of Beethoven's descendent" can be interpreted as an inferiority complex because in contrast to Asians, Africans have few roles in the Western classical music scene. The myth can also be seen as a sign of resistance. Africans no longer want to accept the unique position of classical European art music. They want to overcome the image of their so-called "underdeveloped" musical cultures. By reclaiming a famous European com-

poser as their compatriot, they want to draw attention to possible interconnections between European and African music cultures.

Unfortunately, most European-African classical cross-over productions that have enjoyed great popularity in recent decades are rather Eurocentric. Although they invite several African-born musicians for joint music projects and give them the possibility to present themselves to an international audience, they do not change the dominance of the Western music scene. Part of the problem is that they do not start out from an African viewpoint but from a European perspective, searching for exotic enrichments of its own popular musical canon. These productions also follow old-fashioned "comparative musicology" methods, comparing and mixing different sounds and rarely trying to promote an exchange of different social and cultural contexts.

In this article, I want to analyze four cross-over productions created between 1992-2006 that were produced by major labels and gained successful distribution in the Western hemisphere. Every single one works with different musical sources and constructs the European-African connection differently. The first three are the most popular productions that have constituted the genre, while the last one is less known but portrays a different approach to European-African collaboration. First, *Pieces of Africa* (1992) by the Kronos Quartet claims to represent African art music played by Africans and members of the United States Kronos Quartet. This production clearly wants to address Western listeners of classical music. Second, in *Lambarena: Bach to Africa* (1993), French musician and producer Hughes de Courson and Gabonese musician Pierre Akendengué mix Bach with so-called "traditional" Gabonese music to honor organ player, Bach expert and medical doctor Albert Schweitzer. Here, the producers want to reach a broader audience composed not only of experts in the field of Christian baroque music, but those who come from the educated middle class. Third, *Mozart the Egyptian I+II* (1997/2005) was also produced by de Courson in collaboration with cultural attaché and Egyptian academic Ahmed El Maghraby. In these two volumes, they explore possible musical connections between Mozart's classical music and Egyptian music. The important role North African music ensembles play in this production shows that the producers want to enter the world music market with their product. Finally, I want to draw attention to Austrian group MoZuluArt and its album *Zulu Music Meets Mozart* (2006). In this project, three Zimbabwean singers and an Austrian piano player interpret Mozart's music against the musical backdrop of Southern African choir-singing

traditions. This production represents pieces that were developed collaboratively within the group and had been tested on stage before they were recorded. The album is mainly meant for an audience that knows the artists from their performances or the media and wants to own their recordings.

In looking at these four examples, I am interested in the production process and in the audio-visual and textual messages these albums intend to convey. Wherever possible I tried to get into contact with the producers, the composers or the performers and to discuss with them the long-term impact of their albums. Does the label "cross-over" guarantee musical cooperation on the same eye-level? Concerning the production process this entails, do the projects evolve out of a collaborative work or do Western musicians determine the outcomes of the project? Concerning the performances and distribution, the question is whether both partners gain from the project in the same way. Analyzing the audio-visual elements of these albums, I want to show which image of Africa is constructed by these music projects. Do they simply reproduce colonial concepts and stereotyped images of "African music"? Or does the intercontinental collaboration lead to new forms of portraying diverse African societies and their music? I believe this research is important to show how the most successful albums of this genre determine a Western image of Africa that most of the time follows colonial imaginations. At the same time, it uncovers the power dynamics between Western art music culture and African music that still prohibits most African musicians from entering the Western art music scene.

Before analyzing these productions in detail, I want to reflect on their implications for the terms "Africa", "music" and "classical art music". A critical look at African colonial history is also needed to reveal what Western classical music means to Africans. Finally, the participation of Africans and the target audience of these productions are questioned.

## "European-African cross-over projects" in the context of postcolonialism

To analyze cross-over projects with African music and musicians, the meaning of the term "Africa" used within the productions must first be defined. Considering the use of this term is crucial because since the trans-Atlantic slave trade in the 17th century and the colonial exploration of the continent

in the 19th century, Europeans always created an image of Africa that supported their political and economic interests. Following Edward Said's theory of orientalism (Said 1979), Europeans constructed a collective image of the whole continent as a counterpart to Europe, meaning "uncivilized", "heathen", "wild" and "animalistic". Therefore, if producers of these cross-over albums use the term "Africa" collectively and combine it with the imagination of "wildness" and "nature" in their audio-visual or textual presentation, they reproduce these colonial views on Africa and already show a certain white supremacy towards African music. On the other hand, producers that give a geographical reference to the African continent or specify an ethnic group and its musical culture will more likely have a serious interest in a musical exchange on the same eye-level.

Another form of a collective use of the term "Africa" is not to differentiate between its general regional music cultures, like the Arabian-influenced musical cultures of North Africa or the West-, Central- and South African cultures. It was a colonial strategy to name music "African" that was derived from the Sub-Saharan or so-called "black Africa" and to project the cultures of these regions collectively as the whole continent. This definition also led to the stereotyped idea that "Africa is a country".

The titles of the four albums under consideration already show that the producers work with different terms and meanings, i.e. "Africa", "Egypt", "Zulu", and "Lambarena". In this context, producers' presentations of composers and musicians are also of interest because, due to the history of racism against blacks, Europeans tend to interpret the descent of Africans and their cultures as essential. As research on everyday racism in Germany shows, most Europeans see somebody who is born in Africa as an African, even if he or she migrates to Europe and eventually receives European citizenship. Likewise, someone who is black is regarded as an African and as part of an African musical culture, even if her or his family has lived in Europe for generations (cf. Arndt 2006). Naming an album "African" even if its composers and musicians are black migrants that do not live on the African continent is a form of racial imagination. Showing the diversity of inhabitants in African countries, on the other hand, will ensure a balanced representation. Furthermore, following Gilroy's theory of an intercontinental interrelated black culture that he calls "Black Atlantic" (1993), the term "Africa" in these productions could also be used in the sense of "Black Atlantic" cultures. If these productions include black music or African musicians in

the diaspora, the albums could represent the interconnection of black musical cultures. Yet none of these productions refer to this concept in their audio-visual or textual materials, even though they all make use of composers and musicians who do not live on the African continent. This analysis will help determine if the purpose of the projects studied is an honest musical exchange with Africans and blacks or merely the construction of an "image of Africa" as the counterpart to Europe as a means to successfully distribute the albums in the Western hemisphere.

Secondly, a music production must have an idea of to what the term "music" refers. In ethnomusicology, for decades researchers like Gerhard Kubik (1988) emphasized the fact that many African cultures do not have a term for "music" corresponding to the European concept. There might be terms for special genres, dances and music performed within specific social contexts but no central category without mentioning music/dance being performed at the same time (cf. Kubik 1988: 52-113). It is, therefore, necessary to consider the context in which music is played in Africa. The concept of music as organized sound is a purely European idea, and any blending of sounds makes sense only for European listeners and those in contact with European music cultures. Productions that use this restricted term likely reproduce the stereotypes of African music that Kofi Agawu (2003: 55-96) describes as mainly repetitive rhythm-based, in a call-and-response form accompanied by drums and improvised singing.

When discussing European classical music, it must be remembered that European music was one of the tools to suppress and to transform African cultures during the colonial period (cf. Radano/Olaniyan 2016). Pre-colonial musical practices were marginalized, forbidden and destroyed. Various anthropological and ethnographic sciences constructed the idea of "uncivilized" and "ahistorical" African music in sub-Saharan regions. Regarding the binary division between "art music" and "folk music" in European cultures, only within Islamic cultures and feudal states in Africa can a distinction between "art/court music" and "folk music" be drawn, and this distinction is often already part of a colonial terminology. However, European music was introduced as "civilized" music within the missions and colonial armies. The consequences for the musical cultures on the African continent have been quite diverse. Western classical music remained "white music" in all settlers' colonies in Southern Africa but strongly influenced the local music scenes in North African countries around the Mediterranean Sea, especially in Egypt.

There, in the 19th century, the form of a European orchestra was adapted, local instruments were introduced in these ensembles, and neo-classical music was composed (cf. El-Shawan 1985; Kamel 1999). In the West African countries of Nigeria and Ghana, a genre of African art music developed after the founding of higher education institutions for music subsequent to independence from the colonial regime (cf. Euba 1993; Nketia 2004). Benjamin Ziech (2017), in his doctoral thesis on African art music, counts 85 African composers and more than 540 works in this context of African art music. Church music also saw development towards the composition of works in the European sense of the term.

The composition of African masses primarily by missionaries in collaboration with African musicians during the 1960s were examples of how Africans should be introduced to or "civilized" by European music history (cf. Klein 1990). This tradition inspired musicologist David Fanshawe to compose his *African sanctus* (1972), partly based on his field recordings from North and Eastern Africa (cf. Fanshawe 1989). This history still very much influences the musical cultures of the postcolonial states in Africa. However, although the diatonic scale and the basic harmonic structure of Western music have been introduced throughout Africa, certain features can only rarely be found in African cultures, as Agawu (2016) states, such as modulations and the singing of scales other than major scales. So far, higher education institutions that teach classical European music exist mainly in countries with a history of European settlement and were mainly meant for white students. Unlike those from Asian countries, many African musicians who would like to join the European music scene are excluded. Along with these, there is also a long history of black composers who have worked but who rarely been performed in the United States and Europe since the 19th century. It will become obvious that some cross-over productions play with an imaginary of colonial fantasies and give references to missionary times. None of them follows a bottom up approach to represent African art music; neither do they open the door to the Western classical music scene for the African musicians.

Finally, it is important to consider what the term "cross-over production" means to the musicians and the audience. In general, "cross-over" was used as a socio-economic term to define musical products that were successful in different segments of the music market in the USA in the 1960s. Musicians were called cross-over artists if they gained success with different audiences, especially in the race-segregated society (cf. Brackett 1994). Regarding mu-

sical works, the term is also generally used to describe fusions of different genres in order to popularize one of the sources, i.e. classical musicians are called cross-over artists if they reach the audience of the popular music scene. Yet, in my understanding, the term only makes sense if productions are defined as musical cross-overs when musicians cross different, unrelated musical styles unrelated and combine them to create a new meaning. In the special case of "European-African classical cross-over productions", I describe products that combine popular Central European baroque and classic music with diverse African music and compositions labelled as "African music". The way this fusion is done shows a power relationship between the two sources and creates a message about both musical cultures. This "cross-over" can be achieved by: mixing and blending different musical pieces; playing them at the same time; accompanying the music of the one culture with the instruments, voices and stylistics of another; or using material from both musical cultures as the basis for a new musical exploration. Only the latter guarantees working conditions in which European and African musicians meet on the same eye-level. All other combinations always depend on the producers and their ideas for the projects. It is therefore important to know who creates cross-over cooperation. Who participates in the recordings? Who is meant to listen to them? A detailed analysis proves that the four mentioned productions all differ in their approaches and outcomes. Some of them show a clear dominance of the Western producers in the general framework of the production, even if they offer African composers and musicians the possibility to work together with Western musicians and to reach a wider audience. MoZuluArt is the only group where a balance of power between the participants can be noticed that also influences the musical cross-over in itself.

## *Pieces of Africa:* introducing African composers to the Western classical music scene

The Kronos Quartet is best known for its project-based approaches that simultaneously promote classical music, *Neue Musik* and world music. Often, the musicians work at the borders of art music, film soundtracks, world music and experimental music. In 1987 and 1991, the quartet recorded string music by white South African composer Kevin Volans (1949), and its engagement with African musicians led to a recent production together with the

Trio-Da Kali from Mali (2017). The group has thus demonstrated an enduring interest in promoting African art music within the Western classical music scene. Yet questions remain about how the Kronos Quartet sells its products and how sustainable its engagement with African art music is for the African musicians and composers.

The cover and booklet of the album *Pieces of Africa* (1992) show images of an African canvas, leaving the impression that it contains African music. In fact, all the composers were born on the African continent: Northern Africa (Morocco), East Africa (Sudan and Uganda), West Africa (Gambia and Ghana) and Southern Africa (Zimbabwe and South Africa). Yet most are international world music and jazz artists who have moved to Western countries or have at least resided there for some years. For example, Zimbabwean musician and teacher Dumisani Maraire (1943-1999) lived in the US during 1968-1982 and 1986-1990. Hamza El Din (1929–2006) moved to the US in 1964 after he lost his home due to the construction of the Aswan High Dam. Obo Addy (1936-2012) has also preferred to live in the US since 1978. Volans, a white South African, studied in Europe during 1973-1981 and settled in Ireland in 1986, where he received citizenship in 1994. It is questionable whether he should be called an "African" composer at all, even if the string quartet that was recorded by the Kronos Quartet contains melodies of black South Africans and refers to the anti-apartheid struggle (cf. Ziech 2017: 86-115). Also considering the exclusion of composers from the Lusophone African countries, perhaps *Pieces of Africa* might be better named *Pieces of the Black Atlantic* to avoid an essentialist view of Africa-born composers.

The Kronos Quartet commissioned the works with funds from by the Beigler Trust, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the National Endowment for the Arts and Lila Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund. Some composers were introduced to the Kronos Quartet, while violinist David Harrington actively sought out others. Only in the cases of El Din's *Escalay* and Volans's *White Man Sleep* were existing works rearranged for the string quartet. Justinian Tamusuza's (1951-) *Ekitundu Ekisooka* was written while he studied composition under Volans in Belfast in 1988. Therefore, the production partly represents works of black composers in that it partly creates the repertoire that would not have existed without external funding. All the pieces were recorded by the Kronos Quartet with African musicians and singers—most often the composers themselves—and a choir from Oakland. Clearly, it would be difficult to perform this collection live on stage without these musicians.

Consequently, the project as a whole has remained a studio album produced and sold under the label of the Kronos Quartet. In that way, an impact on the career of the composers is rather limited.

The American musicians seem to pretend to work with the African composers on the same eye-level. The composers are allowed to add vocal and instrumental parts, and the quartet even appears to sing for the first time in Obo Addy's *Wawshishijay*. In the simplicity of harmonic developments in pieces such as *Mai nozipo* by Maraire and *Ekitundu ekisooka* by Tamusuza, the composers make little use of the possibilities of a Western string quartet and instead compose in a minimalistic, repetitive way. Complex rhythmic patterns, the impression of continuous improvisation against simple harmonic patterns, singing in African languages and the sounds of African instruments, are the main characteristics that give the audience the notion of listening to "African" music. The Kronos Quartet thus reproduces a stereotyped form of African music merely fused with Western string sounds.

Some of these limitations arise from the composers' efforts to transform the musical styles of their cultures of origin into works for a Western string quartet. This can clearly be heard in Suso's piece *Tilliboyo*, which starts with a theme on the kora played by the composer, taken over and enriched by the string quartet mostly playing pizzicato. In his work, Tamusuza also tries to imitate Ugandan instruments and musical styles on Western instruments (cf. International Opus 2001). Unsurprisingly, those composers already in contact with the US art music scene cooperate with the founding generation of the American minimal music genre, such as Suso, who worked with Philip Glass on several other projects (cf. Glass 1988; Glass/Suso 1992; Glass/Suso 2011), and El Din, who was introduced to the Kronos Quartet by Terry Riley (see booklet of *Pieces of Africa*). Some of the American minimal composers even drew their initial inspiration from albums such as El Din's *Escalay: The Water Wheel* (1971) (cf. Dümling 2013). Therefore, *Pieces of Africa* partly represents not the African but rather the US-American art music scene. That some of the works from Black composers have actually led to the development of the American genre of minimal music is not mentioned at all.

However, this production meant to introduce so-called African composers to the Western classical music scene was not very sustainable. Suso's *Tilliboyo* is the only piece that was recorded again, in this case by a brass ensemble (Nederlands Blazers Ensemble 2000). Tamasuza did receive funding to compose further works for the International Society of Contemporary Mu-

sic (Essen, Germany 1995), Chamber Symphony of Princeton and Richmond Symphony Orchestra of Virginia (International Opus 2001). All the composers, though, did gain international recognition from the album's success, which helped build their careers in the world music scene. Maraire re-recorded his piece *Kutambarara* in an arrangement for marimbas, the instrument with which he enjoyed success as a performer and teacher (cf. Maraire 1993). Sometimes, the effects were not as visible. For example, Susan Addy, the widow of Obo Addy, reported in a private communication that his piece *Wawshishijay* was performed several times "by other chamber groups—Cuatro Puntos Quartet, Chicago Sinfonietta, Charleston Symphony orchestra. Others too, but I don't know their names." The work also had a deep impact on Addy's career and personality: "Writing 'Wawhishijay' ('Our beginning') definitely gave him more credibility with the classical folks and as a composer." (Private communication via LinkedIn, August 2 and August 6, 2018)

Not coincidentally, *Pieces of Africa* was produced shortly after political change in South Africa in 1990. The Kronos Quartet was interested in presenting a new image of Africa as the post-apartheid era began. Maraire, whose country, Zimbabwe, became independent only in 1980, makes this motivation very clear in the booklet of the album: "Africa and Africans have been suppressed for a long time. It was only around the 1950s that Africans resisted and fought for their rights in their own land and started gaining the political power to rule themselves and try to determine their own future." (Maraire 1993) He, though, does not accuse all Westerners of colonialism, especially not his overseas musical colleagues: "The other message of the song is that not all non-Africans oppressed Africans. Actually, there were and still are non-Africans who fought and fight to free Africa from oppression financially, educationally and politically. Music can dismantle cultural, political and racial barriers." (Ibid)

This cross-over project album, which features an US-American string quartet as the only element connecting all the compositions, clearly shows the power relationship between Africa and the West. Except for Ghana's Addy, the project does not represent the main leaders and compositions of the African academic art music scene in West Africa. Finally, it must be acknowledged that the producers sought to address an audience of highly educated listeners of Western classical music that was open to foreign cultures and desired to experience some "exotic", so-called "African" sounds. These listeners likely would not have bought an album of avant-garde music by un-

known African composers but would prefer the mixing of well-known string sounds with foreign textures.

## *Lambarena: Bach to Africa*—the illusion of a colonial bi-musicality

The idea behind the studio project *Lambarena: Bach to Africa* (1993) was to bring to life the historical soundscape of Lambaréné, Gabon, where French-German theologian, philosopher and medical doctor Albert Schweitzer (1875-1965) rehearsed Bach on his "tropical organ." (Schweitzer 1926: 25) "In Lambaréné Albert Schweitzer, through music, brought about the meeting of Europe and Africa." (de Courson/Akendengué 1993: 6) It is obvious that colonialism and Christian missions are at the core of this production featuring the music of one of the most prominent church-music composers worldwide. The album cover shows a collage of the first building of his "rainforest hospital" in Lambaréné made out of notation paper. The booklet presents black-and-white pictures of Schweitzer and Bach with a colonial map of the Lambaréné area in the background. Photos of the recording sessions are also reduced to black-and-white as if they were taken at the same time. Overall, the visuals present a colonial illusion, and the use of the collective term "Africa" in the title instead of "Gabon" reproduces the Western stereotype that Africa is a country, not a continent.

The album was developed by de Courson (1946), a French musician and producer, and Akendengué (1943), a Gabonese author, philosopher and guitarist. Akendengué, who studied in France in the 1960s, met de Courson, who produced his world music album *Mando*, in 1983. For the album *Bach to Africa*, Akendengué did casting in Gabon and invited ten Gabonese ensembles to a recording studio in Paris, where they joined Western classical musicians and other international jazz and tango musicians (cf. de Courson/Akendengué 1993: 4). The producers seriously tried to compare extracts of Bach's music with corresponding songs from the Gabonese social context. For instance, an incantation of the dead within Bombé, a Bouiti-Apindji ritual, is mixed with *Ruht wohl, ihr heiligen Gebeine* from Bach's *St John Passion* about Christ's resurrection from the dead. The choral *Lasst uns den nicht zerteilen* is combined with the song *Sakanda* from the region Haut-Ogooué, which also celebrates the end of a period of mourning. The extracts blend into each other: sometimes Bach's music and a Gabonese piece are performed at the same time;

sometimes they translated the German lyrics into a Gabonese language; and often Bach's music is simply accompanied by African drums or instruments. In that sense, this cross-over production simultaneously creates something new and propagates an interreligious musical dialogue. Akendengué tries to build a comparative of musical cultures on the same level, although he can be criticized for using only local music styles, giving the impression that pre-industrial Gabonese music traditions is the only existing musical genre in the country today.

Problematically, this sound collage is based on purely historical imaginings. There is no evidence that Schweitzer ever played with Gabonese musicians. He only occasionally accompanied hymns during church services on the harmonium. His daily organ rehearsals in Lambaréné were necessary, because he sometimes went to Europe and America to perform Bach concerts for the charitable purpose of financing his hospital, which was completely dependent on private funding. Even though he did not dislike Gabonese music, Schweitzer tried to prohibit its performance on the hospital campus so patients could relax and recover. Thus, the two musical cultures co-existed in Lambaréné independently of each other and did not fuse as the album purports (cf. Riva 2018; Klein 2007).

The construction of a strong contrast between two musical cultures is also still apparent in *Lambarena: Bach to Africa*. Even when the international musicians play together, the album reinforces the difference between German art music and Gabonese "traditional" music. The production consists of extracts of Bach's music performed by an orchestra and a choir with mediocre intonation and technical precision and diverse pieces of Gabonese music. Special sounds are added to the Gabonese music to give the impression it was recorded outside in the rainforest, whereas Bach's music was recorded inside a church hall. This presentation reproduces the contrast of Africans as "children of nature" and "civilized" Europeans. The contrast of the two music forms is also reinforced by a form of mixing that rarely leads to new interpretations of Bach's music. Unlike the soundtrack of the German movie *Bach in Brazil* (Ahlers 2015), which uses Bach's melodies and harmonic patterns as the basis for a creative improvisation of Afro-Brazilian music styles in a Brazilian setting, and the US-American funk-and-soul album *Handel's Messiah: a Soulful Celebration* (Lipuma-Nash et al. 1992) performed by Afro-Americans, the album *Lambarena: Bach to Africa* does not present a new way of playing Bach in Gabon.

It should also be stated that the combination of different music styles or forms is only possible when short extracts of the two are mixed together. The complex harmonies and modulations within Bach's works could not fit with the harmonic structures of the Gabonese songs and dances in the long term. The common denominator bringing the two musical styles together is the constant rhythmical and metrical basis of Bach's music. However, this element permits mixing Bach's music with nearly all music in the world and does not convey any special message about a European-African connection. It is simply easier to mix Bach's music with non-Western music styles than the music of composers such as Chopin and Wagner.

The production with 250 singers and 50 musicians is impossible to ever perform on stage. It portrays a soundscape that not only is imagined but also cannot be reproduced outside a recording studio. For de Courson, the success of 80,000 sales within the first year opened a new area of work in cross-over productions, leading to *Mozart the Egyptian* (1997/2005) and *O'Stravaganza - Vivaldi in Ireland* (2001). Akendengué, like most of the composers of the Kronos Quartet production, did not follow up with more projects in classical art music but continued his career within the world music scene. This development must not be regarded as an economic disadvantage for him, but it shows that it is very hard for an African musician to enter the Western musical scene, even if he has produced one successful album. It is not possible to trace the careers of the Gabonese ensembles involved in the production. The history of this cross-over production thus shows that it is mainly intended for a European audience still attracted by keywords such as "Schweitzer", "Lambarena", "Bach" and "Africa". The Gabonese musicians' creativity is still interpreted as foreign, "natural" and underdeveloped. The profits of the production mostly went to a French producer, and it barely changed the careers of the Gabonese musicians involved.[1]

1 For a different concept of mixing Bach with African music, see i.e. the group AfrikanEr, September 27, 2018 (http://afrikaner.de).

## *Mozart the Egyptian I+II:* Musical transformations around the Mediterranean Sea

It is a well-known fact that Mozart drew inspiration from the music of the "Orient"—wherever he thought it was. He imitated the music of the Janissaries of the Ottoman Empire, as in his singspiel *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* and in his *Alla turca* movement from the piano sonata in A major (cf. Head 2000). He also showed interest in elements of ancient Egyptian culture, like in his stage music for the play *Thamos, König von Ägypten* or in his singspiel *Die Zauberflöte* (cf. Ebeling 2003). To some extent, he even portrayed Africans, such as the stereotyped and racist role of the "Moor" Monostatos in the latter (cf. Stenzl 2002). The album cover of *Mozart the Egyptian I+II* plays with these associations, showing ancient Egyptian sculptures and cosmic symbols in the background in combination with Arabian writings.[2]

Hughes de Courson and Ahmed El Maghraby, an Egyptian cultural manager and director of the Egyptian Center for Culture and Art *Makan* (ECCA)[3], go one step further with their album *Mozart the Egyptian*[4]. They perceive an intense influence of Arabic Egyptian music on Mozart's work and seek to prove it by compiling a medley of so-called "traditional" Egyptian music and the most popular of Mozart's pieces from his operas, concertos, and symphonic works to his songs and the requiem. They do not differentiate among Turkish, Arabic and North African music or any historical stages of Egyptian music. Indeed, they do not refer to ancient Egyptian music at all. Therefore, from the general outline the album specifies a certain country on the African continent but gives a rather diffuse impression of what the producers actually mean with "Egypt". Do they refer to ancient times, to the 18th century empire or to the present-day state?

Some mixes on the album, primarily performed by the Bulgarian Teg and the Egyptian Nasredine Dalil, are surprising and revealing. The combination of the first movement of the symphony N° 40 with the song *Lamma bada*

2 There are also sporadic projects that try to mix Mozart with Sub-Saharian African music, see Klaus Högl: "So fanden sich Mozart und Afrika" in: Mittelbayrische Zeitung 30.09.2014, September 27, 2018 (http://www.josef-bayer.de/cababana/himbisa-mukama/berichte/so-fanden-sich-mozart-und-afrika-1/index.html).

3 September, 27, 2018 (https://egyptmusic.org/en/).

4 Also published under the title: *Mozart in Egypt*, based on an idea by Hughes de Courson and Ahmed al Maghraby, Virgin Classics 7243 5 45311 2 5, LC 7873, 1997.

*yayathenna* (of doubtful origin and time) sounds as if Mozart has attempted to adjust Arabic music stylistics to his "limited" diatonic scale system. The producers are aware of the challenging process of blending two opposing musical systems into one based on different concepts. They describe their interpretation in the booklet of the album in the following way:

> Western classical music, tempered, rich in harmony and counterpoint, demands that one listens to the sound simultaneously, "vertically". Oriental music, on the other hand, makes its impression by never superimposing one over another its exquisitely ornamented melodies with their subtle modes and intervals are complex, sometimes asymmetric rhythms. It demands that one listens "horizontally" to the sounds one after another. In trying to marry this horizontally and vertically, this musical game presents a sort of "crazy diagonal". We hope the listener will pardon this audacity, and will take the same pleasure in this adventure as have the 150 musicians, Arab and classical.

To avoid this "crazy diagonal", Mozart is sometimes played only on Egyptian instruments, as in his *Concerto for oud and piano N° 23*, whose second movement is arranged for an Arabic instrument and the European piano. In the track *Dhikr/requiem/Golgotha*, Sufi meditation is mixed with extracts of Mozart's Catholic mass for the dead and chants of the Coptic Church of Egypt. Again, the interreligious soundscape produced represents more the idea of the late 20th century than that of the 18th century.

The different viewpoints and the historical gap between the music of an 18th century composer and the diverse Egyptian musical heritage become apparent in the producers' general statement in the album booklet comparing Mozart's interest in Egypt with recent perceptions of his music in that country:

> Steeped in the orientalism of the 18th century, a freemason fascinated by the Pharaonic myths, Mozart loved Egypt from which he often took inspiration. And the Egyptians love Mozart, whose art pleases or enchants, going from the light-hearted to the sacred in a way which is very reminiscent of the great Arab composers.

Is this "fascination" and "love" for each other a basis for i.e. combining the lullaby *Schlafe, mein Prinzchen, schlaf ein* (attributed only to Mozart) with the

Nubian lullaby *Mahdiyat*? Actually, the analogy of these two songs is that they are both lullabies. Because of the social context (female singing) and the function of the songs (to lull a baby to sleep), these songs share similarities. But that does not construct any connections between Mozart and Nubian music. *Schlafe, mein Prinzchen, schlaf ein* could be mixed with almost any lullaby in the world in that way.

The main point of this critical analysis is that de Courson and El Maghraby's production fuses Mozart not with Egyptian music from the 18th century but with arrangements of Egyptian music in recent decades. What the producers pretend to have invented is actually nothing new—or perhaps new only for European listeners. Neoclassical compositions and arrangements of Egyptian traditional music played by a Western orchestra with additional Egyptian instruments have existed since the early 20th century. Most prominently, this can be heard in the arrangements of the songs of Umm Kulthum (cf. Danielson 1997). A long list of Egyptian composers has written concertos for Arabic instruments (cf. Kamel 1999). From an historical perspective, Western art music has influenced popular Egyptian music since the 19th century (e.g. the first opera house on the African continent opened in Cairo in 1869) but not so much vice versa. Furthermore, what happened in Egyptian music history also occurred in parts of Asia, especially India, where the melodies of European classical composers were integrated into many popular film songs. The album *Mozart in Egypt* merely documents one of these typical processes of transforming Western classical music into non-European musical cultures. Egyptian music, too, is relatively easy to mix with European music as the North African countries around the Mediterranean Sea share many cultural traditions (e.g. the distinction between "art music" and "folk music") even if they pretend to be "different".

Due to the success of the first album of *Mozart the Egyptian* and several concerts with Egyptian and Bulgarian musicians—sometimes completed with multimedia dance performances[5]—the production team decided to produce a second volume of *Mozart the Egyptian II* (2005) for the Mozart Year 2006. The album follows the same concept but shows a shift in the target audience. While in the first production, the Bulgarian Symphonic Orchestra and Children Choir of Radio Sofia are mediocre in their intonation and

5 "Egyptian Mozart", September, 27, 2018 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xWODiz7DjIY).

musical expression but are still enjoyable, the quality of the recording of the second volume is barely acceptable for trained listeners of classical music. The musical dynamics are poorly performed and strictly bound to the meter. The mix sometimes sounds as if the instruments have even been produced by virtual instruments in a sequencer program. However, this production features different talented North African musicians and ensembles, including the Egyptian group Mawawil and the Nubian group Aragide, both also featured in the ECCA's *Makan*. Again, all of the groups remained in the world music scene in the long-term and did not profit from the success of the album for their careers. The producers seem to primarily have targeted the world music audience that enjoys occasionally listening to classical favorites. This shift can be seen as a reflection of the audience's changing interests. For instance, at the time of these productions, musicologist Jan Ling (2003) asked: "Is 'world music' the 'classic music' of our time?" Perhaps this album is not a "cross-over" production in a strict sense anymore, but a world music album that draws its inspiration from Mozart's music.

## *Zulu music meets Mozart:* a niche for black singers in Europe?

Among the four productions analyzed here, only *Zulu music meets Mozart* (2006) features an existing ensemble, MoZuluArt, an Austrian group that has produced three albums so far and has performed regularly in more than 20 countries, including several African nations. Their different approach towards an intercultural music project can already be recognized in their group name. MoZuluArt does not only blend the name of the composer "Mozart" with the name of the South African group "Zulu", but does it by imitating the grammar of South African languages. The prefix "mo-" can be found in the Sotho-Tswana language groups, meaning "man", i.e. "MoSotho" is a "Sotho person". The similar prefix in Xhosa and Zulu is "um-". For South Africans, this linguistic imitation is quite obvious, not to mention that the group name also emphasizes in the end what the people involved do: "art". Therefore, the group directly shows that the two musical sources that are connected in their work are regarded as having the same value. This message is strengthened by the cover image that shows a white spot in the shape of a silhouette of Mozart on a cow skin, an animal that is a symbol for wealth and strength in Southern Africa.

The ensemble consists of three singers born in Zimbabwe (Ramadu, Vusa Mkhaya Ndlovu and Blessings Nqo Nkomo) and the Austrian piano player Roland Guggenbichler, all of whom are based in Vienna. Some of the singers come from the families of freedom fighters and arrived in Austria in 1995 through a cultural exchange program. The group first performed in 2004 at a jubilee concert at the Radiokulturhaus in Vienna for the tenth anniversary of the end of the South African apartheid system. Their success motivated them to found a cross-over ensemble. After their first programme in 2005, they were invited to play with the Wiener Symphoniker to open the Wiener Festwochen in 2006 and thus became part of the celebrations of the Mozart Year 2006 (private email communication with Roland Guggenbichler, October 3, 2018). Although the group presents both South African songs and their own compositions, their focus lies on new interpretations of Mozart's music. In doing so, they hope to mix musical cultures and overcome ethnic and imagined racial differences, as they state on their website (www.mozuluart.at):

> Music is and has always been a unifying factor around the world, bringing together people from different backgrounds, races, ethnicities and, of course, traditions. It is through music that people get to know and understand other cultures and develop a liking to adopt into that culture.

Although the group is based in Europe, the Zimbabwean singers must have been familiar with Mozart's music in Zimbabwe as part of the "white's music" from which they were excluded. Their motivation to overcome differences, therefore, can be applied to the European-African relationship as well to African internal contexts. At the same time, the group is a living collaboration between Zimbabwean singers and an Austrian continuously trying to bridge various cultural misunderstandings. For example, piano player Roland Guggenbichler said in the television feature *MoZuluArt - Steine am Weg*:

> Me, I don't understand the lyrics. I only speak some loose scraps of Ndebele. But this year, we already played in South Africa, and there, the people did understand the lyrics of course.[6]

6 TV-Magazine "Feierabend" (26.12.2011) "MoZuluArt - Steine am Weg", September, 28, 2018 (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=11zOHoHtyCQ).

In contrast to the L'Orchestre Symphonique Kimbanguiste, famous for its conventional interpretations of European classical music in the documentary film *Kinshasa Symphony* (2010), the Zimbabwean singers use Mozart's music only as a basis to develop new vocal lines in the singing style of the Zulu "isicathamiya" men choirs. This style became very popular after Paul Simon's album *Graceland* (1986), in which he performs with the South African group Blacksmith Lady Mambazo (cf. Erlmann 1996). The piano enriches the music with jazz-oriented accompaniment. Giggenbichler describes this form as a new interpretation of Mozart's work in the already mentioned television feature in the following words: "He [Blessings Nqo Nkomo] listened to the music in detail and added what he believes the music wants to tell him." The newly written lyrics also refer several times to the Christian faith, but in the case of MoZuluArt it is a confession of individual Africans who have grown-up in Christian communities. Their religious expressions do not refer to the European missionary time any more.

From performances with dancing choreography and entertaining announcements between songs, it is apparent that MoZuluArt wants to attract a wider audience than just classical music listeners. Indeed, its show even won a German comedy prize. Its performances are often staged in the context of Christmas concerts and charity events focused on Africa. Political and social engagement play important roles in the group's activities, and its use of popular classical music that has a big audience in Austria may be interpreted as a means to accomplish this goal. The group members do not see themselves as Western classical musicians, as Vusa Mkhaya Ndlovu writes:

> We've never thought of entering the classical music scene as classical singers. The best thing to do as an artist is to stay true to your craft and work on being the best version of yourself. This is what we are trying to do and achieve. If an apple tries to be an orange, it will spend the rest of its life being compared to the best oranges, but it will remain an apple (Private email communication with Vusa Mkhaya Ndlovu, October 5, 2018).

However, the group's attempt to work on the same eye-level and to reach an honest exchange of musical genres and identities and at the same time raise awareness for social and political issues has not led to the economic success enjoyed by the other productions discussed above. MoZuluArt works with a music agency to secure performance opportunities outside the relatively

small Austria, but all of the musicians have to work with other ensembles to survive. To be sure, this group shows a new and more sensitized form of collaboration between European and African born musicians. Founded in 2004, it portrays a new generation of musicians that are aware of the historical and actual power dynamics between the two continents and tries to overcome that in their structure, their music and their social engagement. Unfortunately, to work on a project where the musicians really exchange ideas of different cultures on the same eye-level seems to be less successful in the Western hemisphere than to fantasize a colonial or collective "image of Africa".

## Conclusions

Due to Africa's colonial history, no collaboration takes place between Western classical musicians and African musicians without a definition of what African music is. In *Pieces of Africa* by the Kronos Quartet, we see the noble motivation to record at least some works of art music by African-born composers. However, even the production's success did not open the doors to the Western classical music business for these composers; instead, the fame of the Kronos Quartet increased. De Courson's *Lambarena: Bach to Africa* and *Mozart the Egyptian I+II* are Eurocentric productions that reproduce colonial imaginations of the "other". The engaged musicians had the unique chance to present their music to a wider Western audience, but they weren't able to cross over to the Western classical music market in the long term, because of this "othering" of their music. It is questionable if the *Lambarena* production should not be called cultural appropriation, because sounds of other cultures are mainly used to enrich a European musical setting. What these productions are intended to reveal is not even clear. In the cross-over production *The Arabian Passion* (2009) by the jazz ensemble Sarband and Fadia El-Hage, for instance, the producers at least have a visible intent to raise awareness of the suffering of groups in the Middle East by interpreting Bach's passions in Arab languages with Arab instruments. What, though, do we learn from de Courson's albums apart from the blending of different musical extracts? MoZuluArt has initiated the only sustainable project that consistently blends Western classical music and music styles from Southern Africa. It is part of a movement that deliberately uses European music to express other musical identities. Just how much the colonial context generates the devel-

opment of these European-African cross-over productions becomes even more obvious if you compare these albums with the participation of Asian musicians and composers within the Western classical music scene. For decades, composers from Japan and China have been recognized internationally, and their works are performed and recorded. The infrastructure of institutions for Western music education all over the Asian continent enables musicians to learn Western music, to study abroad and to enter the international music market. There are several neo-classical works that combine the classical orchestra with Asian instruments and music, but they are written by Asian composers themselves and are mainly performed in Asia. If you look at the African continent, similar but even more sophisticated projects have been initiated in recent years. For instance, in *Mozart's Magic Flute* by Impempe Yomlingo (2009), an all-black cast accompanied by marimbas perform Mozart's *Zauberflöte*, enlarged with South African songs and staged within the context of South African people groups. If the Western music business wants to overcome its colonial structures, it should support more Africa-based cross-over productions in the coming years. For example, it is difficult to understand why no major international label has ever produced a work from the rich, innovative genre of African pianism (cf. Nketia 1994; Kimberlin/Euba 2005)—or the interesting cross-over projects realized in Africa, such as Cameroonian opera singer Christian Akoa's blending of Cameroonian church-choir repertoires with Western bel canto singing on his privately produced album *Dieu des Traditions* (2009). African musicians have sufficient potential to develop their own cross-over albums and do not need to imagine oriental soundscapes of Africa or to fantasize about whitewashed black composers.

## Bibliography

Agawu, Kofi (2003): Representing African Music, New York [u.a.]: Routledge, pp. 55-96.

Agawu, Kofi (2016): "Tonality as a colonizing force in Africa." In: Ronald Radano/Tejumola Olaniyan (eds.), Audible Empire, Music, Global Politics, Critique, Durham/London: Duke University Press, pp. 334-355.

Ahlers, Ansgar (2015): Bach in Brazil. Conspiração Filmes (Brazil) / NFP (Germany).

Akoa, Christian (2009): Dieu des Traditions (https://open.spotify.com/album/3tW1D1W46V8Tc3i1G9MsAr).

ANY: "Beethoven Was African", June 01, 2015 (https://beethovenwasafrican.bandcamp.com/album/beethoven-was-african).

Arndt, Susan (ed.) (2006): AfrikaBilder. Studien zu Rassismus in Deutschland, Münster: Unrast.

Brackett, David (1994): "The Politics and Practice of "Crossover." In: American Popular Music, 1963 to 1965." In: The Musical Quarterly 78/4, pp. 774-797.

Danielson, Virginia (1997): The Voice of Egypt. Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century, Chicago/London: University of Chicago Press.

de Courson, Hughes/Akendengué, Pierre (1993): Lamabarena: Bach to Africa, Sony Classical SK 64542, LC 7873.

de Courson, Hughes (2001): O'stravaganza. Fantasy on Vivaldi and The Celtic Music of Ireland, Virgin Classics 545494-2, LC 7873.

Dümling, Albrecht (2013): "Tastende Integration und die Aktualität des Alten" In: neue musikzeitung 5/2013 (https://www.nmz.de/artikel/tastende-integration-und-die-aktualitaet-des-alten).

El-Shawan, Salwa (1985): "Western Music and Its Practitioners in Egypt (ca. 1825-1985): The Integration of a New Musical Tradition in a Changing Environment" In: Asian Music 17/1, pp. 143-153.

Euba, Akin (1993): Modern African Music. A Catalogue of Selected Archival Materials at Iwalewa-Haus, Bayreuth: Iwalewa Haus, Universität Bayreuth.

Ebeling, Florian (2003): "Rationale Mysterien? Eine Interpretationsoption für die Zauberflöte." In: Sibylle Meyer (ed.), Egypt—Temple of the Whole World / Ägypten—Tempel der Gesamten Welt. Studies in Honour of Jan Assmann, Leiden/Boston: Brill, pp. 59-80.

El Din, Hamza (1971): Escalay / The Water Wheel, Nonesuch H-72041.

Erlmann, Veit (1996): Nightsong. Performance, Power, and Practice in South Africa, Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Fanshawe, David (1989): African Sanctus. Salaams. DECCA 426 055-2.

Gilroy, Paul (1993): The Black Atlantic. Modernity and Double Consciousness, Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Glass, Philip (1988): Powaqqatsi, Nonesuch 7559-79192-2, LC0286, 1988.

Glass, Philip/Suso, Foday Musa (1992): Music from The Screens, POINT Music 432 966-2, LC 6042.

Glass, Philip/Suso, Foday Musa (2011): The Music of Philip Glass and Foday Musa Suso, From the Philip Glass Recording Archive: Volume VI, Orange Mountain Disc OMM0066.

Head, Matthew (2000): Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music, London: Royal Music Association.

Impempe Yomlingo (2009): Mozart's The Magic Flute, Portabello.

International Opus (2001): "Traditional African Music for Classical Musicians", (http://www.internationalopus.com/Justinian_Tamasuza).

Kamel, Adel (1999): "Egyptian Composition in the Twentieth Century." In: Malcom Floyd (ed.), Composing the Music of Africa. Composition, Interpretation and Realisation, Aldershot [u.a.]: Ashgate, pp. 335-351.

Kimberlin, Cynthia Tse/Euba, Akin (eds.) (2005): Towards an African Pianism: Keyboard Music of Africa and the diaspora, Vol 2, Point Richmond: MRI Press.

Klein, Christopher (1990): Messkompositionen in Afrika. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte und Typologie der katholischen Kirchenmusik Afrikas, Mainz: Edition Re.

Klein, Tobias Robert (2007): "Bach in Afrika—Eine Rezeptionsskizze." In: Michael Heinemann/Hans-Joachim Hinrichsen (eds.), Johann Sebastian Bach und die Gegenwart. Beiträge zur Bach-Rezeption 1945-2005, Köln: Dohr, pp. 19-34.

Kronos Quartet (1987): White Man Sleeps, Elektra Nonesuch 79163-1, LC 0286.

Kronos Quartet (1991): Kevin Volans—Hunting: Gathering, Elektra Nonesuch 979253-2.

Kronos Quartet (1992): Pieces of Africa, Elektra Nonesuch 79275-2, LC 0286.

Kubik, Gerhard (1988): "Einige Grundbegriffe und –konzepte der afrikanischen Musikforschung." In: Gerhard Kubik, Zum Verstehen afrikanischer Musik. Aufsätze, Leipzig: Reclam, pp. 52-113.

Ling, Jan (2003): "Is 'world music' the 'classic music' of our time?" In: Popular Music 22, pp. 235-240. doi: 10.1017/S0261143003003143.

Lipuma-Nash, Laura (et.al.) (1992): Handel's Messiah. A Soulful Celebration, Reprise Records 7599-26980-2, LC 0322.

Maarten (2017): "Was Beethoven Black?", August, 21, (https://classicalmusings.com/2017/08/21/was-beethoven-black-|-classical-musings/).

Maraire, Dumisani (1993): Marimba Sounds, Gramma Records |– L4 ZML 1050.

MoZuluArt (2006): Zulu Music meets Mozart, Emarcy/Universal Music 0602517028913, LC00699.

Nederlands Blazers Ensemble (2000): Si Dolce, VPRO Eigenwijs EW 0061 NBELIVE NBNC002.

Nketia, Joseph Hanson Kwabena (1994): African Pianism. Twelve Pedagogical Pieces, Accra: Afram.

Nketia, Joseph Hanson Kwabena (2004): The Creative Potential of African Art Music in Ghana. A personal testimony by J. H. Kwabena Nketia, Accra: Afram.

Owono, Julie (2015): "Was the Great German composer Beethoven African?", May 6 (https://www.africasacountry.com/2015/06/was-the-great-german-composer-beethoven-african).

Radano, Ronald/Olaniyan, Tejumola (eds.) (2016): Audible Empire, Music, Global Politics, Critique. Durham/London: Duke University Press.

Raptorific (2010): "Beethoven was Black", (http://raptorific.tumblr.com/post/16866729630/beethoven-was-black).

Rinehart, Nicholas T. (2013): "Black Beethoven and the Racial Politics of Music History Transition." In: Django Unpacked 112, pp. 117-130. doi: 10.17613/M62R8C.

Riva, Nepomuk (2018): "Ein musikalisch-dichtender Urwaldarzt—Albert Schweitzers Wahrnehmung afrikanischer Musik." In: Die Musikforschung 2018/2, pp. 113-131.

Said, Edward W. (1979): Orientalism, New York: Vintage Books.

Sarband/El-Hage, Fadia (2009): The Arabian Passion According to J.S. Bach, Jaro Medien 4294-2, LC 08648.

Schweitzer, Albert (1926): Zwischen Wasser und Urwald. Erlebnisse und Beobachtungen eines Arztes im Urwalde Äquatorialafrikas, München: C.H. Beck.

Simon, Paul (1986): Graceland, Warner Bros, Records 9 25447-3.

Stenzl, Jürg (ed.) (2002): Mozart und Afrika. Europa und Afrika zu Mozarts Zeit. Dokumentation der Salzburger Tagung, Salzburg: Land Salzburg.

Trio-da Kali/ Kronos Quartet (2017): Ladilikan. World Circuit Ltd, WCD093, LC 02339.

Ziech, Benjamin (2017): African Art Music. Eine Analyse der Musik und ihres Verhältnisses zum Stereotyp „Afrika". Dissertation, Heidelberg (http://archiv.ub.uni-heidelberg.de/volltextserver/23588/).