



Remapping Sound Studies

GAVIN STEINGO AND JIM SYKES, EDITORS

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## Ululation

*Louise Meintjes*

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For migrant Zulu men at home in Msinga, in rural KwaZulu-Natal, *ngoma* performance is a form of participatory politics with regard to community life as it offers a way of being in the world. Imagine the politics: Mboneni, curtailed in a moment of improvised dare; Uzowotha dancing, and nothing is spoken; Zabiwe competitively slicing through Siyazi's dance that day; Mdo strutting, calling out praises, struggling this year against the virus; spindly Sono taking the place of his assassinated father in the dance. Notice ways of being and the pleasures being had: boys parroting the adult dancers, and ululating mothers exhorting their sons. Girls watching. A dancer boasting. An admirer deputizing her sister to present gifts to a dancer: matches, cigarettes, a T-shirt. Zabiwe singing with the eloquence of men. Ntibane trumping the moves of his friend. The elders advising and blessing. The granny crisscrossing the dance floor, crisscrossing, crisscrossing, as the high summer afternoon wind blows.

Zulu men's song and dance called *ngoma* grew out of South Africa's migrant labor system through the twentieth century. It is a recreational, high-prestige form organized around competitive all-male teams who dance for their communities at homecoming times and for their fellow migrants in Johannesburg. The competition within and among teams is coupled with intense camaraderie,<sup>1</sup> *ngoma* being a practice that cultivates masculine ideals.

In a Zulu *ngoma* aesthetic of "no gaps" — a dense layering of synchronically overlapping performances — the crisscrossing granny follows her own trajectory through the outdoor performance space ringed by the team's fans,



FIG 2.1. Ma Soshangani Zulu, Keates Drift, Msinga, December 25, 2008.  
Photograph by the author.

friends, and family. As she hobble dances with her walking stick, weaving around the dancers in the middle of the arena, she ululates. She continues all afternoon. “Zizekubani? Ezakabani?” (Who are the girls coming to see/visit? Where are they coming from?) she inserts rhythmically between her trills and over the men’s singing as she passes close to the dancers.<sup>2</sup> She plays with phrases conventionally asked of girls coming to represent their courting sisters at a boys’ homesteads. Two dancers enter her rhythmic verbal play, exchanging stock ritual phrases with her. It is a playful passing duel to which only those in proximity are privy. Later, the dance captain spots a girl checking out the dancers as he leads the team in song. “Girl, choose your boyfriend, please. The room is full of boys. Girl, where is your boyfriend?” he inserts into the stream of his narrative, improvising in song.

Ululation is a high-pitched trilling by means of oscillation of the tongue. The crisscrossing granny’s ululations, along with those of other women in the “audience,” contribute formal components to ngoma’s acoustic performance. They fill in temporal gaps; they fill out the sound spectrum in a band-

width cococcupied by men’s exclamatory dental whistles and the dance team captain’s metal whistle ushering commands. They excite the texture with the attack and vibrating quality of their melodic lines. The timing of their outbursts often delineate sections in men’s performance. Ululation builds a relationship to the performance to which it responds and with which it overlaps. Perhaps it is something akin to *signifyin(g)*.<sup>3</sup>

I am struck by the near-omission of ululation from ethnomusicological scholarship, as though ululation were postperformance clapping. Where it appears, it does so cursorily as extraneous, if notable, noise.<sup>4</sup> I argue that it is an artful presence, an unmarked gendered feature of ngoma that in effect makes the form.

My metaproject here is to notice the way in which the global South’s relationship to sound studies remains largely unmarked, as though the global South were sound studies’ postperformance clapping. Via ethnographic close analysis of ululating Zulu women in rural KwaZulu-Natal, I hope to contribute toward getting the global South more widely heard as a cocreator of sound studies from a place of struggle. Marking the global South makes explicit the requirement that sound studies be gendered; its discourse racialized; its relationality recognized; and its sounds heard as particular.

Ululation is a performance in itself. It projects the presence of women through the rasp of the high summer afternoon wind, across wide outdoor arenas, over the booming drums and the singing and exclamations of the dancers. It does so by its characteristic high pitch, loud volume, timbral intensity, and sustain (Jacobs 2008). There are intermittent ululators, as there are virtuosos, such as Ma Soshangani Zulu, crisscrossing as the wind blows. There are liquid warbles, wavering oscillations, and stuttering trills; cascading melodic lines, pithy rhythmic iterations; shrill whistles and reverberating upper mid-range calls; piercing interjections and soaring projections. Some have deep lungs; others, rapid-fire tonguing technique.

One ululates for or on behalf of: *ukikizela*. The verb *ukukikiza* appears commonly in everyday talk with the applicative suffix *-ela*, which identifies the ululator as acting in relationship to someone or something.<sup>5</sup> Two chatting women turn to watch the performers. They respond to the lead singer’s phrase, partially covering their mouths decorously when they ululate. The first is the singer’s mother ululating for her son; the second is his sister.

Ululators time their utterances in relation to the singer-dancers’ performance. The mother times her ululation to cascade over the final phrase of the singer-dancers’ chorus, initiating it precisely in a sub-phrase gap. She utters three phrases, consistent in pitch, timing, and melodic contour.

The team captain's whistle shares the bandwidth, further exciting the sound.

With staggered onsets, each woman's ululation is synchronized with other ululations in a polyphonic overlap. The singer's sister begins her phrase as her mother's first utterance completes its descending tail. Her pitch and melodic contour is different from her mother's, and she follows her ululation with a texted exclamation. In turn, her mother punctuates the call with agreement, musically timed. Here we hear the women relating acoustically to the lead singer, as well as to each other.

The timing of specific ululations can mark and cultivate relationships among women while they build ngoma's form. Similarly, while ululations are not coordinated across the whole gathering, one set of ululations can provoke another somewhere else in the crowd, producing a kind of collective effervescence.

In the process of ululating, women are exhorting, competing, affirming, agreeing, celebrating, proclaiming, encouraging, anticipating, or praising, sharing in a mature women's world while marking their relationships to one another and to men. Danced eruptions likewise mark individual women's relationships to specific men. Khulukuthu, the wild one, executes a magnificently fiery sequence. His wife, Makahlela, bursts out of the crowd and rushes into the arena swinging her handbag like a lasso. She veers toward him, loops back to the encircling crowd, dances an exuberant step or two, then merges back into the audience. I think of women's spurts out of the crowd into the arena as danced ululations—the voice, in other words, as a body-voice.

Ululation's defining technique is the oscillation of the tongue, using vocables rather than sung text. In ululation as a tongued body-voice performance, the sound producing technology is artful. The tongued body-voice is also the resonator, amplifier, and medium of distribution. In other words, the tongued body-voice is technology, technique, and *techne* (craft).<sup>6</sup> As sound studies has canonized into excellent readers, special issues, and handbooks, it has predominantly attended to sound technology (and sometimes leaves out the sound). Gavin Steingo and Jim Sykes remark in this volume that, written from and mostly about the North, sound studies erroneously presumes ubiquity, newness, efficiency, and abundance of technology—digital technology—irrespective of place. How might we remap the sound studies terrain not only to better include the sonic practices of the South, but also to rework the terms into ones that do not position the global South abjectly? Can one hear the global South ululating?

The tongued body-voice as technology embeds unique affective biographies and political histories in each utterance. It is always already gendered, raced, and implicated in struggle. The crisscrossing granny lives in Msinga, an area that was designated an African reserve as early as 1848. Colonials pushed Africans off fertile land into this rugged area, which has been maintained as a "reservation" through various dispensations ever since. Today the area holds at least twice the number of people and cattle than the land can sustain (Association for Rural Advancement [AFRA] newsletter no. 14, in "All CAP/Mdukatshani Newsletters from the 1960s till the Late 1990s" 2016). Households rely on multiple sources of income: small-scale farming (including livestock) for consumption and sale; earnings from agricultural labor nearby or from migrant labor in the cities and industrial areas; and any other small or temporary options that present themselves, such as driving taxis. Illegal activities such as marijuana growing and gun running provide income for some. Commerce is sparse. For many families, welfare and social support grants from the state are essential.<sup>8</sup> Msinga is the fourth poorest out of 227 local municipalities in South Africa, with 86 percent of the population living below a lower-bound poverty line (Noble et al. 2014).<sup>9</sup> Unemployment lies at 69 percent in the municipality that this ngoma community calls home.<sup>10</sup> Households struggle against daunting odds. The women live polygamously (mostly, and especially mature women). They live under the jurisdiction of a male chiefdom and the state, in a community organized through a system of headmen. In an area impoverished by a history of colonialism and apartheid, and their violent legacy (including the HIV epidemic), women bear the weight of maintaining homesteads in the context of largely male migrant labor. Young women who seek work elsewhere often leave primary child-care to grandmothers. Women ululate out from this history, carried in the body-voice.

Specific ululations also voice specific biographies and specific violent politics. It is December 25, 2002, and the team has entered the arena to begin its display. The team members are seated in two long lines, ready to sing. First, Vice-Captain Mdo—the singer whose mother and sister ululated for him—inspects his dancers' ranks, strutting up and down between the lines, admonishing slouchers. Next he sings the team into song, pacing in front of them. He walks to the edge of the arena, to where the crowd gathers to watch. There he stands erect atop a rock, surveying his dancers from afar. "Moliva!" he calls out to them, incanting the name of their place. "Shiya!" they respond, saluting him from the center of the dusty arena. He paces farther out of the arena. Where is he going? (As a lead singer, he always

struts, commandeering the dance arena by pacing while singing instructions to the team. But he has never walked this far away.) He saunters back to the rock. Unusually, he is stretching out the pauses. He sings out, lines rich in masculinist metaphor and innuendo, drawing on the poetic reservoir of home and displaying his verbal agility. “Yeyi, black bull, come and surprise me!” he sings, as if provoking a good dancer into a challenge. He stalls for a moment, surveying the scene. “Thank you, my children [dancers]. Respect yourselves,” he shouts. “Yes!” he exclaims, before rattling off stock phrases that reference the district: “I tell you, if you respect yourself, even your dancing will respect you and your dance will get respect. Never, never, never! [i.e., Don’t make any mistakes],” he incants, although only those in his proximate vicinity hear him. Ululations fill the space like sonic filigree. “Hey, father!” calls a woman from his family, addressing him with respect. Soon he resumes his strutting, following the arena’s circumference, outlined by the watching crowd, while women ululate and he sings, and the dancers answer him from the center. Mdo works against the acoustic constraints of the outdoor event to render his signature singing, risking his power, playing with his control at the edge. He pushes his voice to its acoustic limits. Exacerbating the acoustic difficulty, he paces to the limits of the arena. Mdo takes his own style to the extreme.

Did I notice, a dancer said some years later, that Mdo did not dance that day in 2002? He did not insert a single virtuosic solo dance, as is usual for leaders. When dancing on that day exceeded Mdo’s capacity, he instead focused his authority in his voice. Mdo asserted undisputable leadership by means of a vocal performance made dramatic by his use of space and his poetic language, even with a weakened voice. He used the resonance of open vowels to throw his voice, although he could not fully sustain his tone and pitch. He switched to the rasp of his throat for contrast. He shifted the form, adding variation and interest by inserting incanted praise from his distant rock. (“Never, never, never, people of esiPongweni!”) He made his sitting dancers wait, just too long, until they called on him to let them begin, texturing the event with their interjections. He thereby commanded the team and directed the flow of the event. In turn, the team honored his new limitations by refraining from exhorting him to dance yet admiring him with shout-outs of his dancing praise name while he strutted around their cluster. Nothing was spoken. Mdo’s vulnerable condition—he was struggling against the virus—was publicly articulated and his reduced capacity managed while the team members sustained their ordinary social relationships, including with their friend. Throughout, he elicited a plethora of ululation, whether uttered in appreciation of the drama he crafted,

in knowing support of the effort this took him, or to cover for the signs of his stigmatizing struggle.<sup>11</sup>

Ululation has the capacity to cut through, to enact a genre appropriately, to fill in and flow over. Its passing specificity is there to be heard under the cover of ambiguity and while making a musical contribution. Fans appreciate the artistry of ululation. Ma Soshangani Zulu, the crisscrossing granny, has told me about her unmatched vocal renown in the valley and her skill as a dancer during her girlhood. Ngoma performers also consider ululation a component of their art. When the Umzansi Zulu Dancers, the professional subgroup of the community team, self-produces their CDs, ululation contributes an aesthetic effect. In “Zindala Zombili,” for example, the group plays with various quivering textures and cascading contours in the upper bandwidth of their sound, overdubbing a range of blown whistle sounds and ululations.<sup>12</sup> Similar to the valued stridence of a Zulu “traditional” guitar sound that enables the instrument to cut through a busy mix, whistles and ululations in the high register cut through the sound and excite it. The way ululation is integrated highlights its aesthetic coherence with Zulu musical style. It is also used as a compositional element: overdubbed ululations are positioned to mark the verse-chorus form in “Khuzani.”<sup>13</sup> Here, the improvised timing of women’s response, such as of the mother initiating her ululation in the chorus’s sub-phrase gap—is reproduced as a regularized framing device. One also gets a sense of how present ululation is in the sound for ngoma dancers. To the ululations on “Khuzani” the group added reverb and echoes that one would never hear in an open acoustic environment of ululation performance (Doyle 2005). By means of this reverb, the Umzansi Zulu Dancers are enhancing a valued quality of ululation, namely its sense of projection, and pitching the idea of outdoor rural sociality. The inclusion of ululation on these recordings, as well as the way in which it is produced, points to the significant presence of women in the aesthetics—and the local politics—of ngoma events.

#### ULULATING AS AND ON BEHALF OF THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Billions of women in the global South ululate out into the world from a range of religious, class, ethnic, national, historical, and gendered positions. Techniques vary, whether executed with the aid of jaw movement, as for some Zulu women, or not. Joel Kuipers (1999) describes the Indonesians flicking the tip of the tongue against the alveolar ridge of the palate. Jacobs (2008)

finds Moroccans striking the teeth, alveolar ridge, or (with lateral oscillations) the corners of the lips with their tongues. Preferred vowels vary, and so, therefore, do lip positions, whether rounded (*o*, *u*) or widened (*ee*, *ay*). Melodic patterns vary, as does the textural density of polyphonic utterances. Generally, a ululation begins with a rapid onset—that is, a quick rise to the main sustained pitch—and tails off variously at the end of the breath. Whatever the variations in technique, ululation is an affirmative form of women's expression practiced across the Levant, the African continent, South and Southeast Asia, and Aboriginal Australia.<sup>14</sup> Weddings are the most widely reported venue, but others include parties, ritual, and performance events. Jacobs (2008) mentions ululation at a Palestinian funeral, but, as she notes, it was a funeral of a bride-to-be.

Ululation also erupts in political moments when women want to display communicative competence or get things done. Here ululation moves away from artistic performance, Mikhail Bakhtin's (1986) secondary genre, into the domain of everyday communication, Bakhtin's primary genre. I offer four examples.

At a time of domestic tension in the KwaZulu household that hosts me when I visit, I surreptitiously slipped the women extra cash. Rather than presenting it ceremoniously as a gift, I wanted to bypass the patriarch. But the two women had their own agendas. Rushing outside, they proclaimed news of our exchange across the valley in ululation. Minutes later, a neighbor arrived to hear the details, and soon the patriarch came scurrying home to investigate the to-do at his house.

Gavin Steingo witnessed academics ululating for their (female) dean at an event at the University of Pretoria. I would have expected the elite, cosmopolitan aspirations of female academics to preclude ululation. What I imagine was happening was that these female academics were publicly recognizing their dean respectfully as their titular head at the same time that they were celebrating that their dean was an African and a woman. Their gendered African voicing from the floor marked and collectivized the achievement on a campus that once denied them access.

To welcome Barack Obama onstage at the Global Entrepreneurship Summit in Nairobi in July 2015, the Kenyan television host and news anchor Julie Gichuru ululated for him.<sup>15</sup> Online, Kenyans debated the propriety of her performance voraciously, as they did, to a lesser extent, her skill. Critics' discomfort seemed to lie in the class disjuncture that Gichuru's performance represented (that ululating was "traditional" and she was British-educated); alternatively, celebrants tuned in to it as an Africanized voicing.

In the Algerian War of Independence (1954–62), ululation clearly had effects as it was banned by the occupying French (see Vergès 2015).

Despite the ubiquity of ululating, my search has rendered only two analyses focused on the technique and sound of ululation (Jacobs 2007, 2008; Kuipers 1999). Kuipers speculates on reasons that the significance of ululation as a vocal utterance has been missed: that it is uttered by women; it is neither music nor speech; and it is often not recognized as performance. Ululation, in other words, appears peripheral to genre constitution. There is, however, wide-ranging attention paid to keening and lamentation, which are predominantly associated with women; are neither music nor speech; and are not necessarily recognized as art. Perhaps lament positions women as victims, sufferers, and caretakers.<sup>16</sup> What's more, as an expression shared with women in the North, lament may have attracted more scholarly attention than the more affirmative voicing of women across the global South.

Analytical ears might scarcely be turned on to the acoustics of ululation, but there are many passing references to ululation in travelogues, missionary accounts, descriptions of African music and dance, and early ethnographies, as there are in studies of performance through the decades. Authors grant ululation a celebratory, noisy (wild), or resistant quality. Ululation also appears in metaphoric turns by poets, novelists, filmmakers, journalists, and theorists. The classic film *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) dramatizes collective resistance through the projection of voice. In the final scenes, a dark urban hillside dotted with domestic lights quivers acoustically. Unseen but ubiquitous women ululate. The effect is powerful for its all-encompassing resonant projection and for its untranslatability. In the context of the film, ululation is present as a warning, as an imminent threat of unshakeable resolve. It is the sound of a collective, impenetrable, unknowable (because inarticulate) but organized Other.

As in the film, critics and theorists invariably pick up on ululation's racialized politics, although they rarely differentiate ululated utterances or parse out their social value. For example, in her comparison of South African and southern U.S. literary texts, Sheila Smith McKoy coined the term "racial ululation," by which she means "a 'ritualized process of vocalizing a response to threats to white supremacist order' in order to 'maintain racial stratification and the disproportionate distribution of power that accompanies it'" (Smith McKoy 2001: 24–25, quoted in Steyn and Foster 2008). Melissa Steyn and Don Foster apply Smith McKoy by developing the idea of "white ululation" in South Africa, deploying but inverting its racialized profile. Looking at print journalism, they identify "white ululation" as a discursive repertoire among

whites resistant to postapartheid transformation (Steyn and Foster 2008). These are not references to the sound of ululation nor to the pleasures of ululating. However one might critique this, or the theoretical value of the argument, or the extent to which the meaning of ululation needs to be broadened to work as a social metaphor here, Steyn and Foster usefully point to two key features of the practice. First, it is a racialized practice and situated in a world of radical power discrepancies. Second, reproducing a popular understanding of ululation, they presuppose that ululation is a way to talk back that is resistant. I am not sure it is resistant as much as it is a claim to ongoing participation.

What if we spin things around to treat ululation as an embodied practice that is crafted, subsumed through a lived history, enacted, and naturalized as affective, a tongued body-voice as technology? What if we approach it less as a framing device of men's articulate worlds, less as indexical of others' authority, than as a raced, gendered vocalizing presence saturated with struggle history?<sup>17</sup> Jacobs and Kuipers show the way. Kuipers (1999) approaches Indonesian ululation (Sumba island) not as an impoverished song genre but as audience response. Ululation represents gendered complementarity through interactive vocal overlap in ritualized speech situations (where men's performance is encouraged by women's ululation). He writes that by ululating women are "not primarily offering evaluations so much as expressions of their participation. In this sense, the ululators as 'audience'—actually an imprecise term—are more like coauthors engaged in a joint production and display of communicative competence" (Kuipers 1999: 492). Jacobs treats Levantine ululation as "sentiment-laden communication." For her, ululations are discourse markers and contextualization cues within an event. At the same time, they are construed meta-culturally as moral projections—that is, "Such performances are correct, appropriate, thoughtful, and good, hence motivating particular behaviors and desired social relationships within the unfolding circumstances" (Jacobs 2008: 178). Moroccan ululation (*zaghareet*) "expresses *farah*, 'joy' (to someone, about something)" (180).

Ululation amplifies and distributes a woman's voice. It is an insertion of praise while it also exhorts. It is an assertion of a relational presence—to and with other women as much as to performing men. A voice seemingly on the margins of (male-centered) performances, it is critical to proceedings and to the soundtrack of events, and it is heard within, over, and beyond an event. It is an announcement.

Ululation is an insertion made to be heard. That is why it needs to be artful. It asserts presence without saying something, referentially.<sup>18</sup> It is

tongued body-voice. "Untexted" is not an absence, not a loss of voice; it is not an absence of proper language. To the contrary, it is the means of gaining recognition by means of being voice rather than logos. Sometimes it is music, not speech—the secondary genre of the stage; sometimes it is speech, not music—the everyday genre of a spontaneous outburst. It is, but it is not "art," while good ululators are appreciated. Ululations appear (being made sensible) on the stage, the street, the studio, and as everyday utterances, improvised responses to the moment. In the context of women's worlds, lived under sometimes harsh patriarchies in precarious times, ululation's acoustic qualities, social value, generic fluidity, and shifts in register (Gray 2016) are key to conjoining aesthetics and gendered politics.

#### ULULATING TO, WITH, AND OVER SOUND STUDIES

Ululation remaps sound studies by filling out the multiplicity of sound studies narratives. Could we take ululation as a metaphor for dialogue returning amplified and inflected from the South and specified by race, gender, and struggle? That dialogue shifts the attention in sound studies to the voice as technology (Ochoa Gautier 2014) and finds sympathetic vibrations with black studies, curiously underplayed in sound studies as it is evolving.

In wanting to see more presence given to the vital genealogy of black studies, to which sound studies is indebted, I am thinking of W. E. B. Du Bois ([1903] 2009) writing out from the vocables, exclamations, shouts and cries within the southern black church as the starting point for his observations on race, mobility and empowerment in the United States, or Zora Neale Hurston's primary descriptions of vocalizations in her 1930s field notes (1981), or Paul Gilroy's black Atlantic (1995) resting on sonic histories and sonic connections, acoustic traces recoverable through listening, taken up in the work of Ashon Crawley (2017), Fred Moten (2003, 2010), Alexander Weheliye (2005), and others. Could we take inspiration from black studies and from ethnographies of sound?

Could we consider ululation intervocal participation of and on behalf of the global South and, with this, on behalf of ethnography and black studies? By introducing the idea of "intervocality," Steven Feld (2012) turns from an earlier emphasis on dialogism and dialogic editing (Feld [1982] 2012) to polyphony. Dialogism approaches communication as a form of negotiation, a call and response in which the accumulating feedback shifts the terms of the conversation. By contrast, intervocality is a form of intimate covocalizing in a relational space—a space that coevolves with the vocalizing. Here



FIG 2.2. Thombilakhe Zulu ululating, December 26, 2015, Keates Drift, Msinga.  
Photograph by the author.

the voice is constituted through immediate improvisations that draw from a repertoire of relationships near and far, contemporaneous and historical, imagined and remembered, material and elusive, voiced and heard. Intercorporeality (Maurice Merleau-Ponty, via Fischer 2008; Weiss 1999) inflected into the voice and into listening as intervocality blends the significance of sound with its reshaping in the moment of sounding. Singular voices carry within them multiple other voices, present and elsewhere. They emerge in dialogue with others and in relation to ways of being heard (Feld 2012).

To remap sound studies, the global South, like ululation, calls for attention to its own materiality and to the particularity of its sound worlds—and thus to its histories of struggle, to an uneven interconnected terrain, to violent politics, and to the grannies crisscrossing as the wind blows.

#### Notes

1. The competition is implicit: there are usually no judges, prizes, or announced winners. I elaborate the organization and aesthetic of ngoma in Meintjes (2017).
2. I transcribed dialogue and song texts from videos I recorded and translated them from isiZulu with the assistance of Siyazi Zulu. All subsequent English-language quotations were performed in isiZulu at ngoma events.

3. Gena Dagele Caponi (1999) represents a variety of ways in which Gates's concept has prompted fruitful understandings of African American antiphonal musical practices. I am thinking of ululation as both double-voiced (as in signifyin[g]) and polyphonic (i.e., voicing or speaking to multiple social relationships).

4. The single article dedicated to ululation published in an ethnomusicology journal is inspired by the study of ritual language, not music, and was contributed by a linguistic anthropologist (Kuipers 1999). Improvised solicitations that are a feature of many genres of African performance share some characteristics with ululation. *Libanga* "shout-outs" in Congolese *soukous* are a crucial component of a performance, with a band member designated to improvise them (White 2008). *Mipasho* in Tanzanian *taarab* tends to be critical, and sometimes insulting (Askew 2002). In South African *kwaito*/house music, dancing fans interject vocal exclamations such as "Vuma!" ([We] agree/accept) (Steingo 2016).

5. The suffix *-ela* means "an action . . . performed for, on behalf of, or in the direction of something or someone" (Mbeje 2005: 229, quoted by Steven Black).

6. Steingo (2016) considers the relation among these three terms.

7. The historical work of Veit Erlmann (2010), Alexander Rehding (2005), and Ana María Ochoa Gautier (2014) that upend European modernity's colonial sound epistemology, and music disciplinarity is my inspiration. Likewise, the ethnography of Daniel Fisher (2016), who racializes the history of the Aboriginal Australian radio voice and proposes a "Black Pacific" that seizes on sonic blackness as a value, and Steven Feld (2012), who traces transatlantic listening of African musicians as cosmopolitans, prompt my exploration here.

8. I take this demographic description directly from Cousins and Hornby 2009.

9. This poverty line is calculated per person per month. The real 2015 value is \$136 per month, converted to U.S. dollars using purchasing power parity rather than exchange rate. I thank Katharine Hall for providing these figures.

10. This figure excludes adults older than fifteen who are not economically active (e.g., students and pensioners) and is extracted from the 2011 Census by Katharine Hall (personal communication, November 28, 2016).

11. This story also appears in Meintjes (2017), where it is more extensively situated.

12. Umzansi Zulu Dancers, *Zindala Zombili*, CD, Izimpande IZI 003, Johannesburg, 2007.

13. Umzansi Zulu Dancers, *Khuzani*, LP, Gallo Music Productions MCGMP 40502, Johannesburg, 1994.

14. I am thinking here of women's vocalizations at a rain dreaming ceremony recorded by Alice Moyle in Arnhemland, Australia (Aboriginal Music, CD, Ivory-sur-Seine, France, [1977] 1992). Though not strictly ululating technique, the sound and its placement in relation to the central (men's) performance appears strikingly similar.

15. The excerpt is available on YouTube, accessed December 16, 2016, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcDKLjqLUDU>.

16. Ana María Ochoa Gautier contributed this point.

17. Here I follow Ellen Gray (2013), who calls attention to the entanglement of form, embodiment, and history by articulating fado “as genre,” distinct from the idea of “a genre” that compels descriptive contextualization of a musical form.

18. Without materiality a voice loses its politics (Feld et al. 2004; Cavarero 2005); without artfulness the voice diminishes its narrative authority and its “capacity to claim an audience” (Malkki 1997: 223).

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