28 November 2012

Marabi Nights - Jazz, ‘race’ and society in early apartheid South Africa is an updated and substantially expanded second edition of Christopher Ballantine’s classic study of the triumphs and tragedies of South Africa’s marabi-jazz tradition. New chapters extend the book’s in-depth account of the birth and development of urban-black popular music. They include a powerful story about gender relations and music in the context of forced migrant labour in the 1950s, a critical study of the legendary Manhattan Brothers that uniquely positions their music and words in relation to the apartheid system, and an account of the musical, political and commercial strategies of the local record industry. A new afterword looks critically at the place of jazz and popular music in South Africa since the end of apartheid, and argues for the continued relevance of the robust, questioning spirit of the marabi tradition.

The book includes an illustrative CD of historic sound recordings that the author has unearthed and saved from oblivion.

PRAISE FOR THE FIRST EDITION

‘Written by the most distinguished figure of South African musicology, [it] aims at nothing less than a complete revision of some of the most entrenched myths about South African music.’

Veit Erlmann, Freie Universität, Berlin

‘Ballantine has written an important book which goes far beyond its subject matter, jazz. It is a gem of scholarship.’

Z.B. Molefe, author of A Common Hunger to Sing: A Tribute to South Africa’s Black Women of Song 1950 to 1990
'There are not many books like this, to which you can dance.'

John Lonsdale, Trinity College, Cambridge

‘There is no doubt that Marabi Nights is one of a few seminal works in South African jazz history. It made a very significant contribution to mapping South African proletarian history when it first appeared and remains an important work of cultural historiography.’

Gwen Ansell, author of Soweto Blues: Jazz, Popular Music & Politics in South Africa

Christopher Ballantine is Emeritus LG Joel Professor of Music at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, a Fellow of the University, and an internationally acclaimed researcher and writer on music. His books and articles tend to be cross-cultural and interdisciplinary, and cover a wide range of issues in the fields of musicology, popular music studies, the sociology of music, and ethnomusicology.

The book is being launched in Durban on Friday, 30 November at The Centre for Jazz and Popular Music at UKZN at 5.30pm for 6.00pm (Howard College Campus). Should you require details about the launch, please contact Adele Branch:

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