

EMBARGOED UNTIL DELIVERED

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE KIRBY COLLECTION OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

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Life in politics is rather austere and when it is the politics of liberation, it is usually austere for 365 days a year. When therefore I was asked to open Professor Kirby's collection of musical instruments, I accepted the assignment with alacrity. Not that in our circumstances we can divorce music from politics as I hope you will understand from what I say tonight, it is just that the interface between politics and culture is one of the most fascinating and probably least explored areas of interest. So, ladies and gentlemen, while I am not taking a holiday from politics in being here, I assure you it gives me great pleasure to be here with you.

I am particularly grateful to Professor Dr. S. Saunders for having been so accommodating when he invited me to open the Kirby Collection of musical instruments. Demands on my time are very

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heavy and I really do appreciate the trouble your Vice-Chancellor took to ensure that I could fit this trip to Cape Town into my schedule. My association with Dr. Saunders has always been very rewarding for me and I am most grateful to be able to share with him an occasion such as this.

I would also like to pay a heartfelt tribute to the late Mrs. Noreen Saunders. I knew her as somebody who had a profound interest in African cultures and I rank her in my memory as one of the greatest human beings that I have ever had the privilege to know. She had a multi-cultural approach which was one of the dimensions of her being which made her so unique. Her passing from our midst is a tragic loss to so many of us. Professor and Mrs. Saunders shared their home with me and in the intimacy of their home I have always enjoyed the comfort of understanding friendship.

My own interest in African music dates back to my earliest memories. I was brought up in a home greatly enriched by African music. Both my mother and my father had a profound understanding of African music and I grew to love and value our music from my earliest days. My mother has played a very significant role in the preservation of our music through her vital and living interest in it. Professor David Rycroft of the School of African and Oriental Studies, London, came here to see my mother and to talk about music with her. I was privileged to

act as an interpreter for her when she spoke to Professor Rycroft and I was always totally absorbed by the profundity of their discussions.

I was also privileged to act as a translator for the late Dr. Hugh Tracey and other distinguished scholars, such as Professor John Blacking when they came to visit my mother and to explore African music with her. My father ^{CAREP MATHOLE BUTHELEZI} was known as the best Zulu singer ^{and dancer} of his time and I am moved afresh every time I watch a

film made of his singing and dancing by the late Dr. Tracey in the 1930's. ^{Although it is a silent film, I am always deeply} I have always found it so tragic that so many people do not have the kind of intimate family introduction to music which I was privileged to have as a child and a young man.

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One of the things that sustains me in my political life is the vision I have of a future open and democratic society in which race, colour and creed take their place as enriching dimensions in national life. Once we have learnt just how criminal it is to use race, colour and creed prescriptively in racist discriminatory practices and we are liberated from the fear of them, vast new vistas of social and personal life will open up for us all. I associate culture and art in so many different ways. Specific expressions of Art may be dated but the Art of any period is both uniquely specific to that period and part of a continuum in man's discovery of beauty. Whatever consensus there is about the merits of specific Art forms or of Art of specific

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periods of history, we all agree there is a kind of totality about Art. One form of Art is not a critique of another and in my opinion we err when we use analytical constructs to evaluate one Art form against another or evaluate one piece of art against another piece of art.

Likewise with culture. It is a dimension of man which has been expressed in a rich variety of ways and the world today is a mosaic of cultural explorations. As with art, I believe that we cannot evaluate one culture by comparing it with another and I believe that we would err if we employed analytical constructs to rank the cultures of the world in some kind of order of merit.

Racism in South African society and the way we encapsulate politics in racism has exacted a terrible price in terms of Art and culture. The arrogance first shown by early White settlers towards us and which regarded indigenous culture and art forms as heathen and of no intrinsic merit, persisted through the Act of Union and lives on even today.

South African art galleries are filled with pieces of art from White South Africa and from a wide range of foreign cultures and one seldom sees African art as such. Whether it is in the field of music, or painting or sculpture or dancing, officialdom gives no, or at best very little, status to African art. Our school and university syllabi by-pass African culture and Art and even

our Black students emerge from our educational institutions with a bias against African forms of Art.

I think it is tragic that what I say is not only true about biases against African Art but that it is also true for Indian and Coloured Art and culture. The disrespect which White society shows for cultures other than their own is tragically divisive in this country. Interpersonal and social relations, and consequently economic and politic relations, between people are all deeply coloured by White cultural arrogance. On the other side, the attitudes of officialdom and institutionalised pro-Western biases have not produced culturally proud African, Indian and Coloured folk.

There has been a resurgence of Black awareness in South Africa in recent years but even this consciousness of being Black is partly deficient. We are conscious of being Black and we are politically motivated to be so, but this consciousness is so frequently an austere consciousness and is not based on a deep love for one's culture and a well-developed appreciation of art in it. Racism makes us all losers.

It is against the background of these thoughts that it gives me such immense pleasure to express Black South Africa's appreciation to the University of Cape Town for having decided to house Professor Kirby's collection of musical instruments. I express Black South Africa's deep appreciation for the work of

people like Professor Kirby, the late Dr. Hugh Tracey and his son, Andrew Tracey. They have done South Africa a service which will be ever-increasingly appreciated as we move through the labyrinth of racial entanglements one day to emerge as a rich and free society in which cultural diversity will be part of a uniquely rich, open and free society in this country.

The thoughts I express here today are so personalised for me. Until the day I die I will carry with me the sense of emotional shock which I experienced in 1953 when I was almost excommunicated from the Anglican Church for having dared at times to wear traditional dress and sing tribal songs. I carry with me a sense of personal hurt which is incremental as I move through daily life and again and again meet intolerance from others of my African Blackness and my African heritage.

I address Black South Africa when I say that ultimately we can only walk tall on our own cultural foundations. I do not make this statement because I despise other cultural foundations. I make this statement that we cannot walk tall on other foundations if that walking expresses the fact that we despise our own culture. I do not believe that culture as such is genetically transmitted. Were I born in, say, England I would have been able to absorb and be enriched by English culture and if a White South African was born into Black culture in this country, he or she

would have been able to find his or her own being in Black culture and would have been enriched by it.

It is important for us to understand that we really do face a crisis in this country. The new political dispensation being foisted on us by the National Party will be characterised by intense racial conflict. We reject the new constitution; we reject it because it makes racial considerations the prime mover in politics. We would reject it if a fourth chamber was created for us and we would continue to reject it even if the tables were turned and we dominated the tricameral parliament. I would reject it even if it afforded me the opportunity of being the Executive President. We will have no part of it and from now onwards a heavy emphasis will have to fall on our own constitutional thinking as we prepare to reconstitute the State some time in the future. The tricameral arrangement is such a radical departure from the Westminster system that South Africa must anticipate a radical realignment of political forces in the country.

The new constitution enshrines the basic tenets of National Party ideology in the constitution itself and it is quite clear to us that the new constitution will in fact simply be used as a rubber stamp for National Party politics. Those of us who are committed to persist in democratic opposition to apartheid must face the fact that constitutionally speaking our democratic opposition is

not legitimised by the political process in so-called White South Africa. Under the old Westminster model, Blacks could legitimately aspire to getting the vote and becoming participants in political processes which govern the country. The new constitution changes this fundamentally. My own resolve and the resolve of KwaZulu and INKATHA to pursue democratic forms of opposition is echoed very substantially by the whole of Black South Africa. There is, however, a growing minority whose commitment to use violence for political means is actually legitimised by the White man's politics today which has trampled on democratic aspirations.

As we face this period of heightened conflict the process of polarisation will be hastened and the use of violence will increase.

This is a very serious situation we are in and I do not make these observations lightly. I have noted them tonight because I want you all to understand one dimension of a decision a Black may make to espouse violence for political purposes. Anybody who opts to employ violence to bring about change is aware of the fact that it is a wild dimension and that the concept of controlled violence, or limited violence, is dubious in the extreme. Violence by its very nature breeds more violence and the first step to employ limited violence is a step which ultimately will lead to the employment of violence on a massive

scale and in our situation on a scale which will include the dimension of a race war. When one sets out to employ violence one must be aware of its destructive nature.

I make the serious point tonight that the cultural alienation of Black South Africa makes it easier for Blacks to be somewhat careless in their assessment of the destructive nature of violence. There are already those who do not mind if South Africa is annihilated and reduced to ashes; there are those who believe there is not much worth saving and the harshness of life which will be found in the rebuilding of South Africa from the ashes is no different from the harshness of life which Black South Africa now experiences. The harshness of rebuilding South Africa in adverse circumstances for them seem at least to be constructive, whereas the harshness they experience now is the harshness that they experience in despair.

We urgently need a Black cultural renaissance in this country because I believe that when we stand on the foundations of our cultural heritage and experience a renaissance in our culture, we will relate to the rest of South Africa more dynamically and we will realise we have got a great deal more to lose than it is worth risking in careless applications of violence.

The interdependence of Black and White in this country is such that I have to tell my people, and in fact I frequently do tell my people, that Blacks will achieve nothing without Whites, just

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as we know that Whites could not even survive in the short term, let alone go on to achieve new things, without Blacks. Culture does not bar people from exerting influences in it. Black culture does not bar White universities from playing a significant role in its resurgence, and I think it is this perception which deepens my praise for the University of Cape Town, and in particular for Professor Kirby, for having set about the important task of establishing this collection of indigenous musical instruments. I do not see these instruments as museum pieces; I see them as an assemblage of the kind of building materials we will employ as the base from which we will stage a Black cultural renaissance in the country.

I really do believe that cultural interdependence is one of the consequences of economic and political interdependence which is a fact of life in South Africa. Mr. P.W. Botha will never succeed in establishing his Afrikaner Utopia because he can only do so with our help and that help will not be forthcoming. As a Black man, I am not ashamed of this kind of interdependence and I am not ashamed as a Black man to plead for White participation in the circumstances which will facilitate and nurture a Black cultural renaissance. I believe that we have a living example of this in the phenomenal success that the musical group "Juluka" represents to the world. Its vitality is not marred by White participation. White culture, whether it be Afrikaner or not, is

not the exclusive property of the National Party, in the same way that Rembrandt is not the property of the Dutch. True culture may have a political context but it is in fact a non-political dimension of human association.

I have a vision of a future open society where we shall be free to relate to each other and to hold each other closely in common concerns about the things we love. I am sure that then Black cultural heritages and remnants of Black beauty which have been salvaged from the past which was descreted by racist politics will be vital and essential elements in the themes of a developed classical art form which has the hues, tones and forms of a unified South Africa. African music is not a nostalgic thing of the past; it is living today and its expression tomorrow will be in tomorrow's idiom.

When we are battered with violence; when our future is threatened by racist politics and during a time when we cannot reach out and love each other across racial barriers, the value of Art, and in particular the artistry of music, is a universal language in which we can express our patriotism. I do not need an English ear to hear Beethoven and I do not need an English eye to see beauty. I need only the ears and eyes that God gave me. God created us to be creatures in His own image and He created us with ears that can hear across racial barriers and eyes that can see across the chasms of our polarised society. I want to end

with the rather cryptic thought that the concept of miscegenation
is totally inadmissible in the world of Art.
