

22 “Jazz against Apartheid”: An Interview with Jürgen Leinhos

Steff Rohrbach

“Jazz gegen Apartheid” – “Jazz against apartheid” – was a project launched in Frankfurt in 1986 by Jürgen Leinhos¹ and the South African bassist Johnny Dyani, shortly before the latter’s death. Thirty years later, on 27 October 2016, the project made a guest appearance at the Bird’s Eye jazz club in Basel with a concert entitled “Celebrating the music of Johnny Dyani” that featured Makaya Ntshoko on drums – a South African who had long before made his home in the city. The club’s programme states that “Jazz against apartheid” had dedicated an annual series of concerts to the memory of Johnny Dyani ever since his death.

Leinhos managed the project from its very beginnings – which was reason enough to meet him in his home city of Frankfurt am Main on 24 May 2024 to ask him about both the project and Ntshoko.



Figure 22.1. John Tchicai, Jürgen Leinhos and Makaya Ntshoko in Frankfurt on the morning after a concert for Ntshoko’s 72nd birthday.

¹ Jürgen Leinhos (born 1938) studied sociology and philosophy, was active in the development of digitalisation and founded the initiative “Culture in the Ghetto” in Frankfurt am Main in 1984 and then, shortly afterwards as part of this, “Jazz against apartheid”. See: <https://jazzagainstapartheid.com/team/juergen-leinhos> (accessed June 2024).

The Personal Background

Steff Rohrbach: *Jürgen, we're meeting here at the Hotel Nizza ...*

Jürgen Leinhos: ... which was founded in 1993 as an artists' hotel, and where we stayed right from the start. We've put on well over a hundred concerts for "Jazz against apartheid", most of them here in Frankfurt. Accordingly, Makaya Ntshoko has stayed here at the "Nizza" a hundred times.

SR: *You were born in Eisenach in 1938 – how did you get into music?*

JL: I was involved with music from an early age. My mother used to say: "You were baptised with Johann Sebastian Bach". Both my parents were pretty big music fans, Eisenach was Bach's place of birth and it's a musical city. You just grow into it there. I spent the war with my grandparents out in the countryside, then moved back to the city with my parents. 1950 was the 200th anniversary of Bach's death and the whole town was full of guests, there was an international audience there, and of course I was thrilled and thought: "You're in the right place here!" That was a wonderful, formative event. I finished school in Eisenach and did my Abitur [i.e. the German school-leaving exams], then I moved to Güstrow, a little town in the Mecklenburg-Vorpommern region that had a small theatre offering opera, spoken plays and ballet. That was where I met Luten Petrowsky.² We remained friends until his death last year; I went to Berlin for his funeral.

SR: *Ernst-Ludwig "Luten" Petrowsky was already a well-known musician in Switzerland, even during the communist era, not least because the Swiss record label Intakt Records began early on to document the East German scene.*

JL: Luten and Eberhard Weise³ performed in Montreux as early as 1968! Later, between 1980 and 1990, Luten also toured the world with the "George Gruntz Concert Jazz Band"⁴ that was named after the famous Basel pianist, composer, arranger and bandleader who ran it.

Petrowsky was involved in a project in Güstrow with Eberhard Weise at that time, who was a trombonist by trade and worked in the Güstrow Theatre. But he also played jazz piano and later led both the Radio-DDR Combo in Leipzig and – much later – the Leipzig Radio Orchestra. Petrowsky and Weise founded their first ten-man band in 1956, which was very influenced by West-Coast jazz. They collected the relevant literature that wasn't available in the GDR back then. Because I was commuting between Güstrow, Eisenach and Berlin, I had the advantage

² Ernst-Ludwig "Luten" Petrowsky (1933–2023) was a composer and free jazz pioneer who played the saxophone, clarinet and flute and is considered one of the forefathers of jazz in the former German Democratic Republic ("GDR", East Germany).

³ Eberhard Weise (born 1934), was later chief conductor of the Leipzig Radio Dance Orchestra and leads the German Philharmonic Big Band.

⁴ George Gruntz (1932–2013), a Swiss jazz pianist, composer and bandleader, worked for the radio from 1956 and became internationally known in 1958 as a member of the Newport International Band at the Jazz Festival, where he also played with Louis Armstrong. His Concert Jazz Band was unusual in that it consisted exclusively of internationally renowned soloists. See, for example, <https://hls-dhs-dss.ch/de/articles/020594/2014-03-06/> (accessed June 2024)

of being able to listen to a lot of West-German radio stations and could record programmes of West-Coast jazz for them on my tape recorder. I realised how much fun it was, working with musicians.

SR: How did you continue with your training?

JL: From Güstrow, I went to Frankfurt am Main where I studied sociology and philosophy with Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno. Then I moved to Kiel because I realised that my subject area of sociology might be exciting, but it was also very out of touch with reality. That was in the mid-1960s – just when digitalisation was beginning.

SR: Were you in Kiel for your work? What were you doing there?

JL: Yes, I was there professionally. Dr Rudolf Hell⁵ was working in Kiel on a digitisation project that was practically a reinvention of the Gutenberg printing press, 500 years later. I worked on it as a developer, but also from a sociological and philosophical perspective, which was of course very exciting. I stayed for two years and then went back to Frankfurt.

SR: Adorno neither liked nor understood jazz, and used terminology to describe it that is considered problematical today.

JL: Exactly, and that was one of the reasons I wanted to go back. I wanted to finish my studies and argue with Adorno about these ideas of his. I had understood one of the cornerstones of Marxist-oriented sociology, as determined by Max Weber, namely the assumption that everything that has to do with the intellect is bound to class. It was this kind of prohibition of thought, which is also reflected in Adorno's speeches and writings, that I wanted to fight against. It was the same with digitalisation: the capitalists were too blind to understand what was happening with it. Digitalisation wasn't being triggered by businesses, but was a consequence of technological development. Gutenberg's technology was simply too slow, and digitalisation made faster processes possible. The sociological dogma said that this development was a matter for the leading class and refused to realise that it would change the entire world of work and bring about a completely different aesthetic in society.

SR: What did you do in Frankfurt, how did your life proceed there?

JL: When I came back, Adorno had already died. I continued to work as a developer, had two children who've grown up well – and I went through a lengthy process to establish equal, constitutional rights for me as a single father. After that, in the 1980s, I started to focus on music again.

⁵ Rudolf Hell (1901–2002) invented the Hellschreiber (teleprinter) in 1929, the Klischograph (machine for the mechanical production of printing plates for the letterpress process) in 1951, the Chromograph, a scanner for digitally generated photo typesetting, in 1963 and computer typesetting in 1965. Hell was awarded the Grand Federal Cross of Merit with Star, the Gutenberg Prize and the Werner von Siemens Ring.

The Launch of “Jazz against apartheid”

SR: *When did “Jazz against apartheid” start?*

JL: We founded “Culture in the Ghetto” in 1984, and the project “Jazz against apartheid” was set up within it. Much of what we did in the first edition in 1986 also had a connection to Frankfurt, because Frankfurt is a banking city that did good business with South African financial institutions. The anti-apartheid movement boycotted South Africa politically and economically: we wanted no fruit from South Africa, and no business with it. There were masses of people lying in front of the big banks. When their employees came out for lunch, they had to step over hundreds of people lying all over the ground.

The movement didn’t comprise a mass of people, but it was well-organised and that made it powerful. Its basis was among the churches, trades unions and peace activists.

SR: *How did “Jazz against apartheid” come about?*

JL: It was obvious that this process, this movement, also had to have an artistic format. We thought about who we could invite from among the exiled South African musicians, and we immediately decided in favour of Johnny Dyani. We discussed everything with him and also jointly decided on the name “Jazz against apartheid”. Johnny came here for various performances. There was a big series at the time called “Songs in the Park” that was practically a protest movement.

We wanted to stage this new project in Frankfurt, which was home to the anti-apartheid movement here, though it was also intended to be active across Germany. It was launched in Berlin, but there were also concerts in other cities. Everything went very well, including the preparations for it. Johnny made a guest appearance in Frankfurt with the Danish guitarist Pierre Dørge⁶ and his band. They played at the jazz festival and at “Songs in the Park” in front of thousands of people. And he came with Marilyn Mazur,⁷ Harry Beckett,⁸ John Tchicai and Makaya Ntshoko – all prominent musicians, great artists, most of them older than him, but Johnny was in good musical hands in his Danish exile. He once spent a week here, and also played in the Jazzkeller with Peter Kowald.⁹

⁶ Pierre Dørge (born 1946) founded the New Jungle Orchestra in 1980, which he still conducts today. It represented Denmark as its “State Ensemble” from 1993 to 1996 and also played for Nelson Mandela as a kind of “cultural ambassador” for Denmark.

⁷ The American-Danish percussionist Marilyn Mazur (born 1956) was the only woman musician ever to go on tour with Miles Davis’s band. She also became world-famous through her collaborations with Wayne Shorter, Gil Evans and Jan Garbarek. She has been particularly successful, however, with her own projects.

⁸ Harry Beckett (1935–2010) was a British trumpeter who came to the UK from Barbados in 1954 and played alongside Charles Mingus in the 1961 film *All Night Long*. He also played with Chris McGregor’s Brotherhood of Breath and with other ensembles on the English scene.

⁹ The bassist Peter Kowald (1944–2002) came from Thuringia in Germany and played on the European, UK and American scenes with names such as Irène Schweizer, Pierre Favre, Evan Parker and Wadada Leo Smith. He also played with Marilyn Mazur and Jeanne Lee as their second bassist alongside Klavs Hovman.

SR: So “Jazz against apartheid” was much more than just a trio with Johnny Dyani, John Tchicai and Makaya Ntshoko ...

JL: ... yes, that’s how the whole thing came about. Johnny chose Harry Beckett, John Tchicai and Makaya Ntshoko for the ensemble, along with Pinise Saul,¹⁰ Lucky Ranku,¹¹ Ernest Mothle¹² and Thomas Dyani.¹³

But after the start in Berlin, Johnny fell into a coma and the other musicians had to go on tour without him. And when they arrived in Frankfurt, we received the news of his death. We told the band members that no matter what happened, they would be back here a year later and that we’d continue the series. And that’s how it developed down to this day, even though we thought that the end of apartheid would also mean the end of the series.

SR: *Where do the concerts take place?*

JL: Essentially in cultural centres and church halls – there’s always been at least one venue in a church facility from the very beginning. There’s the “Haus am Dom”, the educational centre of the Catholic Church, the “Brotfabrik”, a cultural centre, the “Bessunger Knabenschule”, a cultural centre in a former boys’ school in Darmstadt, the “Main_Forum” of IG Metall and the “Gallus Theater”, which is located in the Gallus district of Frankfurt and used to be called “Kamerun” – it was once an industrial quarter and was called “Galgenfeld” [“gallows field”] until the end of the 18th century. These places form our basis, but there are also other venues like the Bird’s Eye in Basel or Oakland in California.

The Eventful Years

SR: *Did Johnny Dyani’s music remain at the core of “Jazz against apartheid”, even after his death?*

JL: Yes, and this is how it happened. The year after his death, the big German Protestant Church Congress took place here in Frankfurt from 17 to 21 June 1987. There were 125,000 people in attendance – and they all wore a scarf against apartheid! We’d been asked to design the musical programme. The closing church service took place in the Waldstadion – where Eintracht Frankfurt normally plays – and it was a huge event with 85,000 participants. Apartheid and the Deutsche Bank were a central theme – 25,000 people marched in protest to the headquarters of Deutsche Bank, which had maintained an uncritical stance towards South Africa’s apartheid government. It was a church event, but apartheid and South Africa were clearly at the heart of it.

¹⁰ Pinise Saul (1941–2016), a South African singer, was a member of Dudu Pukwana’s band Zila and performed with Bob Marley, David Murray, the World Saxophone Quartet and others.

¹¹ Lucas Madumetja “Lucky” Ranku (1941–2016), a South African guitarist, worked with Dudu Pukwana and others and in 1983 played with Hugh Masekela in London for the celebration of Nelson Mandela’s birthday.

¹² Ernest Mothle (1941–2011), a South African bassist who played with Hugh Masekela and Jonas Gwangwa, and from 1981 onwards with the Brotherhood of Breath.

¹³ Thomas Dyani (born 1964), a Danish-Nigerian percussionist and singer, stepson of Johnny Dyani.

SR: *What was the significance of this church congress in 1987 and your project “Jazz against apartheid”?*

JL: As “money cities”, Zurich and Frankfurt were particularly important to the international protest. Our concerts were noticed all over the world and were also linked to the 100,000 protesters and the human “carpet” in front of the big banks in Frankfurt. After that church congress, we were also in an alliance with the trades unions and churches. The churches were effective in the fruit and bank boycott, and many church members cancelled their accounts with the banks in question in Switzerland and Germany. The trades unions here were linked with the South African unions and thus also had an influence on the car manufacturers down there.

SR: *Were things only happening in Frankfurt?*

JL: No, I also recall how in 1986, just two weeks after Johnny’s death, there was a fantastic South African evening in Zurich, though the mood was understandably very subdued. First the Chris McGregor Trio played, and Irène Schweizer played a duo with Louis Moholo; then came “Jazz against apartheid” – which the programme still listed as “Johnny Dyani’s South African Project” featuring Johnny himself, Makaya, John Tchicai, Harry Beckett, Ernest Mothle, Pinise Saul, Lucky Ranku and Thomas Dyani. Mbitiyana Blythe wasn’t in the band. They were followed by Dudu Pukwana with his group “Zila”. The performance by Irène Schweizer and Louis Moholo was very special: they both came on stage, but then hesitated – and suddenly, large banners unfurled from the upper balconies protesting against apartheid and the complicity of the banks with the South African regime.

SR: *That evening took place on 8 November 1986 at the Zurich Volkshaus, as part of the Zurich Jazz Festival. The Swiss record label Intakt Records released the duo concert on LP in 1987, then on CD in 1997.¹⁴ The Festival was supported by the supermarket cooperative Migros, the Swiss Bank Corporation, the Union Bank of Switzerland and the Schweizerische Kreditanstalt. Louis Moholo several times shouted out the title of the piece that gave the disc its name. It’s clearly audible on it.¹⁵ “Free Mandela!” The festival review in the Neue Zürcher Zeitung was very favourable.¹⁶*

JL: It was a gigantic event, and they set it up very cleverly. And of course there were people in Zurich who were offended, because it was an obvious breach of the rules. But it was important and right – and above all, it was great art.

Incidentally, in interviews that I later conducted with Irène Schweizer and John Tchicai, they both independently pointed out that the first real anti-apartheid concert had taken place back in 1975 [on 30 August] in Willisau in Switzerland, with the two of them plus Makaya on drums and Buschi Niebergall on bass.¹⁷

¹⁴ Intakt Records, CD 006.

¹⁵ See Patrik Landolt, *Unterwegs im Freien. Zürich, New York, London, Berlin. 37 Jahre Musikproduktion von Intakt Records*. Zurich: Versus Verlag, 2022, 15.

¹⁶ “kl”, “Trübe Stimmung mit wenigen Aufhellungen. Eindrücke vom Internationalen Jazzfestival”, in *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*, 261, 10 November 1986.

¹⁷ See www.willisaujazzarchive.ch/concerts/1975/1010.html. This was Makaya Ntshoko’s second

SR: *Looking back now, how important was this time?*

JL: The years 1986 and 1987 were decisive for the international anti-apartheid movement. We alone had over ten concerts with “Jazz against apartheid” in the year of that church congress. There was a lot of international pressure on the apartheid regime. You could probably say that this was the beginning of the end of South African apartheid, because the issue had never got so much publicity or resonance in the media before – even the bankers had meanwhile got cold feet.

Developments in South Africa

SR: *The situation in South Africa itself surely also played a central role, didn't it?*

JL: Of course. Then there was the ceasefire between Angola and South Africa in 1988, the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 here in Germany, free elections in Namibia and its independence from South Africa in 1990. These were all decisive factors that finally led to Nelson Mandela's release in 1990 after 27 years of political imprisonment, and then ultimately to the end of apartheid itself in 1994.

SR: *Did most of the artists return to their home country of South Africa?*

JL: Many South Africans indeed returned from exile after 1990, including Louis Moholo and Ernest Mothele from our project, for example. But they also included the South African cultural historian Neville Alexander,¹⁸ now deceased, who had received a scholarship to study in Germany on the strength of his talent, and who wrote his doctorate here on Gerhart Hauptmann and had written about the concept of liberation pedagogy that he wanted to take to South Africa. Neville said to me: “Don't be surprised if we end up in the same situation as the German artists and intellectuals whom nobody wanted after their return from exile after the Second World War”. All the same, he was able to ensure that the new South African constitution recognised ten official languages alongside English.

SR: *And what was it like for those who returned?*

JL: That's exactly what happened – the new South African government didn't care about its culture in exile or about the grand designs and achievements of its cultural workers abroad. After the end of apartheid, many returning from exile became part of the opposition again, as South Africa was now practically a one-party state – at least until the elections that took place in late May 2024 that forced the African National Congress (ANC) into a coalition with the largest opposition party, the Democratic Alliance (DA).

appearance in Willisiau; on 20 March 1971 he had already played with Irène Schweizer, Jürg Grau (trumpet, guitar) and Peter K. Frei (bass) under the title “Makaya Ntshoko meets Irène Schweizer”.

¹⁸ Neville Alexander (1936–2012), South African linguist and an anti-apartheid campaigner alongside Nelson Mandela. He studied in Cape Town, joined the movement in 1957 and received his doctorate in Tübingen in 1961. He was a co-founder of the National Liberation Front (NLF), was sentenced to ten years in prison for treason in 1963, and served time with Mandela in Robben Island prison.



Figure 22.2. Irène Schweizer at Makaya Ntshoko's 65th birthday celebration in the Bird's Eye Club in Basel.

“Jazz against apartheid” in South Africa

SR: *What happened to “Jazz against apartheid” in the “Corona years”?*

JL: We used the Covid period to intensify the project. After things changed in South Africa in the 1990s, we had expanded our project title to “Jazz gegen Apartheid – zwischen Heimkehr und Exil” [“Jazz against apartheid – between homecoming and exile”] and started organising workshops. Daniel Guggenheim,¹⁹ Tobias Delius,²⁰ Claude Deppa,²¹ Allen Jacobson,²² John Edwards,²³ Christopher Dell²⁴ and Christian Lillinger²⁵ joined us – so together with Makaya we now had a double quartet. “You’re the only bandleader who isn’t a musician”, said Daniel Guggenheim with amusement about my role in it ... It’s a project that’s grown.

Then we received the Order of the Companions of O.R. Tambo from the South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, which is a national “order of peace, co-operation and active expression of solidarity and support”²⁶ – it’s something like the Federal Cross of Merit in Germany.

¹⁹ Daniel Guggenheim (born 1954), Swiss saxophonist who lives in Frankfurt.

²⁰ Tobias Delius (born 1964), British saxophonist.

²¹ Claude Deppa (born 1958), South African trumpeter.

²² Allen Jacobson, Canadian trombonist, conductor and teacher, in Frankfurt since 1999, has played with Kenny Wheeler, Lee Konitz, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Baden Baden Philharmonic, the European Philharmonic and others.

²³ John Edwards (born 1964), British bassist.

²⁴ Christopher Dell (born 1965), German vibraphonist.

²⁵ Christian Lillinger (born 1984), German drummer and composer.

²⁶ See the official South African government website at <https://www.dsac.gov.za/the-order-of-the-companions-of-or-tambo> (accessed July 2024).

SR: ... you received the medal in silver, personally, in 2021 ...

JL: ... that was Vusi Mchunu's doing: Vusi is a South African poet and filmmaker who studied in Germany and was one of the first to work at the "House of world cultures" in Berlin. He had also gone back to South Africa. At roughly the same time that we were awarded this medal, he suggested that we should come to the Cape for five concerts and five workshops, which we gave down there in 2022 and 2023. In the meantime, Vusi Mchunu was given a lifetime achievement prize at the 2022 South African Literature Awards. And this year we are taking the project to the Cape for the third time.

SR: Wasn't it possible to go to South Africa with "Jazz against apartheid" before then – despite Mandela having become president in 1994?

JL: Back in 1990, we continued our work in Germany, including workshops to get new musicians interested. What's more, until then there was no one who had the necessary courage and really wanted the project. Now, however, there are people down there who've said they want exactly this project – with everything that's involved in it. That's what's in the works now. I didn't fly to South Africa myself. I used to go there, but it's too exhausting for me today. I'm not fit enough for the long journey there. On the other hand, the journalist and adult educator Elisabeth Ehrhorn, who is involved with us, is accompanying the project in South Africa and has developed a lot more activity around it than I could have done.

SR: Where is "Jazz against apartheid – between homecoming and exile" performing in South Africa?

JL: This year marks the 40th anniversary of the "Culture in the Ghetto" project. And it's been 30 years since the new government was formed in South Africa and apartheid was abolished. To mark the occasion, "Jazz against apartheid" will be travelling to the Cape for the third time. There is a Holocaust & Genocide Centre in Johannesburg that focuses on research and teaching. Its director, Tali Nates, received the Goethe Institute's Gold Medal in 2022 and is a member of our project. There'll be another launch event there, and they're also holding an academic conference together with New York at which the topic of culture in exile will play a central role. Everything that the government can't do has to be done by others – and they're doing it because they realise how important it is. The final concert will again take place in the Eastern Cape: in East London – where the Steve Biko Centre is located, and where both Johnny Dyani and Steve Biko grew up and are buried. Two of our closing concerts have already taken place there. There's also an exhibition about exile in the works, based on the one previously shown in Frankfurt.²⁷ The best German artists went into exile during the Second World War, with many travelling to the USA via Switzerland, including the Nobel Laureate Thomas Mann.

²⁷ The permanent exhibition "Exile. Experience and Testimony" at the German National Library in Frankfurt am Main was opened in 2018, with exile publications, the personal archives of writers, philosophers, musicians and holdings of institutional provenance. "It features analogue and virtual special exhibitions and has a varied programme of events presenting different aspects of exile, ranging from historical exile to contemporary phenomena". www.demokratie-geschichte.de/index.php/4370/deutsches-exilarchiv-19331945

Makaya Ntshoko

SR: *Makaya had disappeared from the scene a few years before your project – but did he always return to get involved in “Jazz against apartheid”?*

JL: Makaya was part of “Jazz against apartheid” from the very beginning. Johnny Dyani put the ensemble together and brought Makaya back. Makaya was one of the first to go into exile in Europe, and he initially found refuge in Switzerland. Makaya never missed a single performance, he was always there and never cancelled. He was and remains closely associated with “Jazz against apartheid” and our entire process.

SR: *Did Makaya ever tell you anything about his own story?*

JL: He didn’t talk much, but at the same time he was always the centre of attention and received a lot of affection – he even celebrated several of his birthdays with us in Frankfurt. We always found him to be very active and reliable, especially in his musicality. In pieces such as “Appear”, for example, he simply sets the theme – the piece isn’t entirely undemanding, even for wind instruments, and he played it so fantastically that it became clear that he was the best percussionist for the ensemble. You also have to know that our ensemble only plays Johnny Dyani’s compositions and that all of them are chronicles and portraits of South Africa: they’re about musicians, contemporaries like Kippie Moeketsi, the “Lennie Tristano” of South Africa, of whom everyone said he taught them what South African jazz means.

With songs about the freedom fighter Lilian Ngoyi (1911–1980) or, of course, Steve Biko²⁸ (1946–1977), we said things that had to be told so that the audience, especially the younger people, could find out what they were all about. Makaya insisted that everything be written down and told exactly as it was and that there couldn’t be anything left to chance – after all, he’s immortalised on the famous Dyani album *Song for Biko*.²⁹

Makaya enjoyed a lifelong friendship with John Tchicai. The two of them were very supportive of each other, and John was always a really solid person.

SR: *Makaya was an amazing drummer and played with top people. He once told me that he was invited to play with Weather Report, the famous band of Joe Zawinul and Wayne Shorter and that he flew out to the USA for it. There are various versions of the story about why the engagement didn’t work out. Makaya himself claimed there was a young Black man on the drums whose job he didn’t want to take away. It’s also possible that he mistrusted Joe Zawinul. Or maybe it was health reasons that prevented it ...*

JL: ... those South Africans were so impressive, we were all fascinated by what they brought with them – from their phrasing to their tone formation, their rhythms and the special nature of their songs that sometimes sounded like hymns – we’d never heard that before.

²⁸ The civil rights activist Steve Biko (1946–1977) was tortured and died in prison, although it was initially claimed that he had died after a hunger strike.

²⁹ Johnny Dyani’s album *Song for Biko* with Dudu Pukwana (alto saxophone), Don Cherry (cornet), Johnny Dyani (bass) and Makaya Ntshoko (drums) was recorded in 1978 and released as an LP by SteepleChase in 1994.

But I also wanted to tell you about John Tchicai, who got on so well with Makaya and often worked with him. He lived in the USA again for a few years in the 1990s, this time not in New York but in California. John once played two concerts in Oakland, naturally with Harry Beckett and Pierre Dørge, and the special thing was that Art Davis³⁰ was on bass, who didn't know anything about this South African music. Makaya was also invited, but didn't want to go there – I don't know why, but it couldn't have been anything to do with his papers because he had a Swiss passport by then. It wasn't for health reasons either. Gilbert Matthews³¹ then went to California from his exile in Sweden to play drums.

SR: Makaya obviously coped very well with the generational change in the “Jazz against apartheid” ensemble.

JL: That's true, Makaya has worked several times with all of the former members, and not just in our project. And it also worked out wonderfully with the new musicians who joined after the workshops.

SR: Makaya was also long associated with the pianist Irène Schweizer and the poetic, melodious drummer Pierre Favre.

JL: Yes, Irène Schweizer thought the world of Makaya. I remember the session³² at Bird's Eye that took place on Makaya's 75th birthday, with many musicians who'd performed with Makaya and where you and I were both present, though we didn't know each other yet. Pierre Favre spoke about what he owed to Makaya, how he'd encouraged him to go his own way. There'd not been a hint of South African jazz that evening until Irène got up – she'd played a lot with Makaya, Louis Moholo and other drummers – and said: “So, let's finally hear some South African jazz”, and she sat down at the piano and played a wonderful duet with Makaya in Johnny Dyani's song “Appear”. Irène was never part of the “Jazz against apartheid” ensemble except in 2012 at the Gallus Theatre in Frankfurt, but she was very committed to it and was part of the struggle against apartheid herself.

SR: Makaya was still to be seen cycling around Basel a few months ago but is now, as we speak, in hospital. He also used to be a boxer, tough as nails, and people say he possessed tremendous strength – and on the drums he demonstrated an incredible, polyrhythmic way of playing that has often been compared to Elvin Jones.³³

³⁰ The US bassist Art Davis (1934–2007) studied at the Juilliard School and worked with Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington and Thelonious Monk, John Coltrane, Max Roach and Dizzy Gillespie and orchestras such as the Los Angeles Philharmonic. He filed and lost a lawsuit against the New York Philharmonic after accusing it of refusing him a vacant position because he was Black. In the meantime, he had also studied clinical psychology, obtained his doctorate and was practising in Southern California.

³¹ Gilbert Matthews (1943–2020) was a South African drummer who also worked with Johnny Dyani, Ray Charles, Sarah Vaughan, Archie Shepp and Roscoe Mitchell.

³² “Honoring Makaya Ntshoko – Jam Session” took place on 16 December 2014 at the Bird's Eye jazz club in Basel (see www.birdseye.ch/index.php?p=search&l=de&ptc=w)

³³ The drummer Elvin Jones (1927–2004) was the brother of the trumpeter Thad Jones and the pianist Hank Jones. He played with Bud Powell, Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Charles Mingus and Charlie Parker and was hired by John Coltrane in 1960 for his quartet, of which he was a member

JL: He's already been very ill once before – in 2014, I think – and could barely walk. So we also hired Janusz Stefanski³⁴ to be on the safe side. The two of them already knew each other and shared the drum part. I thought Makaya might play one or two pieces, but in fact he played practically all the sets, even if it was very difficult for him at first. Janusz had done some work in ergonomics and got him a chair with a backrest. After that, Makaya started to feel better physically, and he recovered noticeably over the course of the week.

Two years later it was the other way round. Makaya was healthy again, while Janusz had been seriously ill with lung disease for quite some time but still wanted to be part of it, despite his acute pain. So the two drummers played together again. We all found the two drummers' joint performance immensely impressive and touching – and we all knew that it would probably be Janusz's last concert. He didn't make the trip to Basel because he had to go to the doctor every day. I brought the drum sets back on the Saturday and was told that he had to go to hospital two days later. He died a week after that. It was impressive how the two of them stuck together. They had a presence that was simply incredible: two great musicians, two refugees, two lives in exile.

until 1965. He played on some of the most famous jazz albums of the time, most notably John Coltrane's *A Love Supreme*.

³⁴ The Polish drummer Janusz Maria Stefanski (1946–2016) defected to the West at the end of a tour in 1981 and became a lecturer at both the Hochschule für Musik in Mainz and the Frankfurt Hochschule für Musik und Darstellende Kunst.

STEPHANUS MULLER AND CHRIS WALTON (EDS)

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