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SOUTH AFRICAN POPULAR MUSIC OF THE 1980S AND THE ROLE OF THE GRACELAND PROJECT: A CASE OF INTERNATIONAL (USA-RSA) COLLABORATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

by

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DECLARATION

I, **Thulani Zulu**, hereby declare that the thesis for the Doctor of Philosophy degree at the University of Venda, hereby submitted by me, has not been submitted previously for a degree at this or any other university, it is my own work in its design, and all reference material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.

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ABSTRACT

In the 1980s South Africa was subjected to cultural embargo. However, at the height of the embargo, Paul Simon went against the political climate of the day and mounted a cross-cultural, multinational music project called *Graceland*. Although South African popular music can facilitate the prosperity of musicians, only few musicians have succeeded in fostering this aspect. Using popular music and pop culture Afrocentrism as frameworks, this study analyses the *Graceland* project in the context of the South African popular music of the 1980s. The empirical research approach leaning towards the qualitative method was used. Interviews and literature review were the main modes of data gathering. Owing to the sensitivity of the subject, ethical considerations were adhered to. The cultural embargo, as well as other political interventions aiming at pressurising the South African government to abandon its apartheid policies, were well-meaning, but at the same time, the cultural embargo had a negative impact in that the popular culture of the country went unrecognised by global players. It was envisaged that this study would help in understanding the motivations and intentions of the planners of the *Graceland* project, and how these were to benefit the South African music sector.

Keywords: *Graceland*, socioeconomic, South Africa, music industry, popular music, cultural embargo, apartheid

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

1.1   INTRODUCTION

Paul Simon's *Graceland* music project is regarded, socially, politically and academically, as among the most successful yet controversial musical works of all time. The involvement of this venture in those fundamental aspects of society, particularly in South Africa, is evident. Politically, the emergence of *Graceland* entailed matters which spread in South Africa and internationally. Waterman (1990), Coplan (2005), and Redhead and Street (1989) also make reference to the political involvement of the *Graceland* project. By extension, *Graceland*'s linkage to South African political affairs afforded, among other things, matters that affected local musicians and other stakeholders who partnered with Simon in this project. For instance, Greer (2006) discusses collaboration between South African popular music and American rock music. One would judge such a partnership as significant in the breaking of a cultural embargo that existed in South Africa during the 80s. Steingo (2008) makes reference to the South African cultural boycott, in which *Graceland* was entangled. The role played by the *Graceland* project with regard to the cultural embargo and South African popular music reveals various issues, in that *Graceland* appears to have affected South African popular music, both positively and negatively. This study therefore analyses this project's implications for the development of South African popular music of the 80s. But first, a brief discussion on the background of *Graceland* is necessary.

1.2 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In 1985, an American musician and songwriter, Paul Simon, became interested in South African township music, which drove him to the recording of *Graceland*. However, this was during the period when South Africa was under a cultural boycott by UNESCO as a result of the apartheid system (Garofalo, 1992). Simon's persistence with the recording was construed as disregarding the embargo, while posing a political statement in South Africa, which generated both academic and political debates. Greer (2006) believes that *Graceland* not only made a social statement, but also provided a platform for political issues during the apartheid era in South Africa. Meintjes (1990) and Fairley (2001) also make reference to issues concerning this project. Indeed, the release of *Graceland* appears to have started an uproar that still reverberates even today. Nevertheless, it would seem that although Simon's actions might have sparked controversies around *Graceland*, they also afforded suggestions for improving South African popular music. Meanwhile, Meintjes (1990) regards *Graceland* as an opportunity for a two-fold collaboration: the first in the form of interwoven styles, both in composition and in the production of the album. The second one was collaboration in the socio-political and cultural sense. Meintjes' (1990) views on *Graceland* were apparently justified by the project's selling 14 million copies (Collins, 2009) a year after its release in 1985 (Greer, 2006), which would further suggest that the stakeholders' socio-economic requirements were fulfilled. A blend of renditions about *Graceland* appears to have fortified a combination of the implications of this mission towards South African popular music.

It is evident in the literature that scholars have investigated the implications of Graceland. However, there remains a need for persistency in exploring this area, and for achieving comprehensive results in dealing with problems that are faced by the South African music industry.

1.3 PROBLEM STATEMENT

South African popular music can facilitate the prosperity of musicians. However, only few musicians have succeeded in fostering this aspect. Challenges in promoting local popular music hinder musicians from performing internationally, which could improve their standard of living while curbing the burden of music piracy. Moreover, the failure to promote popular music has created a gap that is currently occupied by Western popular music. This has consequently restricted the development of the indigenous popular music of this region, much to Coplan's (1982) distress. In the 1980s the *Graceland* music project helped in promoting South African popular music, both locally and internationally. For change to take place, collaborative concepts similar to the *Graceland* project could restore the reputation of South African popular music. If the situation does not change, South Africans will remain consumers of music of other cultures, which will further affect the performance and prosperity of local musicians.

1.4   RATIONALE

The recommendations of a study such as this are bound to foster the social and economic wellbeing of South African popular music. In addition to financial success, collaboration inspires tolerance and solidarity. Koppler (2010) alludes to the relevance of intercultural music. Research on the *Graceland* project could be used as a template in creating a viable South African music industry. Besides, this research will benefit future scholars in studies of this nature.

1.5   AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is to analyse the role of the *Graceland* music project in South African popular music of the 80s and determine the potential for the international positioning and collaboration of South African popular music on the international stage. In carrying out this exercise, two objectives emerge.

1.6   OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

This study has the following objectives:

- To situate the *Graceland* project in the South African historical context of the 80s.
- To evaluate the role of South African popular music in the *Graceland* project,

1.7   RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What is the position of the *Graceland* project in the South African historical context?

- What is the role of South African popular music in the *Graceland* project?

1.8   LITERATURE REVIEW

Literature that was consulted occupied three areas. They covered the perspectives on American and South African popular musical culture of the 80s in the context of *Graceland;* the socio-economic aspects of creative collaborations in the context of *Graceland*; and the politics of such collaborations: the case of the *Graceland* project. This exercise included incorporating the African epistemology in this field, because of the tendency of this survey to address matters arising in Africa. In the course of the literature review, subthemes developed for the refinement of the validation thereof. This therefore justified the employment of an Afrocentric approach in dealing with the core of the subject matter.

METHODOLOGY

As a way of organizing this study, a qualitative method seemed most appropriate. This is because of the nature of this study to enquire about the experiences of South African musicians who participated in *Graceland*. For the collection of data, the literature review and interviews were employed as tools, and South African musicians who participated in the

Graceland project were interviewed. The methodology for this study is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

1.9 DIVISION INTO CHAPTERS

Chapter One introduces the study.

Chapter Two provides the literature review, and the theoretical framework.

Chapter Three explains the methodology of the study.

Chapter Four presents the data, and an analysis and discussion of the findings.

Chapter Five concludes the study and makes recommendations.

1.10 CONCLUSION

Chapter One provides an overview of the study, which is an investigation into the role of the *Graceland* music project in the South African popular music of the 1980s. The background of the study, the statement of the problem, the rationale and purpose of the study, its objectives and research questions, and the theoretical framework are presented in this chapter.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter deals with the literature review, which helps with familiarising the researcher with the study. Randolph (2009: 1) warns that "a researcher cannot perform significant research without first understanding the literature in the field." Literature reveals factors which reveal the implications of the *Graceland* project for the prospect of South African popular music of the '80s. Watts et al. (1999: 1) lament that "interventions should not leave social injustice undiscussed and unchallenged." They appear to strongly support the notion of thorough investigation.

Owing to the comprehensiveness of the popular music of the regions involved in this study, this section is divided into three main themes, namely: perspectives on American and South African popular musical culture of the '80s in the context of *Graceland*; the socio-economic aspect of collaboration in the context of *Graceland*; and the politics of collaboration. In order to ensure that the objectives are fulfilled, the literature which will be documented in this study will broaden the understanding of literature on the role of the *Graceland* project regarding the South African popular music of the 80s.

2.2 Perspectives on American and South African popular music of the '80s

The interaction between American and South African popular musical cultures of the '80s entailed in the Graceland project is worth investigating. Discussing the two popular musical cultures creates better clarity on how the individual cultures influenced the Graceland project. But first, a short background to a general overview of the popular music, using the international and African point of view, could result in a clearer understanding of its effects.

To an ordinary individual, popular music can be understood as songs that are created by famous musicians and made popular. Indeed, apart from the *Graceland* project by Paul Simon, artists such as Michael Jackson (Mercer, 1986), Madonna (McClary, 2002) and U2 (McLaughlin & McLoone, 2012), for instance, are regarded as superstars who have achieved their success through popular music. The success of these musicians is also alluded to in the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry's (IFPI) 2014 report, which reveals the net revenue of the music industry as estimated at around $15 billion at the time of going to press (IFPI, 2014). Arguably, popular music plays an important role in developing the lives of musicians in general.

One could therefore also consider the charismatic state of popular music as a contributory factor in acquiring its status and lucrativeness. The likeable nature of popular music could be determined by its intriguing sounds and catchy content, which stimulate the emotions of a listener, while reflecting his or her culture, irrespective of his or her region of origin. Adegoke (2011: 150) supports the view that "popular culture comprises a complex of distinctive

expressions of life experience." For instance, it is important to note that music by musicians such as Bob Marley (Alleyne, 2000) gained global popularity because of its lyrical content, which is relevant to the Jamaicans. Owing to the presence of these determinants, music is then likely to disseminate across borders, ultimately leading to its global popularity. It is, then, safe to conclude that music of any background qualifies to become popular, as long as it entails certain qualities and is well promoted.

In Africa, a similar situation can be observed. Determining the popularity of music rests upon winning the hearts of the audience. Musicians such as Youssou N'Dour, Angelique Kidjo (Taylor, 1997), and Salif Keita (Knight, 1991), to name but a few, accompanied by African indigenous beats, do tell their life experience through music. In some instances, to a certain extent, their experiences relate to those of the audience. Thus, a connection is created between performer and listener. A deliberation on the music-audience connectivity is tackled substantially later on in this study. Nonetheless, the popularity of music begins at the local level to ultimately become a world phenomenon, thus leading to an artist becoming a household name. South Africa is not an exception. Popular musicians such as Mirriam Makeba, Hugh Masekela and Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Tomaselli & Boster, 1993), to name a few, are among those who represented South Africa internationally through this genre.

2.2.1 American popular music of the '80s

American popular music automatically becomes an important element in this study because it was featured in the *Graceland* project. Deliberating on this feature is expected to enable a deeper understanding of its influence on *Graceland*. This discussion begins by exploring the current status and historical background of the subject, and ultimately landing us in the '80s, a period this survey is focusing on. But first, defining the term "popular music" creates a point of departure in finding core matters that relate to *Graceland* and South African popular music.

There exist various definitions of the term "popular music". Among others, the *Cambridge Dictionary* provides two versions of "popular music", the first being a British version that lists terms such as soul, reggae, world music, etc., as examples of popular music, and the second, an American version which defines popular music as "the kind of music with words and a strong rhythm that many young people enjoy listening and dancing to" (*Cambridge Dictionary*). Both versions seem to define the term well. However, looking at other sources for different meanings is equally important. Authors offer a significant range of the definitions of this word. For instance, Humphreys (2004), in a study that focuses on popular music in American schools, defines it as music that is meant for a wide audience. Meaning, it is a type of music which has a huge following.

It is without a doubt that popular music helps the music industry of the United States to be the overall dominating sector it is today. This predominance can be attributed to the sturdy economy and advanced music technology that the country possesses. The strong American economy enables extensive music sales, which consequently empower the country's music fraternity. Shuker's study (2013) makes reference to American popular music in relation to personal income. It appears that the GDP per capita matters when attempting to improve the economy of any music industry. Additionally, America's stable economy assists in shaping various media platforms and forging advanced technology, which helps in the worldwide fashioning of the music industry of that area. America's advancement in technology in the form of media and music technology helps in improving music production, which subsequently assists in the growth of the country's music sector (Zhao, 2016). Power and Hallencreutz (2002), Christenson and Roberts (1998), and Rose (1989) allude to the effect of the advanced technology on the American music industry. A healthy personal income, the media and advanced musical technology complement each other in this regard. As a result, the American music industry plays a critical role in the development of the country's economy. As a matter of fact, digital sales of American popular music accounted for 60% of the countries market in 2013 (IFPI, 2014). Given that music production and sales in America rapidly prove to be predominant, it poses a question about their background.

The stature of American popular music should not come as a surprise as this country started formalising music and its business as early as the 17th century. A study entitled *American Popular Music and Its Business: The First Four Hundred Years. Volume II: From 1790 to 1909* attests to the early initiatives of Americans in making popular music a success (Sanjek,

1988). A study on the function of popular music in the 1940s by Adorno (1941), which includes America, adds to this awareness. Today, American-based popular musicians are reckoned to be amongst the most successful in the world. This understanding helps in realising the importance of diligence when tackling the business side of popular music.

On the other hand, despite the extensive dominance by American popular music over the years, there have also been evident shortcomings about this music style in this region during the '80s. Neal's research is based on the American popular music of the 1980s. In a study entitled *American Culture in the 1980s* (2008), Neal states that there are issues which first need addressing before one can consider the 1980s as a period of cultural production in America. Bayles (1996: 4) appears to share this sentiment, and laments the fact that, "many critics were protesting the obscenity and brutality of contemporary songs and videos" around that period. This view calls for further exploration into this period, considering its long recognition as the American musical powerhouse. As recently as 1982, following the withdrawal of rock from "transgressive power, flaunting the body and celebrating the 'raw truth' of desire, the directness, dirt and insistence of R'n B was the dangerous energy in pop" (Reynolds, 1986: 1). In other ways, American popular music of the early 1980s staged nudity and vulgar lyrics. Reynolds (1986: 1) goes on to assert that "the delinquent animalism of R'n B and funk has occupied the entertainment mainstream, by posing 'Sex and Sweat Is Best', 'Sex, Sweat and Blood' as acceptable forms of healthy vitality." It is then correct to question the "delinquent animalism", as observed by Reynolds (1986), and how it would relate to the *Graceland* project, and the South African popular music of the 80s. A study by Cateforis (2011), *Are We Not New Wave? Modern Pop at the Turn of the 1980s*, emerges as a response

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to these questions. The author argues that there are three modern historical eras to consider regarding pop music. These are: modern metropolitan American, 1880-1930; the period from the late 1950s to the mid-1960s, when America first, then England, experienced the new affluence and rising youth culture; but the period that is of relevance to the current theme is the third, which the author entitles "the modernity, or what is often referred to as the late modernity marked by deindustrialisation, or the rise of globalisation" (Cateforis, 2011: 4). With regard to the modernity era, Cateforis states that "the impeding approach of a computerised society at the turn of the 1980s, the 'modern', promised a better life as it encouraged critiques of societal dehumanisation." Certainly, changes brought by the introduction of computers into the music world are currently quite evident (Morris, 2010).

Media as influenced by the improvement of technology also became predominant in changing the American music industry during the 1980s. This formed a critical era for the progressiveness of the American sector. Cateforis (2011: 4) recognises this effect when stating that modernity was the most decisive era compared to the other two, especially during the 1980s. For example, the song "Video Killed the Radio Star", by Trevor Horn and Geoffrey Downes in 1979, started appearing on the screen around the time when the first MTV music video was broadcast for the first time, on 1 August 1981, and was interpreted as "describing the dawn of a new modern technological era while lamenting the passing of an older modern time, the golden age of radio" (Cateforis, 2011: 4). The introduction of visual music has always been seen as replacing radio sounds. Clearly, American popular music has proven to be dominant since the inception of this genre. However, this dominance declined during the 1980s, the same decade that the *Graceland* album was released. This outcome

requires the questioning of the background of South African popular music as a base for *Graceland* around the same decade.

2.2.2 South African popular music of the '80s

The South African popular music of the '80s is one of the central elements found in the *Graceland* project. It is important to understand its characteristics in order to locate the role it played in the *Graceland* project. Like its American counterpart discussed earlier, the characteristics of South African popular music can be determined through analysing its current status, followed by the historical background which explains the events of the '80s pertaining to the subject matter. The economy and the music technology of South Africa as elements that inspired the development of the music industry will be looked into in this study. However, the educational background as the driving force in acquiring a healthy economy and advanced technology is also discussed. In order to achieve this, and also as a way of adhering to a comprehensive method, defining the term "popular music' using the continental context is therefore essential. This exercise should be critical in fostering South Africa popular music for current and future purposes. It should help to avoid the sidelining of central elements, such as ethical factors.

Nketia (1974) as cited by Agawu (2003) argues that "although African music can be categorised in different classes, it is varied on the surface, but unified at a deep level" (Agawu, 2003: 1). This statement becomes critical when addressing diversified popular music. Moreover, while African music can be given titles such as "art music, popular music

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and traditional music", the recognisable mode is "traditional category", because that is where the "realm of African essence is most clearly displayed", adds Nketia (1974) (as cited in Agawu, 2003: 2). This should serve as an indication that there are other areas to consider before reaching conclusions when defining popular music. Challenges relating to the positioning and addressing of African phenomena have been a scapegoat because of wonders such as defining of popular music. A lack of doctrines that underpinned African wonders, philosophies that were formulated to solve them, together with their inventors, were demeaned by the colonialists. Academia, because of its magnitude in inspiring judgements, has been an area where Africa's lack of competence is projected. However, an Afrocentric paradigm emerged as a supporting mechanism designed by Kete Asante to break this norm. An Afrocentric philosophy has been the missing piece of a puzzle with regard to creating an appreciation of the uniqueness of African popular culture, among other things. It helps in reinforcing the validity of the difference of African ideologies within the academic world. Guibault (1994) refers to constructions of difference as:

> *based on an open specificity, a distinctive aesthetic process that is informed by a particular environment-itself described as being shaped by a conjuncture of specific sociopolitical, economic, and cultural forces. This construction of difference aims at recovering a historically complex past through the celebration of hybridization and a particular aesthetic sensibility*

(Guilbault, 1994: 164)

A validation of foreign methods used to judge African philosophies remains a challenge which deserves addressing. Nonetheless, an understanding of cultural difference requires the acceptance of oneself before relating to others. But for a better understanding of this

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standpoint, it is also important to look at the features of African popular culture that bring about its difference.

Chernoff (1979: 36) concurs with Nketia (1974) when defining African music as "a cultural activity which reveals a group of people organizing and involving themselves with their own communal relationships." In other words, music should be viewed in terms of communal gathering where people share the cultural activities of a particular society. Plainly put, music expresses the day-to-day activities of life. On the other hand, Barz (2004) defines music as "a social event" (as cited in Munyaradzi & Zimidzi, 2012). Moreover, Burns (2001) agrees with Chernoff when he defines African music as "a public performance that takes place on social occasions when members of a group or a community come together for the enjoyment of leisure, for recreational activities" (Burns, 2001: 17). Clearly, apart from enjoyment, African music is mainly defined in terms of culture and promoting solidarity. South African popular music can also therefore be defined by its contribution in bringing the global community together for promotion of cohesion while offering amusement. It is, however, also critical to follow empirical approaches in dealing with meaningful concepts such as Afrocentricity when making sense of African phenomena. This method should help reveal core issues whilst supporting the ideologies used in solving them.

But there are also emerging tendencies that appear to hinder popular music that does not originate from the West, such as the renaming of African pop as "world beat" or "world music" (Phua, 2002). This has been creating problems for the progress of the African music industry. It isolates African pop while stigmatising it for having dubious judgments created

against its development. Notwithstanding the good intention of this action, if any, the persistence of this categorisation is undesirable for African prosperity. Numerous scholars, such as Fold and Nylandsted Larsen (2008), and Guibuault (1993) also shun the "world music" philosophy. This false distinction creates the possibility that non-Western and non-European music can be isolated for manipulation undesirable to the development of African pop. For instance, such an intervention may be depriving African musicians and other stakeholders of the fully deserved benefits of the music industry at an international location, and depriving audiences of a variety of pop which could promote global cohesion. It derails both the economic infrastructure and interaction with the outside world. Therefore, the naming or any other facilitation and administration of indigenous phenomena such as music should be left to the members of that particular culture.

With regard to modernising music to improve its production and quality, the South African situation can be determined through analysing the current status of music, and providing a historical background, as in the case of American popular music earlier in this study. The economy and the music technology of South Africa as contributors to the development of the music industry will be looked into in this study. The background of the education system, as the driving element in acquiring a healthy economy and advanced technology, will also be discussed.

The progress of African music has always been controversial in terms of its position on the international scene. Its existence has a long history of either acclamation or degradation. Coplan (2001) refers to the dismissal of South African popular music as based on its

backward tendency. Similarly, Hamm (1995) indicates how South African popular music is seen as inferior compared to the classical genre, and therefore not deserving of any serious attention. The popularity of such claims has caused negative views regarding the accreditation of African music on the international stage. On a different level, Manu Dibango believes that "African music was and remains music of encounters, and in this lies its attractive power" (Muller, 2004: 1). Locke (2011: 1) cites "simultaneous multidimensionality" as one of the main components that make African music stand out. However, the inadequate current conserving of information about South African popular music poses a question concerning music education in this region.

Previous studies have shown that scholarly information on the history of South African music is grievously lacking. Undermining of Africa's indigenous forms of education, oppression and segregation of Africans by colonisers stand out as the cause of this deficiency. Watermann (1990: 2) noticed this tendency, and opined that "this lacuna was related to the colonial imperative to define traditional cultures and to a fundamental anti-Creolization ideology expressed across a wide range of colonial discourse." Even on the academic level, the promotion of African popular music was suppressed in order to promote the colonialist ideology. It was only in the early 1900s that African popular culture was seen fit to form part of the academic community. "The bulk of Africanist urban ethnography, from the late 1930s through the 1960s, was carried out by British anthropologists, most notably members of the Rhodes-Livingstone Institute in Northern Rhodesia, now the Institute for Social Research of the University of Zambia" (Waterman, 1990: 2). This resulted from the anxiety of the imperialists, who realised that the success of African studies that involved popular cultures

would connect and unify Africans for a progressive path ahead. In order to avoid this, "music and dance were generally deemed interesting only in so far as they elucidated patterns of social organisation" (Waterman, 1990: 2). Agawu (2014), Frith (1991) and McKenzie (1986) are among scholars who engaged immensely in discussions of the impact of colonisation on African popular music. Subsequently, the legacy of segregation in academia by colonisation appears to have resulted in other challenges, such as delaying the development of South African popular music and that of the rest of the continent, through defects in technology and therefore in the economy.

In the 1980s, the global evolution of popular music represented, among other things, the advance of technology. However, although technology generally improved the output of popular music at the time, it also posed problems for the South African music sector. There are two scenarios emerging regarding the case of the South African pop and music industry under this theme. These are technology in terms of music production, and technology in terms of marketing and promotion. Music has improved and is still improving with the evolution of technology, hence the computerised music era has been improving the output of music in general. However, this innovation has not been adequate in Africa. Although South Africa's trade with the outside world during the 1980s resulted in this country leading technologically in the continent (Muller, 2004), the progress of local musicians remained stagnant. Frith et al (2001), in their *Pop and Rock* study, confirm this matter about technology and popular music in the 1980s. Given the outcomes of colonisation, music innovation arrived late in Africa. The computerised music industry was supposedly going to improve the lives of musicians during the '80s (Cateforis, 2011: 4). However, evolution could not have taken

place as intended, owing it to the unpreparedness of the music industry stakeholders. This brought about a different development in South African pop from its American counterpart.

To this point, this discussion has indicated that the exclusion of Africans from progressive education, the economy and control over the dissemination of information would ensure that they eternally remained shadows of the races by whom they were oppressed. These key aspects of oppression were then protected by all means necessary. People would protest about their socio-political situation, but to no avail. Africans were excluded from participating in strategic ways of growth, and on which they would keep questioning and protesting without positive response. Consequently, for African musicians, working towards fulfilling their dreams through the music industry has always required them to double their efforts. In order to penetrate the global market, which is today dominated by Western musicians, they had first to experience the challenges emanating from the socio-economic and geopolitical agendas of their oppressors. Drewett and Cloonan (2006) and Bermúdez (2001) identify the issues emanating from policy related geopolitics and censorship of African music. What has always been brought to the fore as an excuse for degrading African music has always been alleged historic events which entail African music's lack of documentation and coherence. This has led to an increased isolation and demeaning perceptions towards African music by critics in both academia and the music industry. Omolewa (2007) describes how traditional African educational methods, which also include music and other art forms, are perceived as inferior by critics. In addition, complex African rhythms (Chernoff, 1991), which have always been difficult to comprehend in the West, made it difficult for African music to appeal

to the rest of the world. Currently, popular music is mainly influenced by Western practice. Further discussion on the evolution of African music follows below.

Evidently, the development of African popular music was hindered by colonisation. Today there exist commentaries that criticise and demean African development because of its sluggishness. Such critics go as far as labelling Africa a dark continent. One must recognise the challenges endured by African musicians, which deprived most of them of the opportunity of being listed alongside the likes of Michael Jackson, U2, Madonna and other Western, globally renowned musicians. It was only in the 1980s that opportunities became substantial for African artists in terms of recording skills and international standard recording for the market. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) states that the 1970s marked an era of development for African music, but it was during the 1980s that Africa got a real boost (UNCTAD, 2001). African popular music has sprung from an as yet unexploited field because of colonial hindrances. It cannot be denied that colonisation played a critical role in the sluggishness of Africa's development, including that of the music industry. The backlogs in the development of African music can be attributed to the oppression of African people, which included, among other things, the imposed language barriers, resources which were prioritised as being for whites only, and the degrading of indigenous and traditional African forms of information. This included belittling African music, which is one way Africans use to spread information. However, owing to the now available technological resources in Africa, popular music of this region is gradually claiming its position in the international scene alongside the music of America. The emergence of a young, talented, aspiring African generation is evidence of Africa's

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reclaiming its place on the global stage, a situation unlike that of their predecessors, who had to first experience hardship in order to succeed. Through independent music labels and other creative pop means, African popular genres are being promoted from various regions.

Despite all the above challenges, South African popular music prevailed during the 80s. "South African popular music possessed one of the richest popular music traditions in the world, surpassed in its variety and inventiveness perhaps only by the United States" (Mojapelo, 2008: 1). Its ingenuity and richness showed that there is great potential in South African popular music. Consequently, the fact that pop in this region has seen the light of day relatively recently, compared to its American counterpart, and yet has proved to be advancing so rapidly, both locally and abroad, indicates that a lot of work has been done within a short period, despite the cultural embargo. For instance, in 1981, the Harare and Flying Out bands released music which surpassed expectations (Mojapelo, 2008). American popular music, on the other hand, experienced a decline during this period (Bayles, 1996; Neal, 2008; Schellenberg & von Scheve, 2012). The fact that "some of the best singles achieved platinum status and also entered the American Disco Hot 100" (Mojapelo, 2008; 3) is evidence of the success of South African pop music during the 1980s. Other artists who prospered during this time that are worth mentioning are Brenda Fassie (Whaley, 2004), Steve Kekana (Durbach, 2015) and Paul Ndlovu (Madalane, 2012), to name but a few. The success of these musicians did not come easily, as they had also to overcome difficulties related to the music industry during the 80s, such as the evolution of technology, and the restrictions of apartheid. Observations that the 1980s allowed the introduction of other genres

support the findings based on the prevalence of South African popular music during that time (Meintjes, 2003).

2.2.3   Understanding collaborative popular music

This section discusses collaborative popular music in the *Graceland* project. Cowan and Arsenault (2008) define collaboration as initiatives that feature cross-national participation in a joint venture or project with a clearly defined goal, and may in certain instances be a more effective public diplomacy technique. Given that the *Graceland* project comprised South African and American popular music, it is important to understand the results of their collaboration. This exercise should also contribute to answering questions regarding the implications of the concept of collaborative popular music. Also, matters surrounding South African and American popular music during the 1980s should aid in reflecting how the music of that period affected the project.

Music is a natural extension of a long history of collaboration (Winkler, 1995). It forms part of the facets that promote ties among societies. Winkler (1995) makes clear that musical collaboration has been topical for an extensive period. Adelman (1994) relates music collaborations to social cohesion. It is apparent that, musical partnerships enhance tolerance among societies. Creating peace among societies prompts their productivity, which in turn helps in assure the growth of a country. Also, what stimulates musical collaboration is an urge to provide an organised and unique sound that interests audiences. Atkins (2010: 1) asserts that "composition should be seen as encompassing all skills of construction of sound

in all possible performance environments and in all possible collaborative situations." In other words, although the welfare of societies is included among reasons for promoting collaboration, treating music itself needs also to be prioritised, which will enable further socioeconomic development, and therefore, more collaboration.

In South Africa, the effects of collaboration were also experienced. In the mid-1980s, for instance, Johnny Clegg, a white South African, joined forces with Sipho Mchunu, a master of guitar-based music (*maskanda*), to form an innovative group called Juluka (Impey, 2000). Such a partnership should be perceived as monumental for social cohesion, because it occurred during a period when racial conflicts were still rife in South Africa. Even in instances where initiatives were taken to address social issues, good quality music in which South Africa was involved existed. Hence:

> *In 1986, Warner Brothers released the LP album called Graceland, a musical collaboration between Paul Simon and various South African artists. This release initially provoked international outrage, and Simon was accused of appropriating South African music to serve his own musical and commercial ends; however, the record-breaking success of the album worked in favour of South African musicians and helped to return them to the international limelight.*
>
> *(Impey, 2000: 140)*

In support of this view, Meintjes (1990) refers to *Graceland* as a project which encompassed Western and South African cultures, a composite of styles, each richly embedded with social and historic meaning. Overall, it is clear that the main purpose of collaboration is to sustain

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the role players, and strengthen relations between different cultures while promoting tolerance. But there were debates concerning the influence of *Graceland.*

In terms of the mutual influence between the American and South African musical cultures in the *Graceland* project, the winning of awards by *Graceland* depended on South African popular genres such as township jive, *mbaqanga*, *kwela*, and Zulu choral music. A study entitled *Fluidity in Paul Simon's "Graceland": On Text and Music in a Popular Song,* makes reference to the influence of *Graceland* (Bennighof, 1993). However, Garofalo (1993) is quick to point out that South African popular styles were themselves heavily influenced by African-American rhythm and blues. There are traces of foreign influence in the music of certain areas in Africa, as Emielu (2006) has acknowledged. The author points out that "by far the most far-reaching influence on African music both in the colonial and modern times is Africa's contact with Europe" (Emielu, 2006: 31).

However, Emielu (2006) believes that it is important to look closer when addressing musical influences in this area. According to Emielu:

> *The term 'African Music' may be used widely to denote musical practices or traditions of African people living in the African continent. However among many scholars, the term African music connotes the music of Black Africans who inhabit the region south of the Sahara. This region is known for its complex rhythms described elsewhere as 'hot' rhythms, call and response patterns singing, the metronome sense, contextual usage of music in a wide variety of socio-economic, religious and political events in the life of the individual and society at large.*
>
> *(Emielu, 2006: 28)*

Africa is divided into two regions: North Africa, also labelled as white Africa because of its mainly Asiatic influences, and Africa south of the Sahara, i.e. Black Africa. Although Nketia states that even though African music may have different characteristics, its core meaning is rooted in its cultural connections, there is a contrary view regarding the influences on collaborative popular styles such as *Graceland*, which contends that people of the southern part of Africa are the originators of core African music (Emeliu, 2006). It emerges in previous works that music of Africa south of the Sahara has actually substantially influenced Western music. This is because African people who were taken to America as slaves mostly lived in that region (Emeliu, 2006). Francis (2013) and Hester (2004) are among numerous authors who have written about the connection between American music and the slavery of African people. Therefore, while one must acknowledge the recent commercial dominance of American popular music, there is evidence that proves that the influence of popular music between South Africa and America has been a mutual, not a one-sided phenomenon. Perhaps this explains the recent interest of certain foreign musicians in African music, which has resulted in collaboration which included Paul Simon and the creation of *Graceland*.

On the other hand, collaboration has had its drawbacks, dating from before the 1980s. Kealy (1979) understood the disadvantages of collaboration, and their effect on the work experiences of those involved. It is not always possible for individuals from different backgrounds to join forces to contribute in achieving a common goal, and be comfortable with the arrangements. Sometimes, if not mostly,

the 'Poor' are represented by the intellectual 'Left' as a fixed, virtuous subject, even while this fixed identity is actively mobilised by people themselves to gain symbolic and real power".. I argue that the philosopher's fixation on the singular subjectivity of the oppressed confines the 'Poor' to their very subjugation.

(Kealy, 1979: 1)

In other words, there exist issues pertaining to equality around collaboration which need addressing. If collaboration is to prosper, it is important to determine disparities in terms of contributions and profiting as the main goal. This includes overlooking matters of less value, and putting cultural differences aside. Such an exercise should enable a long-term harmonious working relationship that would see music partnerships and industry among the leading economic sectors worldwide.

2.3   HYBRIDITY AND SYNCRETISM: A *GRACELAND* CONTEXTUAL

Understanding matters around the role players of the *Graceland* project calls for looking at hybridity and syncretism that took place in this partnership since it was constituted through multicultural interaction. An understanding of the pros and cons of these phenomena could be helpful in gaining strategic ways for resolving current challenges and those that are likely to be faced by future music collaborators. Such an approach situates South African culture and other key aspects within the global scale. Discussions around hybridity and syncretism have been an ongoing matter. Before looking into the definition of these terms, which are rather tricky, it is important to mention that debates around them have resulted in the formulation of mechanisms which are used in resolving issues emanating whenever two or

more cultures interact. One of these mechanisms is transculturation, a term which was coined by a Cuban anthropologist, Fernando Ortiz, in 1947 "for understanding the linguistic, racial, social, and power-laden cultural clashes of immigrant populations in the United States" (Arroyo, 2016: 139). In simple terms, hybridity and syncretism are elements of transculturation, a process that refers to the interaction between diverse cultures. African popular musicians who participated in the *Graceland* project are exemplars of the process because of the interaction between African and American cultures found in that project. In essence, "Syncretism describes the creation of new cultural practices by the fusion of two or more religious or social influences, while English-speaking postcolonial critics like Homi K. Bhabha (1991) use hybridity to define cultural and power mixtures and relations" (Arroyo, 2016: 139). These definitions should provide even more clarity about the role of the *Graceland* project in South African popular music of the 1980s.

In general terms, popular music is ordinarily known as an entertaining entity from which stakeholders gain profit. However, pop cannot be divorced from the effects of syncretism and hybridity, particularly when a collaboration such as *Graceland* takes place. The function of various popular music can be traced back from cultural practices where that music sometimes carries deeper meanings. On certain occasions music is chosen for accompanying traditions of critical value, such as spiritual practices and community engagements. On the other hand, commercial musicians perform this music in public areas for commercial purposes. Such music then becomes disseminated worldwide. Diverse cultural music is then experienced on different global platforms. It is during these situations, among others, that popular music becomes a unifier, while processes of hybridity and syncretisation take place. For example,

incidences of hybridity and syncretisation in *Graceland* consist of two facets: a section that points to the intertwined American and South African cultures in *Graceland* refers to hybridity; and syncretism, on the other hand, refers to the process of combining the cultural and the spiritual aspect of the music of this project. However, existing works suggest that presently there are more challenges than successes associated with hybridity and syncretism. It would seem that dissecting popular music is a way of addressing core hidden matters with regard to the phenomena at hand.

Hybridity and syncretism were not merely to be welcomed; they ensured innovation, survival and also continuity for humanity (Connell & Gibson, 2004: 348). One could view these phenomena as tools used to pave new ways for innovative strategies that would shape the future of the stakeholders and their music. However, findings reveal that the interaction between different cultures through hybridity and syncretism causes challenges. As they stand, these features are in certain instances used against the originators of cultures by those who appear as equals, but enter into partnerships for ulterior motives. In most cases these collaborators possess skills and resources which allow them to undertake profitable projects such as music. During these partnerships, the representatives of culture therefore become prone to possible exploitation as they would be lacking such capabilities. For example, at an international level, Johnson (2017) in a study titled, *Itineraries of Modern Ethiopian Instrumental Music,* talks about this matter. Gilroy reflects that "where African-American forms have been borrowed and set to work in new locations they have often been deliberately reconstructed in novel patterns that do not respect their originators' proprietary claims or the boundaries of discrete nation states and the supposedly natural political communities they

express or simply contain" (Johnson, 2017: 31). Steve Goodman (2010) (in Johnson, 2017) uses a biological metaphor to depict the movement of genres and specific musical elements around the world. "According to Goodman's dialectic worldview, musical viruses or 'earworms" are used by Western imperial powers, in the form of advertising, propaganda or media manipulation" (as cited in Johnson, 2017: 31). The promotion of non-Western cultures in this manner is an ancient practice which is still in effect to date. Because of the richness of cultures such as those of Africa, agents sometimes use their prominence to mislead desperate musicians for lone economic gains. Johnson (2017) uses Falceto's role as Western mediator of Ethiopian music for international audiences to portray this scenario. The author points out that Falceto "did nothing to influence the music, nor did he superimpose his own name, lyrics and ego on top of an Ethiopian band in the way that Simon did with *Graceland*" (p. 89). The *Graceland* project emerges as among alleged initiatives that were used to abuse the originators of music. In order for popular music collaboration to do well, associating with such perceptions ought to be avoided. There should be nothing sinister about implementing elements such as transculturation in solving issues around the coexistence of humanity. However, what created a problem was when, for instance, "from its inception, transculturation was allowed to negotiate the ever-changing racial and social dynamics of modernity and capitalism in Cuba" (Arroyo, 2016: 140). Simply put, initially, dismantling of aesthetics in this fashion was influenced by the urge to configure strategies of addressing the tangles of economic politics in such a way that they favoured a particular section of people. By implication, cross-cultural interaction where economic power is involved creates problems in the popular music sphere. A deeper understanding concerning this trend entails, among other things, the isolation of certain cultures.

Previous studies in this field link hybridity with the coining of the term "world music". Talking about world music is relevant to this topic because the term itself "emerged in the mid-1980s, initially as little more than a handy term for music as vastly heterogeneous as Paul Simon's Graceland" (Erlmann, 1996: 467). The period during which this term came into existence, and the fact that its coining occurred during the period when the *Graceland* project was created, necessitates this discussion. Apparently world music had quickly gained global popularity. "By 1988, however, this category was well known as 'worldbeat' in the US and described by *Newsweek* magazine as the fastest growing sector of the international pop market" (Erlmann, 1996: 467). Its proliferation also entailed various debates on political and economic power. It then appeared that renaming music which came from non-Western regions as "world music" would also change its destiny and purpose on the international stage. This happens because "we seek to examine the extent to which world music can be conceived as a selective 'commercial' category of music, rather than a genre that has inherent links to particular world regions" (Connell & Gibson, 2004: 343). In other words, inappropriate and greedy assumptions over music from other regions can obscure its background. "At one level, all music is 'world' music', in the sense that music is a perennial feature of all societies across the globe, but only some musics are labelled as such" (Connell & Gibson, 2004: 343). It is therefore safe to conclude that the term "world music" was coined to advantage those who came with it, while the originators of that particular music were discounted. Categorisation of music in this manner makes it easier for certain players to take commercial advantage of it, and identify certain cultures and regions for illicit commercial purposes. Therefore, hybridity as a natural occurrence needs to be guarded rather than manipulated. Interventions such as transculturation are likely to be dysfunctional in regions

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such as Africa because of the problems they come with. It is also critical to note the negative effect of hybridity in South Africa. Musicologists such as Feld and Taylor argue that "the dominance of western conventions and emphasis on accommodation and hybridity in South African recording studios represent a latent cultural imperialism" (Toulson, 2016: 102). Taylor in particular argues that the tendency of Western musicians to "override their lesser-known non-western musicians" is an acute way of failing "truly collaborative world music".

Syncretism, which is defined as the incorporation of diverse religious, is another element in music that is surrounded by challenges. As with hybridity, there exists a tendency to misuse cross-explorations of spirituality for unscrupulous purposes. However, despite the encounters that relate to syncretism, people still find reasons to integrate different cultures and religions for survival and dominance. These are people who believe in divine existence, and their irresistible urge to achieve coexistence of individuals for a common purpose. *Graceland* is a relevant example in this regard. Syncretism can be defined as having both a religious and a cultural context. A study entitled *Religious Syncretism as a Worldwide Mission Challenge: A Biblical and Missiological Response*, by Sanou (2013), looks into factors that contribute to religious syncretism. Sanou (2013) observes that the Greek word from which the English "syncretism" is derived refers to people joining together, in this case in battle; syncretism was used as an alliance tool during ethnic confrontations. "Syncretism was first used by Plutarch to describe the temporary coming together of the quarrelling inhabitants of Crete in the face of a common enemy" (Sanou, 2013: 132). Evidently, the context of this definition refers to the history of power struggles. In the world of music, syncretism is meant to ensure innovation, survival and continuity where religions are involved, as pointed out earlier by

Connell and Gibson (2004). But even from a religious standpoint, this phenomenon is not entirely associated with mischief. In his definition of syncretism, Mullins points out that it is not everyone that sees syncretism as a negative phenomenon, and Van Rheenen sees contact with a new culture as one of the possible contributing factors in religious syncretism (Sanou, 2013: 132). However, in the *Dictionary of Asian Christianity*, Mullins addresses the difference between standard usages of "syncretism" in the social sciences and in missiology. He points out that;

> *Syncretism is usually understood as a combination of elements from two or more religious traditions, ideologies, or value systems. In the social sciences, this is a neutral and objective term that is used to describe the mixing of religions as a result of culture contact. In theological and missiological circles, however, it is generally used as a pejorative term to designate movements that are regarded as heretical or sub-Christian.*

<div align="right">(Sanou, 2013: 132)</div>

What is of interest in this definition and of relevance to this study is syncretism which took place in Africa in the missiological context. As a word that refers to the study of religious (typically Christian) missions and their methods and purposes (*Oxford Dictionary*), it is then relevant to look at missionary activity since this was around when missionaries came into contact for the first time with the indigenous people of Africa. Deliberating on syncretism at this level should help in understanding African music's encounter with this phenomenon. When giving an opinion concerning this interaction and its implications for Africa, Walls and Moreau argue that "syncretism is a greater peril for Western than African or Indian Christians, and less often recognizable for what it is" (Sanou, 2013: 132). This opinion calls for a brief inquiry into how syncretism can be of any more danger in the West than it is in

Africa and other regions. Perhaps analysing inculturation, another phenomenon that emerges when looking closer into syncretism would be more helpful. Inculturation is defined as "the gradual acquisition of the characteristics and norms of a culture or group by a person, another culture, etc," (*Oxford Dictionary*). In other words, inculturation implies the practical process that is used as a tool for undertaking decisive measures during syncretism. It should be noted that syncretism in this instance is perceived as the umbrella. Notwithstanding the dictionary definition, there exist other meanings of the word inculturation. For instance, Anthony (2012: 1) says "it is the incarnation of the Christian message in a particular cultural context, in such a way that this experience not only finds expression through elements proper to the culture in question, but becomes a principle that animates, directs and unifies the Church and remaking it so as to bring a new creation." In the process of inculturation one culture is projected as the one with meaning, while the other is abolished since is perceived as senseless, and therefore not entitled to exist. Music is thus used for capturing other cultures. Such perceptions about African culture have been confirmed by scholars. Anthony (2012) provides the provenance of African inculturation theology as an illustration:

> *African inculturation theology arose against the background of attempts made during the missionary period to sow the seed of the gospel in Africa. Long before the advent of missionaries, some negative notions dominated Europe's concept of Africa. For instance, Homer (cited by Njoku, 2002) said that Africa is a remote place at the extreme of the universe where people worshipped and sacrificed to the gods. Hobbes (cited by Njoku, 2002) said that Africa is a timeless place in which there are no art, letters or social organization, but instead only fear and violent death. According to Hegel (cited by Njoku, 2002), Africa is an ahistoric continent even though it has a geographic location. There people live in a condition of mindlessness, barbaric, without laws and morality. Rousseau (cited by Njoku, 2002), said that the black people are unable to think in any reflective manner. Their engagement in arts is, therefore, a thoughtless*

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activity which is the antithesis of the intellect. Comte (cited by Njoku, 2002)
wrote that "Africans are people who lack the sophisticated linguistic skills,
the scientific and political faculties of the Europthierean and are best
suited to dancing, dressing up and singing" (p. 10). These ideas, in one
way or the other conditioned the relationship between European
missionaries and Africans: they undermined the worldview of the African
people.

(Anthony, 2012: 239).

Certainly, the implementation of religious syncretism in Africa degraded African people and their norms. Tarnishing another nation in this manner shows how a permeating religion perceives the culture of the permeated. It influences how people look at life and determine their future. This way of looking at life affects the confidence of those attempting to develop concepts such as *Graceland* out of their cultural activities. Considering the intricacy of how syncretism is manipulated, were such originators capable of reasoning at that level?

Targeting culture as the backbone of any nation's development appears to have been a strategy used by certain powers to dominate others. Understanding this calls for sharp warnings. "Any theological application to Africa must take account of the Africans to whom the faith is addressed, their culture, religion and civilization" (Anthony, 2013: 239). This is because a theological implementation is intended to reflect the ways in which people think, develop and identify themselves. Lindenfeld (in Isaac, 2015) explains that formalisation of syncretism in the church could be understood from the pronouncements of Pope John Paul II when addressing a Native American audience in Phoenix, Arizona in 1987, in which he said:

The early encounter between your traditional cultures and the European
way of life was a harsh and painful reality for your people...I encourage

you, as Native people…to preserve and keep alive your cultures, your languages, the values and customs which have served you well in the past and which provide a solid foundation for the future…These things benefit not only yourselves but the entire human family.

(Isaac, 2015: 159)

Furthermore, mechanisms which are formulated by certain groups for addressing the social issues of others could exemplify deterritorialisation (Connell & Gibson, 2004). There is much to lose when phenomena such as hybridity are transformed to unfairly benefit certain individuals or groups. For instance, taking over or undoing cultures of others may only mean abandoning or adapting outdated ideas. Cross-cultural collaboration as an ideology has the potential to address more important unforeseen issues than conniving in processes for personal interest. Global communities stand to benefit from this initiative since music cultivates social cohesion while improving lives. Collaboration introduces fresh musical ideas for the welfare of musicians worldwide, particularly in developing areas such as Africa. This could go a long way to eliminate the unemployment and poverty which afflicts this region. In return, developed cultures would be free from giving handouts to Africa, unless the core purpose of handouts is indirectly to maintain this region's dependence on a colonial master. As it is, "musicians are situated in multiple cultural and economic networks – some seeking to reinvent or revive traditions, others creating opportunities in musical production to stir national political consciousness or contribute to transnational political movements, and some merely seeking to achieve commercial success" (Connell & Gibson, 2004: 343). Africa needs such joint efforts for creating rapid progress which will ultimately benefit everyone who has earned it. Without that, prospective partnerships of the likes of *Graceland* will always experience shortcomings.

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However, hybridity and syncretism both appear to hold challenges as far as the improvement of developing regions is concerned, and in implementing projects such as *Graceland.* Obviously, there is only a thin line between partnering for a good purpose and a selfish one. As in developed cultures where effective conceptual tools are employed when making informed decisions, there is a need for Africa to develop such tools in order to resist the selfish interests of a powerful partner. Currently, there exists Molefi Kete Asante's Afrocentric philosophy that is based on addressing the culture, identity and history of African people. This study coincides with this manifesto of Afrocentrism, and adopts the ideologies behind it. Such an exercise is critical in finding and understanding oneself in terms of forging ahead with a revolution that is aimed at achieving the holistic progress of African people. An Afrocentric approach is already being employed in other areas that experience challenges similar to those addressed in this study. For example, in a study entitled *Manifestations of Afrocentricity in Rap Music,* Cummings and Roy (2002) write that "in keeping with the Afrocentric notion of rhetoric, the ultimate goal for rap artists seems to be achieving balance, harmony, and transcendence in the community" (p.1). In a nation such as ours that is still in its infancy in terms of implementing ideologies, the fashioning of constructive ideologies should be commendable. On the other hand, scholars such as Yehudah (2015) remind us about the actual purpose of paradigms such as Afrocentricism. This should be viewed as another way of shaping a bright future for Africans until more precise methods are discovered, whether located in Africa or elsewhere. In essence, what is needed are paradigms that address African intellectual, political, sociological, historical and cultural perspectives and other African matters, such as Afrocentrism. And they are needed soon.

2.4   THE SOCIAL ECONOMICS OF POPULAR MUSIC

One of the main purposes of popular music is to help improve the lives of the stakeholders and societies involved, both socially and economically. Agawu (1992: 1) asks: "Can we, that is, is it a good thing to – study any music without taking note of social, economic, political and technological circumstances of its producers?" The query calls for striking a balance when implementing popular music ideas. *Graceland* emerges as one of the projects which depict the aspects asked about by Agawu (1992). However, looking into a broader scope of the topic, and then narrowing it to the case of South African popular music might help to clarify the social economics of popular music in the *Graceland* context. Three factors which emerge as the crux of this topic are: i) music performance as a social phenomenon; ii) the social impact of South African popular music on Western perceptions; and iii) the economy of popular music in the context of *Graceland.*

2.4.1   Music performances as a social factor

In order to clearly understand the impact of the *Graceland* music project on South African popular music, it is important to comprehensively investigate its social role. This section discusses the social aspect of *Graceland* from a general to a specific point of view, and will convey social implications that speak to general community welfare. Pen (1992: 135) states that "music… is not just socially structured; the social order is, in part, musically structured since musical activity comprises one important public domain in which a world is made patent in a multileveled and powerful form." It is within music that all humankind can address

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their matters, using one language, and ultimately progress as united. "Its ambience endures the repression since human social needs and stories can be well told through it" (Pen, 1992: 135). However, among the public domains that form part of the networks from which civilians can practise activities that are mentioned by Pen (1992) are social gatherings where popular music is played. People from various global regions share their differences during social gatherings, hence such platforms are regarded as vehicles for social cohesion (DAC, 2008). Besides, through music performances, musicians and other stakeholders have the potential to gain profit. For instance, "encouraging live music is a great way to improve the local music industry" (Shaw & Rodell, 2009: 46). Moreover, Africa's identity and prosperity can well be associated with this view. Pen (1992, 135) argues that "emergence from a shadow of colonialism is vividly depicted in the development of indigenous popular music styles that both reflect and construct a new political and social order." The South African society, particularly of the 1980s, should be better understood from this angle, as well as the qualities found in the *Graceland* project. Greer (2006) agrees that the *Graceland* project is among those that make a social statement.

Apart from gathering audiences of different backgrounds under the same roof, musical collaboration plays a major role in getting music practitioners of diverse cultures together for sharing ideas and understanding cultures. During festivals where performances of collaborative music take place, musicians from different backgrounds meet together with the audiences on different but intertwined levels. Frith (2004; 9), argues that "other than being just a pop festival, it can indeed be a case of commercial exploitation, a social gathering, an assertion of youthful identity and revolt." *Graceland* is among projects that brought

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musicians from different cultures where experiences were exchanged, and self-sustainability was achieved.

Contrary views exist about performances benefiting the world. Gracyk (1997: 1) disagrees that "a world without musical performance would be aesthetically poorer than the world we live in", and that "when one wants to be acquainted with a music work, the handiest way is by means of a performance." Notwithstanding Gracyk's (1997) standpoint, the world's poverty in the context of performances refers to more than what meets the eye. Numerous researches indicate that music performances enrich one in different ways. For instance, knowledge of human communicative processes spanning language and music, and emotion and information transfer are augmented during performances (Vines et al., 2006). Concerts come with fresh companionship, which implies that there is an effective connection with the outside world, compared to experiencing performances in a lounge, social club or car. Boyce-Tillman (2007), in a study entitled, *Spirituality in the Musical Experience*, mentions the *Graceland* project and "The healing of the Earth, a song that was part of the performance.

However, presently, the spreading of live performances like the *Graceland* project is gradually becoming restricted as more music players are now opting for new technology. In America and Europe, because of generally adequate personal income, music technology does not seem to necessarily affect the live performance scene. On the other hand, owing to low personal income and unemployment, Africans resolve to digitalise music shows because they are cheaper. Jazz festivals have been diversified in this way in South Africa, for instance. Today such gatherings sometimes include mainly musicians that use backtracks, and live

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performers remain less privileged. To some extent, live performers have become less popular because of the new programmed sounds that intrigue an audience. This is despite the evidence that "an interaction effect suggests that there exists an emergent quality when musical performances are both seen and heard" (Vines et al., 2006: 1). Moreover, live performances help in bypassing the problem of piracy. Moreover, the more musicians perform on stage the more they earn. Therefore, fewer live performances should be viewed as depriving audiences of a complete musical fulfilment. There are rich and abundant resources at our disposal to promote social cohesion while refreshing the pop styles of the world. This is because this region has always been popular for having something to offer in music, since the culture here has always been much more communal than Western European culture (Caravantes, 2010: 19).

2.4.2   Spirituality of African popular music

This section discusses the spirituality of popular music in the context of the *Graceland* music project. It emerges that the presence of a divine aspect in music, particularly during performances, increases the effects of popular music, and puts the audience in a trance during a performance. "For indigenous people, music and dance were aspects of participatory occasions that were part of sociability and spirituality" (Torino, 2000: 5). Various authors share different findings on this topic. In an article entitled "The Role of Popular Music in the Construction of Alternative Spiritual Identities and Ideologies", Lynch (2006) researches the importance of popular music in the development of spiritual identities. Clearly, there is a mysterious matter around popular music and spirituality worth looking into. Consequently,

this study can assist in explaining whether or not spirituality played a role in the success of the *Graceland* project, and what its effect was on the audience. It also explains other elements which contributed to the prominence of popular music in general. Besides, the participants in the *Graceland* project, such as Ray Phiri, Isaac Mtshali, M.D. Shirinda and Joseph Shabalala, testify to being exemplars of spirituality, which is conveyed in their performance and to the audience,

In general terms, spirituality can be defined as the quality relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things, as in a religious song of the kind associated with African-American Christians of the southern US, and thought to derive from the combination of European hymns and African musical elements by black slaves (*Oxford Dictionary*). That is, spirituality can be described as an aspect of human life that is associated with a combination of the music and inner self, as, for example, with indigenous African people. Elements that affect humans and their functions, as reflected in spirituality, are worth investigating through a holistic approach. Taylor's definition of spirituality states that:

> *although definitions vary on some points, they seem to agree that all people are spiritual beings. Everyone has a spiritual dimension that motivates, energizes, and influences every aspect of his or her life. Spirituality can be considered a basic human quality that transcends gender, race, color, and national origin. At the same time, spirituality has many intangible aspects and is an intensely personal issue. It means different things to different people, and these differences are often difficult to describe. Many individuals cannot describe "a spiritual experience," yet they are convinced that they have experienced something spiritual*

(Leonard & Carlson, 2015: 9)

While theorists and researchers have yet to agree on a single universally accepted theory or definition of spirituality, some would deny its existence or impact on health and healing (Leonard & Carlson, 2015). For instance, the study entitled, *Music, Spirit Possession and the In-between: Ethnomusicological Inquiry and the Challenge of Trance*, questions the validity of the integration of music and spirits in academia (Jankowsky, 2007). Jankowsky's observation calls for a well-informed approach when debating the incorporation of spirituality and music.

Leonard and Carlson (2015) respond to Jankowsky's questioning by citing three dimensions of spirituality:

- The physical dimension (body) is world-conscious. It is that aspect of individuals that allows them to taste, feel, see, hear, smell, and be.
- The psychological dimension (mind) involves self-consciousness and self-identity. It is that aspect of an individual that deals with issues related to human interactions (and associated emotions such as grief, loss, and guilt) on an intimate level.
- The spiritual dimension (spirit) is described as a unifying force within individuals, integrating and transcending all other dimensions. This dimension is also described as God-consciousness, or related to a deity or supreme values. It is concerned with the meaning of life, individual perceptions of faith, and an individual's relationship to the Ultimate Being.

Since this study relates to the social impact of popular music on people, the spiritual dimension, as observed by Leonard and Carlson (2015), is a relevant consideration. A pool of theories exists to serve this purpose. Among these, Leonard and Carlson (2015) mention a theory of sociology which relates to the issue under discussion:

> *Sociology examines the concept of spirituality by studying groups of people. According to sociology, people strongly influence other people, who are in turn influenced by the groups in which they live. Sociology describes spirituality as the spiritual practices and rituals of groups of people as well as the social morality within personal relationships.*

(Leornard & Carlson, 2015: 7)

From an African perspective, Cilliers (2008: 1) writes that "it is almost impossible to define African spirituality", and "certainly impossible to do justice to the richness of this concept within the limitations of this paper", referring to his research. But noting other perspectives that characterise spirituality could create possibilities for justifying this phenomenon. Masango (2006: 931) asserts that "in an African village the image and likeness of God is revered and when you add the concept of Ubuntu, you must also connect it to African spirituality which forms values and good character in a person." This implies that, in an African context, one cannot accurately define spirituality without including Ubuntu and religion. Ubuntu has always been associated with Africans, while the concept of God refers to *Umdali* (the Creator in the African context). The author further reminds us that "South Africans lost their concept of Ubuntu during the apartheid times, when they fought for their liberation" (Masango, 2006: 932). A topic on apartheid is extensively discussed later on in this study. Vilakati et al. (2013: 10) point out that "as a point of departure, a web definition

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of the concept 'African' can be summarised as… 'of Africa' – relating to any part of the African continent, or its peoples, languages, or culture of African people, people who live in Africa or trace their ancestry to indigenous inhabitants of Africa." The inclusion of ancestors and culture fortifies the African context of defining their spirituality since these features identify with the African way of life. This implies that, in order to precisely define African spirituality as reflected in the *Graceland* project, one needs to encompass where African people are situated physically while also considering their way of life (Vilakati et al., 2013). In a study entitled *Spirituality in the Musical Experience*, the *Graceland* project is said to possess mystic influences (Boyce-Tillman, 2007). In this regard, Ubuntu (Masango, 2006; Cilliers, 2008; Vilakati et al., 2013) forms a core element when defining the term spirituality in the African, then in a *Graceland* context. It is this facet that makes African spirituality and therefore music unique. The adjective "African" should therefore be understood in such a manner as to be all-inclusive, embracing all possible meanings of the term: geographic, political, cultural, ideological, religious, and so forth (Vilakati et al., 2013).

South African (as an exponent of African) popular music matters are not an exception, and should also be better understood from this angle. In other words, for initiatives such as the *Graceland* project to continue making a social statement (Greer, 2006), its issues ought to be meticulously observed. One way of doing so is by looking into the spirituality as forming part of the influence on the success of the *Graceland* project. In South Africa, the integration of music and spirit is used on various platforms where South African people worship, amuse themselves, or perform music for cultural purposes. Spirituality cannot be divorced from being the accompaniment of these activities. Mapaya (2011: 66), for instance, observes that

South African music "is grouped into five broad categories, namely Music for Healing Purposes; Music for the Church; Music associated with Rites of Passage; Music associated with Social Entertainment; and Music for Other Purposes." As part of his examples, he makes reference to *ukuthwasa* (*sangoma* initiate). *Ukuthwasa* is among old South African traditions where spirituality plays a crucial role. An individual can only be communicated with by the ancestors, first, before undergoing this ritual. "The training and the experiences of the initiate depend heavily on their connection with their ancestors", where "they guide, direct and drive the process through the dreams of the initiate" (Xaso, 2015: 4). Another example almost similar to *ukuthwasa* is *ubungoma* (being a *sangoma*), a rank above *ukuthwasa.* It emerges that in both instances, an individual can couple *ubungom*a with being a music performer. If an individual has been chosen by the ancestors to become a healer, he or she acquires the ability to connect with the high beings through dreams. This connection results in a passage whereby the initiate's consciousness is taken over by the divine. This process, in which divinity and music cannot be separated, is then called spirituality. Certain individuals manage to avoid the initiation passage by embarking on public music performances as a way of redeeming the initiation process and/or for a commercial purpose. Avoiding a calling by becoming a music performer does create a breather for some, while others can even be recalled from stage performances to undergo the initiation. For example, Buhle Mda, one of the vocalists in one of South African popular groups, The Soil, left the group and went to *sangoma* initiation (*You Tube*). Normally the calling involved bad experiences for the chosen ones. Stage music performance is meant for entertainment, but for a performer who has *amadlozi* (ancestors), such an activity is also used to keep a constant connection with them. On the other hand, in an interview on *mmino wa koša* (a genre of Northern Sotho music),

Mme Rangwato Magoro says her grandmother was a good dancer of *mmino wa malopo* (an ancestral or spiritually oriented Sepedi music), although she was not an initiated healer (Masoga, 2015). This example adds to a proof that there is connectivity between the African tradition and music, which results in spirituality. To support Masoga's (2015) findings, a study that deliberates on matters around slaughtering of a beast and Zulu traditions also considerably incorporates *ingoma* (song) and *izinyanga* (diviners or healers) as part of the customs (Mnguni, 2006). A prominent South African musician, Sipho Mabuse, was introduced to drumming by Ntate Manuel, who was a musician and a *sangoma* (Mojapelo, 2008). Moreover, the *Graceland* project included M.D. Shirinda, a South African musician who was a well-known traditional healer (Madalane, 2012). In Africa, it is not unusual for a music performer to be possessed with spirituality.

Moreover, the concept of incorporating music and spirituality is not new in Africa. People of this continent have been celebrating spirituality through music for a long time. For instance, during slavery, "the network of communal houses offered support for new migrants and freed slaves by providing an environment in which they could find others who shared their language, customs, and beliefs, and each house corresponded to a political, ethnic, or linguistic sodality in the sub-Sahara" (Jankowsky, 2006: 375). This serves as testimony to how Africans breached repression by employing spirituality as a strategic tool to promote harmony among themselves. During the course of these activities, which included the invoking of saints and spirits, rituals were performed in association with musical tradition (Jankowsky, 2006). Jankowsky lists countries such as Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon among regions which took part in these exercises.

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Apparently, certain backward perceptions about African music are disguised tactics used for stealing cultures for profit. Practitioners who are also researchers admit to the fact of this occurrence. In essence, their studies support the existence of spirituality, and some argue against exploitation of practitioners who are associated with such music in regard to copyright and political matters. In a paper entitled "Music, Spirit Possession and the Copyright Law: Cross-cultural Compassions and Strategic Speculations", Scherzinger (1999: 103), asserts that "musicologists are beginning to be disturbed by cases of Western artists using music from other parts of the world for profit", which appears to have prompted the author to explore "the confrontation of copyright rules with various traditionally non-Western notions of music making and offer strategies for negotiating their antagonistic demands." The lament by Scherzinger (1999) confirms the presence of copyright disputes, which also indirectly verifies the existence of spirituality in pop. He makes mention of writers such as Zemp (1996), Frith (1993) and Taylor (1995) as among those whose works are concerned with issues around copyright laws, where music is either related to the ancestors or spirits, or is indigenous and coming from somewhere other than the West. Among the tactics used for manipulating popular music Scherzinger shows that:

> *Sherylle Mills, whose article otherwise exhibits an exemplary vigilance to the "power discrepancy between traditional communities and the multi-national music industry," argues that the copyright requirements under U.S. law – that music "have specific author . . . be captured on a tangible medium and . . . be original" – are "stubbornly ethnocentric," because they were designed for commercially oriented societies and are indifferent to "non-Western" understandings of music (ibid.: 80, 63). She carefully substantiates her argument with examples from various quarters: "the Pintupi," for example, "believe that songs are captured, not composed, by a man's spirit when he sleeps," and thus such composition cannot be*

promoted "through the United States' method of financial incentives"
(ibid.: 62).

(Scherzinger, 1999: 103)

Seemingly, this is a formulated means intended to develop certain cultures at the expense of others i.e. enabling a particular culture to exploit and demean others. An ongoing trend of this nature demands agent attention. To demonstrate how the indigenous approach works, Scherzinger (1999) states that

> *according to Sherylle Mills: "the Suyas would not designate th[e] man [that can teach new songs by mimicking his spirit's singing] as the 'creator' of songs" (ibid.: 64), and thus the music is compelled into the public domain. More generally, Mills claims that "in many traditions, sacred songs stem from ancient spirits or gods . . . The job of the keepers is to accurately reproduce the ancient song, not necessarily to add 'original' intellectual modifications" (ibid.: 65), in effect denying copyright for lack of an originality requirement. In sum, because the author, if there is one at all, is often a community of musicians, because the tangible medium of the music is in many cases orally transmitted, and because the music is frequently a reproduction rather than an invention, non-Western music becomes uncopyrightable.*

(Scherzinger, 1999: 103)

Such outcomes should not come as a surprise since "much of the debate about how such cases should be arbitrated has focused on the culturally specific lineaments of the current copyright law – its origins in European book publishing, the signing of the Berne Convention of 1886" (Scherzinger, 1999: 102). Like other economic matters which are of African origin, their fate depends on the mercy of the laws crafted elsewhere. Hence a need to employ

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mechanisms that talk to African matters is critical, such as an Afrocentric approach because of its ability to underpin African philosophies to counter an unjust alien hegemony.

2.4.3 African music approach

African music style is worth exploring because of its distinct character, which emerges as a factor that prompts spirituality during social gatherings where popular music takes place. The complexity of the rhythmic and melodic elements of African music has long been acknowledged as a contributory factor to fresh ideas in popular music universally. Munyaradzi and Zimidzi (2012) observe that "it is important to investigate Africa's contributions to the music industry." Concepts such as *Graceland* are among the projects that opened doors for South African music internationally, for a major portion of its character is rooted in the characteristics of African music.

Regardless of the still on-going criticisms and gatekeeping regarding its character, African music deservedly found its place in the international market as a competent body of work. It was as far back as 1928 that Hornbostel, for instance, offered to explain certain features of African rhythms to the West, and these still appear to be puzzling today (Blacking, 1955). Ambiguous perceptions of African music have arisen in regard to its analytical processes in the West, while audiences are mesmerised by its charismatic quality. Chernoff (1979) (in Sowande, 2018) proclaims that "we first accept the different principles on which African music is based, then we learn to admire the way it achieves excellence, and finally we can appreciate its movement and cultural meaning" (p121). However, much of music politics is

tackled in the next section of this survey. Of particular interest in this section is creating an understanding of the tendency of South Africa's popular music style to be used as a possible strategic tool for fostering future collaboration such as the *Graceland* project. But in order to share Chernoff's (1979) position on this subject, one needs to first understand the cultural background of African music through being an active practitioner. Such an exercise helps in grasping the essentials of this field. Perhaps Paul Simon understood part of this fact, hence he took it upon himself to travel to South Africa to engage with indigenous musicians for the recording of *Graceland.*

Southern African music is well known for its cross-penetrating symmetries and near-symmetries that characterise harmonic patterning (Scherzinger, 1999: 1). Although Scherzinger's study focuses on Zimbabwean and Mozambican music, relations between South Africa and these two regions have been nurtured by musicians who migrate to South Africa to promote their craft to make a living. They bring with them a different feel from that of South Africa. For instance, their trendy "interlocking performance techniques, asymmetric melodic lines, polyrhythmic interlacing of parts, shifting metric downbeats, and inherent patterns", observed by Scherzinger (2010: 1), add more flavour when combined with the South African style, which mainly consists of a 4/4 time signature. Ray Phiri, a guitarist and arranger of *Graceland*, refers to *Crazy Love* Vol. II as "like the music of Malawi and Zimbabwe" (Greer, 2006: 49). His statement should not come as a surprise since he has a connection to Malawi, another sister country, in his approach, while M.D. Shirinda's roots (he is also a member of *Graceland*) can be traced from Mozambique (Madalane, 2012). Clearly, after the entanglements which ultimately eroded African music, there still exist

vibrant South African indigenous components which to date have a good record in the upholding of heritage.

Apart from traces of music from neighbouring countries, the *Graceland* project also consists of urban and traditional South African sounds. The presence of these elements plays a major part in strengthening the uniqueness of this project. They deepen the understanding of the origin of some of the sounds that helped the *Graceland* project to gain its success.

South African traditional styles such as the *Isicathamiya* of Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Ballantine, 1989), the *mbhaqanga* style of Boyoyo Boys (Greer, 2006), and township music styles serve as good examples of the traditional elements in the *Graceland* project. Feld (1988: 35) states that "in both cases the actual musical contribution – the structure and performance of the song materials – seems to owe much more to the bands than to Simon." In other words, African traditional music formed an important aspect of the project. Boyoyo Boys were critical of the inclusion of "Gumboots", "I Know What I Know" and "The Boy in the Bubble" in *Graceland* (Feld, 1988: 35). On the other hand, Joseph Mshengu Shabalala (the group's leading vocalist) talks about Ladysmith Black Mambazo's contribution in *Graceland* when stating that the main aim is to ensure that "*Isicathamiya* speaks to the audience rather than other choirs or the judges" (Nkabinde, 1997: 73). This tactic in vocal delivery by Ladysmith Black Mambazo has been prominent worldwide, partly because despite the language difference, they sing to communicate with the hearts of the audiences. This statement connects to a point I made earlier concerning spirituality and music. The main function of African music is to appeal to the community. Apart from amusing crowds, its

purpose is to communicate on various life issues. A certain approach and skill such as "tuning down to a soft, low key choral sound called 'Sithululu' with voice parts blended in velvet harmony" (Nkabinde, 1997: 73), as in the case of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, is required to achieve this. Moreover, other original elements that involve the audience are created for music to cut through. For instance:

> *Both bombing and sithululu employ a lot of embellishments such as: grr grr or drr fIT Shi-e-she-he-she, hey wethu and ululation. In live performances ululation comes from the members of the audience, particularly the ladies. "She-e-she-he-she" enhances the choreography, it agrees with the movement of the foot when they are doing the Zulu traditional dance.*
>
> *(Nkabinde, 1997: 74)*

This originality, coupled with elements of American music, gives an advantage to South African popular music that ensures its appeal even to the ears of an international audience.

2.4.4   An analysis of the Graceland music album

As a way of achieving a comprehensive treatment of this topic, the thematic content and meaning (or lack thereof) of the songs on the *Graceland* album are analysed. But because of its culturally interlinked nature, an analysis of *Graceland*'s musical style is also undertaken. This exercise will be helpful in finding out how the context of *Graceland* connects with the South African historical background and that of popular music of the 1980s.

In most cases, the layout on the sleeve of an album provides a glimpse of what to expect when one listens to the music. Apart from the titles of the songs, the outline on the cover gives an indication of the album's mood. And so it is with *Graceland*. The cover of the recording depicts a white man riding on a white horse, wearing traditional attire, and holding an assegai in his hand. This portrait reminds one of epic movies based on Western events where a brave individual goes on a venture on behalf of his nation to conquer the world and return a hero. Indeed, Paul Simon embarked on a musical venture in a foreign land, and went came back to his homeland as a successful individual. He travelled to South Africa, a land in which he set foot for the first time. Subsequently, he ventured through it with the intention of fulfilling his destiny. The main aim of his venture was achieved. Ultimately, the success of *Graceland* made him a hero, in musical terms.

The first track of the *Graceland* album is entitled "*The Boy in the Bubble*". This is where a South African pulse instantly comes through. The catchy sound of an accordion introduces the tune. It was an accordion that caught Simon's attention when he listened to Boyoyo Boys' recording, and which made him take a trip to South Africa. The distinct character of the sound of an accordion in "The Boy in the Bubble" can be traced to the popular music of Lesotho, which combines *lesiba* and *litolobonya* styles. Lesotho is a small enclave of a country totally surrounded by South Africa. Its location should explain the musical relationship between these two countries. A Basotho accordion style of play was first introduced during the first mining and industrialisation era in South Africa, where workers interacted with an accordion.

Unsurprisingly, Greer (2006) states that an accordion's improvisation at the beginning of the song is ambiguous. It is natural to mistake certain African musical sounds as not making sense because of their complexity. However, I disagree with Greer on this point. The accordion in "The Boy in the Bubble" is not improvising; it is playing a melodic line. However, I understand where Greer is coming from with his opinion, since the Basotho approach on this instrument can be confusing if one is not familiar with their sound. "The Boy in the Bubble" is a cover version whose original form is by a Lesotho band called Tao Ea Masekha, to whom the song is co-credited (Meintjes, 1990). The characteristic sound of an accordion in this song is a traditional sound used in South African popular music, which in *Graceland* is played by Forere Motloheloa (Toulson, 2016), a member of Tao Ea Matsekha. The accordion in *Boy* continues to play throughout the track. Greer (2006: 29) observes this and concludes that "the accordion not only plays a vital role in introducing the South African character of the album but also provides a crucial musical link to later, non-African songs." To hype an accordion's charisma was a good choice in this regard since its musical patterns are familiar to a Western audience. It originated in Germany (Hennessy & Meagher, 2017), and was adopted by black South African musicians via the colonialists in Africa. The African and European link is thus created here. As a way of completing this link, Simon also added another African flavour in the form of Tao Ea Matsekha's style of drumming and bass line, while Ray Phiri played lead guitar with Demola Adepoju on pedal steel guitar.

In an interview on the technicalities involved in creating "The Boy in the Bubble", Simon stated that the song was created through stacking the lyrics over an already existing track

(Simon, 2012). The instrumentation of the song was conserved as Simon was generally happy with its arrangement and sound. He was, however, not impressed with the general outcome of the song, which included the lyrics (Simon, 2012). According to the interview, the track was what he could live with while finding the lyrics which would be to his satisfaction. This meant that he could cancel the lyrics and rewrite them while keeping the same track. Technically, the song proved to have been a challenge in its putting together. Simon's trouble concerning "The Boy in the Bubble" could be attributed to the fact that he could not afford to lose the spontaneity of the recording of the track, particularly the accordion part. As the introductory song in the album, careful measures had to be taken when constructing a transmission from Africa to a Western audience. However, Simon's connection with the recording of the accordion suggests that he was desperate to make the accordion intro work in the song. Because of its distinct playing it was difficult to join it to the measured part. During my interview with Isaac Mtshali (personal communication, September 28, 2017), the drummer in Stimela who also took part in the production of *Graceland*, he said that he usually helped in cueing Forere Motloheloa on "The Boy in the Bubble" during rehearsals. Indeed, "The Boy in the Bubble" included more South African elements in terms of approach, which fused well with those of America, thereby enticing the listeners and ultimately contributing to the success of the project.

Among the critics who wrote about "The Boy in the Bubble" was Ewen (1987), who related the song to "mystical connections between primitive magic and modern technology" (Ewen, 1987: 371). In other words, Ewen (1987) suggests that there is a thin line between traditional beliefs and innovative standards in the song. This observation is evident in "The Boy in the

Bubble" music video on YouTube, where modern technological machinery and a tropical forest are displayed side by side. A related view also emerges in Greer's (2006) opinion on the lyrical content of the song, where Simon states that technological advances made him find out about South African music. This proves that technology played a critical role in Simon's success in making the *Graceland* project, thus boosting his career at the time. It is also evidence that the musical profession made great progress in technology during the 1980s (Greer, 2006). A detailed discussion on Western music technology versus that of African appears earlier in this study. Greer's observation appears to be indirectly talking to Ewen's view on the evolution of the technological world versus the primitive world. Modernity can be associated with the West, but the primitive denotes Africa. This is how the two regions have always been portrayed to the rest of the world. But according to Simon in the song, although differences between America and Africa have been highlighted by America's relentless path to modernization, there is something that always brings them together. An individual's interpretation of *Graceland* really depends on his or her unique perception, geographical location, and social environment. In a demonstration of one person's interpretations of *Graceland*, Meintjes (1990) laments that:

> *as the Boy in the Bubble on Graceland sings: "These are the lasers in the jungle/Lasers in the jungle somewhere/Staccato signals information...." To which Ray Phiri has the response on the album Look, Listen and Decide: "Who's fooling a who?/who's fooling are you fooling a me or am I fooling a you?/Who's using a who?/who's a me?/are you using a me, baby, or am I...*

(Meintjes, 1990: 69)

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Clearly, "The Boy in the Bubble" appears to have different meanings for different people. In the case of South Africa, the song's interpretation and impact are determined by either honesty or dishonesty about the realities taking place in Africa, and the history behind the modernity and primitiveness of societies.

Another song that starts almost like "Boy" is "I Know What I Know". Like the accordion introduction in "The Boy in the Bubble", "I Know What I Know" starts with cracking *mbhaqanga* guitar lines which are suddenly followed by a Xitsonga version, played by the late M.D. Shirinda, another South African pop icon. A guitar is vigorously prominent through use of improvisation at the breaks which close the gaps in the song. Traditional melodic lines play a major role in embellishing the vocals in this track. The AABA structure of "I Know What I Know" is a typical form of *mbhaqanga.* Because of the similarities between *mbhaqanga* and the Tsonga guitar style of playing in general, it would seem that it was simple for Shirinda to make a transition between the two, or sometimes merge them in the song *I Know What I Know*, since he was inspired by Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens, a *mbhaqanga* band. Because of this comparison, one would expect the roaring voice of Simon Mahlathini Nkabinde to follow the rhythm section which introduces the leading voice in "I Know What I Know". Greer (2006) agrees that *mbhaqanga* influenced M.D. Shirinda's music. Shirinda confirmed acquiring inspiration from a *mbhaqanga* (Mahlathini and the Mohotella Queens) band when I interviewed him about the *Graceland* project in 2016. He asserted that Mahlathini and the Mahotella Queens motivated his style of music, especially Mahlathini's vocal ability (M.D. Shirinda, personal communication, November 22, 2016). Indeed, a roaring voice similar to that of Mahlathini's can be heard in some of Shirinda's

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recordings, particularly "Mafiki Zolo". Hence Marks Mankwane's (the Makhona Tsohle band guitar player) style of play at the beginning of "I Know What I Know". In essence, Mahlathini as the king of *mbhaqanga*, and Shirinda a giant of Xitsonga traditional music, sustained Mahlathini's vocal ability after his death in 1999 (Mojapelo, 2008). With regard to the *Graceland* project, a significant part of this album came as a *déjà vu* to the international audience that were fans of Mahlathini and the Mahottela Queens music.

Backing vocals of General M.D. Shirinda and the Gaza Sisters band play a crucial role in "I Know What I Know" with their Xitsonga singing. They add an African traditional approach in the chorus of the track. Because of their distinctive voices, Simon decided to use them "as the heart of this track" (Greer, 2006). Actually, the prevalence of the unique backing vocals is evident when one listens to the song. The lyrics depict a man and a woman, with money being the subject matter between them. Simon "adds lyrics that respect the original intent of the music, creating a very light, humorous story about a singer and woman trading odd, yet flirtatious comments to each other" (Greer, 2006: 38). However, unlike in situations whereby backings would sound lower than a leading voice, but still audible, it is not the case in "I Know What I Know". Simon's voice is deliberately made prominent over those of the backings in the chorus section. He sings on top of the backing vocals in such a way that they are not clear. It is obvious that in the recording backing vocals were moved back so that their volume sounds the same as that of the rest of the backing instrumentation. This indicates that the lyrical content of the Gaza sisters is not of any significance except in complementing the song like the rest of the instruments. They sound as though they are treated as a footnote to the track. The main purpose of this tactic appears to have been to ensure that the song sounded

friendly and appealing to a Western audience. Rather than corroborating perceptions that *Graceland* is what Meintjes (1990) refers to as a "collaboratively intertwined" project, a closer look at "I Know What I Know" contradicts them. The meaninglessness of backing vocals in this track emerges as the actual cause of the unavailability of its written form for reference and public use. An analysis of "I Know What I Know" suggests that the song is designed uncompromisingly for a commercial purpose, for which it did not necessarily require the engagement of the Gaza sisters' recognisable participation and therefore identification. Towards a similar motion, in her review entitled "I Wanna Be Me: Rock Music and the Politics of Identity/Disruptive Divas: Feminism, Identity and Popular Music", Warwick (2004) reacts to Gracyk's (2001) *I Wanna Be Me: Rock Music and the Politics of Identity* on the matter of appropriation pertaining to popular music. Her argument is on Gracyk's (2001) defensiveness over seemingly unscrupulous tendencies that involve Western and African popular music, with cross-pollination and borrowings being the core of the matter. As a way of setting the pace on this exchange, Gracyk states that:

> *It is often asserted, with minimal argument that, appropriation is fine unless one belongs in a dominant cultural group. No one, so far as I can tell, has ever criticised the Navajo people for appropriating drypainting and weaving techniques. No one sees any problem in African Americans in New York's Bronx creating hip hop music by borrowing Jamaican DJ practices and Puerto Rican syncopation from recent immigrants. Yet many cultural theorists of color believe that appropriations by white Europeans and Americans from other cultures are automatically exploitative and fundamentally wrong. (Indeed, many recent writers treat "appropriation" as synonymous with "wrongful cultural appropriation"). Since rock would not exist without appropriation, this is a deeply troubling charge against rock.*

(Gracyk, 2001: 97)

Indeed, appropriation issues of fraudulence involving multicultural music collaboration is not a new matter in this study. Kealy (1979) determined earlier the mischief where dominant and emerging cultures collaborate in popular music. Warwick's (2004) words that appear as a response to Gracyk's (2001) lament about appropriation, notwithstanding Simon's integrity towards his co-workers, states that he "superimposed his voice as a soloist singing new melodies and lyrics about cosmopolitan postmodern angst over songs previously situated with the lives and struggles of aggrieved black communities" (Warwick, 2004: 705). In other words, considering that both parties are now equally aware of what goes on in popular music collaboration and other matters involved, insights which were initially only the privilege of certain parties, for partnerships of this nature to proceed smoothly, the supremacy of one party and the exclusion and exploitation of the other needs to be a thing of the past. Excluding existing allegations, and others, the *Graceland* project stands out as a model for shaping future collaboration.

Considering the background of the *Graceland* project, the lyrics in "I Know What I Know" have no political implications, but the instrumentation and sound signify more than they appear to do. The arrangement suggests a historical element that is infused in the style (Meintjes, 1990). In other words, even though the lyrics of the song are entertaining, the instrumentation signifies a serious background involving South African musicians and the rest of the people. This is because of Africans' traditional sense of communication through, for instance, mere drumming, when lyrics would not be included. In his book, *In Township Tonight!* "Coplan argues that songs whose words have little political reference may communicate a sense of cultural pride and creative development vital to African identity

formation and black political consciousness" (Greer, 2006: 38). Clearly, an analysis of "I Know What I Know" brings about deeper meanings regarding the *Graceland* project and collaboration in general, when popular music from developing regions such as Africa are involved. "Under African Skies" seems to present an angle which speaks to interpretation by Meintjes (1990) and Greer (2006), of the situation in South Africa during and before the release of the album.

"Under African Skies" is another masterpiece that produces mellow sounds which still capture the attention of a listener even 32 years after its release. The track has undoubtedly kept the *Graceland* album vitalised after this long period. An ABC News interviewer echoes this sentiment when he cross-questions Paul Simon and Joe Belinger about Belinger's movie of the same title (ABC News, 2012). At the same time, "Under African Skies" becomes the core of the controversies that resonate globally even to this day. In an interview (ABC News, 2012) Greer (2006) and Ching (2009) bring up matters around controversies concerning the song. But first, discussing the technical part of this track may provide deeper understanding.

As part of the introduction is a guitar, which if one had been living in Southern Africa long enough would immediately arouse sizzling emotions accompanied by a vivid picture of its natives and their daily practices. Being a guitarist myself, I find it easy to relate the playing approach to the song to Ray Phiri. It is perhaps reminiscent of his accustomed way of playing which cuts across almost all the musical cultures of Southern Africa. A guitar-playing style in this part of the region can on its own narrate the whole story. Its persistent rhythm patterns dig down into the emotions of even an individual who has been listening lazily. This is

because a guitar from Zimbabwe, Malawi, Mozambique and other parts in the south caters for anyone who has either seen men working in the mines, women ploughing on the farms and children playing on river banks or dusty streets in the townships. In the townships of South Africa where performers used to flock around in the '80s for music opportunities, a guitar sound flashes back to childhood moments when domestic workers by day and mothers and housewives by night would get off heavily overcrowded trains that came from cities which curfewed them back to their slums and shacks.

After the guitar introduction comes a bass line that does nothing more than emphasise the story told by the guitar. This emphasis, which has yet to be captured in academia, is called *umgxobanyawo* (stomping). *Umgxobanyawo* can also be associated with bass players who have lived or learned from rural players such as Bakithi Khhumalo. His rural background and musicianship is discussed in detail later in this study. *Umgxobanyawo* is one among old traditional Zulu music styles. However, it lost its prominence when it was combined with *uMgqahiyo* to form *uMbhaqanga* which resulted in an urbanised fusion of Zulu traditional musical approaches.

This traditional rigid rhythm would then be filled with Simon and Linda Ronstadt's mellow singing that seems not to mind the aggressive rhythm of the song, particularly during the second section. Here, a relatively hasty rhythm particularly that of the bass line which is propelled by a firm and steady kick, is matched against smooth singing. In this regard, it is a successful tactic to maintain a stiff, stubborn and traditional rhythm while adding a fresh, soulful flavour in the vocals. Simon and Ronstadt's style of singing immediately reminds one

of another musical element in the *Graceland* album. When listening closely to Simon and Linda's approach, and then turning to "Homeless" for a short moment, it is easy to realise the similarity with that of Ladysmith Black Mambazo in their singing. A gentle, noiseless and velvety characteristic of *isicathamiya* emerges in the vocals of "Under African Skies". Integrating interchanging South African and a bit of Western instrumentation, and going from *isicathamiya* to English vocals and vice versa, appears as key in the creation of consistency in the *Graceland* album. Meintjes (1990) talks about "ohh" vocables that are sung by Simon in "Under African Skies", which the author refers to as a linguistic integration of Zulu and English used to familiarise non-African listeners with the music. A similar tactic is used in "Under African Skies" whereby sounds that are found in both languages are involved to enhance the listenership. There is other incorporation of the languages elsewhere in the album where Ladysmith Black Mambazo seems to have the influence in "too loo loo" vocables (Meintjes, 1990). Furthermore, drilling vocals similar to that of Johnny Clerk's (a South African *maskandi* musician) are clearly displayed during a more forceful third section of the song. Overall, "Under African Skies" singing is convincingly influenced by Southern African traditional style.

As far as the lyrics are concerned, Simon seems to depict the harsh experiences of Joseph in the track. Chin (2009) wonders whether in this song Simon is referring to Shabalala, since "Under African Skies" comes just before "Homeless" in the album. The answer to this question could be self-explanatory. Either way, a Joseph in the song and a Ladysmith Black Mambazo leader both come from the similar harsh conditions. Ray Phiri says about this song that the lyrics "take this child…give her wings to fly through harmony" are a statement linked

to apartheid in South Africa (Greer, 2006: 47). It is then safe to conclude that "Under African Skies" is completely driven by South African feel and experiences.

However, "Under African Skies" brings up issues that add to the controversies around *Graceland.* A mellow female voice in the 'Under African Skies" recording belongs to Linda Ronstadt of "Long Long Time", a hit of the 70s. She was on the list of foreign musicians who were forbidden from performing in South Africa during the UNESCO cultural ban. This observation aggravates the *Graceland* tangles which have pervaded the pop music world. Greer (2006) argues that Simon had to have known about this when he engaged Ronstadt for *Graceland*. Notwithstanding Greer's argument, there must have been something that pulled Ronstadt into the making of this song. One thing amongst others is the political nature of this tune that could have created a working relationship between the two which would have been perceived as defiance of the cultural boycott by Simon. The fact that "Under African Skies" talks about the political struggles of African people emerges as among the reasons for such defiance Ronstadt subscribed to revolutionary struggles against segregation. Her involvement in a fight against racism, which got her into the bad books of the American authorities only fortifies this view. For instance, "In July 2004 she was banned from ever performing at the Alladin Casino in Las Vegas in 1990 after dedicating one of her songs to Michael Moore as she had on every other date on her tour" (Garofalo, 2013: 18). The involvement of Ronstadt in *Graceland* suggests different views about Simon's controversies concerning *Graceland.*

Of late, the documentary mentioned above, with the same title, *Under African Skies*, where Simon is featured expansively, attempts to tell the *Graceland* story. Joe Belinger, the director of the film, explains how, despite all the controversies around *Graceland*, Simon was open about talking about the project (ABC News, 2012). After all, projects of *Graceland*'s stature deserve to be preserved as heritage for future purposes. Collaboration of this nature, where diverse cultures are intertwined in a music recording, and go on to become globally recognised, are rare. Belinger thinks that what Simon did was revolutionary, but obscured by the cultural issues that were involved (ABC News, 2012). Unfortunately, this is a fact which will always stand as an obstacle, even where developmental aspects such as music relationships are involved. A part of history which entails racial warfare serves more than anything else to arouse paranoia about black people. During their interview, Simon states that perceptions that whenever an American white man collaborates with an African black man, the white man is likely to exploit the black is inverse racism (ABC News, 2012). Because of South Africa's cruel past and the magnitude of its effect on black people, *Graceland* is bound to attract more critics than supporters. Regrettably, there is opposition to the idea of launching similar projects to *Graceland* at the present time. Nonetheless, more than reflecting *Graceland*'s tale, the *Under African Skies* documentary appears to afford Simon a platform to redeem himself from accusations that have been following him since the making of the album.

In most cases, the purpose of up and slow tempos and other dynamics in music is to capture a listener's emotions. In *Graceland*, *mbhaqanga* gives the album a fast tempo while *isicathamiya* contributes to a slow one. The above discussion is based on the songs of

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Graceland that are relatively fast. *Mbhaqanga* is found to be a contributory factor in the fastness of the album. On the other hand, "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes" and "Homeless" are two tracks which are driven by *isicathamiya* with its slow beat. This is in exception with the main section of "Diamonds" because of its relatively fast tempo.

The introduction of "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes" begins with *a cappella* singing by Ladysmith Black Mambazo in Zulu. In between the third and fourth beat of the fourth measure, Simon joins the singing in English on top of the *mbube* style, which is in Zulu. Such a gesture suggests shutting out cultural barriers, while the creation of good music becomes the priority. This point could also be proven when an approach that is mainly used by one of the cultures involved in the form of call-and-response is employed. Erlmann (1994: 177) seems to be on point when describing the engagement of *mbube*, language integration and call-and-response in "Diamonds" as a "seamless, blurred and almost contourless cross-referencing". Call and response is the signature style of *mbube* music, which today is widely acknowledged. After the unaccompanied singing, the key of the song then changes from E major to F major with a guitar burst played by Ray Phiri, which brilliantly connects the intro to the rhythm section. Isaac Mtshali (drums) and Bakithi Khumalo (bass) then fuse in by locking the song, thereby giving it a firm structure. In this tune, Bakithi Khumalo imitates almost all the elements in the song through improvisation, which again is typical of Southern African bass lines. The percussion of a Senegalese, Youssou N'dour, completes the rhythm, which also adds in the African identity.

"Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes" stands out as representing what *Graceland* as a project is all about in terms of collaborative elements. This song entails almost every musical sound, from percussion and horns to the vocals. It seems to have included almost all the elements that comprised *Graceland,* even in terms of cultural diversity and languages. It is more like an opening up to each other's long-hidden matters, an understanding, acceptance and tolerance of either side from where the participants in the *Graceland* project originate. Erlmann (1994: 177) points out that "the attempt on Graceland to construct an authentic identity, is informed by a semiotic traffic back and forth across this frontier." Arguably, through this track Simon was able to create a link between diverse cultures like never before. This is despite the fact that in an interview on the film of *Under African Skies*, he says that the song "Graceland" is where DNA was most intertwined (ABC News, 2012). However, his statement contradicts Greer's (2012) findings where Simon is quoted as saying that the title track is "less typical of South African music than most other tracks" in the album (p33). Still, it indeed took Simon on an adventurous journey composed of South African background and African musicians, a trip to a foreign land filled with its own culture into which he manoeuvred, and a working relationship between the parties for *Graceland* to come into being. A harmonious interaction it may have been, but an extreme view about *Graceland* also surfaces where Erlmann (1994) states that:

> *In trying to bring to the fore the voices of difference while at the same time recognising the universal in the local, Graceland partakes of what Arjun Appadurai has called a certain kind of cannibalism, a politics of the mutual effort of sameness and difference to cannibalise one another and thus to proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular.*

One could therefore conclude that this analysis is about a comprehensive understanding of the core elements needed to create *Graceland*. These include collaborating in terms of diverse cultural music relations, the interactions between black and white in achieving a common goal, emerging controversies about the project, and the fair acknowledgement of the music copyright and sharing of spoils. Arjun Appaduraj's point of view is precise in observation and analysis, and may not be surpassed. However, it cannot be avoided that the issues as observed by Appaduraj regarding the tracks also suggest the survival of the fittest in terms of the powerful influence of one participant over the other. In other words, although collaborative pop may be obtainable through an imbalanced contribution by one or other participant, there would still be reservations about the achievement as long as there is no indication of the transparency, respect and fairness involved among those at work who come from various cultures and regions, with various capabilities. But since the profits of a musical partnership are intended to satisfy every individual taking part, careful measures ought to be taken during the formation of the projects to ensure fairness to all.

The distinct contributions in *Graceland* are what has accorded this project its long success. However, notwithstanding other elements involved in its creation, discussing *isithacamiya* may contribute to a proper understanding of what it took to bring *Graceland* about.

Isicathamiya emerges as among the most significant elements in the *Graceland* recording. This musical style arguably played a vital role in popularising the *Graceland* album, which

resulted in a fortune for Simon, numerous accolades for those involved, and putting Ladysmith Black Mabazo on the map. Exploring *isicathamiya* is another form of determining the role of the *Graceland* project in South African popular music. This exercise should provide insight into the interlinking of the two musical cultures involved.

Numerous authors such as Ballantine (1989), Erlmann (1991), Ntaka (2007) and Gunner (2006), to mention only a few, have researched *isicathamiya*. Ladysmith Black Mambazo, a South African male choir, is currently internationally well known for singing this style of music. The singing group was the first *isicathamiya* choir to produce an album, *Amabutho*, which earned them a gold disc (Nkabinde, 1997: 72). They are still winning awards. Their recent winning of a Grammy award this year (2018) proves the quality of this genre. As umuZulu whose background is in one of the rural villages of eNquthu (KwaZulu-Natal), I witnessed *isicathamiya* as a boy during weddings and other social events. Ballantine (1989: 307) acknowledges the prominence of *isicathamiya* by writing that it is "arguably the most important vocal style to have emerged in South Africa this century" (Stewart, 2001). Indeed, its stature has been a jewel to be reckoned with, locally and internationally. With regard to the *Graceland* album, *isicathamiya* may be heard in songs such as "Homeless" and "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes" (Greer, 2006). It is safe to say that Simon was also captivated by it.

A short narration on the background of *mbube* and the circumstance concerning its founder should help with better understanding of the connection between the two styles, with Linda Solomon as the custodian of *mbube*, and Ladysmith Black Mambazo the custodian of

isicathamiya. Isicathamiya, also known as *mbube, cothoza,* or *ngom'ebusuku,* is derived from the South African traditional musical style called *mbube*. *Mbube* was characterised by its call and response patterns, which became popular during the 1930s and '40s (Greer, 2006). *Mbube*, Zulu for a lion, is a song well known in music circles and households around the world. In 1939, a former Zulu herdboy who became a migrant worker calling himself Linda Solomon, wrote a song about lions that attacked cows while they were grazing, and performed it for the crowds around Johannesburg (Dean, 2006). Because of the popularity *of "Mbube",* Solomon was led to what he assumed would be his ticket to success. In the 1950s, he signed the song under Gallo and was paid 10 shillings, and given a job as a floor sweeper and tea server (Wassel, 2009). The *Graceland* version of this story presents tangles concerning power and resources where musicians from developing countries collaborate with established individuals and companies from developed countries. After its release by Gallo, *"*Mbube" found its way to American audiences, where it landed in the hands of the folksinger Pete Seeger, who transcribed the song and made it his own (Dean, 2006). In this study, although Simon fairly shared the royalties and copyright with African musicians who participated in *Graceland*, numerous findings implicate him in having exploited them through imposing himself on their work. However, he is deemed innocent since he did not legally offend the musicians he worked with. Today, "Mbube" is the theme for the famous movie, *The Lion King*, has versions in Spanish, French, Japanese and Danish, and is estimated to have earned about $15 million in composer royalties, while Solomon died a pauper, and his wife was unable to buy a mere headstone for his grave (Dean, 2006). In essence, both Solomon and Ladysmith Black Mambazo embarked on a venture to success through their traditional musical styles, except that Solomon's case involved lawsuits over copyright

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infringement, but the *Graceland* album only entailed debates on the appropriation of a musical culture, which were contested outside the court. There is no intention of confirming the allegations against *Graceland* which are surfacing in this study, but it should be noted that accusations of exploiting African musicians take two forms here – either the violation of policies that govern the music industry, or the manipulation of vulnerable African musicians. Notwithstanding the extent to which it has profited local musicians up to now, preceding works indicate that *mbube*, which would later become *isicathamiya*, has emerged as a prominent musical style that has stirred international political opinion on the socioeconomic issues involved as a result of the desperation of African musicians to sustain themselves.

A distinct musical approach is what gains *isicathamiya* its popularity. As much as the *Graceland* project is among musical ventures that contributed in furthering its fame, it is safe to point out that *Graceland* benefited from the sheer appeal of *isicathamiya*. Consisting usually of ten or more Zulu males led by a leading vocalist, its trendy African traditional-altering style or call and response is involved in seeing the music through. What was innovative about Linda Solomon's tactic in "Mbube" was his exclusion of *bombing*, an approach which was mostly used by singers from the rural areas. On this point, Stewart (2001) cites Coplan: "Urbanized styles of choral music sung by non-westernized Zulu migrants was recorded, both in the more traditional (but not rural) *bombing* mode, and in the more westernized *mbube* form made famous by Solomon Linda" (Coplan, 1979: 144).

2.4.5 Relations between South African and American popular music cultures

As has surely become clear by now, the relationship between the *Graceland* project and South Africa popular music is one that involves both American and African culture. In order to achieve a holistic point of view on the implications of this collaboration for South African popular music of the 1980s, it is necessary to discuss the two musical cultures, which means looking into the relations between the two cultures before the 1980s, then in the period when the *Graceland* project became feasible. Determining the pros and cons of the relationship in this fashion could help in shaping the current state of South African popular music, and envisaging the possibility of similar cultural partnerships in future.

But first, the distinction between matters around popular music and the history of African and American music and how they overlapped during the slavery era should be well understood. For instance, the American pop musician, Paul Simon's, coming to South Africa should not be associated with the American enslavement of Africans (Sullivan, 2001). The *Graceland* project did not benefit only Simon and the American crew that formed part of the production and tours. Although there are gaps in this claim which are intensively looked at later in the study, *Graceland* profited African musicians and other stakeholders of African descent who participated in this venture. In fact, it appears logical to see the project as more beneficial to African musicians, since it provided international exposure to those who had been deprived of it owing to circumstances back in their homelands. However, the current influx of American culture into South Africa via music cannot be overlooked as deterring current popular music from upholding the heritage of this region. It is for her traditional

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practices, amongst other things, that Africa is recognised internationally. For this reason, discussing the *Graceland* project from both perspectives may not be avoided if a holistic approach to the issues is wanted.

Historically, the relationship between American and African culture has been determined by the colonisation of Africa, among other things. When Africans were shipped to America, enslavement, and transformation of their culture, were the disasters that ensued. These developments were strategies employed to ensure a permanent transformation in how Africans viewed themselves and life in general, and facilitate the manipulation and repression of Africans. As a result, music became their sole tool for conserving and reviving themselves and their identity. Abdullah (2009) illustrates how Africans in America used music as a primary mechanism for disseminating their cultural legacy. Waterman (1999) shares this sentiment with regard to music in writing that "American Negro groups have remained relatively homogenous with regard to culture and remarkably so with respect to in-group solidarity" (p. 17). Because of such events, genuine critics do acknowledge African music as a contributory factor internationally through its richness. As proof of its prominence, it influenced American music during slavery. Waterman (1999) states that there is enough similarity between African and European music to allow a relationship. On the other hand, Heller (1992) adds that:

> *for American readers, in particular, it is instructive to trace the influence of black African musical traditions from their West African origins, whence they were imported as black slaves to the American colonies; then back, this time to South Africa via touring troupes of black American descendants of those slaves, later reinforced by the tidal wave of black*

American music that emerged during the 1950s and 1960s; and, finally, back to the United States in the form of some such phenomena as Graceland.

(Heller, 1992: 364)

For a broader understanding of this discourse, one should recognise that the musical culture that is presently influencing South African popular music is not the same as that the West inherited when people of Black Africa were enslaved (Emielu, 2006). Current African and American music is related because of how it is articulated. For example, rhythm in both Western and African music has metre, tempo, duration and time (Munyaradzi & Zimidzi: 2012). These qualities are also evident in the *Graceland* project. Because of these similarities, and the fact that America is advanced in terms of technology and media, which makes that region powerful in the marketing of pop, it is a global leader in terms of cultural influence and music business sense, with the resources for developing the music of that region. The heavy funding and marketing of American pop is the main reason behind the vigorous dissemination of American cultural activities worldwide. "Through soul music (including rhythm and blues and rock and roll), reggae from Jamaica, salsa from Latin America, and even highlife from African cities, multicorporations exert powerful social control in the artistic and economic arenas". (Lawrence-McIntyre & Hunter Havelin Adams, n.d: 1).

A proof of this is how since the inception of radio, South African music content has always favoured foreign music, and American popular music in particular, over local.

This went on until recently when the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) announced the 90% local music content (BBC News, 2016). However, after a short while a local newspaper, *City Press* for example, posted a headline which read "'90% local sucks", which has resulted to the reduction of the quota. Meanwhile, a study titled, Pop Internationalism: Has Half a Century of World Music Trade Displaced Local Culture? By Ferreira & Waldfogel, (2010) discusses cultural goods trade between economies. The authors raise a concern "that cultural products from large economies – in particular the US – will displace the indigenous cultural products of smaller economies" (p1).

However, it should not be forgotten that this tendency forms part of the influence of old legacies that were formulated to advantage the colonial system. Newly democratised states such as South Africa still find it difficult to shed the dark shadows which today form the residue of the previous authorities. The Independent Broadcasting Authority (IBA), for instance, an institution that was strategically deployed for emancipating South African musicians, among others, from their generational frustrations is still found wanting, more than two decades into democracy. Its mandate was clear and to the point: "To serve in the public interest and to promote the ideals, norms and values of our hard-won and well-intended democracy by developing and regulating this crucial sector that provides entertainment, education and information" (Mtimde, 2000: 175). However, because of lack of expertise in the broadcasting field after taking over power from the colonial, then the apartheid system, little has surfaced as concrete solutions to challenges faced by the South African music milieu today. Perhaps Mtimde states it well when he says that:

When the IBA was formed in 1993, there were no precedents in this country and continent. It had no pool of local personnel with experiences and expertise in the field of broadcast regulation. None the less, it has gone on to play a key role and has distinguished itself in restructuring the broadcasting sector in the country.

(Mtimde, 2000: 175).

Notwithstanding the progress made thus far it is easy to predict that Africa stands to be under the influence of her colonisers for a long time in terms of socioeconomic development. This predicament has so far been the cause of unemployment and poverty for most South Africans and the rest of the continent in the music industry.

South African popular music is impacted by this challenge in relation to Western musical culture, which means that at present the South African music scene is saturated with American musical styles. Consequently, this leaves South Africa's popular music with not enough space to showcase its potential, which causes the local music industry to depreciate because of the high tech and overwhelming musical quality America possesses. Hence the South African social "usefulness has been called into question because of its basis on an essentially Western." (James, 1979: 470). Moreover, South African culture is in danger of becoming extinct, absorbed by that of America, since popular music is very much a vehicle for a culture's dispensation and promotion. This will only increase the cultural dominance of America over African states, and in other critical areas such as the economy. Unfortunately, this will be almost impossible to reverse.

Matters concerning South African popular music and the rest of the continent, such as reactions to practices that seem to degrade African music and culture, are emerging. Erlmann (1994) has responded to the perceptions of audiences and critics of South African culture in the West. The author argues that "difference should no longer be seen as something inherent in the content of discrete cultures but rather something to be defined as an intrinsic feature of global music production" (Erlmann, 1994: 1). This implies that, socially, African musical culture is not only segregated, but also regarded as unclear in the West. Dolby (2001) is among writers who make reference to South African popular music, and that of the West and its influence. According to Dolby (2001), new terms have been recently used to ensure the segregation of African music today, irrespective of its accomplishments. The author laments the fact that the notion of "culturalism", which was initially intended to fight racism, has somehow been changed to represent a new form of racism (Dolby, 2001). In Dolby's perspective, culturalism has evolved and become what Balibar (1991) (in Dolby 2001) refers to as "racism without races", which he defines as:

a racism whose dominant theme is not biological heredity but insurmountably of cultural differences, a racism which, at first sight, does not postulate the superiority of certain groups or peoples in relation to others but only the harmfulness of abolishing the frontiers, the incompatibility of lifestyles and traditions

(Dolby, 2001: 10)

The lately devised tactics are intended to guarantee the upholding of the old undesired tendencies with regard to creative cultures. Unfortunately, they stand to affect collaboration, emerging music industries and therefore South African popular music. These tendencies

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undermine one of the main aims of musical collaboration and performance, as is the case with the *Graceland* project, which is the promotion of social cohesion within societies. These developments harm the music industries of both regions; thus socially and collaboratively, both regions stand to lose. For instance, the American music sector is likely to suffer, because, as much as that region is well known for its technological innovations. South Africa is astonishingly advanced in terms of musical styles. However, South Africa promises to catch up in terms of technology, while American music diversity is likely to reach a saturation point. The crises of American popular music of the 1980s set a new example in this regard.

If the situation does not change, it can only be rational to assume that the developed regions would do whatever it takes not to jeopardise their status quo. On the other hand, developing regions such as Africa will remain shadows and consumers of the developed ones. Africa will remain dominated by developed states based on the unfounded perceptions and manipulation of the media.

2.4.6   The economy of collaborative popular music in the context of Graceland

Discussing the economy of popular music is important since it helps in the better comprehension of the popularity and success of ventures such as *Graceland.* However, collaborative pop initiatives, because of their multilayered culture, afford different perspectives regarding their economic value. This section therefore looks at both the spin-offs and the flaws of the economic aspects of collaborative popular music from a general perspective to the project under discussion. Such an approach should afford a holistic

understanding of collaborations of popular music and their economic implications for African states such as South Africa. This is because, apart from promoting social cohesion, popular music improves the lives of the stakeholders, and economies of states.

The concept of collaboration can be defined as an initiative that features cross-national participation in a joint venture or project, with a clearly defined goal that may in certain instances be more of an effective public diplomacy technique (Cowan & Arsenault, 2008). It is a partnering effort by musicians from different backgrounds, with the common goal of making art forms such as music. These partnerships contribute to the communities of the musicians involved through, among other things, the social issues which were addressed earlier in this study. They are perceived by some authors as a commendable way of breaking boundaries in music production. For example, in a chapter entitled "Toward a More Perfect Union: Cross-Cultural Collaboration", Taylor (1997: 173) argues that "collaborations are a crucial way of suspending identities, and identity politics, focusing more on the resulting 'work' than on the process of working together." The author observes that such collaborations are gradually increasing in number, and gives examples such as collaboration between European women and women of colour (Zap Mama), and the interracial collaboration of Johnny Clegg and Sipho Mchunu, who formed South Africa's first mixed-race group, which Johnny and Sipho later called Juluka while in America, including a Native and African group called Song Catchers (Taylor, 1997). The global context of collaborations, as observed by Taylor (1997), is not far from that of *Graceland* except that the *Graceland* project consists not only of interracial but multi-intercontinental cross-cultural collaboration, which is demonstrated through various cultural sounds in the album. Analysing the economic

aspect of collaborations is meaningful, considering the ground that they cover in terms of audience and market.

As noted, generally musical collaboration is a concept that is adopted by various musicians to make money, while creating workmanship between the parties involved. From this point, if working together within a country becomes a success, then it becomes easy partnering with other artists in other countries in order to profit. In attempting to gain the financial support of the creative industry and the humanities at higher learning institutions in London, the team's thinking was shaped by Cathy Brickwood et al.'s *Un(common) Ground: Creative Encounters Across Sectors and Disciplines*, which observes that "The explosive growth, not just in interdisciplinary practice but in creative collaborations across whole sectors including business, art, design, the public sector and academia, requires the collaborative public to become less ad hoc and more strategically informed" (cited in Shiach & Virani, 2016: 7).

In other words, employing informed strategic methods when working on a collaborative project helps in preparing the involved parties to overcome unforeseen circumstances. Subsequently, the existence of harmonious workmanship in collaborations implies a joint venture in achieving a common goal.

One main mechanism worth discussing is a general perspective on the economy of collaborations. This is because the topic relates to the study via a partnership in the *Graceland* project. Understanding the broader scope of this discussion can be helpful when addressing a similar phenomenon at a local level like South Africa.

In developed states, for instance, music partnerships have proved to be successful in bringing together different ideas and promoting social cohesion. Watson (2012) observes this with regard to Germany, where hip hop artists created a common point for performances, interactions and exchange of concepts. These spaces created a platform for musicians from different backgrounds to grow creatively while expanding their profiting territories. Another example is the British drum and bass (D&B) music of the '90s, which is characterised by what is named a dub plate culture, where interactions occur between DJs and aspiring artists for profit (Watson, 2012). But what seems to form a base of interactions between collaborators is a strong social element. If a project is formulated through a healthy social foundation, it is likely to produce positive financial results "Projects are the realisation of a potential that is generated by the practice of drawing on a network of social contacts, ties, and core members of successful previous projects to serve on successor projects; as such, economic action becomes embedded in networks which are socially constructed" (Watson, 2012: 58). But for effective benefits from collaborations, innovative mergers have been introduced, tried and tested. For example, Budner and Grahl (2016) study the large-scale structure of music collaborations using the tools of network science. A collaborations network is used to determine the roles played by particular participants in the partnerships, and is presently applied in network collaborations in the music sector (Budner & Grahl, 2016). Considering the background of music of the '80s, where particular roles of the participants may not have been exhausted, such as in *Graceland*, for instance, this exercise promises to bring more light into the world of collaborations, particularly in developing areas such as South Africa.

The *Graceland* project became one of the most successful projects ever, as far as profitable collaborations were concerned. This project earned substantial revenue (Kartomi, 1999), from which African popular musicians who took part in *Graceland* profited (Gunner, 2006), and became world icons. The *Graceland* project sold 14 million copies of the recording within a year of its release (Collins, 2009). This is an indication that initiatives such as *Graceland* are indeed commendable for improving the lives of artists. For instance, renowned South African musicians such as Ray Phiri, Bakithi Khumalo, and the Ladysmith Black Mambazo were among participants in *Graceland* who experienced being involved in an intercultural music partnership (Gunner, 2006). As part of the legacy of the *Graceland* project, and apart from the riches it brought to some, the likes of Ray Phiri got an opportunity to unveil the conditions of black South African musicians during the 1980s to the rest of the world. In his interview in 2009, Ray Phiri pronounced that "we had one common enemy, whether you were a liberal, a moderate or whatever... music is not only a career – it's a conviction, it is your word, it's your virtue" (Durbach, 2015: 110). This opened a window to South Africa which was closed to the rest of the world by the apartheid regime. Bakithi Khhumalo, on the other hand, got the rare break of relocating overseas at the time, escaping the hardship in South Africa to further grow his musical career. In my interview with him, he described how he had nothing to show as a musician in South Africa, but the emergence of the *Graceland* project gave him a chance to improve his life and that of the rest of his family. Ladysmith Black Mambazo are the main highlight in this regard because of the many successes this group has achieved to date. One of their accolades was winning a fifth Grammy award in 2018 (Sowetanlive, 2018). As a longstanding musical team, Ladysmith Black Mambazo got their international breakthrough after participating in the *Graceland* project.

Today they consist mostly of blood family, sons of Joseph Shabalala (Thomson, 2017). These developments indicate the potential magnitude of a collaboration, and that the profit it makes can be inherited by generations.

However, apart from issues pertaining to the international music scene which have already been dealt with in this study, there also exist matters which present an unclear picture about the development of the economy of collaborative music in South Africa. This creates a new chapter as far as the growth of the music market in this region is concerned. The current vague understanding about the African market seems to create a problem for the international music market observers, and a growing number of independent music labels in Africa (IFPI, 2017). Apparently, this problem makes it difficult for international observers to measure the statistics of the African music market, for two reasons. (1) This is because of its tendency to form an underground movement, since the number of informal labels in Africa is growing. This implies that they are not available in the global regulation systems for manipulation. Because of lack of detection, it is and will in future be a challenge for observers to determine the future of music collaborations that take place in Africa. The exceptions will be those who are directly involved in such projects. (2) Independent record labels are expanding in Africa. This means that the once globally sidelined African music owing to certain views around its complex rhythms is finally finding room for improvement. "The issues involved in the essentially participatory dynamics of African rhythmic organization can lead in a number of speculative directions" (Chernoff, 1991: 1095). However, Choi (2009), who also discusses collaborations, writes that a major issue faced by independent labels is lack of marketing resources. Of course, a new development comes with its challenges, but a lack of censorship

and the growth in the number of independent labels in Africa could indicate a fruitful future. Eventually, Africa could be on the verge of having a new music market established by Africans, a market whose policies and culture will talk to African music stakeholders and the market. This move should automatically eliminate gatekeeping concerning collaborations and markets in Africa. Certain powerful individuals and organisations who use music collaborations for the purpose of segregation and exploitation, as observed by Steingo (2005) and Impio et al. (2008), would be excluded. The *Graceland* project is specifically mentioned in issues of exploitation of collaborations (Phua, 2002). In consequence, the market would for the first time address core issues pertaining to the African music sector. Therefore, South African music industry participants and those from the rest of the continent can be the determiners of their own destiny with regard to the market. But in order to ensure this, a trial and error method concerning the future of the African music market ought to be implemented. This should happen without external intervention, when policies have proved not to be tailored to address the issues of African indigenous creative cultures. In the absence of profit the South African music industry and its players are liable to deteriorate.

Like other African states, South Africa still faces a challenge with regard to profiting from musical collaborations. Music sales in this region have challenges which hinder the progress that is mostly being achieved by the developed countries. Piracy is a scourge that has long bedevilled the South African music industry (IFPI, 2017), infringing the copyright of the musicians and other stakeholders, though recently its rate has shown signs of decline (Scannell, 2001). Karaganis (2011) states that "although this dynamic is commonplace in low- and middle-income countries, piracy in South Africa is also the product of a distinctive

history of repression, political contestation, and diplomatic tension, reaching back to the apartheid era" (Karaganis, 2011: 99). Karaganis offers other reasons for piracy (2011: 99), but the South African music industry, as the leader in Africa (Scannell, 2001), has the responsibility to eradicate the problem for the rest of the continent to have a stable music sector. For a continent that has a rich musical culture, with a rapidly rising level of new talent, and is rated among the lowest in terms of high tech distribution to the market, it is essential to aim for a piracy-free market in order to experience growth. Moreover, in support of Karaganis' findings, Zulu (2014) published in a study entitled *Perceptions of Music Piracy* in which, after interviewing piracy operators in the streets of South Africa, he finds a low personal income to be among the causes of piracy. The study also reveals a struggling GDP to be among the reasons for the problem. Adejunmobi (2002), Throsby (2002) and Ambert (2003) also acknowledge the problem of low personal income and a high unemployment rate in South Africa. The high rate of unemployment, which has resulted in fans resorting to piracy, can also be attributed to the high price of music products. The current state of the South African music market is worse than it was in the 1980s, when the *Graceland* project was released.

Considering the absence of censorship, a growing number of local record labels, continuing negative perceptions of musical output, and the piracy scourge, there is still a lot of work to be done in order to realise the potential of South African pop. The international market appears to have exposed African music to unwanted results regarding profiting. With regard to the increasing number of independent labels in Africa, a new dawn for local music is being created, which should counter the problem of piracy and negative perceptions about African

music. For the greater financial prosperity of South African popular musicians and stakeholders, together with strategies formulated to address African indigenous challenges, projects such as *Graceland* seem to be good models if certain measures are taken to avoid present irregularities.

2.5   THE POLITICS OF THE *GRACELAND* PROJECT

Discussing the politics that directly and indirectly affected the *Graceland* project is a way to maintain a holistic approach to the research. This approach should also show what the historic events of this region were in the 1980s, and how such developments affected South African popular music stakeholders. Frith (1991: 3) suggests that "to study popular music is to study musical change, to study struggle and competition between producers, tastes and moneymakers and politics."

Current works on the cultural boycott and Graceland appear to reveal three levels of discussion. First, exploring the cultural boycott: Graceland; secondly, the politics of the cultural boycott: South African popular music of the1980s; and thirdly, the experiences of South African popular musicians in the 1980s.

2.5.1   Exploring the cultural boycott: Graceland

This section investigates the South African cultural boycott in the context of the *Graceland* project. According to Beaubien (1982: 6), "cultural boycott was but one component of the

international campaign to impose mandatory and comprehensive sanctions against South Africa." The banning of South African popular music in the 1980s, which resulted in controversial perceptions about the *Graceland* project, is worth investigating. It is necessary to discuss this topic as it directly affected South African music industry stakeholders. Studies reveal issues such as the cultural boycott's damaging impact, but also its advantage. A brief background on the boycott follows.

In 1968, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) instituted the cultural boycott against South Africa (Schumann, 2008). This practice restricted South Africa's cultural activities from interaction with the rest of the world. Introducing a cultural boycott was a strategy by the international community to force the South African government to end apartheid (Drewett & Cloonan, 2006). Foreign intervention reflected the intensity of segregation that took place in South Africa at the time. Griffith and Barnes studied the cultural boycott, and wrote:

> *In 1962 the United Nations General Assembly (UN) passed a resolution that deemed apartheid to be a violation of South Africa's obligations under the UN Charter and a threat to international peace and security. The resolution paved the way for voluntary boycotts by requesting Member States to break off diplomatic relations and to cease trading with South Africa (arms exports in particular), and to deny passage of South African ships and aircraft.*
>
> *(Griffiths & Barnes, 2008: 36)*

Decisive powers granted to UNESCO, a specialised agent of the United Nations whose mandate is to promote global collaboration, peace and security, should be looked into because of the magnitude of this organisation's duty to safeguard African interests. UNESCO was established after a conference of 37 countries which took place between 1 and 6 November 1945, in London (Singh, 2010). It is the main international agent concerned with critical issues such as education, science and culture. The fact that "UNESCO is explicit in its mission to shape ethical and just norms" (Singh, 2010: 2) explains the power and authority this organisation possesses in maintaining its policy. Introducing a cultural boycott of South Africa was an indication thereof. However, there are contrary views on UNESCO's approach to administration. For instance, the boycott entailed elements of censorship (Drewett & Cloonan, 2006). In this study the researchers argue that "a wide variety of interrelated practices (both legal and extra-legal) combine to explicitly interfere with the freedom of expression, association and movement of popular musicians to ensure that the articulation of certain facts, opinions or means of expression are stifled, altered and /or prohibited" (Drewett & Cloonan, 2006: 23). On the other hand, a study, *International Organizations as Teachers of Norms: The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization and Science Policy Communities,* interprets UNESCO as a body that treats states as objects meant to contribute to globalisation, instead of with an open and free approach which would give birth to independent states (Finnemore, 1993). By implication, the current strategy implemented by UNESCO is designed to ensure that certain states are subjected to its manipulative style of administration. If claims such as that by Finnemore are true, it would mean that UNESCO is an autocracy. Unfortunately, this means that developed economies will flourish even further, while developing ones become more destitute. Studies such as

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Race, Racism, and Antiracism: UNESCO and the Politics of Presenting Science to the Postwar Public (Brattain, 2007), *UNESCO and the Coining of Cultural Policy* (Silva, 2015) and *ECD Policy Development and Implementation in Africa* (Pence *et al*, 2004) have also contributed to the criticisms against UNESCO. If the findings that implicate UNESCO are valid, then repetitions of the *Graceland* project might not get the spotlight they deserve. It then means that, although the implementation of cultural sanctions on South Africa may have been viewed as beneficial, there also exist traces of self-interest therein.

2.5.2   The politics of the 1980 cultural boycott in South African

Owing to *Graceland*'s involvement on issues pertaining to UNESCO, via a cultural boycott, it is imperative to extensively investigate issues around the boycott that took place in South Africa. Schumann (2008: 1) writes that "to properly understand the processes that have led to the transition from apartheid to majority rule, it is essential not only to analyse the developments at the negotiating tables of politicians, but also to understand popular initiatives for, and responses to political change." In order to find the standing of South African popular music in this regard, its relation to the entanglement between the cultural embargo and apartheid ought to be determined.

"In 1948 the Nationalist government came to power in South Africa, and immediately set about consolidating a system of racial inequality and separation inherited from previous colonial governments" (Drewett & Cloonan, 2006: 23). Plainly put, South African blacks were segregated from whites by the apartheid regime on the basis of colour. However,

the injustice of the apartheid system, together with the zealousness with which the apartheid government implemented it, resulted in international condemnation and a steady growth in anti-apartheid resistance; one of the strategies to oppose the apartheid government was the cultural boycott (Drewett, 2006: 23).

South African popular culture was among elements that were engaged as tools by the international community in order to force the South African regime to end apartheid. The tangle between the South African cultural boycott and the cultural industry gained enormous popularity worldwide. Hence, among others, Schumann (2008) uses the:

> *German playwright Berthold Brecht's idiom to show how the political use of music in South Africa changed from being a 'mirror' in the 1940s and 50s to becoming a 'hammer' with which to shape reality by the 1980s. In South Africa, music went from reflecting common experiences and concerns in the early years of apartheid, to eventually function as a force to confront the state and as a means to actively construct an alternative political and social reality.*

(Schumann, 2008: 1).

The boycott and the South African cultural industry's predicament was later exacerbated by the birth of *Graceland* in the1980s. It was also during this era that popular music was used to communicate the complaints of the people against the regime (Nkabinde, 1997: 6). It then also emerged that the boycott/South African cultural industry conflict involved apartheid, the anti-apartheid movement, the cultural boycott and popular music. This meant that apartheid as a structure hated by the majority of South Africans, the anti-apartheid movement as the force that attacked the apartheid system, and popular music formed a triangular connection.

South African popular music was used as a catalyst to hasten the advent of democracy. Accordingly, this study seeks to understand how South African popular music was affected during the boycott. Meanwhile, the alleged disregarding of the boycott by Paul Simon led to the perception of the *Graceland* project as controversial. This makes this music project a model that is suitable for determining the history of South Africa and that of popular music of this region during the 1980s.

Attempts at fighting the apartheid regime started in 1952 after the establishment of official policies of apartheid in 1948 (Byerly, 1998). Black political parties, and organisations advocating the development of South African artists, took to the streets with the aim of mobilising the abolition of apartheid. Byerly (1998: 13) asserts that "the actual anti-apartheid protest began when legal acts such as the Group Areas and the Immorality Acts of 1950 were passed, which prompted the determination of the resistance and protest organisations such as the African National Congress." Musically, this period, which Byerly (1998) refers to as the first wave, "is parallelled by the more traditional music styles like the Zulu isicathamiya and maskanda forms, sefela of the Nguni and Sotho language groups, and mission-influenced makwaya choral music" (Byerly, 1998: 13). Although the struggle had already begun, it was in the1980s, a period which Byerly (1998) calls a second wave of resilience and protest, that the South African cultural boycott received global attention.

In the early 1980s, the American musicians Millie Jackson and Frank Sinatra became the first to stimulate the officialisation of the boycott, after being scheduled to perform in South Africa (Beaubien, 1982). According to Beaubien, Jackson allegedly spoke insensitively

about the boycott during her visit to South Africa in 1980, and Sinatra went ahead to perform in the country in 1981despite warnings against it. A study entitled *Sun City and the Sounds of Liberation: Cultural Resistance for Social Justice in Apartheid South Africa* deliberates on the allegations that implicate Jackson and Sinatra (Freeman, 2014). However, "Millie Jackson's alleged insensitivity angered both the Music, Drama, Arts, and Literature Institute (MDALI), a cultural organization dedicated to improvement in the status of Black South African artists, and the Azanian People's Organization (AZAPO), a black South African political group" (Beaubien, 1982: 5). It would seem the Jackson-Sinatra saga had started an uproar. "In the mid-1980s, a few years after AZAPO and MDALI issued a joint call for a domestic boycott of all foreign artists and the compilation of a boycott list for international circulation of all entertainers who visit South Africa, the Graceland saga took place" (Beaubien, 1982: 5). This was to be the period during which Simon would embark on a journey to South Africa. In 1985, Simon used his connections through consulting prominent musical figures in the anti-apartheid movement such as Harry Belafonte in trying to fulfil his dream (Meintjes, 1990).

In trying to ascertain the role of the *Graceland* project in South African pop, it is vital to also consider similar situations during the boycott saga. One way of achieving this is through responding to questions related to the problem. Did the attitudes of both artists towards the boycott result from the fact that they were desperate for making a living like any other artist under similar circumstances? Or was it a mere lack of compassion as well as the fact that they were protected by the system of the day? Owing to the involvement of Jackson-Sinatra in the boycott tangle, the *Graceland* project also becomes a subject for discussion since a

fraction of it was recorded in South Africa with South African musicians during the boycott. These facts make it vital to look into Paul Simon's visit to South Africa in the mid-1980s. This exercise should reveal his motive and role regarding the politics and boycott, and fine-tune investigations on the implications of the *Graceland* project for South African popular music.

To that extent, it emerges that the racial struggle for power was a main cause of the triangular confrontation mentioned earlier. The cultural embargo, South African politics, and the global intervention in the form of UNESCO were tools used by ethnic groups in their power battles. Byerly (1998: 2) maintains that "traditionally, academic discourses about South Africa and indigenous discourses in South Africa have posited a simplistic dichotomy of opposing factions, the African and the European, vying for power." Earlier in this study there have been references supporting Byerly's view. These were about UNESCO, as the instigator of the boycott in South Africa, South Africa, as subjected to the boycott, and Paul Simon, as a connecting point between American popular music and South African popular music. However, this discussion reveals a power struggle between South Africa and the USA through UNESCO.

The emergence of the USA as the main funder of UNESCO (Engel & Rutkowski, 2012; Blanchfield & Browne, 2013), could result in a bias against other states, particularly those that are not in the USA's good books. Alternatively, because of its stature as the main funder, the US could indirectly have the edge in influencing decisions and policy drafting in UNESCO, i.e., the association between the USA and UNESCO placed the USA in a position

where it could be able to manipulate the deployment of aid to needy states by UNESCO. Moreover, the funding of the United Nations (UN) by the USA (Schaefer, 2010) created challenges to a forum that represents various states. As the mother body, the UN should lead by example through distancing itself from manipulative tendencies. As a consequence to the US, UN and UNESCO relationship, Africa, regardless of the richness this continent possesses, has always been on the receiving end as far as funding is concerned. Africa's ailing economic condition has mostly, if not always, caused this continent to depend on organisations such as UNESCO for funding (Makuvaza & Chiwaura, 2014; Nwaka et al., 2010; De Raedt, 2014). South Africa has sometimes depended on UNESCO for funding (Fiske & Ladd, 2006). In most instances when African states experience difficulties, the US becomes a funder of such countries and their institutions via UNESCO. Such a practice provides the US or any state that has intimate relations with UNESCO the opportunity to manipulate the system in achieving its goals. Owing to Africa's unstable economy, regions such as South Africa tend to succumb to other economies such as the USA when making critical decisions on domestic issues, such as popular culture. Therefore, in matters that concern the US, its citizens, such as American pop stars, are likely to receive some kind of special treatment, particularly when the US stands to benefit. American artists would then emerge as indirectly having had the support of their ally, UNESCO, in fulfilling their musical endeavours; while black South African parties who protested against illicit systems for the sake of suppressed African humanity remained in awe. This outcome supports Byerly's (1998) observation of the power rivalry, where the USA appeared to come out victorious. If the interventions by UNESCO to sanction South Africa were well-intentioned, why was its policy ambiguously implemented? According to the literature, foreign artists benefited from

this implementation; particularly American musicians. This is because, in the midst of the boycott, the number of American musicians who infiltrated South Africa increased, following Sinatra's lead after he was paid $1.79 million for a series of performances in the country during the embargo (Beaubien, 1982). Little or no action was taken against such artists by UNESCO, except for being listed among those who defied the policy. Meanwhile, the apartheid regime either prohibited black South African musicians from performing abroad, or monitored those who did so. It was only a few who managed to perform overseas through their exile and illegal connections with foreign allies. All channels that provided development to black artists were strictly observed. They included *Graceland*, although this project involved local players. The closest Simon and his co-workers could go as far as performing in Southern Africa was Zimbabwe.

Perhaps as a sign of desperate measures to get South African musicians to perform in front of their home crowd, a Zimbabwe tour was staged despite the cost to the project (Meintjes, 1990). Notwithstanding the cost, or many questions regarding a lack of political statements in the project's music, this gesture may have indicated the *Graceland* project's position concerning apartheid in South Africa. "A mixed-racial character of Graceland, as recorded and performed live on the Graceland tour, particularly in Zimbabwe, represented a highly visible public rebuttal to the South African government's racial policies" (Hamm, 1989: 299). Such instances showed the sacrifices made by the players in the *Graceland* project, together with the role played by popular music in responding to racism in South Africa.

It is then safe to say that the cultural policy which was effected by UNESCO (Silva, 2015) acted as a double dagger, which was carefully designed to favour some, while cutting out others. Although the boycott may have played a role in the struggle against apartheid, there was a price to pay for this intervention by UNESCO. The undesired output of American popular music in the '80s (Neal, 2008), and its relationship to the cultural boycott deserve further discussion to include political debates around popular music, and the question of how South African musicians were affected. This is because certain South Africans who participated in the *Graceland* project were involved in the struggle against apartheid, and were subjected to the effects of the cultural boycott.

2.5.3   The experiences of South African popular music in the 1980s

Discussing these challenges should afford an understanding of how apartheid, the boycott and foreign help affected local pop musicians, as well as how the *Graceland* project fitted into this tangle.

Apartheid was the main influence on South African musicians. To most, apartheid was hateful, but a few benefited from it. However, a number of musicians saw a need to stand up against the government because of the circumstances it subjected them to. They did so through a joint venture with the anti-apartheid political movements (Drewett, 2003). Drewett (2003: 153) affirms that "in response, the Nationalist government attempted to minimize the impact of musicians by preventing controversial music from being heard and by repressing the musicians themselves." However, musicians developed other means of taking the

struggle forward and "fought back in a multitude of ways" (Drewett, 2003: 153). The government then saw the need to tighten the suppression of musicians as they clearly interfered with the apartheid plan. "Not all instances of censorship were overtly political, but they were always framed by, and took place within, an extreme legal-political system" (Drewett, 2003: 153). But through the enormous strength of music, musicians "articulated and transformed culture, opening spaces in which particular forms of artistic expression emerged" (Drewett, 2003: 153). A paper by Drewett (2003) presents the story of the repression of South African musicians in five themes: the legislation; broadcasters: the SABC and independent radio stations; record companies' self-censorship; and the South African police, which the author collectively refers to as *The Mechanisms of Music Censorship.* However, this study focuses on the effects of the legislation, the broadcasting corporation, record companies and the South African police.

With regard to legislation, the Publications Act of 1974 was the critical strategy that guaranteed the dictatorship of broadcasting, including sound recordings in South Africa (Merrett, 1988; Drewett 2003; Schumann, 2008). This Act ensured the censorship of musicians through the government's Directorate of Publications, government personnel and members of the general public (Drewett, 2003). What appears to have been a notable example of censorship was the Security Act of 1976, which granted the police the right to detain without trial, and led to the banning of organisations and political parties such as the African National Congress (ANC), the South-West African People's Organization (SWAPO), and the Pan-Africanist Congress (PAC) (Van Rensburg, 2013). Additionally, the legislation enforced two forms of censorship, the legal and the social (Van Rensburg, 2013). Social

censorship dictated how people in communities interacted, including the broadcasting of music. Since the apartheid regime had detected the musicians' means of counteracting the oppression, the South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC), as the main broadcaster, was used as an important tool to serve the cause of exclusion (Van Rensburg, 2013). Moreover, a whites-only Bantu Programme Control Board was formed in order to censor black music broadcasting (Clegg & Drewett, 2006; Durbach, 2015). This form of censorship was a way of confirming that the apartheid regime had control over every communication and resistance in the country, from the grassroots to the heavyweight organisations. As a way of exerting complete control in assuring this mandate, agents of the apartheid regime would go as far as damaging vinyl to make sure that the disc jockeys did not play restricted music (Drewett, 2003). This manoeuvre by the apartheid government forced musicians to introduce other means of avoiding censorship, such as self-censorship (Traber, 1989). In South Africa it was adopted by musicians to receive airplay during the 1980s (Drewett, 2003; Van Rensburg 2013). Musicians mostly avoided political content in lyrics for their music to be assumed inoffensive. "We keep the radio in mind when we compose." Joseph Shabalala, leader of Ladysmith Black Mambazo, explained: "If something is contentious they don't play it, and then it wouldn't be known anyway" (Drewett, 2003: 157).

Nevertheless, some musicians did not recognise the legislation, and neither did they have any intention of using the self-censorship strategy, for they were adamant in fighting for their rights. Their loyalty to the struggle led to being identified by the system as musicians who disregarded the apartheid laws. Musicians such as Kalahari Surfers, Jennifer Ferguson, and Mzwakhe Mbuli (Drewett, 2003) were among those who stuck by the struggle, and whose

music was sidelined by the SABC. Other musicians such as Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwangwa and Mirriam Makeba (Topouzis, 1991; Schumann, 2008) were even banned from the country and went into exile for their consistency in fighting apartheid. Gilder (1983), a South African musician-author who went into exile, refers to the experiences of musicians mentioned above in a study called *Finding New Ways to Bypass Censorship*. He says that "apartheid, coupled with extreme economic exploitation, divided South African music into rigid racial and class categories" (Gilder, 1983:18).

Although apartheid and its repression of South African music did severe damage to certain musicians, its legacy failed to survive. Coplan (2005) observes this and reflects on three decades of his "participant observation" of South African popular music. He uses the South African stage actor John Kani's 1975 interview when he commented that black performing artists could be thankful for apartheid because;

> *it produced some kind of gangrene within you…that eats your soul, that forces you to save your soul. I couldn't really say that a repressive society would result in creative art, but somehow it does help, it is an ingredient; it acts as a catalyst to a man who is committed*

(cited in Coplan, 2005: 9).

Kani's words echo earlier perceptions on the status of South African popular music in the 1980s. Coplan (2005: 9) asserts that "if this was the irony of black people's theatres in the 1970s and '80s, then it was equally true, by means of different processes of cultural production, of the other black performing arts, including popular music." The gangrene as observed by Kani was indeed engraved in the hearts of the musicians who remained at home

waiting for any chance of survival and saving their nation from repression. One of such opportunities was the launching of the *Graceland* project.

In 1985, Paul Simon visited South Africa with the aim of launching a multicultural album called *Graceland*. However, this was during the time of the cultural boycott. As a result, the birth of *Graceland* was surrounded by massive controversy which incited cultural and colonial issues (Stephan-Robinson, 2013). Musicians who took part in this project were the South Africans Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Stimela, Tao Ea Matsekha, General M.D. Shirinda, the Gaza Sisters, and Bakithi Khumalo, among others (Meintjes, 1990). Other musicians who completed the list included Los Lobos, Good Rockin' Dopsie and the Twisters, Linda Ronstadt, the Everly Brothers, and the Senegalese musicians Youssou N'dour, Barbacar Faye, and Assane Thiam (Meintjes, 1990). As mentioned earlier, one of the highlights of this venture was the fact that it sold 14 million copies within a year of its release in 1986, and thus helped improve the livelihood of South African musicians who participated in the project. Moreover, it put certain South African musicians and the country on the world map. For instance, the *Graceland* project was critical in furthering the fame of Ladysmith Black Mambazo (Connell & Gibson, 2004). Other renowned South African musicians who benefited from *Graceland* were Hugh Masekela, Mirriam Makeba (Feld, 1988; Mangaliso, 1999) and Barney Rachabane (Allen, 2005). There are, however, other issues linking *Graceland* to exploitation (Impey, 2000). Misusing artists collapsed group performers such

as bands, ensembles and even collaborations. Meintjes (1990) observes this involvement about *Graceland* and states that:

> *The foregrounding of the collaborative elements of the Graceland project does not deny that some features of the project also suggest a process of appropriation, exploitation, and domination. There are certainly signs of this. First and foremost, Simon profits financially from the project over above everyone else. Music and arrangements are co-credited on songs, as are the words of "Homeless" and of the introduction to "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes," but Simon holds the copyright of the album*

(Meintjes 1990: 47).

Unfortunately, the existence of such allegations are a bad omen for the course of collaborations that have the potential to develop strong ties between ethnic groups and states involved, for the betterment of humanity.

2.6   THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Theoretical framework must demonstrate an understanding of theories and concepts that are relevant to the research, and which relate to the broader areas of the knowledge being considered (Labaree, 2009). The phenomena entailed in this paper are constituted through informed findings based on the role of the Graceland music project towards the South African pop of the 80s. But because of the nature of this study which suggests addressing matters

arising in Africa, popular music and pop culture Afrocentrism emerged as relevant outlines for guiding and underpinning this research.

2.6.1 Popular music

A number of theories have been formed on African popular music. As early as the 1940s, Herskovits, Redfield and other American anthropologists were mostly referred to with regard to African popular music (Waterman, 1990). Coplan (2001), Ballantine(1989; 2000; 2004) and Jury (1996) are among authors who have written about South African popular music (Adegoke, 2011).

The nature of popular music in South Africa focuses on the real life experience of the people of this region. Adegoke (2011: 152) attests to this view by positing that scholars who write about South African popular music are "preoccupied with the struggle against the apartheid regime, marginalization and the dehumanisation of Black South Africans, the African Renaissance project, and identity struggles between white and black peoples", and thus focus on life experiences that depict South Africans musically. Chernoff (1979) in Waterman (1990) is of the opinion that:

> *Music is essential to life in Africa because Africans use music to mediate their involvement with a community.... As a style of human conduct, [music participation] characterises a sensibility with which Africans relate to the world and commit themselves to its affairs. ... In the midst of change [musical values] characterize a culture's continuity from generation to generation, suggesting the underlying strengths which vitalise the efforts of individuals and communities as they meet the realities of new situations.*

(Chernoff, 1979: 154).

 In Nketia's *The Music of Africa and the Foundations of African Musicology*, Agawu (2003: 2) posits that while African music can be given titles such as "art music, popular music and traditional music", the recognisable mode, according to Nketia, is the "traditional category", because that is where the "realm that is the African essence is most clearly displayed."

2.6.2   Pop culture Afrocentrism

The Afrocentric philosophy is a renowned approach that is credited to Molefi Kete Asante and employed in various research based on the culture, identity and history of African people. Mapaya (2013) is aware of this ideology, and refers to publications such as *The Afrocentric Idea* (1987), *Afrocentricity* (1988), and *Kemet, Afrocentricity, and Knowledge* (1990) among the more frequently referenced.

The Afrocentric ideology is an approach that is recommended for addressing issues around popular culture. "The cultural aspirations, understanding, and practices of African indigenous people should position researchers to implement and organize the research process" Mkabela (2005: 178). The involvement of the Afrocentric paradigm in African-based research is a strategic method because "it forces historians to start telling the history of humankind from Kemet (now known as Egypt), and not Greece" (Mapaya, 2013: 33). There also exist views that locate the misrepresentation of the Afrocentric paradigm. For instance, Yehudah (2015) is concerned that, "Pop Culture Afrocentrism" misquotes the Afrocentric model since it

suggests that a discourse need only feature, or mention, people of African descent to be considered Afrocentric. On the other hand, in a study, *Out of Africa: The Dilemmas of Afrocentricity*, Cobb (1997) opines that, "Afrocentrism is an attempt to redefine ourselves as subjects rather than objects of history." It is not surprising to have different views regarding methods such as Afrocentrism as it is in the process of settling into various academic disciplines such as music. However, an Afrocentric standard intermediates as a compass that redefines African role players in popular music as viewed by Cobb (1997). "In whatever way we look at it, the Afrocentric paradigm goes a long way in liberating scholarship to an extent that previously marginalised voices and experiences can now form part of academic discourses" Mapaya (2013:36).

2.7 CONCLUSION

South African popular music has the potential to project the works of musicians from this region. The projection of pop involves and sustains the stakeholders, and by extension the socioeconomic character of the country. However, this process is not adequately promoted in South Africa, and only a few musicians are able to promote their work on the international scene. This creates a problem as it badly affects the livelihood of the music stakeholders. The reason for this is excessive foreign music which is promoted instead. As a result, it prevents South African popular music from showcasing its potential. The *Graceland* music project emerged as an initiative that had implications for South African popular music of the '80s. This chapter has discussed the role of this project using three main themes: perspectives of American and South African popular musical culture of the '80s in the context of *Graceland*;

the socioeconomic character of collaborations in the context of *Graceland*; and the politics of collaborations in the context of the *Graceland* project. Under each of these themes, several other interwoven subthemes emerged pertaining to the *Graceland* project. The relationship and contrasts between American and South African popular music was determined with the aim of uncovering matters that are critical when engaging in collaborative projects. But since among other purposes, collaborations are intended to better the socioeconomic situation of the stakeholders, the socioeconomic circumstances of the *Graceland* project were analysed. For better understanding of emerging issues, these circumstances were decoupled into the social and economic elements. Music performances, spirituality in popular music, and South African music style and articulation formed part of the discussion under the social theme. Under the economic rubric, the economic nature of collaborative popular music in the context of *Graceland* was also discussed. This entailed consideration of matters around the advantages and disadvantages of collaborations. Because the success of popular music depends on the political standing of the society and its economy, the politics of the *Graceland* project in the context of South African popular music was also discussed. This theme consisted of the issues around the South African cultural embargo during the 1980s, and the experiences of South African musicians in the *Graceland* project. As a point of departure, popular music and pop culture Afrocentrism formed the theoretical framework for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

3.1   INTRODUCTION

This chapter covers the methodology of the study. Research methodology can be defined as "the strategy, plan of action, process or design lying behind the choice and use of particular methods and linking the choice and use of methods to the desired outcomes" (Odero, 2014: 15)." Put differently, methodology refers to a particular approach that leads to the achievement of anticipated results. This section deals with the methods which were employed when collecting data from musicians who participated in the *Graceland* project, and well-informed participants in South African popular music of the '80s.

3.2   QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

As a way of carrying out the data collection in this study, a qualitative method was employed as a basic approach. Since the qualitative approach is known to be "a process of enquiry that draws data from the context in which events occur, in an attempt to describe these occurrences, as a means of determining the process in which events are embedded and the perspectives of those participating in the events, using induction to derive possible explanations based on observed phenomena" (Gorman et al., 2005: 3), it makes this method viable. Moreover, qualitative research allows the researcher to interact with people in order to "identify their social and cultural norms" (Hennink et al., 2010). This implies that the qualitative method is critical in carrying out studies such as this one.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

This study employed the exploratory design. Exploratory research is defined as an introductory stage in the research process that gives way to the central part of the study (Stebbins, 2001). In other words, after realising the gap in research, the exploratory technique helps in figuring out other existing gaps. Studies that engage the exploratory technique are gradually considered, especially those that focus on new topics, or address issues from different perspectives (Mason et al., 2010). Since this study uses a possibly new or rarely explored angle of analysis, this technique seemed the most appropriate. Most importantly, the exploratory approach is associated with most researches whose works are based on popular arts (Stebbins, 2001). In pursuing this study, the researcher travelled to the locations of the participants in the *Graceland* project to carry out interviews. Among these were areas that the researcher had never been to.

3.2 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The participants in the Graceland music project live in various parts of South Africa. Some, if not most, are still performing artists, and this implies that they frequently travel either in or out of the country, or they frequently move from one point to another within the country. In order to locate them, the researcher had to find a music hub where most musicians meet or perform. Johannesburg emerged as a connecting point where it was possible to find a lead to the artists' whereabouts. Hence the researcher undertook trips to the preferred locations of the participants. Owing to shortage of time and resources, the participants in *Graceland* who

were based outside the South Africa could not be reached in person, so other means of contact, such as the media, were used instead. This study focused on every participant in *Graceland*, irrespective of the instrument they played, and also on any other knowledgeable informant regarding the project. However, featuring the participants in this study depended on their availability.

3.3   Population

De Vos (2002:198) quotes Powers *et al*. when defining population as "a set of entities in which all the measurements of interest to the practitioner or researcher are represented". However, Neuman (2006: 224) defines population as "a large pool of cases or elements." Population in this study consisted of all participants in *Graceland* and a recognised scholar, David Coplan, in matters that concern African popular music. Ray Phiri, Barney Rachabane, Isaac Mtshali, M.D. Shirinda, Joseph Shabalala, Sonti Mndebele and Bakithi Khumalo are South African musicians who participated in the Graceland project, and were interviewed in this study.

3.2.1   Data collection procedure

The main data collecting tools in this research were interviews and the literature review. An "interview is a two-way conversation in which the interviewer asks the questions to collect data, and learn about ideas, beliefs, views, opinions and behaviour of the respondents (Juma, 2011: 65)." The preferred methods of interview were the semi-structured and unstructured.

A semi-structured interview consists of "conversations in which you know what you want to find out, and so have a list of questions to ask, and a good idea of what topics will be covered – but the conversation is free to vary, and is likely to change substantially between participants" (Fylan, 2005: 65). Moreover, "through semi-structured interviewing, the interviewer gets to talk to people, in order to find out about what they have experienced and what they think or feel about something they are interested in" (Fylan, 2005: 65). On the other hand, unstructured interviews can be "described as a way to understand the complex behavior of people without imposing any *a priori* categorization, which might limit the field of inquiry" (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009: 1). Also referred to as open-ended interviews, they allow more fluid interaction between the researcher and the respondent (Marvasti, 2003). Unstructured interviews permitted the participants to express their encounters in the *Graceland* project freely. Bless and Higson-Smith (2000: 20) opines that a literature review helps to discover connections, contradictions or other relationships between different research results, by comparing various investigations, and identifying variables that must be considered in the research as well as those that prove irrelevant (cited in Moletsane, 2004). Shunda (2007) considers that a literature review displays one's understanding of research on a given topic of agreement, consensus, disagreement and controversy, among other issues. "Systematic literature reviews are methods of making sense of large bodies of information, and a means of contributing to the answers to questions about what works and what does not" (Petticrew & Roberts, 2006: 2). The authors have numerous explanations, but in essence their definitions are common. Through a literature review, various information can be established for obtaining facts, as was the case in this study.

3.2.2 Data analysis

To carry out the analysis of data, this study employed thematic analysis. "Thematic analysis is a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data, and minimally organises and describes your data set in (rich) detail" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 6). "Thematic analysis is frequently used to analyse qualitative data in psychology, healthcare, social research and beyond" (Fugard & Potts, 2015: 669). This method enables researchers to make informed findings about people's perceptions of social events, and through scholarly understanding clarify the research data. "Through its theoretical freedom, thematic analysis provides a flexible and useful research tool, which can potentially provide a rich and detailed, yet complex account of data" (Braun & Clarke, 2006: 5). Normative desk-top-gathered data, and data collected through voice recording of the participants were analysed in this research.

3.4 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The role players in the *Graceland* project came from various parts of the world. With regard to data collection, extensive travelling could have been costly and time-consuming. As a way of avoiding these difficulties, finding a demarcating mechanism that helped with drawing the boundaries of the study was important. According to Simon (2011), delimitations are those characteristics that limit the scope and define the boundaries of one's study. Therefore, interviewing of the participants was restricted to South Africa, with the exception of one participant.

3.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

There are limitations in every study, and this one is no exception. Some South African musicians who participated in *Graceland* were hesitant to participate. Others were unavailable for interview owing to work engagements. On the other hand, existing studies on *Graceland* have limited information of the required relevance. In terms of a research site, the distance between the researcher and the *Graceland* participants was long, which meant much travelling. Some participants in the project who had agreed to contribute to this study were not available to interact with the researcher on the set dates. Others would give short notice for cancelling appointments with the researcher, and the long distances to travel to get to them made other meetings too difficult.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

"Ethics in research are guidelines that enable the researcher to ensure that all respondents participate voluntarily and are not harmed" (Wysocki, 2008: 228). These definitions relate research morals to an approach that conforms to the practices of the participants in this study, thus accommodating their philosophies and lifestyles. Anonymity

"A research project guarantees anonymity when the researcher and the people who read about the research cannot identify a given respondent" (Babbie, 2007: 64). The researcher undertook to keep the participants anonymous in this study.

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3.2.3 Deception

"Researchers may be dishonest about who they are, and what they are doing, thus they use deception in order to conduct their study" (Hesse-Biber and Leavy, 2007: 109). Accordingly, at no point did the researcher deceive the respondents about his identity.

3.2.4 Voluntary participation

"People should never participate in a study unless they explicitly and freely agree to participate." (Neuman, 2006: 135). Participants took part in this study willingly

3.2.5 Validity and reliability

"Validity is concerned with the notion of truth, how the findings of the research actually portray a true picture of what is being studied" (Browne, 2005: 412). This study employed validity in order to ensure that the findings from the target group were valid. As a way of verifying the validity of the responses from the participants, their answers were compared.

Reliability is the "degree to which the research yields consistent results when the characteristics being measured have not changed" (Leedy and Ormrod, 2005: 93). For collection of reliable information from participants, this study adhered to the reliability principle.

3.3 CONCLUSION

For making certain that the research process upheld the need for its integrity, all ethical principles were adhered to in terms of accessing the study field and facilitating other requirements.

CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTING OF DATA, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This study was conducted using the qualitative research method. This is "a type of research that focuses on qualities such as words or observation that are difficult to quantify, and lend themselves to interpretation or deconstruction" (Glesne, 2011: 283 as cited in Babchuk & Badiee, 2010: 28). It is important to note that owing to a lack in projecting South African popular music because of the prevalence of piracy and excessive promotion of Western pop, the music sector was becoming affected. Therefore, in order to counter this problem, the *Graceland* project emerged as a model that could play a significant role in contextualising South African history. *Graceland* is the model of choice because of the success of this project and the connection it has with the South African past. Choosing a project of such a status could be helpful in shaping the future of South African musicians and that of the industry. The qualitative method was therefore a relevant approach in engaging in interpreting data in this study, since it deals with people, as implied in Babchuk and Badiee (2010). The presentation of data, and analysis and discussion of the various perspectives that developed during the interaction with the participants form part of the focus of this chapter. The participants of the *Graceland* music project were interviewed in order to determine their encounters at first hand, as the role players in the project. This exercise assisted in tabulating information regarding situating the *Graceland* project in the South African historical context

of the 1980s, and evaluating the role of South African popular music in the *Graceland* project. Views of the project participants were analysed using the thematic analysis method.

4.2   INTERVIEWS WITH THE PARTICIPANTS

This section deals with the presenting of data. The information was collected from interacting with the South African musicians who took part in the *Graceland* project.

4.2.1   Exploratory research

The exploratory approach was employed in order to apply a scientific procedure in gathering data. This method was helpful in determining existing gaps in the study. It assisted in identifying historical challenges which are related to livelihood socioeconomic matters in South African popular music. Mason, Augustyn, and Seakhoa-King (2010) share the same view regarding the function of the exploratory approach. However, because the study deals with core issues, other doors that range between political and socioeconomic factors were opened.

The *Graceland* project consisted of a number of individuals who were directly and indirectly connected to it. However, for various reasons it was a challenge to interact with some of the prospective participants. Some were occupied with music-related matters as they were still performing artists, while others were unavailable for personal reasons. Nevertheless, Johannesburg as the music hub of South Africa, where most musicians meet or perform, was

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used as a connecting point in locating the musicians' whereabouts. The researcher undertook trips to their preferred locations for interviews. On average, the participants were asked 10 questions. Each question required participants to provide answers to the following main points:

- The background to the *Graceland* project

- The role of South African musicians in the *Graceland* project.

- The spinoffs of the *Graceland* project.

Each of these points entailed three questions that each of the participants was asked.

Interviewing Ray Phiri

The first site I visited was Mpumalanga province (South Africa). This is where Ray Phiri, a renowned guitarist, vocalist, and leading member of the South African popular band Stimela, who also participated in the *Graceland* project, lived. I was fortunate to have interacted with him just a few months before he died. It took almost a year to get hold of Phiri, popularly known as Bra Ray. "Bra" is a term sometimes used in South Africa for referring to an elderly male.

My first interaction with Phiri was on 5 April 2016, through a telephone conversation. He then referred me to his attorney, Adv. Victor Mbungela, who helped me through the process of interviewing him. However, scheduling an interview was delayed, mainly because of Phiri's busy schedule. But Adv. Mbungela ensured that I was eventually allocated time for an interview. The interview took place on 23 October 2016. The journey to Crocodile Valley, a farm where Phiri lived, was a gruelling exercise. I was accompanied by a friend whom I had met at university, since he was familiar with Mpumalanga. Phiri was in a relaxed mood, calm, soft-spoken and informed. His approach in conversation was that of a learned individual, rather than the uneducated one he said he was. Getting closer to him, one easily became aware of his philosophical and highly spiritual approach to life, particularly when referring to matters that related to Africa. It was evident that he had acquired his knowledge over the years he had spent as a musician. Apart from being a musician, he was an avid reader, who came across as quite informed about his rights as a musician, and about life in general. The presence of Adv. Mbungela was testimony to his knowledge of his legal rights even during such an interaction. When he realised that I had already placed my voice recorder on the table, Adv. Mbungela asked Phiri whether he was comfortable with being recorded. Fortunately Phiri approved. After formal introductions had been carried out, Adv. Mbungela left to attend to other matters. Phiri, my companion and I remained exchanging the necessary pleasantries. After a short while, Phiri put a formal look on his face and quietly asked, "Who are you? Why have you been brought to me, and what makes you think you have the right to come and interview me?" I was the second of only two students that Phiri allowed to interview him. He highlighted the fact that he valued his weekends, especially Sundays, as they were the only time he spent with his family.

Phiri was not only an avid reader, but also a great philosopher. His conversation ranged from how one acquires musical inspiration, to how the Arabs conquered African people, and referred to them as kaffirs (non-believers), the Timbuktu manuscript, etc. He also made reference to the ideologies of socialism and capitalism, metaphysics, and philosophies propagated by Karl Marx, Aristotle and Machiavelli. It did not look as if he was going to get to the point soon. Furthermore, he produced a book by Vernon Lee which he suggested that as musicians and composers we needed. On the subject of musicianship he maintained that

You know, in many African countries in the West, places where music is performed are called groit. If you go into a groit, it's more like going to a troubadour that does certain things to influence a good feeling in others. You don't stumble into it. One has to go through certain passages in order to discover oneself. In most cases such a person would first start by prophesying about issues, and would not know where they come from. In the end it would make sense, but not to you because you would feel that you could have done better, because music comes from a very sacred space. The most unfortunate thing about music is that it's easy to pick up a guitar, but difficult to put it down. You become a slave to it. Hence, I am saying it's more of a calling than just playing music until you find your purpose, which becomes the most difficult thing. This is because you would have many questions, but you want answers. They are not there. But as you grow and keep on going, the volition you are putting out there is the one that brings the answers. The most unfortunate thing is that ours are based on the Timbuktu manuscripts, which are written in Arabic. And the Arabs wanted to rule Africans. That is why they enslaved us. They are the ones who chased after us and sold us. Today we have what is called the African diaspora because they never recognised us

as human beings. They are the first people who came up with the term kaffir. They meant that we are non-believers; meanwhile we do believe: we welcome you into our homes because we are spiritual people. You understand? [he asked. I only nodded, indicating that he could go on.] Our learned friends or educators or lecturers or professors haven't stumbled into this because we don't have a real African institution that talks of our indigenous knowledge systems and sciences. Until the day those are put into perspective, we won't have anything documented. It will be passed on from one generation to another just like that, without proof. In the meantime, a professor would come out with a book and say, from my research, this is what I have found; based on the fact that there are organic intellectuals, relating and telling the stories of centuries; it's up to them to make sense out of the narrations of those organic intellectuals. They ended up calling themselves organic intellectuals, based on the hearsay of the organic. That is why we don't have much to talk about when it comes to us as a people. We were and still are very nomadic.

After a long, winding philosophical talk, he finally asked me what my study was about so that we could start focusing on it. After I had told him my topic, he advised that I should get rid of the term "popular music" and replace it with "popular culture, because each and every generation has its heroes." He said that every generation resonates with the thought of the day, and addresses what is buried within. He said that the youth might be good musicians because they have good ideas, unlike the musicians who have written false music. He maintained that when the youth are angry, as in the case of "fees must fall" protests, popular culture is based on the challenges of the time. Phiri said that it is different challenges that make music different from one era to another, but it is going to be three chords or four, so

that it automatically deserves to be referred to as popular music of the day. He argued that, even 30 years down the line, it is popular because it resonates within that age group. It does not die because those that were there when it was introduced are nostalgic. Phiri believed that this argument applied to what happened to the Beatles, whose music is still regarded as pop music. The Beatles had managed to fine-tune their art in Germany, where they performed for more than 14 hours a day, but mastered making the art of three chords very interesting, including clever lyrics that went very well with an easy melody and rhythm. He said it was three components that made music very popular. So the music of South Africa discovered Paul Simon; Paul Simon did not discover South African music. Phiri said Paul Simon stole his music. "I am here. This is where the music started, on this farm. I started living on this farm last April; as you can see there.*"* He was pointing at a pillar of the house on which was written 2004/2015. "That's metaphysics for you. I remember the times, the dates, the day, the year and what happened. Then you can start making sense of nonsense life. With those last words, I figured it was now time to ask my interview questions.

The background of the Graceland music project

How would you characterise the music of the 1980s?

Phiri said that the 1980s was the right time for musicians to work. After '76 there was one good story to tell: exposing the evils of apartheid every which way they could. There were books that came out, such as *I Write What I like*, by Steve Biko, and others, as we all had one common enemy; hence the formation of progressive forces such as the UDF "(Uniroyal

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Dunlop Firestone)". There was laughter at the table when Phiri used names of tyre brands, which was a strategy they employed in order to conceal the actual meaning of the acronym from the police. The '70s and '80s were an era when people were necklaced with tyres. All the progressive movements, namely, AZAPO, the PAC and the ANC were united and their purpose was to destroy apartheid in support of the 1976 June 16 uprising. He said musicians and organisations spoke in one voice, and sang thousands of songs in one voice.

We didn't sing thousands of songs with thousands of voices. It wouldn't have made sense. You heard Mandela campaigns. You heard young poets who started coming up, some poets who were never heard of. Even the songs came from a space and a good place. I came up with songs like "Highland Drifter", which was recorded in 1974, whose lyrics are "Mountains are my home and my playing ground. When dusk falls, I will make myself a big fire and watch the burning… singing praise to the freedom fighters. They left their homes. And their homes were mountains."

It was starting to become clear that Phiri was spiritual, philosophical, and made reference to the segregation of his people during the 1980s. He said: "The country was very pregnant with positive energy." He asserted about the Black Consciousness Movement: "All we and musicians of the time wanted to do was to get the fire starters to light the fire, so that the country could respond." He said that was what he did with his writing, and yet he did not know where he got all his intelligence from, when he did not even have matriculation. He only went up to Standard 9, and ran away from home to become a musician, which he did not regret. He believed that if he had carried on with his schooling, he would have been dead

by now, as he was a curious young man who grew up in Crocodile Valley. This is where he grew up and made his music, and he regarded the farm as the cultural hub of Nelspruit, where songs like "Crazy Love", in Paul Simon's album *Graceland*, which his father taught him in 1964, were composed. He said he was a feisty young man who contributed a great deal to the struggle against apartheid, and believed that all types of war had to be under one roof, which was political and musical. The UDF's Jabu Ngwenya recruited Stimela in 1984, the same year that Paul Simon came to South Africa. When he came, Phiri asked the UDF if it was right for Stimela to work with him. The UDF agreed as Simon was a well-known international artist, and working with him would enable them to fight the war at all levels. At that point Phiri asked me to switch off the tape recorder, as he wanted us to move into the house, where he wanted us to view some of *Graceland*'s interviews and performances so that we could see how Paul Simon double-crossed South African musicians. During the viewing there were issues that he objected to, such as instances where some of his statements were omitted from recordings, which implicated the *Graceland* project. In his view, some South African musicians were not outspoken when unfavourable matters emerged. Thus only his side of the story was taken into consideration.

What were the political aspects of the popular music of the '80s?

Phiri asserted that owing to the political struggles in South Africa, around the '80s, the music was used to communicate issues associated with apartheid and other related political problems.

How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

Phiri said that the cultural boycott did not affect the music of the country. Instead, it provided a stage for local musicians to promote their views about social challenges of the time. The outside world became even more interested in South African music and what was happening in this country itself.

On the possibility that the resurgence of South African popular music could have attracted international artists such as the legendary Paul Simon, Phiri said international artists had always been interested in South African music, and Paul Simon was one of those. He came to South Africa to try his luck and fortunately for him, it was at the right time.

The role of South African musicians in the Graceland music project

What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

Graceland contributed a great deal to the struggle against apartheid and the promotion of South African musicians in the outside world. With regard to his role in the making of the *Graceland* project, I asked him to describe it in terms of casting (putting together musicians) and guiding the musical direction/production. He confirmed that he played a pivotal role in restoring the spirit of the band. He continued:

Sometimes we could play a groove in a certain mood, and a lot was happening around that time, including frustration. So, you could not tamper with it. You fitted your lyrics within it for it to become one great thing. Simon was lucky because he came at the right time for the right reasons; and *Graceland* made him famous.

How did your participation in the Graceland project affect your other projects?

Phiri did not think Stimela was drastically affected when he left South Africa in 1989. He went away for two years because he felt he needed to enhance his music production skills as well as his understanding of the music business. When he came back he found that the band had already signed a contract, excluding him. He therefore went back to America and came back in 1995. At that point Stimela was having a hard time.

How was your participation viewed by the South African public?

Phiri said "It was all right. You will remember that such opportunities were scarce around that time. But also, we had our own mandate to accomplish as a nation.

The spinoffs from the project

What would you say were the spinoffs or downfalls from Graceland for the South African music scene and beyond?

In response to this question Phiri said:

The most unfortunate thing about South African music is that you've got to remember that Nico Casterns 1958 recorded a song called "Zambezi". In 1961 or 1962, Miriam Makeba came up with "Phata-Phata", which became a world phenomenon. In 1966, Hugh Masekela came up with "Grazing in the Grass". So all those events say something about South African music. Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela were already living in America. *Graceland* was an addition to what was already taking place successfully in South Africa.

When I asked whether there was still a link between the *Graceland* project and Ladysmith Black Mambazo overseas, he said that he would not know if there was a connection between Paul and Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

To a question whether the *Graceland* project could serve as a template to catapult South African musicians to international stardom, Phiri said: "No, it would not be able to do so because South African culture is supposed to be exposed to the world by South Africans themselves, not by foreign people. Christopher Columbus did not discover America. There were local people living there. Unfortunately, the world thought of one thing, that Paul Simon had found his diamonds in South Africa. This view excluded the fact that those diamonds were already there. That is the difference. I would be happy on the day when we have South African artists that will be recognised for what they can do rather than give foreigners the right to claim to have achieved something that they have not. Only a South African can tell the story the same way that Miriam Makeba did."

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Interviewing Barney Rachabane

The next participant I interviewed was Barney Rachabane. I started searching for him in June 2016. Like his counterpart, Ray Phiri, Barney Rachabane is still a performing musician; which contributed to the delay in my meeting him. However, Steven Mabona, a music teacher at one of the well-known music colleges in Gauteng where I attended my music business workshop, played a big role in connecting us.

Barney Rachabane showed his willingness to participate ever since I first spoke to him over the phone on several occasions before the interview. In fact before our meeting he insisted that I diarise the date on which we were going to meet, and asked that I send him my e-mail address in case he forgot and could not get hold of me on the phone. Through these initial interactions, a relationship of sorts was established between us.

Rachabane has been in the music industry for over 50 years. He started blowing a penny whistle as early as the age of eight. His instrument was a penny-whistle when he was still with a youthful music group, Kwela Kids (*Mail & Guardian*, 2014), and later changed to alto saxophone. He is still blowing that alto saxophone and continually performing.

I finally got a chance to interview him on 31 October 2016, at the Maponya Mall, Pimville, Soweto, a walking distance from his home. Although his family was forcefully removed from Alexandra by the apartheid regime to Pimville, where he still lives with his family, he has found peace. He feels proud to be living in the heart of Soweto, and perceives himself as a

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"kasi dude" (township resident). It seemed as though his experience as a resident of Pimville played a pivotal role in his musical career in terms of compositions. The time was approximately 6:20 p.m. when we finally sat in one of the well-known restaurants in Maponya Mall, where he had suggested we meet.

Background questions on the Graceland project

How would you characterise the music of the 1980s?

He said that the music of the 1980s is the same music that has been there even in the '50s. He said it was the kind of music he grew up listening to. He added that in the '80s he was already in the studio recording music.

What was the social character of the Graceland project?

When explaining the social aspect of pop music in the '80s, he indicated that "white people tried to destroy it because they said it did not have any meaning. Even though they knew that it played an important role among African people. *Wabona music is a funny ding* (you see, music is a funny thing). Music has survived all eras. Even though there are colleges and universities, there are great musicians that did not learn music from these institutions. You can also see that there are great musicians who never went to school, such as Mankunku Ngozi and others."

What was the political character of the Graceland project?

With regard to the effect that politics had on popular music of the '80s, Rachabane had this to say: "When we did *Graceland,* I will tell you what happened. I was in Zimbabwe and I was called to come and do the album. Early in 1985, I was touring with Hugh Masekela in Botswana. He had a hit album and we also went to Europe and America. That was between 1985 and 1986. In 1987, I went to perform in Zimbabwe with Caiphus Semenya at a gig called BUWA. While in Zimbabwe, I had a clash with musicians who were from exile. They thought they were better than us because they were from exile. People from exile have a tendency to believe that they are the only ones who fought the struggle, and we did not. Yet we remained in South Africa to face the wrath of the apartheid laws. I therefore decided to come back and go on with the *Graceland* tour. There were interviews all over the world about the *Graceland* album. The ANC was saying strange things – that Paul Simon stole our music. Can anybody steal your music? People can play any song, anybody's song." He argued that musicians are allowed to perform anyone's music, as long as they acknowledge them. "Then where is the crime there?" He used my name as an example in explaining that musicians are allowed to perform anyone's music as long as they acknowledge them. "Then where is the thief there? The ANC are not musicians, but politicians."

With regard to a question on how he connected with *Graceland*, Rachabane responded that "I was in London, then when I came back to South Africa to launch my album the late Koloyi Lebona phoned me and requested that I come and record with them. He said, 'Please, Barney, can you come for an hour?' And I said, 'Okay, but I won't be long because I am busy, I am

here to launch my album.' I then went there quickly, and I recorded that thing. They gave me a couple of bucks because it was not very serious. But I ended up doing a world tour with them, my brother. I made dollars. Can you imagine? I made a lot of money. I could take my children to school and do others things."

How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

On the question of how the cultural embargo affected the South African music scene of the 1980s, Rachabane said that it did not affect it at all. He asked me if I thought people could stop playing music because of the ANC. "Music is very powerful, even more powerful than politics. Even when we were performing in London, people were picketing because ANC people were on strike against the show. He said that, unfortunately for the ANC, the show had already sold out, as music is powerful." He added that there were about 150 of them on stage during a performance. There was even a private jet to transport them. He said that he had never had anything like that in his life.

The role of the South African artists in the Graceland project

What is the significance of the Graceland project in South African history?

Rachabane's view is that *Graceland* helped South African musicians to be known all over the world. He said musicians are not taken seriously in this country. That is why today young musicians no longer do live recording because there is no support for them.

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How did participating in the Graceland project affect your other projects?

Rachabane said participating in the *Graceland* project did not affect his other projects back home as he is a jazz player and does not *mbaqanga*. He said performing in the *Graceland* tour was about making money, hence he played all over the world and came back home when he found time.

He added that his participation in the project did not affect his community at all. He enthused over the fact that Paul Simon would come and have lunch at his house and would relax with his wife and kids. He would also go to London with his family for tours. He felt that people supported what he was doing.

The spinoffs from the Graceland project

What would you say are the positives and negatives of the Graceland project for South African music?

On the advantages and disadvantages of the *Graceland* project Rachabane lamented that

the only problem was the politics against the music. You know what it did? Our local musicians will never reach the *Graceland* heights. It's a lifetime thing. I don't think they can reach that standard. There was a lot of money involved in this. There were billions of rands involved in it. Even Michael Jackson had not reached the level of *Graceland* during those

times. I made a lot of money out of the project, as well as our local musicians who took part. This is despite me not having composed a song in the album.

The researcher asked Rachabane which musicians took part in *Graceland* are still based overseas? He responded:

Bakithi Khumalo. He's an American now, with two children that side. He lives on a ranch. Today he is one of the top bass players in the world, and he has never been to school. South Africa is cheap when it comes to music. It is small time. I wish I could have lived there as well, really. Paul Simon loved my family. I could have gone and lived there

Interviewing General M.D. Shirinda

My next participant was General M.D. Shirinda. As with Ray Phiri, I got the opportunity of interviewing M.D. Shirinda just a few months before he died. Finding him, as with Phiri and Rachabane, was a challenge.

In November 2016 I undertook a trip to Makhasa, which is a remote village where the Shirindas live, east of Malamulele town. Malamulele town is in the centre of the Malamule area, which is predominantly occupied by Tsonga people. People of this area, as in most villages in South Africa, appear to know one another. This makes it easy for them to spot an outsider such as myself. One of the qualities of people of this area is friendliness. This was reflected when those whom I came across on the way to the Shirindas gave me directions.

For example, each referred me to the next person for further directions until I reached my destination. In fact, one member of the community even offered to take me to the Shirindas' house.

As in many villages I have been to, the Shirindas' home consists of a big yard with numerous dwellings built in both African and modern styles. In the centre of the plot stands a sizable black and white statue of Shirinda's father. It is erected close to one of the houses. I assumed that the house could have been of significance to the family, such as *umsamo* (a practice place for traditional healers). Apart from being a music icon, the General was also a well-known *inyanga* (traditional healer).

In the yard, an elderly woman who appeared to be one of Shirinda's wives welcomed us. It was to be conclusive that she could have been one of the Gaza sisters. She then led us to a brick mansion where my companion was recognised by another woman as we introduced ourselves. This created a more welcoming atmosphere for my visit. Unfortunately, Shirinda was not at home at that time. The woman told us that he had gone to Johannesburg. Nonetheless, she was generous enough to call him and inform him about our presence. After a short conversation, she hung up, and then gave me Shirinda's contact number. We then left.

My companion and I parted ways, and I thanked him for being helpful in finding the Shirindas' home. I then went back to the University of Venda, where I was staying. On the way I called Shirinda on his phone and explained my reason for calling. He said he would refer me to his son as he was the one handling his calls. Tivani, Shirinda's son, who also

managed him, struck me as a diligent young man in his thirties. He suggested that we reschedule our conversation since he first had to talk to his father about the interview. He advised that I call again about a week later. I did so, and fortunately managed to reserve time for my interview at Makhasa on 22 November 2016. He said he would be taking his father to the doctor on that day, and we would meet when they came back.

On 22 November 2016, I undertook another trip to the Shirindas' household. Tivani and I had agreed to meet on that day at 12:00. But, because of unforeseen circumstances, Tivani and Shirinda managed to arrive after 5:00 p.m. Tivani had already alerted me about their late arrival. When I was at the gate Tivani came to meet me on the driveway. He took me to the lounge of the main brick mansion where I waited. M.D, Shirinda is a Xitsonga popular musician who was in his eighties at the time of my visit. However, his appearance suggested that the king of Xitsonga music was in his late fifties at the time. It was through his eyes that an extensive vista of life experience was visible. He was a calm man. His calmness was evident through a spontaneous smile as I was approaching a stool that I was showed to. When I had sat down on the stool, we then exchanged greetings.

Shirinda genuinely welcomed and greeted me. Tivani's presence also contributed to my feeling at ease as it meant that he would intervene whenever necessary. Shirinda then asked for my surname, and when I told him I was Zulu, his smile broadened. He was amused by a symbolic sign on my teeth, which I shared with one of his wives. Some people, particularly elders, are able to tell which clan one comes from or is a descendent of by looking at one's features.

He then narrated how he as a boy came to South Africa from Mozambique. He had a remarkable story to tell about his people in Mozambique and how they came to South Africa. By observing him, I could tell something had occupied his mind at that moment. This man had quickly remembered reading about the history of the Mfecane war between the Tsongas and Zulus (Madalane, 2014). It was this connection that got Shirinda and I connected. As a result, we could only look at each other as relatives during my visit. He said he and his family came to South Africa to look for better living conditions after his village was ravaged by drought when he was still a young boy (Madalane, 2012).

After the pleasantries, there was silence in the room, which indicated that it was time to begin with the interview. Shirinda then turned to Tivani and spoke to him in an almost whispering manner, and Tivani turned to me to say: "He is ready." I then put away my scribbler while clarifying to them why I was there, and mentioned the purpose of my study. He quickly interjected by asking me where I came from. Tivani quickly replied that I was from the University of Venda. Realising that he was not satisfied with the response, I explained that I was born in KwaZulu-Natal, and grew up in Soweto. He looked down at the floor for a few seconds, and then looked up into the roof and said, *"Ngiyayazi iSoweto"* (I know Soweto). To me, his reaction implied that Soweto had something to do with his journey in life, or perhaps his musical career. He asked what brought me to Limpopo. I figured that he wanted to know more about my background. After telling him that I am also a musician he quickly exclaimed about his journey as a musician. It felt like a confirmation that he had certainly played a major role in shaping the Xitsonga traditional music (Madalane, 2014). I then asked

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to use a tape recorder to record the interview. Tivani turned again to his father. After a short silence, Tivani said his father was agreeable to my recording the interview.

At this point it was clear that Tivani's role during the interview would be translating, as his father did not appear to be in a good state to handle things on his own. I then began with the interview.

Background questions

How would you characterise the music of the 1980s?

Shirinda said that music was all right in the '80s. He stated that music at that time had meaning, and musicians performed a lot. Unlike today, there were a lot of strong bands. But the difference is that *umculo awusakhulumi nabantu* (music no longer speaks to people). He said: "In those days, musicians spoke straight to people's experiences and hearts. That is why their music is still popular even today. This is because we performed our traditional music and were proud of it. *Graceland* came at the right time because of that."

What was the social role of the music of the 1980s?

He said musicians of the time performed music because they loved it. But it also brought people together. They played anywhere and at any time. People liked coming to see them perform.

What was the political role of the music of the '80s?

Shirinda said that Bekunzima ngalawo malanga. Imithetho yayiqinile ndodana. Besihamba siphethe amapasi. Amaphoyisa ayebopha ngempela engadlali; kakhulukazi ebusuku. (Those were tough years. The laws were very tough. The police always arrested people, especially at night). He said he was always in trouble because of his fighting. "But I sometimes got into trouble with the police because I even fought them too. "You give me trouble, I give you trouble". His use of isiZulu got me interested, and I then tried asking a certain section of the questions using the language.

How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

He replied that the music ban did not affect their music. Instead, it helped in promoting it because we were still performing. But things had not changed because police arrested musicians for nothing at times.

Could the resurgence have attracted international stars such as Paul Simon?

To this question, Shirinda replied that after the boycott things got better because there were American musicians coming to South Africa. But the treatment was not the same. Black musicians were treated badly compared to those from overseas. The overseas artists came and performed in the country. However, none of their music surpassed that of the *Graceland* project in terms of achievements and style.

The role of South African musicians in the Graceland project

What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

The importance of the *Graceland* project to South African popular music of the 80s was that it helped in making my life and that of my family a lot. He added: But what he [Simon] did to me was not good. Imagine *nje*, my song. *Phela*! "*I Know What I Know*" is my song, and he still performs it without me. It is a good thing that *Graceland* did in helping African musicians. That cannot be denied. But what he did to me was wrong. On top of that, he came to perform here in this country, and called everyone else, but left me out. Today I am no longer performing because people who organise events no longer consider me. On the other hand, someone is benefiting out of my sweating."

At the end of the interview, Shirinda repeatedly said: "Now I am old. Everyone knew me as the king of Xitsonga music, but no one sees that now. Even the government is not doing anything to show that I am being appreciated for the role I played in the community."

Can you describe your role in terms of the Graceland production?

Shirinda responded by stating that he played guitars and sang in the project. But that did not last because he was later sidelined by Simon. He realised that his song was the only thing that kept him in the project. Lastly, he mentioned that as a result of his participation in the *Graceland* project, his life changed, and his compositions became hits.

How did joining Graceland affect your other projects?

Shirinda said that joining *Graceland* did not affect his projects or family. This was because, his family knew that he was working for them, and would in turn make sure that there was food in the house. He said that he bought them presents when he was travelling. He was also able to take his children to school. But he stressed that he was already popular when he joined *Graceland*. "People already liked me even before joining *Graceland*. Paul Simon knew how to treat people well, but sometimes he was not okay. *Phela,* what he did to me is still troubling me even today (referring to his composition "I Know What I Know", which Shirinda claimed that he did not get properly acknowledged for.

How was your participation in Graceland viewed by the South African public?

Shrinda answered by saying that his participation in the *Graceland* project was commended by his community and the rest of South Africa, because the nation viewed it as a way of promoting their culture, and this made him their hero. "Even today some people acknowledge me because of my appearance in the *Graceland* project.

The spinoffs from the project

What would you say are the spinoffs or downfalls from the Graceland project for the South African music scene and beyond?

To this question Shirinda replied that despite certain flaws, *Graceland* created opportunities for him, and he was happy with the payments. He said that he travelled the world and was able to support his family, but he had heard that others said they were not paid enough. He disagreed, and said they were just allegations, since they were all satisfied with their payments. According to him, all payments were based on what was agreed upon. He said that he knew of some people who spent their pay wastefully, but would not mention them by name.

Could the Graceland project serve as a template to catapult South African musicians to international stardom? If yes, how could this be achieved? If not, why not?

"There is no music production that could surpass the *Graceland* project during that time. Even today South Africa has never created anything that could get close to the stature of the *Graceland* project. Therefore, yes, a project such as *Graceland* can be used to introduce emerging musicians who will one day make the country proud."

At this point, the themes mentioned below are represented in the responses of participants to the questions concerning the *Graceland* project. Understanding the views of the participants

helped in verifying the role of the project in the South African popular music of the 1980s, and in understanding Paul Simon's perceptions as the main figure in the project. However, efforts to locate him were unsuccessful. Media such as e-mail, Facebook, telephone and other means were used in an attempt to find Simon, but to no avail. As an alternative, I used YouTube and literature forums where Simon's interviews relate to the questions which were asked the participants in this study. The interviews were based on these themes: the background of the *Graceland* project, the role of the musicians in the project, and the spinoffs from the project, amongst other matters.

Interpreting the views of Paul Simon

What is the background of the Graceland project?

This section presents Simon's background for the *Graceland* project, in the context of South Africa. The answers provided here are taken from documentaries and clips found on YouTube and in literature. On a clip entitled, *Paul Simon opens up about hit songs' inspiration* (YouTube), referring to Simon, the narrator says: "It's a rare skill that leads him to creating newly meaningful collaborations." Simon follows by saying: "I find that musicians truly feel the same way. All around the world they are very, very, open to a dialogue of music. You're playing what you love and you wanna hear what they love, and what they play. Well, cultural barriers fall to an amazing degree."

After hearing the first tapes from Hilton Rosenthal, Simon expressed his interest in South African music because of its strong ties with American rock and roll. But as he recorded *Graceland*, Simon said, he did not want it to be just an African album. In his interview with David Fricke, he expressed his desire for the American public to listen to African music on the album as something that actually relates to our world (Greer, 2006: 51). In response to the controversies around South African popular music, politics and his visit to the country during the cultural boycott, Greer quotes Simon as saying:

I didn't say "I'd love to bridge cultures somewhere in the world, and mmm... where? Maybe South Africa" No, I just fell in love with the music and wanted to play.... My view is instinctually cultural. Looking at things culturally, as I did with *Graceland*... there's a political implication, but essentially I come at the world from a cultural sociological point of view, and they [his radical critics] want to define the world politically. ((McNeil Lehrer Report, PBS 25 February1 987, as cited in Meintjes, 1990)

In a YouTube clip entitled *Paul Simon – 2012 Official Announcement*, where the interviewer is narrating the *Graceland* project's connection with South Africa and the cultural boycott, which resulted in the project's controversial perceptions, Simon says he was invited to South Africa by black musicians.

In a clip entitled *Paul Simon TV AM 1991 (1/3),* Simon laments:

I didn't break the cultural boycott and I was never put on the so-called UN blacklist. Although this question clings to me as if it were a fact, it was not a fact. As far as I was concerned then, what I did was based on musical instinct. I went to musicians and worked with musicians who wanted to have their music heard, and the project was successful. In fact the cultural boycott …I mean even in the midst of that…the ANC seriously reconsidered whether it was meant to boycott black South Africans; and concluded quite rightly that it was not….Although I was not aware of the consequences of my actions when I began then… now it's four years, and absolutely no damage occurred. In fact there has been quite a bit of benefit.

Mohr (2011), among other matters, also engages *Graceland* and its South African political entanglement. She maintains that "despite inserting himself into the volatile political environment of the 1980s and consciously going against the international boycott, Simon seemed conveniently naive when questioned about both the albums and his own lack of a political stand: 'Was I supposed to solve things with a song?'" (Sherman, 1993: 92, cited in Mohr, 2011: 45). This statement stands out since some South African musicians used music in having their views heard. Greer (2006: 50) considers *Graceland*, and argues that "Simon's theme of unity of human kind is strengthened by his commitment to finding commonality in various genres."

What is the role of the musicians in the Graceland project?

The following is Paul Simon's interview on describing the role of the musicians in the *Graceland* project. The purpose of this exercise is to determine whether the project played any role in South African popular music of the 1980s. First is an interview between Paul Simon and a neuroscientist musician author Daniel Levitin in a paper entitled, *Still Creative after All These Years: A Conversation with Paul Simon*. In a section where they talk about one of Simon's albums called *Rhythm of the Saints*, Levitin says he knows why the album did not sell well. In his response, Simon, among other things, compares *Rhythm of the Saints* to *Graceland*. He proclaims that

unlike 6/8 or 9/8 time signature in a minor key and complex rhythms from West Africa, *Graceland* has familiar sounds. The South African rhythm comes from a drum kit pattern; they're in 4-4 heavily influenced by English-speaking music because the English live there. And, I don't know, *Graceland* was just one of those records that happens very seldom in a career. Everything seemed to be right, so right. (Levitin, 1998: 8)

What were the spinoffs from the Graceland project?

In an interview entitled *Paul Simon – 2012 Official Announcement*, Simon attests that "In many ways, *Graceland* was the most significant achievement of my career" (YouTube).

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Interviewing Prof. David B. Coplan

The third participant was David. B. Coplan. Coplan is a Professor Emeritus in Social Anthropology at the University of the Witwatersrand. He has numerous publications, including, most notably, *In Township Tonight: South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre* (1986), revised, enlarged and published in a second edition in 2007 *(University of Venda website).* I enquired whether he would participate in this research, and he agreed without hesitation.

Although Coplan did not participate in the *Graceland* project, as a former American citizen who has been living in South Africa for many years, it was safe to consider him a potential participant in this study. As part of his venture into African music, and through our contact during his visit, I learned that he had interacted with almost all the musicians who took part in *Graceland* and beyond, at both local and international levels.

Background questions

How would you characterise the social and political aspects of the popular music of the '80s?

Coplan asked whether I was asking about American or South African popular music. This was an indication that he was willing to reflect on both popular musics. As far as American pop was concerned, he responded: "Popular music is a very huge category. It doesn't mean

young people's music only. We tend to think that pop is for young people. Older people also have their pop, and they also have money to spend. So you find, even now, some bands are from the '80s and still touring. Their audiences are people like me, who are married with families. So it can be any age group. But the '80s was a time for great diversity. There was the world music, which had been there since the '60s, but in the '80s it really flourished, with the West African bands such as those in Senegal, Nigeria and even Cape Verde and other African regions. With musicians like Paul Simon, it looked as if his time had passed in the '60s and '70s." Coplan said that Simon was a good composer, with interesting lyrics.

Then somebody sent him a tape from South Africa with all those people on it. Ladysmith Black Mambazo, because they are doing quiet harmonies, you know, they are not rockers. But they were the popular music of the older people here in South Africa. Paul Simon was not getting any younger at that time. Because of that cool, smooth, vocal music, he was able to sit on top of them. He was not overwhelmed, and they too were not overwhelmed. It's not like he dominated Ladysmith Black Mambazo, nor did they come from the bottom to the top; he was there. So, if he was gonna do a world music hook-up, it was not going to be a heavy reggae, or music that swings too much, because you want to listen to what he has to say. The other thing is that, Ladysmith Black Mambazo was so mild and accommodating to him. They saw him as a star. Joe (Joseph Shabalala) didn't say he was coming to steal our music, blah blah. Instead, they thought,

"Hey, here we go, we have the opportunity to go see the States." They are mannerly people. He also is a very soft character. So, they didn't have to battle over music and other

professional stuff. It was like a marriage. You can say that it was a different style, but they were married pretty well. All floating along on the top and no one was coming from the bottom, you see. So they put that together, and it worked, and they were happy

According to Coplan,

> *As far as South African pop was concerned, the '80s was one of the top periods for South African popular music, even though they were chasing the Americans during the struggle. In the '70s we had Soweto Soul, Minerals, Sipho Mabuse and many more. So the old style Soweto rock and soul were there. But when the '80s came, the American Mary J. Blige and other American styles of the '80s were hot stuff. They were topping the charts and selling more, even here in South Africa. The local musicians responded, because their task was to make music for the struggle, music soundtrack for the struggle. The Americans were not required to do that. It was not their job. You could perform in Sun City and all that, but it was not important. What was important was how music responded to the struggle of the youth. So, you got your Brenda Fassies, Condry Ziqubus, Steve Kekanas, your Cannibals, with Mpharanyane, Yvonne Chaka Chakas, Lazarus Kgakgudi and Bra Sox, etc. They were many, all with the jive of the '80s. They did bouncing, jiving, dancing township music of the time. But the music and lyrics had a lot to do with the struggle. A good example is one of Condry Ziqubu's songs. In the beginning of it you can hear sirens, machine guns and helicopters. That is the first part of the song. An attack on the township people, you can hear it. There is of course Brenda with "Too Late for Mama" and "Black President" in 1988. That was the best Mandela song ever written by anyone. There are so many songs to celebrate Mandela, but that one really stood out, because of the situation in the country. Chicco was part of it. Brenda became the best-selling artist in history. She brought in the African sound, performed with Papa Wemba. People were fighting in the day and jiving in the night.*

(Coplan 2017)

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How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene of the 80s?

Coplan said:

> *There is the good news and the bad news, and the bad news is that the musicians were not able to expand their careers overseas, like they do now. Only the exiled musicians who were already over there were playing for the struggle. On the good news side, they did have the South African scene more or less reserved for them, as only a few foreign artists came in.*

(Coplan 2017)

It wasn't in Jo'burg as such. So they did have a chance to develop. Jazz, whether you think it's popular or not, they were developing it in the '80s, but we did not hear it so much because of the repression from the state in the form of apartheid, arresting musicians and so forth. But they were in preparation for the '90s, without knowing it. For instance, the likes of Zim Nqawana were trained in the '80s. Then the '90s came, and they could play wherever they wanted. The other thing that boomed out was *Kwaito*. Because, like any style of bubblegum, it began to sing repetitive since no new things were happening.

Could the resurgence have attracted international stars such as Paul Simon?

According to Coplan, the resurgence happened, but it was not only in South Africa. The likes of Sting, and many other artists such as Peter Gabriel, Phil Collins, and a lot of other white musicians started to plug world music in their sound. Paul Simon had success with the

Grammies. Ladysmith Black Mambazo went overseas, but it was mostly happening in South Africa. Hugh Masekela prospered, but he was already a citizen of the world. In South Africa, Brenda and a few others began to recognise a new sound from the township which was the South African form of house. It was a bit slower, using rap and other sounds that became *kwaito*.

The role of South African musicians in the Graceland project

What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

Coplan asserted that "The *Graceland* project was significant in two ways. One was globalising, getting out of the ghetto. First of all it was the whites who publicised things, not only because they had money to buy records and go to a concert, but they were also a publicity machine. Global media were in their hands. So global media began to respond to the world music thing. *Billboard*, for instance, where they put top forty for every category; such as top forty jazz, top forty reggae, soul, etc. They had to bring in the category of world music also, to have a top forty on it."

The spinoffs from the project

What would you say are the positives and the negatives of the Graceland project for the South African music scene and beyond?

Coplan maintained that the *Graceland* project did not have much effect on black popular musicians, even though it did expose them to the world, and led to tours where they could do other things. But then they ran into the boycott. He added that the cultural boycott became a problem, because if we boycotted South Africa it meant boycotting all the local musicians. This made it difficult for musicians to make a living.

People would often say how can you play happy music whereas we are suffering? But people began to break the boycott because life was going by; and that was Hugh and Miriam. It was Winnie who said Johnny Clegg must play on the Mandela birthday at Wembley, England in 1988. He was not going to be allowed to play. But she said no, this is my homeboy. They began to come out and said a few words about Paul Simon being a sell-out. Hugh then said let those who can pay us as well as Paul Simon is paying us talk about him selling out.

Could the Graceland project serve as a template to catapult South African musicians into international stardom? If not, why not?

It wasn't a template but a *vulindlela* (to open a way). Many who came up were not doing that style of *isicathamiya* or rock. The likes of Johnny Clegg and Lucky Dube continued to prosper. If they wanted to go on an international tour in the '90s they could go. Mahlathini, I toured with him as a commentator. In 1992, he came to Washington, then New York. I had known him, especially Marks Mankwane and the Magonatsohle band. When they came I knew they were in town and I called them up. Then they said let this man come to the studio. Him being an American, he can explain. So I ended up going to a radio studio with them.

When they were interviewed I would try to give the Americans a sense of what was happening. They were very popular. They toured Europe, and for the first time Mahlathini made a lot of money. So *Graceland* did open a way, so to speak.

Interviewing Bakithi   Khumalo

The next participant I had an opportunity of interviewing was Bakithi   Khumalo.   Khumalo played bass in the *Graceland* project, and is still part of Paul Simon/s band even today. He also performs with other world renowned musicians who are mostly based in the USA, where he has been living with his family for over 30 years now. It is safe to say that Khumalo is today regarded as one of the mostwell-known, respected and successful bass players of modern times. Among his accolades, and as proof of his achievement, he has a bass guitar brand named BK.

Getting an opportunity of talking to Khumalo was a difficult task. After almost 18 months of search, I finally located him through social media. I managed to talk to him through a Facebook video call, and he agreed to take part in the interview. Apart from contacting him being a challenge, his busy schedule contributed a lot to the long wait as he was unavailable on his line much of the time. However, on 1st September 2017, around 16:00 CAT, when I had thought I was merely having another unsuccessful shot at getting hold of him, Khumalo responded to my video call. In fact, because of a bad internet signal on that day, our conversation would get cut. But called back and continued where we had left off. This gave me the impression that he was willing to participate in the study. At first we spoke about our

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geographical locations and their challenges as a common factor for bad connections. After a few failures he finally jokingly asked: "What happened, did you run out of airtime?" I laughed, and explained the problem. When the signal was back and was working better, he unfortunately appeared to have readied himself to leave for work since he had changed the spot where he was having what I assumed was breakfast since it was still morning in the US. Seeing that I would not get enough time to talk to him, I suggested we postpone the interview to the following Monday. However, Khumalo said: "Let us do it now because we might not have another chance soon." I agreed, and pulled out a list of questions as he was getting ready in his music room that had a wide selection of guitars in it.

Background Questions

How would you characterise the social and political aspects of popular music of the '80s?

To this question Kumalo answered that the sound of popular music of the '80s was different from what we listen to today. He highlighted sound as the first thing that gave music of the '80s its character. According to Khumalo, a lot of sounds were introduced to the music scene during this time. He also mentioned the 1980s as a turning point in music styles around the world.

On the social aspect of the popular music of the '80s, Khumalo stated that, although it was mainly meant for enjoyment, music back then also played a big role in addressing social matters. He mentioned that, musically, different cultures were well represented, including

South African culture. Although some musicians copied the American style, South African music was highly appreciated around the world. "I feel that we as Africans have lost our music culture. Certain young South Africans create music for the sake of uploading it on YouTube for the world to see, and that is it."

With regard to politics, Khumalo said: "Things were difficult back then. It was a struggle. Black musicians had it tough in South Africa. Apartheid made it difficult for musicians to grow. So when opportunities such as *Graceland c*ame, some of the musicians who formed part grabbed that opportunity with both hands."

How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

"The embargo disadvantaged us a lot," Khumalo said. He said that there were laws which were created specifically to prevent black South African musicians from progressing. "In my case, because I did not belong to any record label then, unlike some of my colleagues, I had to take the only chance I had, when Paul came down there."

Could the resurgence have attracted international artists such as the legendary Paul Simon?

To this question Khumalo answered: "Yes and no. Look, what happened was that the *Graceland* project came to South Africa at the right time. That could have happened to any region. So musicians in South Africa need to refocus and not only think about themselves,

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but build a music industry that will benefit everyone involved." At this moment Khumalo appeared concerned while sounding emotional. I assumed this had to do with the state of the South African music scene.

The role of South African musicians in the Graceland project.

What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

To this question Khumalo answered: "*Graceland* helped a lot of South African musicians to be where they are today. Musicians such as Hugh Masekela, although he was already established at the time, got more connections through *Graceland*. Ray Phiri (may your soul rest in peace, my brother), and others had their lives improved after joining the project.

How was your participation in the project viewed by the South African public?

To this query Khumalo said that he had heard different views about his relocation to the USA, some of which criticised his move. To such criticisms he said that among the things he learned about life was that although one might have a family, and friends, there are times when one is alone and has to account for his actions, particularly as one grows older. Ultimately, life is about what you as an individual make of it, and how you take care of others. "If I had not taken the decision I took then, I probably would not be where I am today. Yes, I have a family here in the US. My children have grown, and one currently goes to college here. But that does not change the fact that I am still a South African. I am still

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uMntungwa (his totem), like how you refer to me." Here he was referring to how I usually addressed him before the interview. He said that he would probably not have been able to take care of his entire family had he not taken the only opportunity available to him, considering the situation in South Africa then.

How did your participation in the project affect your other projects back in South Africa?

To this question Khumalo said that none of his projects were affected by his relocation to the USA. He stated that hardship in South Africa had forced him to move, but he still intended going back to give back through initiating development projects. But he is worried about the existing imbalance of the treatment of musicians in South Africa. Of particular concern to him is the difference in hospitality shown to American and local musicians. For example, "In 2009 I came to perform at the Moshito annual music festival, and was not treated like my American counterparts merely because I was a local musician." According to him, South African musicians still have a lot to learn in order to make a local music industry a success. He added that, as it stands, he is willing to engage in more music-related projects in South Africa, although there is a lot that needs to be done to prepare for such initiatives.

The spinoffs from the project

What would you say are the spinoffs or downfalls from the Graceland project for the South African music scene and beyond?

"The *Graceland* project was a success. Musicians that took part in it, including my fellow South African musicians, benefited from it. The project helped me a lot as far as networking. Again, this included African musicians who were already performing during the 1980s. The *Graceland* project improved their lives even further, both financially and in terms of recognition".

Could the Graceland project serve as a template to catapult South African musicians into international stardom? If yes, how could this be achieved? If not, why not?

To this question, Khumalo replied "Yes and no." When I asked him to elaborate he said that the *Graceland* project was undeniably a successful one, and still is. Any global region would benefit from having such a project. However, after *Graceland*, a country like South Africa should by now have acquired everything needed to put it on the map. *Graceland* played its role in setting an example. Therefore, yes, a project like *Graceland* can be used to groom future stars; but South Africa is now in a position to go out there and be the *Graceland* project of other African states and the world.

Interviewing Isaac Mtshali

It took about four months for me to find Isaac Mtshali, a drummer in the *Graceland* project. A friend who is also a drummer played a major role in helping me find Mtshali, also well known as "Mnca" by those close to him. He is one of the founders of the band Stimela. In fact he still plays drums in Stimela. Ray Phiri called Mtshali a polite and private person when

I interviewed him last year (2016). It was for me to then verify Phiri's statement when getting an opportunity to interview Mtshali.

My interaction with Mtshali started through a phone call after asking a friend whom I had thought would be able to help since he sessioned for various prominent South African bands, and might perhaps be helpful in locating him. Indeed, is emerged that my colleague is a friend of Stimela's piano player. He asked him for Mtshali's contact number and I called Mtshali for the first time on Monday, 14 September 2017. He responded that he was willing to meet me, and asked that I call him again to confirm a day for the interview since he had a tight schedule. I called again later in the week, and he scheduled our meeting for 29 September at Thokoza, a township in west Gauteng province.

On the agreed date Mtshali picked me up at a nearby filling station at 11:00 a.m., as arranged, and welcomed me to his modern home in the middle of the township. Out of curiosity, I asked him why he chose to build such a house in a township when people of his calibre usually moved to the suburbs as soon as they became stars. Mtshali replied: "I did not see the point of relocating to the suburbs when my people were here in the township." He wanted to be close to his own people, meaning his neighbourhood. According to him, the suburbs consist of big divisions where one is far from one's neighbours because of high walls. He said he likes interacting with people, so there was no point in moving to such an environment only to come back when he wanted to be with people. In fact, Mtshali advised one of his friends to this effect when he was worried about moving. This reply confirmed what Phiri had told me about Mtshali's personality.

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Mtshali invited me into his lounge. Like those of most of the *Graceland* participants I had previously interviewed, one could not ignore the vast collection of music vinyls, various sculptures, and a huge music system. This indicated Mtshali's existence as a seasoned musician who had done a lot of travelling collecting sculptures during music tours. He suggested that we sit outside where there was sunlight and fresh air. There I could hear sounds of the happenings in the township environment during that time of the day. I assumed this was the kind of quality of life he had spoken about, and which he could not part with. Mtshali gladly gave me permission to use a recorder to capture the interview.

Background Questions

How would you characteirise the music of the '80s?

With regard to the social character of music of the 1980s, Mtshali said: "It was more like a school in many ways, because musicians did not write a lot when composing. They would write two lines, for example, but there would be a lot of meaning in them. For the moment, let us forget about the instrumentation in music. Musicians say a lot in a few words. For instance, let's talk about Soul Brothers. Soul Brothers sang only a few lines over the entire song, but what they sang about made a lot of sense. A good example by Soul Brothers is a song whose lyric says *mama ka-Sibongile awuyeke ukuthi uma usuphuzile ebese uyangiphoxa!* ("Sibongile's mother, stop embarrassing me whenever you have been drinking!"). That brings me to present compositions. I always ask myself why they don't copy from the likes of Soul Brothers. In the current music I find it difficult to understand

where the theme of the song starts and where it is going. But I also tell myself that one should not judge a person if you do not understand what he or she is singing about, though it is worrying that our young generation will go on in this way. I see the message as what characterises music of the '80s.

"Politically, music played a big role because it had a hand in bringing us to the phase we are at in terms of freedom. As I mentioned earlier, music of the 1980s was about the message, so it was always relevant since it addressed issues such as political matters. Unlike nowadays, where music is all about *gooh-gooh-gooh* [referring to a bass drum or kick]. As a result, we witness a lot of crime, restlessness and casualties because music has a different meaning to people. Currently people only want to nod their heads and dance. The message behind it perpetuates this tendency, unlike in the '80s, when people would go to social gatherings for enjoyment, but would also benefit in terms of addressing social issues. Today we cannot ask questions such as 'W*here Did We Go Wrong?'* [Stimela's title song], for instance. There are those who say politics should be left to politicians. That is not possible. As long as one is part of the society that is affected by politics, one is likely to talk about politics one way or another. That was the case during the '80s. Since musicians were part of the oppressed society, they were bound to talk about politics one way or another. People are not aware that they are politicking in almost everything they do."

How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

"The embargo affected us in many ways since it not only affected musical life, but also sports and other recreation. When we went overseas during tours it emerged that Ray was focusing more on politics while I was concentrating on something else. Once when we were abroad, I noticed that wherever we travelled there would be flags that represented other countries, but the South African flag would not be there. I would see flags of almost all other countries, such as Zimbabwe, Zambia, Mozambique, etc., but the South African flag would not be there. I never asked anyone about it, though it bothered me. It then came to me that we were restricted in terms of interacting with other countries, meaning there were those who controlled our movements. They determined how we should move, and would allow us free movement only when we agreed to certain terms. Then when we went back during the 1990s I saw our flag and thought to myself it was an indication that we were then in agreement with those who controlled our movements. After that I started paying more attention whenever Ray spoke politics. I started doing my own research into how we got our freedom. I found out that we fought for it, but not like other countries. We did fight for our freedom, but in a "smart" way, although we did not surpass Swaziland, because it got its freedom in a more polite way. The Swaziland authority was smarter because, for instance, it lent land to foreigners who came to do business in the country. The authority would then go to ask for the land back, and say the king was asking for it, and would appreciate if his land was not messed up in the process of evacuation. That meant that whoever had built a property on that land was not allowed to destroy it because he or she would be messing up a king's land, which was against the law."

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Could the resurgence have attracted international artists such as the legendary Paul Simon?.

"Yes, it did. However, the effect of it happening cannot be compared to Paul Simon's, because he came to South Africa during the tough times. He did what nobody else would have done during those times, so that we experienced difficulties when we went to perform in London in 1987. We were boycotted. Oliver Tambo was in London at that time. Many meetings were held with him about the *Graceland* project. Paul Simon explained that he was on our side, but used music in fighting apartheid. You will remember that South African musicians such as Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela were not allowed to enter the country. So Paul used this project as a way of contributing to their coming back to South Africa. That led to the *Graceland* project, and other South African musicians performing in Zimbabwe, closer to home. *Graceland* contributed a lot in the struggle against apartheid, which also led to the changes in the 1990s. However, many people thought Paul Simon's mission destroyed Stimela, which is not true. Instead there was only one person among us who ruined things. After being bestowed with power and connections through *Graceland*, he thought about himself instead of thinking for the band. That is how Stimela got destroyed. This was proved in an article that came out in which he was asked how he and I managed to stay together for such a long time. His response was that 'Mnca is a traditionalist and I am a dreamer.' I think what caused our clash is that I suggested that since Paul Simon used us in that particular way, we could then also use him in a certain way. But I didn't blame him for long because I realised later that he was influenced by something or a certain individual. Nevertheless, Paul Simon played his part. The plan was that he would come back later to continue where he had left

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off. But I guess age is against him. That would have helped produce more stars. But look, today we have the likes of Joy of Jazz where a lot of overseas musicians come to perform. They followed in his footsteps. So one would say the resurgence did attract more Paul Simons. Remember that we were also not allowed to perform overseas. But today we can travel and perform as far as we want, and overseas musicians can come to South Africa too. Meaning, musicians can also collaborate and come up with new musical ideas. So music contributed, and still does a great deal."

The role of South African artists in the Graceland project

What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

"Firstly, the *Graceland* project played a role in helping to break a barrier that was created by the cultural boycott. Secondly, Paul Simon contributed in bringing together different South African ethnic groups. He took Xitsonga, Sotho, Zulu and other local languages and put them in one pot. He brought together these tribes to become a unit. Overall, the *Graceland* project, which consisted of different tribes, became a global success. I really do respect him for that. He might have had his own bad intentions about the project, as it is alleged, but he did his thing and did it well. Simon made an effort in showing us that we are supposed to create our own music since we are musically rich. He proved that there is no such thing as nonsense music. What is considered to be inferior music, when it is well arranged, becomes the best product. Another example is the title song "Graceland". He fused his language and other elements from back home with our South African rhythm. We used to call him *igundwane*

(mouse). No matter how hard one tries to close a hole for *igundwane* not to go through, it only needs to get its head in. Once it can succeed in doing that, *igundwane* has found its way in. So Simon was like a mouse since he managed to come to South Africa when international musicians were not allowed, and recorded the project. Even at the meetings we held in London about the project, he was the only white man. Similarly, when we came back from overseas, there was this political organisation whose name I have forgotten. When we had thought everything was done and dusted, we were called into a meeting and asked why we stole South African music and sold it overseas. I thought to myself, *wemadoda* (a Zulu pronunciation when one is disappointed or surprised). But after they were explained to, it was only then they understood the aim of the *Graceland* project."

You obviously played a major role in the making of Graceland. Can you describe your role in the production?

"You see, if you are a drummer, as I was in *Graceland*, you are like a wife. A wife's place is always reserved in a house: it is in the kitchen. Life is not normal in a house without a kitchen, since everything that makes people able to function is in the kitchen. Now, in the *Graceland* project, Paul Simon did not know anything about South African rhythms. I was the one who directed him when to come in and out when we were practising the music. If my mind got disturbed, he would also be lost in a song. Another example is Tao Ea Matsekha, who played an accordion in the project. He was a recorded and famous artist back home in Lesotho. When the band practised his song it became difficult because of his freestyling tendency in his play. The band found it difficult to join in as a result. Vusi Kumalo, who played two songs in the

Graceland recording, tried to help, but in vain. But because I had played with many Sotho and Zulu musicians before, I thought I should try to help. I asked the band to first give me a chance to talk to him. The secret was for the band to come to his level of playing in order to get things right. I then spoke to him in Sotho, his language, and discussed with how we were going to play the song in order for the rest of the band to join in. After a short discussion, we gave it a try, without the rest of the band. It was only me and him. After getting the song right we invited the rest of the band to join in. It took just one take to record that song after a long struggle in trying to figure out the introduction. On the day of the performance, after playing a few songs, the time to perform "Boy in the Bubble" came. Simon turned towards the band and said, 'Anything that is going to be done during this song will be guided by Isaac.' We performed the song, and it came out well. That became a stamp since then till now. Even when Simon performed without the original members during his small gigs overseas, he did not replace me."

How did your participation in Graceland affect Stimela?

"Well, it started when we left the country to go on tours. We would leave for about two months in the beginning, and come back. But as time went on we would be away for three months or more. Later on we realised that we were building someone's house while ours was falling apart. Ray and I then had a discussion about that situation. We were earning $350 a week at that time. This pay excluded a meal allowance. We were getting paid $600 a week. In my discussion with Ray I suggested that we talk to the management to give us an increase of $1 000 each. That would mean that we would be paid $4 500 each. We would each send

$2 000 to the band back at home, so that the band members would sustain themselves until we finished the tours. But the management turned down our request. They came to me and asked about that matter. I explained to them that, 'As you know, we left a band back home, our request for a raise is for us to be able to help the band members to survive until we go back. Since you took a drummer and a lead singer, the band is no longer performing. Meaning, they no longer have a source of income. So with the little that we intend sending, it will keep them intact. Otherwise we might not find a band by the time we go back home.' The management said that it could not afford to give us a raise. I then responded that, if that was the case, I must be given a plane ticket to go back home. That was in 1989. It was the fourth year since we had started being part of the project. I thought I should come back and continue with Stimela because the second lead, Nana Coyote, was there. At least if there was a drummer the band would continue with performances. The management said 'No, wait until we have spoken to Paul.' Paul came to talk to me and asked about this matter. But he could not help, citing his reasons. I then asked to be released. They did let me go. They then went to Ray, but he agreed to stay. I expected Ray to join me, but he didn't."

Mtshali believes in horoscopes. He used Phiri's star sign Aries to explain his character. He said that a goat likes feeding on high leaves. It uses other goats to climb to where it wants to feed, and forgets that other goats also want to reach there. He added that he was not surprised by Ray's actions because it is in the nature of an Aries to behave in that way. On the other hand, I thought that maybe he had decided to stay because he knew Nana would fill his space. "When I came back things were bad. We used to run the administration of the band together, and Ray was no longer there. I could not access our funds in the bank because the account

was opened under me and Ray. This meant that I used the money I came with from my gigs overseas to help revive the band. I was hoping that I would be refunded when he came back to South Africa. However, I have not got it to this day. When he came back, he went to the bank and they gave him the money without me. This is after they had refused to give it to me without him. When Ray came back to South Africa from overseas, he started his own music projects instead. Even after he rejoined the band, things were no longer the same. The media made things worse by broadcasting 'Ray Phiri and Stimela' when it was not the case. We were still Stimela after Ray rejoined us, but the media changed all that."

How was your participation in Graceland viewed by the South African public?

"When Paul Simon came to South Africa he organised everything discreetly, so the main part of the country was not aware of his presence. He went from place to place recording underground. People only became aware of the project when we were about to go overseas. This was when we staged a farewell show at Fun Valley in 1987. People were very happy to hear that. They did not think that Paul Simon was destroying Stimela. They were very happy that we were going to promote South African music overseas. Things only started to go bad when Ray did not come back to Stimela. People started saying Paul Simon killed Stimela. If my brother had been strong and come back to the band, today we would be far. We would own a very big building with broad letters reading: 'Slow Train Institute', which used to be our dream."

The spinoffs from the project

What would you say are the spinoffs or downfalls from the Graceland project for the South African music scene and beyond?

"You see, my brother, even Paul Simon knows very well where he is that among the projects he has recorded, he has never created one that was as successful as *Graceland*. It worked out very well for him. It brought back his dignity. They were like kings when he was still with Garfunkel. But after splitting things started going slow for him. He was trying, but things were a bit shaky. It was different when *Graceland* came into the picture. After he released that project, things changed drastically. Even today people still want *Graceland* to tour overseas. One must conclude that the project did wonders for Simon. Now, as for me, it was the first time I had ever seen a person as fair as him. With Paul Simon, we put all the songs on the table. We got paid for rehearsals. We also got paid for recordings. On top of that he paid us royalties from the album." Mtshali also made an example of his house. He said: "Even this house I built with the *Graceland* money. I have another house bigger than this one at home. I designed these houses and divided them into two. This one is the small version, and the big one is at home. It has a similar shape, but more bedrooms. Do you know how much I am getting from the project as royalties? Two cents. But those two cents are working for me. I was really surprised by this offer. When we asked our local record companies about it, we were told that there was no such thing. We were told that here in South Africa the government would never approve that. That was in 1987. That was after we had tried very hard to tell them that it was how the law worked internationally. But they insisted that was rubbish. After

that I probed by asking whether he (Mtshali) was still getting his *Graceland* royalties. He replied: "My brother, I am still receiving my royalties." Although they are gradually reducing, I am still getting something, and in dollars. It started at around $18 000. Today the royalties have shrunk

to around $6 000. But they are still something. We are talking all the two cents, my brother. Today I can point out to you a lot of things I have done with those two cents. The *Graceland* project did a lot for me. I can even comfortably say the *Graceland* project worked for me more than Stimela did."

Could the Graceland project serve as a template to catapult South African musicians into international stardom? If yes, how could this be achieved? If not, why not?

"I will make an example with a boy called Sizwe that we just found in the band. He played keyboards. After the death of our keyboard player, there was a need to look for another. At that moment four of the band members fell ill. So this young man came as a blessing because we used him when recording our recent album. We left spaces in the recording for those who were still recovering. Sizwe said he had always been following our music, including other well-known South African musicians. Coming to your question: he said that what had always bothered him was the fact that at music school they were taught how to play like American musicians. This got him curious because there were good musicians here in South Africa. The question was, why were they not taught about South African musicians, and to play like them. I said to him, 'That is a brilliant question. Here you are going to play the way you feel

you want to play because the playing style of Americans belongs to Americans. But you can use what you have learnt from school in your own style of play. But it is also important that you learn other music styles, such as music from the west, east, south and north. That makes music last a long time. For instance beats from the north have not been exhausted yet. You can even tell that those old men who play those drums do not even think about what they are playing because music comes from the heart. So, if you think while playing you are going to start to look for first beat or second, you will find it. But that will take time.' So, we are musically rich here in South Africa. If we take our local music and fuse it with music from other regions we will end up having our own identity. Music from Zimbabwe is known for guitars. They can play four guitars at once, but they do not clash. Nigerians have their own style, Cameroonians have their own style. What do we have? Long ago we had *umgqashiyo*, which was played by Mahlathini and Mahotela Queens, Izintombi Zesimanjemanje, Izintombi Zomoya, you name them. We had a rhythm then. But as time went we lost it all. Now we are just confused. So, the advice for us is to go back. Studying people like yourself can be very helpful in getting us there. For instance, the 'do' which we use in the scale could be changed and played in a way that represents us. This would be interesting and fresh. The inventors of scales which we are using today would also be stunned. Yet it would be challenging for them to get it right. So imagine a combination of a spiritual person like me, on drums, and other players who understand Western style. By that I mean, it is vital to fuse different styles in your music." I interjected, asking: "How can we create our identity with something that is not indigenously ours?" He responded: "It is now ours because it has been with us for a long time. But the difference is that they have their own cultural music and we have ours. Similarity the notes are what brought us together musically. Therefore, we should

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manipulate these notes our way since they all operate them using their way. Steve Kent, the drummer, still has respect for me because he had a problem playing Shirinda's song. Shirinda would start by playing a solo guitar in free time before the actual song started. Kent got it wrong because he would start counting in free time. By the time the song started, he would be somewhere else. I then advised him and said: 'Steve, when playing our music, one starts by appreciating. We first talk to the ancestors before continuing with a song. This is a challenge to most Western players. So you who come from school should capitalise on that. Look at Richard Bona, for example. He is prominent overseas because he plays in his own style, and the audience is intrigued by that. But also what gives him an advantage is that he can write music scores using Western notes. You African musicians have both: you are rich musically, and can read and write music. Whereas Western players are limited to writing it.'"

Interviewing Joseph Shabalala

The next participant I had the opportunity to interview was Dr Joseph Shabalala, the lead singer of the South African male music group, Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Mambazo's fame was projected to even higher levels after the group participated in Paul Simon's *Graceland*. The *isicathamiya* (a South African traditional *a cappella* music style) singers started as a local traditional group and went on to woo the world with their music. But it was through the *Graceland* project that they got an international breakthrough while earning prestigious accolades such as Grammy awards. Their winning of an eighth Grammy award recently in 2018 is proof of their efficacy in the music world. The inclusion of Ladysmith Black Mambazo in this study is therefore of critical value in attempting to understand the role of

Graceland in South African popular music. It is through such an understanding that the position of South African popular music within the global scene will be realised, and its prospects for success in future. Avail

Two years of fruitless attempts to connect with Ladysmith Black Mambazo went by. In 2016 I tirelessly went through almost all the internet platforms that would connect me to the group, but to no avail. It was in late 2017 when I thought I was on the verge of getting an opportunity to interview the leader, Joseph Shabalala, but my hopes were shattered by news reports about his illness. As a result, I had opted to interview either of the retired members of the choir, since the current crew is mainly based overseas because of their tight performance schedule. However, during the same period my hopes were rejuvenated after meeting a fellow scholar at a conference I was attending. She would play a major role in connecting me with Shabalala's household when he had recovered. On 19 May 2018 I visited Ladysmith in KwaZulu-Natal province, South Africa.

Fortunately, I was granted an opportunity to interview Shabalala on my second day of being in town. My first experience on the morning of the interview was unpleasant, because although I had left the place where I was staying an hour early, I was still late for the interview because of lack of communication between me and the manager of the interview schedule, who works for the Ladysmith Black Mambazo Foundation. However, she was caught up in unforeseen circumstances, and the problem was resolved with ease, with things going back to the initial plan. She texted me Joseph Shabalala's wife's contact number to make her aware that I was around their residence, and Mrs Shabalala welcomed me with sincere generosity.

In fact she overlooked my lateness and gave me correct directions since I had ended up in the wrong street owing to that initial lack of communication.

On my arrival, a big electric gate opened to reveal a mansion. Mrs Shabalala came out to welcome and lead me through a backyard where what looked like a newly recruited group of *isicathamiya* were practising. On our way to the house she explained to me about Shabalala's health, which she said was improving. I figured that she was preparing me for the approach I would use when interacting with Shabalala. When I arrived at the practice area, Shabalala was sitting on a chair in front of the practising group, with his eyes focusing on the group and a big smile on his face. He seemed taken by something that the group was doing at the time since he hardly noticed my presence. Mrs Shabalala introduced me to him, and he glanced in my direction with a similar smile. Because of the noise in the practice room she had to speak into his ear, by which I assumed that she was explaining to him who I was. Through his gesture I realised that Dr Shabalala was indeed expecting me. Quickly, his attention went back to the group that was practising. Mrs Shabalala then took me to the lounge, which was situated well away from the practice room where Shabalala was working. The atmosphere in the house indicated that the Shabalalas' house, apart from being a home, was also used as an activity place for the new *isicathamiya* aspirants. Although taking place in an upmarket area, activities in the Shabalala's house resembled those in some typical township households, without the informality and low noise that one can experience in the suburbs. As Mrs Shabalala was leading the way to the lounge, she apologised for her husband's lack of attention to me, which I felt was unnecessary as I had enjoyed seeing him in action with a mellow-sounding *isicathamiya* group. She went on: *Uwuthanda kabi umculo*

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umkhulu. Kwesinye isikhathi unokuthi singamncisha ukudla kodwa hayi umculo. Uthi engahlala engadli kodwa umculo angephile ngaphandle kwawo. Uthi kokunye ufisa engathi lokhukudla esimupha khona ngabe kwenziwe ngomculo. ("He likes music a lot. He sometimes says that we can deprive him of food, but not music. He says he can live without food, but not music. He says that he wishes that the food that we feed him was made of music"). She said: *Nalengoma ehlatshelelwa ngale iqanjwe nguyena nje* ("Even the song which is sung by the practising group in the room is composed by him.").

After I'd been sitting a few minutes in the lounge, Dr Shabalala appeared through the door and joined me. He greeted me politely with his famous smile, and it seemed to me that he carried his smile everywhere, not only when he was in front of the group during performances, or during TV interviews. I responded, and explained the reason for my visit. He nodded his head, and said he was very happy to see someone all the way from Venda as he had also been there a while ago. I asked whether we could start with the interview since I didn't want to keep him long from his schedule, and he nodded in agreement. Fortunately, I was granted permission to record the interview using a recorder.

Background questions

How would you charactirise the music of the '80s?

He said: Eyyy umucabanga izindaba ezinjengalezo, futhi uma ukhuluma ngabantu, abantu babesijabulela ngendlela eyayidida ingqondo. Kodwa zazikhona futhi ezinye izindaba.

Wawuthi uma ungakhuluma ngezinye ezithize, okanye ungaphakamisa izwi, sekonakele. Kodwa namuhla kuyacaca ukuthi yakeyabankulu indaba ("When one even starts to think about matters of the 1980s, although people were overwhelmingly happy whenever they saw us (Ladysmith Black Mambazo), there were also a lot of other deep issues.")

He added that although things were difficult, they kept quiet and continued doing what they did best, and prayed for the improvement of the situation.

To a similar question, but about politics, he responded by saying: "As I have already explained, our situation during the '80s was difficult. It was as though people were created differently during those times. There was no peace among black and white people. Certain people would question our relationship with people who treated us (black people) badly. I would respond: 'Not all white people are bad. For instance, the one whom we are working with (Paul Simon) is a kind person who respects us. We work very well together, and he likes us a lot.' I would say that in response. Indeed, we worked quite fine with Paul Simon. Everything went well. Our critics only saw things differently when *Graceland* was released. The individuals whom I thought were the strongest during those times were the Mambazos. But the most important thing was that God was with us all the way.

How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

"We (South Africa) were a known problem by the world. Things became worse when Paul Simon came to South Africa. Because of the cultural boycott in this country, people said

[singing]: *ayikho lento* ('This project will not succeed'). However, there were those who thought [singing] *ikhona lento* ('This project will be a success'). This was the time when I realised that if I had not been a spirited leader, it would have been over regarding our dream. Our situation became quite difficult because of the ban. It became clear that people in general had different spirits that made them have different views. One thing that brought us together was helping Paul Simon with the recording of the *Graceland* project because he was on fire. Something was burning him, and he did not have people to help him out. There were those who did not even care about what he was doing, but the project became successful against all those challenges. Although the ban did disturb South African music at the time, the *Graceland* project became popular, nevertheless."

Could the resurgence have attracted international artists such as the legendary Paul Simon?

"Yes, Paul Simon did contribute in restoring the dignity of South African music. Although the timing was inappropriate, his musical approach was on point. Although he would not have made things happen on his own; he needed the help of others." Shabalala then pointed at a pen I was holding in my hand, which I used for writing interview notes. He then asked, U*yazwana nayo?* ("Do you like it?"), referring to the pen. *Yebo, baba* ("Yes, sir."), I responded. He continued: "It is one thing that helped us a lot. It helped us in being able to solve some of our challenges." I asked him to elaborate on his statement. He said: W*azi kahle ukuthi ngikhuluma ngani* ("You know well what I am talking about.").

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The role of South African artists in the Graceland project

What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

"*Graceland* closed a lot of gaps. Some of these gaps we did not know how to handle. Actually, closing gaps is an understatement. The outcome of the project became full proof that hard work was indeed put into the project. Truly speaking, during the *Graceland* project, one knew that one had to be direct when talking to him (Simon). He always preferred straight talk, especially if a conversation involved *ukukhula*, *ukwehla nokuqhuzuka* (ups and downs) of the project. He was always full of energy when it came to such matters. After talking to him, one would leave filled with the drive." I was a bit confused by his response, and decided to probe the question. However, although he used different words, he maintained his response to the question.

You obviously played a major role in the making of Graceland. Can you describe your role in the production?

"We played an important role in the project, especially since there were men such as the ones in the group who believed in what they did as though they would die for it, just as Jesus died for his beliefs. They loved the beauty of music. Even when it came to preparing songs which would be presented to Simon, we would go through them together as a group."

How did your participation in Graceland affect your other projects?

Cha abekhona impela nje ("There were projects that were affected"). But I would not like to elaborate on them because it is something of the past and was addressed then," said Shabalala.

How was your participation in the Graceland viewed by the South African public?

Hawu, iningi labo babejebule impela ("People were happy that we were part of such a project"). We were also happy when abroad. It was more like we were at home. Even the company of people overseas felt as if we were here at home. That happiness was then reflected whenever we were back in South Africa, which made our people happy, and therefore they approved of the project. In fact, I remember very well how people would gather around us whenever we were back in the country. Everyone would shout and scream in celebration of what we were doing. We were showcasing our culture and talent to the world."

The spinoffs from the project

What would you say were the spinoffs or downfalls from the Graceland project for the South African music scene and beyond?

Uma zifikile izinsizwa, ziyeshel'intombi, akukho okungazivimba. Futhi zikuthola konke okungokwazo. ("When young men are out hunting for girls while knowing well how good they (boys) are, there is nothing stopping them from getting what is theirs"). In other words,

when one is out there doing what one is good at, and knowing how good one is, there are no shortfalls expected." Here Shabalala used a figure of speech to explain that they were happy with how their rights and profits were addressed and distributed.

Could the Graceland project serve as a template to catapult South African musicians to international stardom? If yes, how could this be achieved? If not, why not?

Yebo, isizwe sakithi nomculo siyawadinga ama-project afana ne-Graceland ukwenzela intuthuko kubaculi bakithi ("Yes, South Africa needs projects such as Graceland for the growth of the music industry and musicians"). Kodwa akumele sencike kubona unomphela. Kufanele sifunde ukuzimela uma sesiyibonile indlela. Njengawo nje amaMbazo. Emuva kokuhlabelela no-Paul Simon, safunda ukuzimela njengoba naye esithole sizimele ("But South Africa needs to learn to be independent in order for this country, the music sector and local musicians to develop. Just like Laysmith Black Mambazo, we were independent when Paul Simon came to us").

Interviewing Nomasonto "Sonti" Mndebelele

Meeting with Nomasonto "Sonti" Mndebele was a difficult task because of her busy schedule. She is an energetic person who is open about her life and taking her profession seriously. Apart from being a performer, which requires a lot of time and dedication, Sonti is presently contributing in helping with the development of aspiring, talented young musicians around the country. This exercise is in sync with this study's objectives. It took

almost two years before my interaction with her came about. Sonti Mndebele is among the three original female members of the *Graceland* project. That, including her profile concerning *Graceland*, is what is of interest for this study. In other words, her background relates well to the outline of this paper. Her journey as a musician ranges from an involvement in politics, her financial history, and the role she played in the *Graceland* project. I had an opportunity of interviewing Sonti on 21June 2018 at her home in Calsworth (Midrand), in Gauteng province, South Africa.

Growing up with a love for music from the young age of six to becoming a well-known musician in Europe, America, and other parts of the world, makes her knowledgeable about South African pop from both South African and international perspectives. Regarding her musical background, her parents' love for Miriam Makeba's music made Mama Africa become Sonti's inspiration from when she realised for the first time that she was gifted in singing. After a long journey that included both opportunities and struggle, she joined *Graceland* in 1987, a year or two after the recording, which was during the first tour. Other female members were the late Miriam Makeba, and the late Nomsa Caluza, who was living with Sonti in London. Another female member was Bhambi, who still lives in London. For ethical reasons she could not be included in this study.

Before the interview could take place, Sonti was willing to provide more information about her history as a musician to the point when she joined the *Graceland* project. It is important to know about her background since it creates more understanding about the life of a South African musician before and after the *Graceland* project, which forms part of the discussion

in this research. Sonti said: "In short, I left South Africa for Botswana in 1976 because of political conditions in this country." I asked her how she joined *Graceland* since she was living in Botswana. She replied: "In 1980 I left Botswana for Germany. I was very fortunate, and thank God for my singing talent. Without my talent I do not know where I would be today. I tried getting scholarships to go to a music school, but couldn't get any. Jonas Gwangwa came to Botswana in 1979, and we formed a band called Dashiki. Jonas was a band leader. The Botswana government at that time staged a music festival which included Botswanans, South African bands, and one band from London. During the rehearsals a gentleman by the name of Julian Bahula came to meet Jonas. He was impressed by my singing. I then asked him if it was possible for him to take me with him back to Germany to join his band because I wanted to explore my singing. He said he would see what he could do, but could not promise anything. But he emphasised that I was very talented. Two or three months later I received a letter from Germany, from a South African musical group that was based there. The letter said Julian had told them about me and wanted me to join them. In April 1980 I went to Germany to join the group. I was with them for two years, and then started freelancing with various musicians and other artists. Then in 1984, the same guy, Julian Bahula, who was then living in London, phoned me and said I should come to London, and there was a show that was going to West Africa in a week's time. I then went to London. While I was rehearsing in London, Hugh Masekela was in town, promoting his latest album. Julian introduced me to Hugh. Hugh said he was impressed by my singing, and wanted to work with me. But he would talk further when he came back from his tour. So I never went back to Germany. I started working with bra Hugh when I came back from a tour to Africa. During one of the shows in which we were performing, Miriam Makeba was amongst the

audience. She also liked me, and I became one of her backing singers. But they were later called to join the *Graceland* tour. Paul Simon had his own American backing vocalists during that time, but Miriam Makeba told them that she chose to be backed by her original backing, referring to us. She said: 'Even if I sing only two or three songs during the tour, I would like to come with my own backing vocalists.' So, if it were not for Miriam Makeba I would not even have known what it was like to be part of *Graceland*. She played a big part in my joining *Graceland*. When we started with the rehearsals Paul Simon loved our voices, and he said he would like to use us as his backing vocalists as well. Miriam Makeba said to him: 'You will have to pay them, because they only came to back me in three songs, and you have many. Paul Simon did not have a problem with that. But of course, when we were performing all over the world, we would meet other musicians such as Lionel Ritchie and others. Some of them would want us to work with them as well. So we were able to work with other prominent musicians. It was only in 1989 or 1990, when friends and family asked 'Why don't you make your own project as a soloist?' that I decided to do. If I could do this for people like Miriam Makeba, why couldn't I follow a solo career? I then stopped working with her, and concentrated on making my own music. So it was through Miriam Makeba that I became part of *Graceland.*"

Background Questions

How would you characterise the music of the 1980s?

"Not that I am criticising the new generation, but the music of the '80s was the best. It had meaning, and there was a lot of talent behind it. Yes, today we do have the young ones who are talented. But there is something that I have noticed. Most of today's musicians want to be famous today, and tomorrow they are gone. Hence their music does not last. Some are talented even though their music does not last, unlike that of the 1980s. You can still play music of the 1980s even today. For instance, I gave two of my CDs to members of my church. Neither of them knew that I am in the music industry. Not a lot of people know me here at home because I have been outside the country for many years. But my focus here is on doing workshops for the young, undiscovered, talented musicians. This is because I have seen our talented young musicians are all over the place in search of means to progress. So I think I can contribute in helping them. After they listened to my CD they said: 'What, is it you, singing there?' They were shocked and could not believe that it was me. Hence I say older music will last forever. Both locals and people from abroad still enjoy South African music of the '80s. So even socially, South African music played a big role in bringing different people together, both black and white, local and overseas. This is because, although people from abroad do not understand the lyrics in South African music, they still enjoy it because of the beat. They still come to our shows even today. We still fly our South African flag during shows."

With regard to the political character of popular music, she said: "I left this country in 1976. I am one of those students who threw stones and said enough was enough. I left in July of 1976 for Botswana. Most of my colleagues left in June, but I left in July. This is when most of those who fled the country went to Swaziland, Lesotho and other places. Although I was a student, I was also in the music industry. I was trained then by Gibson Kente. I was the youngest in Gibson Kente's show that did not become popular, called *How Long*. I was not a member of the African National Congress (ANC), but of the Students' Representative Council (SRC), but I had friends who were members of the ANC when I was in Botswana; including Baleka Mbete, Billy Masetla and the late Prof. Kgositsile. Most of my friends who were in the ANC went to different parts of the world, but because I was not a member, I stayed behind since I could not involve myself much as I was a musician. My voice was the reason why I did not go. So because of that I did not concentrate much on politics. I just focused on music. When you were in Botswana and a member of the ANC or a related organisation, it was difficult to get scholarships. I tried several times to apply for scholarships to study music, but did not succeed in getting any. Most of my friends advised me to joint Amandla, an ANC cultural body headed by Jonas Gwangwa, but I did not. Music and politics do not mix. So I cannot answer your question. Nonetheless, when the EFF or ANC asks me to perform at their functions, I will go. I am a musician, not a politician, after all. Even though I left the country because of politics, I am a musician. But the ANC has my wholehearted support."

How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

It affected it a lot. I remember when I was still in *Graceland*, there were boycotts by the anti-apartheid movements, especially in the UK. What made things worse was that they were blaming Paul Simon, saying that he came to South Africa to exploit black musicians. This is what Western musicians do, they said. They said white musicians use African musicians for their own benefit. The Simon issue was even worse because he came to South Africa during the boycott. A question that was mostly asked was why he came during the boycott. People who were frequently asked this question were Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela. So the cultural boycott did affect music and musicians, but it helped some of us, especially Black Mambazo. If it had not been for Paul Simon, none of the musicians would have gained the global recognition they received. I do not think even Southern African countries would have known Black Mambazo then. So the boycott also helped in promoting South African music and musicians internationally. But overseas countries also blamed Paul Simon that he was using us. They said that since he was out of touch musically, he decided to come to Africa to use us. They said he chose us because we were desperate and hungry. I personally would not know his main intention. But it worked big time for him. What I liked about him was that he did not exploit us. Black Mambazo, Ray Phiri and Shirinda got royalties, because they contributed a lot to the project. It would be nice if he could do his farewell performance here in South Africa, but he does not want to." I interjected that the closest *Graceland* had been to South Africa was when the band went to perform in Zimbabwe. She responded: "It was not even a performance. We only went there to make a *Graceland* music video. Paul Simon wanted us to make a video here in South Africa. It was in 1987. But for some of us, which

included me, Hugh Masekela and Miriam Makeba, there was no way we could come to South Africa during that time. So he chose Zimbabwe instead. We were only there for three or four days.

But I remember before Ray Phiri died. It was a day or two before he died. Out of sympathy for his condition, and because I could not think of anyone else, I decided to call Paul, but he didn't answer his phone. I then sent him a text message explaining that Ray was in and out of hospital, and he might need his support. Do you know what he said to me? 'How can he be out of cash after we have recently sent him his royalties?' I could not respond, and the following day Ray died. I still have Paul's text on my phone even today. I then sent Paul a text informing him of Ray's death. Paul said: 'I am so sorry, he was such a great musician.' I then asked him whether he would be attending his funeral, and informed him about the dates, such as the one for the memorial service. Among the reasons why I asked that question was because Ray played a very big role in *Graceland*. But Paul did not respond. I also sent him a text about Hugh's death, but he still did not respond. It was clear to me that he did not want anything to do with South African musicians any more. Organisers were asking me to talk to him about bringing *Graceland* to South Africa. I spoke to his manager, but nothing has happened. I even called him, and he said he couldn't make it because he was on other tours, and so forth. During *Graceland*'s 25th celebration, there were people who approached him about bringing it to South Africa. He sounded quite eager to come, but I do not know what made him change his mind after he left the country. Now he no longer wants to bring *Graceland* to South Africa."

The role of South African musicians in the Graceland project

What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

"It is very important. As I told you earlier, people like it because it helped many people a lot. When I mention to others that I was in *Graceland*, they say 'Hmmm, wow!', not only here in South Africa, but all over the world. Whenever I perform and there are media to interview me, as soon as I mention *Graceland* they get surprised, and become more interested in asking even more questions. Whenever I called people to come and repair my electricity or plumbing, usually there would be white people among them. When they saw my pictures as they were working, they looked at them and asked questions." She was referring to pictures of her performing which were displayed in her home during the interview. "Because most of them did not know me, they would ask whether that was me in the pictures, and I would say 'Yes.' Then they would say 'Oh, so you are a singer?' I would say 'Yes.' They would be surprised and start asking questions. Because I knew that most white people in South Africa knew *Graceland*, I would mention that I was in *Graceland*, and they would be shocked.

"When *Graceland* was celebrating its 25th year, we went to Sweden. I and one of the girls we performed with went to the shops to buy a few things. We then went to where currency was exchanged. We were speaking isiZulu and people there got interested. People in overseas countries are interested in our languages. They asked: "Where are you from?", and we told them that we were from South Africa. They said: 'Wow, nice, you're from South Africa?' We said: 'Yes.' They said: 'Are you visiting here in Sweden?' We said: 'No, we came here

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with *Graceland* to perform with Paul Simon.' They shouted: 'What? The tickets are sold out, and we want them! We want to go and see that show!' One of them said: 'I remember when you guys first came here in 1987. My father went to watch your performance. I was still young then. But I knew the music and the videos. I would love to go and see the show, please!' I said: 'Give me your phone number and name: I will get you tickets.' I got them tickets. Everywhere we performed around the world, tickets would be sold out, I would help some of them with tickets because people all over the world loved *Graceland.* The *Graceland* project was always sold out. Even today, if Paul Simon went to all the counties we have been to, including Europe, the US and everywhere else, the show would be sold out.

"There is another thing, especially about those of us who have lived outside South Africa. You see, I did not choose to live outside South Africa. I left this country when I was still very young. I was still relying on my parents. Before I left, I was used to living with my parents because they took care of me. Political circumstances forced me to go to Botswana. I did not know anyone there. I did not know where I was going to sleep or what to eat. So I was forced to become independent when I was in Botswana. It was tough for me out there, but because of my voice, I was fortunate to go overseas. I was able to finally make a name for myself through performing in big festivals in the US and Europe with my band from London. So when you finally come back home, people say: 'Ahhh, these people left. They left us to face bullets and what have you, during apartheid. They left us for a better life where they come from.' Do you know that I lost both my parents while I was in exile? I could not even come and bury them. My parents had four children. Three of them died while I was in exile. Do you know that today I do not have brothers or sisters? I am only left with my son. People

think I enjoyed being away all this time. I sometimes feel like packing my bags and going back to the UK because of my situation here at home. But I tell myself: 'You know what? There is no place like home.' I will stay. I am not going anywhere. If I ever leave this country, it will be because of my work. But I will go work and come back. There is something that Miriam Makeba once told me when I came back for a short while. She said: 'There are a lot of challenges I am facing here at home, but I am tired of living abroad. I am tired of being a refugee. I am truly tired.' Because she loved cooking, whenever I called her she would be exhausted, but had to cook for herself. One of the reasons she was always tired was that she was always travelling in and out of the country since she was no longer booked here in South Africa. She was celebrated for a short while when she came back, and then forgotten. You know why she was always overseas? It was because people there loved and respected her. But here at home, nothing. I recently spoke to one of her grandchildren. She said today we are commemorating ten years since grandmother died, and nothing is said about that in this country. Miriam Makeba has been forgotten. It is the same thing that I am experiencing today. But I have accepted it." She concluded by saying: "*Graceland* was significant in the history of South Africa because it brought together different cultures and races, not only here in South Africa, but around the world. But local musicians are supposed to be supported here at home too, not only by people overseas."

How did joining Graceland affect your other projects?

No, it did not affect anything. This is because when I joined *Graceland*, it was through Miriam Makeba, and then later Hugh Masekela, for whom I was singing as a backing

vocalist. So my participation in *Graceland* did not affect anything because during that time I was not a soloist, nor did I have my own shows. I was only working with Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela.

How did the public view your participation in Graceland?

People were very happy, especially people that I knew. This was because I was not well known here at home since I left this country in 1976. I have performed a lot abroad, and in other African countries over the years, but not at home.

The spinoffs from the Graceland project

What would you say are the positives and negatives of the Graceland project for South African music?

Everything went well with regard to our payment for *Graceland*. Ray Phiri, because of his immense contribution to the project, could be paid more. As for the others, I do not think they have any problem about royalties because they are getting them, Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Shirinda, Lebone and others. As to how much they were getting, I would not know since that was between them and Paul Simon. Whether they were happy or not, I would not know. But on my side, I was very happy." At this point, Sonti was highly commending the treatment South African musicians and others from the African continent received when in the *Graceland* project. For instance, we had our own caterers everywhere we went. We were

served food during and after rehearsals. If you arrived at a rehearsal not having had breakfast, you would find every kind of breakfast there at the rehearsal venue. I remember when we did our first performance, which was in Chicago, when we were waiting for our transport, which was usually a minibus. Usually we would be ferried on minibuses, and big stars such as Miriam and Hugh would be in limousines. But in Chicago we were all driven in limousines. I was alone in a limousine that day. In every hotel that we slept in, you would get a robe with your name on it, flowers and a bottle of champagne. The person who made sure that we were well treated was Miriam Makeba, whom we were backing during her performances of *Graceland*.

"I also remember when we went to perform in Russia. It was in 1987, or around that time. That was during a seven months' tour. Paul Simon would always say 'I am done' after each tour," she said laughing. In 1989, we went on tour for two months. We went to countries that we had not been to before with the tour. One of them was Russia. This was when Russia was still experiencing economic difficulties. Paul chartered two planes to ferry us there. One plane was for the performers, another one was for the caterers. So we went to Russia with our own caterers from the US.

Could the Graceland project serve as a template to catapult South African musicians to international stardom? If yes, why is this not the case? If not, why not?

I think we should not rely on people such as Paul Simon. We should not. Some of us were lucky to be part of *Graceland*, and experience the beauty, the extravagance, and every other

thing. But I do not think we should rely on such things. We should instead do things ourselves. Unfortunately, in this business, promoters, or whoever is involved, rip us off. This includes record companies. But we should also be careful when doing things on our own because even here at home, the organisers can book you for a performance, but not pay you what you are worth. They claim that they are giving you the exposure by booking you for the festival. I have personally experienced that here at home. I have performed all over the world, and got well paid. But here at home I am told that I get paid less because people do not know me. How do I pay the musicians I perform with and other expenses if I get paid so little? That is the only problem I am facing in this country. Also, nepotism takes place in the booking of musicians in this country. For instance, you can be preferred by organisers, but powerful individuals can change that, so that the organisers book musicians of their choice. So that is the problem. They are blocking us from participating in festivals and other big shows in this country. The whole problem is because musicians from overseas are preferred to local ones. So it is okay to make projects such as *Graceland* for finding a way. But overseas musicians should not be preferred to local ones."

As part of data collection, I searched for information about contracts and royalties between Paul Simon and South African musicians that participated in this study. Among the music archives I visited for such information was the South African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO), where data are kept. But because of the Protection of Personal Information Act, 4 of 2013 (PoPI Act), to which SAMRO is compliant, I could not access such information. Sony, a publishing company that is responsible for Paul Simon's publications, also keeps these records. However, I was advised to use a legal approach in dealing with this matter. By

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implication, verification of claims within data that are presented in this study regarding copyright and royalties complaints by some of the participants remains pending until a further study.

4.3   ANALYSIS OF THE INTERVIEWS

This section presents an analysis of the responses of the participants in the *Graceland* project. Undertaking this process helped in identifying a better understanding of the role of the *Graceland* project in South African popular music of the 1980s. A qualitative data analysis approach was employed in this study, while a thematic method was used to analyse data. The study comprises three themes, namely: the background of the *Graceland* music project, the role of South African musicians in the project, and the spinoffs from the project. Interviews were formulated in order to facilitate the expansion of the themes.

The background of the Graceland project

The question as to how the participants characterised popular music of the 1980s provided various answers. Six participants – Phiri, Rachabane, Shirinda, Mtshali and Sonti – gave answers based on the incidents that took place within the South African popular music scene. Two participants,   Khumalo and Coplan, provided the American and South African versions of the characteristics of popular music. The responses by the participants under this theme included aspects that ranged from politics to, instrumentation, spirituality in music, and the cultural embargo.

Phiri's response on the social significance of music of the '80s was more influenced by politics. He stated that politics was the main determinant of the nature of South African society. He said that musicians spoke in one voice. Shabalala stated that there was no peace among black and white people. Phiri's view was supported by Shabalala when he mentioned the social difficulties for black musicians around that period. Phiri's spiritual connection with music appeared to be the driving force behind his passion for making it, whilst adding to his philosophical views about life. Shabalala, Mtshali and Shirinda also had a spiritual connection with music. Shirinda made reference to the spiritual connection in music, and how this connection is passed onto the audience. Sonti also spoke about music's connection with people worldwide. She stated that during *Graceland's* tours people from different regions and cultures interacted. On the other hand, Rachabane described the character of popular music using the listening world's usual point of view in terms of instrumentation, and how fashionable it was. Khumalo contended that various sounds were introduced to the global music scene during this time. He felt that we as Africans have lost our music culture. His point about various sounds was similar to Rachabane's. Khumalo mentioned the 1980s as a turning point of music styles around the world. He lamented that South Africans copied the American pop style during the 1980s. This led to their losing their musical identity. Sonti suggested that South African music of the 1980s was the best. But her focus is mainly on young musicians of today. She thinks that current musicians do not make quality music. Their main focus is on becoming famous overnight. Unlike music of the '80s, their music does not last in the market. Mtshali stated that during the 1980s South African compositions did not have a lot of lyrics. Musicians wrote only a few lines, but made a lot of sense in a song. Coplan mainly explored the diversification of music, and gave examples of the pop musicians

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of both cultures that were prominent during the 1980s. In a YouTube video clip, *Paul Simon: "Evidently there is an expression on my face that looks like something is wrong"* (You Tube), also attests to his spiritual connection with music. The main common point that was made by the participants was how music of the '80s, particularly *Graceland*, promoted solidarity amongst people all over the world.

With regard to the political impact of the pop music of the 1980s, Ray Phiri's view was that it was used as the struggle against the apartheid system in South Africa. After 1976 there was one good story to tell: exposing the evils of apartheid every way they could. This meant that South African musicians expressed their feelings towards apartheid through music. This trend was conveyed and adopted by mostly black audiences since it represented their culture and a way of communicating people's views and feelings. According to Barney Rachabane, white people in South Africa disregarded music by black musicians, citing inferiority and senselessness as the reasons. This was because the segregation of black people by white people in South Africa meant disapproving of anything which had to do with black people. Rachabane thought that although matters such as apartheid were topical during the 1980s, they did not influence other musicians as far as music composition was concerned. One of these musicians was Sonti. Although she was aware of the prevailing politics, and also participated in the struggle against apartheid, she discontinued her political activity to continue with her musical career. Rachabane's view of black and white people during the '80s partly differed from Shabalala's. Shabalala stated that not all white people were the same. He gave an example about Paul Simon and his treatment of black musicians. Shirinda said that the music of the 1980s spoke directly to people's hearts. Because of the trending of

lyrical relevance during the 1980s, music was a useable form for communicating political struggles, cultural issues, love and other matters that spoke to their emotions. Coplan's response partly matched Phiri's and Rachabane's. He maintained that owing to apartheid, South African musicians were more concerned with composing music for the struggle, while foreign musicians were focusing on other matters. Lastly, Paul Simon's view matched that of all other participants. He believed that musicians were very open to collaboration which eradicated the cultural barrier. This implied that besides being unified by political issues, there was a sense of unity, openness and Ubuntu among South African musicians.

Thus South African musicians, particularly black ones, created, to some extent, music that was in dialogue with the politics in South Africa. This tendency could not be avoided as participating in politics became of a powerful culture in South Africa during the '80s. Moreover, degrading African culture was one of the strategies that the apartheid regime employed to exert its total dominance. As a result, South African musicians could not write a lot of political lyrics in their compositions because they avoided being implicated by the government in using music to address political issues. Other musicians were influenced by musical spirituality, which played a role in enhancing the quality of performances such as *Graceland*. Despite all the social issues during the 1980s, music was able, to a certain degree, to contribute to social health, sanity and integrity, not only in South Africa but throughout the world. Creativity, collaboration and political tangles in the *Graceland* project summed up all that was said on this theme by the participants.

On the question whether politics had any effect on the popular music of South Africa of the 1980s, the analysis shows that there was common ground in the answers by participants. Although their responses differed, all South African musicians who participated in the study experienced challenges concerning popular music and politics, in which they were involved. Phiri pointed out that because of apartheid, music and politics at that time were inseparable as certain musicians took part in the struggle against apartheid. Mtshali agreed with Phiri about the involvement of popular music in South African politics. Khumalo, for instance, had to flee the country because of the oppression. Barney Rachabane's concern was more on the cohesion amongst local and exiled musicians during the struggle. He was concerned about some musicians who went into exile for being arrogant towards those who remained in South Africa. His point was supported by Sonti, who experienced the division when she came back from the UK. She said Miriam Makeba also complained about the division among musicians in South Africa at the time. Shabalala concurred with Rachabane's opinion; he said it became clear that people in general had different views as a result of the ban. Shirinda said that the laws were very tough, and police always arrested people, especially at night. Schumann (2008) noted the entanglements between popular culture and apartheid in South Africa. It was apparent that, besides the oppression of black people by the apartheid regime, there were also political conflicts among local musicians. Lastly, Paul Simon seemed to find a neutral standpoint in his statement that music could not be used to fight the political tangles that South African musicians were facing. His mission was clear from the onset. Rather than getting involved in local political issues, he was bent on acquiring South African musical material. However, the *Graceland* project played a major role in bringing some musicians together.

Some musicians appear to have avoided political tangles through not writing a lot of lyrical content in their music. This limited musicians in communicating social issues directly. However, given the fact that music is regarded as a tool for communication, it is unfortunate that Paul Simon had a contrary view about popular music. Perhaps this was because he was unfamiliar with the hardships that the South African black people were experiencing during apartheid.

On the question of how the cultural embargo affected the South African popular music scene, respondents had mixed views. Two participants, Khumalo and Mtshali, considered that the embargo affected the South African music scene of the '80s. Five participants – Simon, Shabalala, Shirinda, Phiri and Rachabane – did not think that the ban affected it. Two of them, Coplan and Sonti, had mixed views. Phiri's view was that instead the ban promoted local music internationally, and Barney Rachabane regarded music as more powerful than politics. Shirinda's response was that the ban would not have done any more damage as musicians were abused by the South African system anyway. Khumalo, Shabalala and Sonti thought the embargo affected South African musicians, but that it also indirectly promoted South African musicians internationally. Coplan maintained that the embargo was a positive thing for South Africa since musicians had other places where they were able to promote their work and make a better living for themselves. This point is widely echoed by the *Graceland* musicians under this theme. However, Coplan also states that the embargo prevented South African musicians from promoting themselves globally. Here, Coplan agrees with Mtshali, Shabalala and Khumalo.

Most participants did not feel that the embargo affected South African music during the 1980s. This was because their experiences of the ban were varied. For one thing, the participants in *Graceland* were well paid. It is also because the apartheid system kept South African musicians out of sight regarding matters which could have directly affected them. They mainly dealt with what they were exposed to within their limited circles. On the other hand, because literature reveals that generally, foreign musicians were aware of the embargo, this could imply that most local musicians were unaware of the ban. Paul Simon's claim that he did not break the cultural boycott, and did not know about its existence in the first place, may have been genuine. However, the fact that certain Western musicians could still enter the country, and were not strictly held accountable for it by the South African authorities, poses questions. Paul Simon said he was "never put on the so-called UN blacklist." It seems that his determination to become a successful star like other foreign musicians who came to South Africa at the time, was what drove him here.

Thus, although some South African black musicians might have benefited from the embargo, most of them were deprived of the right to prosper and to understand the actual effects of the embargo. They viewed the ban as a platform that indirectly helped in promoting their craft internationally, while in essence, it also indirectly gave foreign musicians the opportunity to perform in South Africa, and South African musicians who left to perform overseas were banned from the country by the apartheid regime. This outcome appears to make UNESCO guilty of prejudice, patriarchy, and being lenient towards foreign musicians, particularly those from America. The organisation was mandated to hold accountable musicians who entered South Africa during the supposed embargo, irrespective of their race or origin.

However, despite all the challenges, collaborations like *Graceland* became a success, said Shabalala. The project provided musicians with needed income whilst promoting social cohesion.

The role of South African musicians in the Graceland project

The significance of the Graceland project in the South African historical context

When questioned about the significance of the *Graceland* project, the participants had different answers. Five participants – Phiri, Rachabane, Shirinda, Khumalo and Shabalala – thought that *Graceland* helped in promoting South African music internationally. Coplan had two views on this point, and Sonti's and Mtshali's views differed from those of the other respondents. According to Ray Phiri, *Graceland* was significant in fighting the apartheid government, while promoting South African musicians internationally. Barney Rachabane concurred with this statement, but added that musicians in South Africa are still not well recognised. Shirinda supported this point, but also said that although Paul Simon still performs his song without his consent, all the musicians were well paid. He said there are those who wasted the money they earned from *Graceland*, but overall everyone was paid according to the agreement. Khumalo and Shabalala also agreed that *Graceland* promoted South African music. Mtshali had two points to make in this regard. *Graceland* helped to break a barrier that was created by the cultural boycott, and Paul Simon promoted South African music. Shabalala highlighted the importance of openness as a lesson for music partnerships to succeed; in other words, for relationships between states to run smoothly,

honesty and transparency should be regarded as their mains elements. Sonti thought that *Graceland* brought various cultures together, thereby promoting solidarity between different races and cultures. Khumalo said Hugh Masekela and Ray Phiri were more successful after participating in *Graceland.* Coplan supported this view, but emphasised the commercial success in saying that *Graceland* took South African musicians out of the ghetto, as American promoters could include South African popular musicians in their billboard figures in world music. Paul Simon also mentioned how successful the project was in his interview on YouTube entitled *The Promotion of Social Cohesion and the Returns Aspect.*

Clearly, collaborative music concepts such as *Graceland* are a promising development for South African popular music. The main achievement of the *Graceland* project was the international promotion of South African music.

As far as their participation in *Graceland* affecting their other projects back home was concerned, the musicians' responses varied. Rachabane, Shirinda, Sonti and Khumalo said they were not affected. Shabalala said their participation in *Graceland* did affect other projects, but could not elaborate. During the 1980s, Rachabane apparently devoted himself to performing, and was oblivious of anything else, such as South African politics. He said politics and music do not mix. He regards himself as a "soldier" of music. Shirinda also denied that his family or projects were affected when he joined *Graceland.* He maintained that it actually helped him to support his family. With regard to Phiri, although he might have been affected, the continuation of his band, Stimela, when he was on a networking quest and musical self-empowerment abroad (an opportunity made possible by his participation in

Graceland, among other things), proves otherwise. Shabalala also pointed out that his participation in *Graceland* did affect some of his projects back at home, but was not willing to elaborate. He said, those were matters of the past, and were sorted out back then. Apparently, because of the pressure that comes with being musicians, and breadwinners for their families, his (Ray Phiri) colleagues were forced to move ahead without him. Mtshali suggested that the project did not affect Stimela, but Phiri was the one who had decided to abandon it after their *Graceland* contract ended. Khumalo said that although none of his projects were affected, he intended going back to support his people; but he was worried about the difference in the treatment of artists in South Africa. Sonti said that she was mainly a backing vocalist throughout her career, so nothing was affected by her participation in *Graceland*.

It is important to note that, South African musicians could not have helped minding their circumstances back home as their only opportunity to improve them at that time was in the form of the *Graceland* project. Notwithstanding Mtshali's view, however, it was in the nature of band members to have different views regarding various aspects of the band. It appears that there were influences on Phiri's decision making for the benefit of the *Graceland* project which turned out to have affected Stimela, their original band. Khumalo's concern regarding the difference in the treatment of musicians is worth considering as it is a major problem which threatens to compromise the aim of future collaborations. Since Paul Simon's focus was only on the making of the Graceland collaboration as his possible route back to stardom, it could have forced him to overlook any obstacles. He had something to lose if both Mtshali and Phiri, who both appear to have been the backbone of the project, left it. This would have

compromised his work. But probably he had nothing to lose with regard to his projects back home since *Graceland* was proving to be his most promising mission. Although *Graceland* project provided for African musicians, it did have a negative effect on the other projects of South African musicians who participated in it. Shabalala's remarks, however, indicate that there are still unrevealed matters regarding the participation of African musicians in *Graceland.*

On the question of *Graceland* being a template to catapult South African musicians into the international music scene, Mtshali, Shabalala and Khumalo think that South African musicians can learn from projects such as *Graceland*, but should learn to be independent in order to succeed in future. Ray Phiri and Sonti do not think that concepts such as the Graceland project can be a solution. Their responses seem to have been influenced by past experience whereby some musicians in the *Graceland* project were not properly acknowledged as having contributed to the project. This argument is echoed by Shirinda, who laments that Paul Simon did not properly administer the accreditations on one of *Graceland's* hits, "I Know What I Know", which was composed by Shirinda. According to him, the only challenge is the involvement of politics in such collaborations. Notwithstanding such views about Graceland, Mtshali, Shabalala and Khumalo pointed out a need to for South Africa to be independent as soon as it had acquired the necessary expertise from collaborations such as *Graceland*. Coplan uses a Zulu term, *vulandlela* (opening up a road), in describing the role of *Graceland*. He also thinks that *Graceland* could be a solution since after the embargo, foreign musicians started pouring into South Africa with the local ones going abroad, as a two-way business transaction. However, this operation has never been

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balanced since the South African music sector was patronised by American stars compared to the small number of South African stars in the American industry. It is an imbalance between the two industries which needs to be looked into.

As they have explained, participants played different roles in the project. This is an indication that extreme measures were followed in capturing the South African music styles, hence the effort in involving various musicians on different occasions during the recording. Rachabane played alto saxophone during the tours of the project. Shirinda's song "I Know What I Know" was one of the well-known hits, with the distinct *Xitsonga* backing vocals of the Gaza Sisters, mesmerised Western audience. Ladysmith Black Mambazo ensured the success of the project through contributing their *isicathamiya* (Meintjes, 1990). Phiri played a major role as a guitarist, composer and a co-arranger of music on the project. He makes reference to "playing a groove in a certain mood", and one would have to just fit in lyrics. Phiri, together with Shirinda and Shabalala (Ladysmith Black Mambazo), because of their spiritual background, which embodied traditional African mysticism, contributed a spiritual dimension to the *Graceland* project. This was apparent during the interviews with them. Mtshali also testified in being taken by *abadala* (ancestors), as he puts it, during his performances. Stephan-Robinson (2009) identifies with the spirituality in the music. It is an unusual yet pleasing mood which stimulates the feelings of the audiences worldwide. Sonti was a backing vocalist on the *Graceland* tours. Paul Simon uses the time signatures in comparing the South African music to that of West Africa. He refers to South African music as rooted in a drum kit, saying that South African music was influenced by English people. Overall, South African musicians contributed their indigenous cultural elements in terms of the style of play, vocals,

the 4/4 time signature, and spirituality to create the mood of the album. Thus, apart from taking part in the recording of instruments, arranging and singing, they were the backbone of Graceland as they helped in creating a distinctive mood on the project. American culture, skills and advanced technology also had their share in the project through Simon.

The spinoffs from the Graceland project

With regard to the spinoffs from the *Graceland* project, all participants gave the impression that *Graceland* project was successful in terms of the returns, as well as the fact that it afforded South African musicians overseas opportunities. As a result, Sonti, Shirinda, Rachabane, Khumalo, Shabalala (Ladysmith Black Mambazo) and Mtshali said they were paid well. Rachabane refers to a world-renowned pop icon and says: "Even Michael Jackson did not make so much money at that time." In emphasising his gains, Shirinda said that everyone was satisfied with their payment. Phiri, on the other hand, claims that there were irregularities involved in terms of royalties. Coplan stated that there were not a lot of positives for black South African pop, but *Graceland* helped local musicians in travelling abroad for more opportunities, and were stopped by the embargo along the way. Paul Simon's declaration that "*Graceland* was the most significant achievement", referring to both production and returns, adds to the testimony of South African musicians. On this point, Phiri maintained that although *Graceland* was a successful project, "the most unfortunate point about South African music" is that, despite the fact that it has all the qualities to make it successful, only gets the recognition and success it deserves when South African musicians migrate to Western countries.

Common remarks by the participants appear to call for an analysis regarding the role played by multiculturalism as an influential element in the success of the *Graceland* project, and whether has the potential to influence similar South African ventures of the future.

Historic events which have transpired between Africa and Western countries regarding cultures, religions and attitudes direct this analysis. Syncretism which can be explained as the amalgamation (or an attempt of amalgamation) of various cultures and religions seems to be influencing the social status quo of humanity even today. As a result, economic power is still being determined by this component. This study clearly illustrates how syncretism came into existence and was employed for addressing socioeconomic issues. Because of the cultural element, which can also be perceived as a religion, *Graceland* is among the examples that exemplify syncretism. Although such initiatives have created gaps in recent times, there is much material which today's scholars can find useful in finding solutions for the development of humanity, while maintaining social cohesion among the global community. This understanding is proven through investigating the role played by *Graceland* in South African popular music of the '80s, which is this study's objective.

However, a determination by certain individuals or organisations in advancing mechanisms that address social issues emerges as the reason for the progression of certain cultures while remaining a challenge for some. One of such approaches was the initiation of transculturation, a model that was meant "for understanding the linguistic, racial, social, and power-laden cultural clashes of immigrant populations in the United States" (Area, 2016: 139). Because of its components which were adaptable for resolving matters in certain

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regions, transculturalism became a challenge in areas such as Africa. The components included music, a base for cultures of almost the whole African continent. It was an unforeseen circumstance, but known to those who advanced strategies such as transculturation, that an interaction which led to combination between the missionaries and Africans would ultimately result to colonisation. Syncretism was not to be perceived as a destructive mechanism (Connell & Gibson, 2004), but a natural incidence whereby guidance, not necessarily manipulation, would be involved in assuring the balance in the global community. Similar to transculturation. One views the emerging challenges concerning music collaboration and other related issues as inherited byproduct of the initiatives such as syncretism and transculturation by humanity. Thereby music industries and their developmental agents form part of the inheritors. In other words, syncretism should be among areas of study if future hybrid music partnerships such as the *Graceland* project are to succeed. By implication, hybridity, which took place in the Graceland project, is also worth looking at in this analysis.

Like syncretism, hybridity has created negative perceptions around it. The socioeconomic tangles where various cultures coexist causes divisions amongst global communities. This undermines the role which is supposed to be played by this phenomenon within the new age societies. Intertwining of cultures in this manner should constitute, among other things, room for fresh beginnings and ideas that would be helpful in resolving our own issues and those of others. Similarly, in music terms, as in the *Graceland* project, hybridity should help in bringing about new concepts, and cultures which would replace outdated ones for bettering the livelihoods of the stakeholders. However, because of the tendency of fighting for power

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among humanity, such incidents have been used for selfish empowerment reasons. If such inclinations continue unattended, many potential features which could be useful for addressing future evolutions would be lost. Unfortunately, perceptions created around hybridity may result in a much bigger challenge that would be not reversible. Therefore, looking closely into this aspect should provide solutions regarding the prosperity of humanity from which a South African music sector can also benefit.

According to most participants in this study, collaborations such as *Graceland* project are commendable for improving the social and financial circumstances of musicians like those of South Africa during the 1980s, although this success became coupled with other issues such as conflicts relating to royalties and music copyrights that seems to have left unanswered questions to certain South African musicians who participated in the project. Cultural circumstances where collaborations take place ought to be investigated to avoid clashes which might disturb the progress of popular music. In the case of South Africa and Africa as a whole, the employment of episteme such as the Afrocentric approach to address African social issues is critical at this stage. To avoid using foreign strategies for resolving indigenous challenges, engaging mechanisms which are solely directed to solving local issues can produce positive effects.

4.4   DISCUSSION

This section discusses the outcome of the study in terms of literature reviewed and data presented. The purpose of this exercise is to create a dialogue with the problem statement

and research questions in this study. Points that emerge as forming the background of the main study are perspectives on popular music of the '80s in the context of *Graceland*, the politics around *Graceland*, and the financial aspect in the context of *Graceland*. But because of the need to employ a comprehensive approach for precise outcomes, hybridity and syncretism are also discussed and an analysis of the *Graceland* album provided. Data presented as a result of the interviews with the participants are also tackled.

Discussing the background of the study in terms of the Graceland project

This section discusses the background to the *Graceland* project. The purpose of this discourse is to determine emerging issues with regard to data collected mainly through the literature review, but the responses by South African musicians who participated in the *Graceland* project are also included. An analysis of the *Graceland* album, the role that was played by South African musicians in the *Graceland* project, and spirituality are also looked into in this section. But what seems to also draw attention as outlining deeper understanding of this theme is talking about syncretism and hybridity. This practice should create an understanding of any developing information and other related issues surfacing with regard to the study.

At the beginning of this study, the *Graceland* project was introduced as a controversial yet profitable project because of the issues emanating from it and successes around it. The visit of Paul Simon to South Africa during the cultural embargo created political uproar because of the attitudes towards the cultures involved and the financial aspects of this venture. Frith (1991) refers to competition, money-making and politics where popular music is involved. It

also appears that apartheid and the cultural boycott of the time both contributed in the hardship which was experienced by South African popular musicians. This study illustrates how the ban was implemented in South Africa, a matter that was also tackled during the interviews with participants in this research. It turns out that although the ban might have been intended to benefit South Africa, there were other issues concerning the global players in this matter. UNESCO, an organisation that is entrusted with the wellbeing of the creative industries globally, did not succeed in resolving racial issues in South Africa through the embargo. Instead, UNESCO appears to have indirectly contributed in the suffering of black South African artists. This then becomes a concern since the USA is the main funder of the UN, of which UNESCO is an agent.

Although the boycott was meant to prevent South African artists from promoting their works internationally, the creative arts of this region such as popular music became famous worldwide through platforms such as the *Graceland* project. Analysis of data presented in this study indicates that even South African musicians who participated in *Graceland*, such as Phiri, Sonti and Khumalo agree with the literature that discusses issues around the boycott and South African popular music of the 1980s. Also, literature indicate that the desperation of African musicians to succeed exposed them to undesired outcomes such as exploitation during collaborations.

Degrading conclusions in academia concerning the South African and African music industries creates challenges to the development of the musical activity of this region. Therefore it is important to discuss the core reason for the challenges that face the making

and performing of South African music today. Syncretism and hybridity are two aspects which need deliberating on. The aim of this exercise is to create an understanding regarding debates that have arisen between American and South African popular music in order to bring about a healthy relationship for current and future collaboration like that in *Graceland*.

Ancient phenomena such as syncretism, which can be described as the creation of new cultural practices by the fusion of two or more religious or social influences, and hybridity, which is a mixture of different cultures, are found to be affecting popular cultures of today. This study talks much about the effects of these components. What appears to stand out concerning this matter is how well-meaning the two concepts were intended for humanity's wellbeing. However, it appears that such meanings were instead manipulated to favour certain areas or groups through syncretism and hybridity. Particular powerful individuals or organisations have been using the two elements in directly and indirectly positioning their religions and cultures above others for the purpose of domination (Connell & Gibson, 2004). Unfortunately, today this practice carries challenges when implemented in Africa as syncretism and hybridity either diminished or absorbed African religion and culture. In other words, ideas were put into practise by certain individuals or organisations then directly and indirectly imposed in Africa since this region was deemed by its critics as lacking its own ways of solving issues. For projects such as *Graceland*, syncretism and hybridity relate to the origin of the problems regarding religions and cultures found in *Graceland*. It should be kept in mind that a religion and culture can be difficult to distinguish. Johnson (2017) discusses how *Graceland* is implicated in this topic. Therefore, based on data presented in

this study, syncretism and hybridity ought to be looked into for the sake of Africa's bright future.

The Afrocentric paradigm emerges as a method that can contribute to resolving issues faced by African popular music because of the nature of the Afrocentric approach's design in dealing with socioeconomic matters in Africa.

Discussing the character of popular music in the 1980s

In characterising the social aspects of popular music of the 1980s in this study, three points of discussion stand out. The first one is that popular music was used as a tool for addressing social matters emanating from the harsh effects of the apartheid laws. The second one is characterised in terms of instrumentation, and the third one considers popular music of the '80s as a spiritual vehicle. The second and third points are discussed in depth in the section entitled "The role of the musicians in the *Graceland* project".

Popular music of the 1980s was regarded as a tool in political conflict in South Africa. It was employed for challenging political power and addressing issues which materialised from those conflicts. Byerly (1998) identifies power struggles where popular music was used as a tool in such scuffles. Ray Phiri and Sonti attested that South African popular music of the 1980s was used to confront the apartheid regime. Because of the discriminatory system, popular music was used as part of the movement aimed at protesting against unjust laws. However, during the apartheid era musicians could not perform freely in their country, as

they were censored or banned from performing music which was regarded as anti-government. They were also battered and jailed for participating in struggles for their rights in the 1980s. Musicians who performed protest music were regarded as a threat to the apartheid system. Moreover, their main focus became protest music, which made them neglect music that addressed other spheres such as love, relationships and other emotional issues.

Apart from promoting relations in Africa, music has been employed for the recording of general life events. Plainly put, musicians have either voluntarily or been forced by circumstances to embark on political struggles, or on any other matter that affects them, through composing songs that relate to such events. Therefore, in spite of other issues that arise, the character of South African popular music is still about its social effect on the South African people.

The social effect of popular music of the 1980s

It emerged in the literature and responses by the participants that the use of popular music of the

'80s as a tool against social injustice by musicians in South Africa has affected them. Only a few who performed protest music enjoyed the fruits of the music industry then. South African policies were formulated to favour the minority, particularly the white musicians who supported the ill-treatment of black people, in every way possible, while the majority of black

people and musicians remained suppressed. Moreover, black popular music was deemed inferior and senseless. The degrading of black culture was one of the strategies employed by the oppressive system to make people loathe themselves. Coplan (2001), Hamm (1995), Muller (2004: 1) and Locke (2011) are among the authors that discuss the perceptions towards African music. South African black people were therefore literally isolated. Either way, both musicians and the society were driven to further desperation owing to oppression. This is although popular music was well known for the integral role it played in various aspects of life, such as amusement, telling stories of the past, conservation of culture, and so forth. However, the involvement of musicians in political tangles is unavoidable as they are part of the affected community. The unfavourable political situation in South Africa indirectly forced musicians to sing and play struggle music, while derailing from addressing other relevant social matters. They were not allowed to collaborate with white people in social gatherings and music festivals, where various cultural intolerances could have been limited. This added to existing problems, which resulted in apartheid exacerbating hatred among blacks and whites, as music by black artists was demeaned, a legacy that exists even today.

The use of popular music as a tool prompted divisions among South African black musicians, thus disrupting their social activities. For instance, Barney Rachabane did not support the use of pop music in political struggle, while Ray Phiri was an activist-musician. As a result, this created a conflict among local musicians, while discouraging many aspiring musicians from taking part in the music industry. Moreover, the conflicts-that existed among certain South African black musicians, and between local and overseas based ones, because of the

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difference in the statuses of the two regions, aggravated the divisions among them. Rachabane mentions how local and overseas-based musicians created barriers amongst each other during music festivals to which he was also subjected. However, regardless of political issues, there was still hope in the form of collaborations that emerged, such as Juluka and *Graceland*, among others, which comprised black and white musicians, thus restoring a reason for remaining hopeful as far as togetherness was concerned.

The political effects of popular music of the 1980s

A situation conducive to a fertile social environment is determined by the political condition of the nation. As pointed out by Ray Phiri, among other things, it becomes a challenge to realise any goodness from music if it is clouded by destructive politics. This makes musicians lack the urge of contribution towards the industry. McLellan (1973), Frith (1991), and Boswell and Dixon (1993) touch on issues associated with popular music and politics when highlighting how politics affects the music industry. Phiri for instance, quotes some of the lyrics of "Highland Drifter", where he sings about his political situation. South African musicians were forced by circumstances to become political musicians during the 1980s. Some were banned by the apartheid system and went to live as refugees in foreign states. Such occurrences defeated the element of workmanship and that of collaborative ventures, said Phiri.

The effect of cultural embargo on the South African music scene of the 1980s

Other than the entanglement between social life and apartheid politics in South African popular music, the cultural embargo came as a "disguised terrorist" for the South African black musicians. UNESCO's strategy of banning the South African's cultural industry had two sides to it. Firstly, the ban was allegedly introduced in order to stop any movement by the outside world that had anything to do with cultural creativity in South Africa. Meanwhile, the South African system also banned South African musicians who left the country for fear of being victimised by the apartheid authorities. Secondly, apart from Paul Simon, other foreign musicians could access the country and receive first class treatment from the government because they belonged to the white race. UNESCO as an organisation that overlooked this situation either did little to curb this practice or turned a blind eye. Byerly (1998), Engel and Rutkowski (2012), and Blanchfield and Browne (2013) share the findings relating to UNESCO's dubious approach in resolving art industry issues in Africa, including the boycott. In other words, African musicians were under strain owing to UNECSO's way of operation. Ray Phiri supported the view that pop musicians were deprived of the right to prosper, and to understand the actual effects of the embargo. Instead, they viewed the ban as a platform that indirectly only helped in promoting their craft internationally, while in essence, it also indirectly gave enormous opportunity to foreign musicians.

Did the resurgence attract international artists?

With regard to whether the resurgence enabled more of the likes of Paul Simon to come to South Africa, most participants in this study thought otherwise, but others agreed. There are two reasons for differing answers by the participants to this question. One, those who did not agree appear to have done so because of their bad experiences during apartheid when the government gave foreign musicians special treatment whereas as locals they deserved equal or better treatment. This caused them to disagree with any ideas that seemed to prioritise foreign musicians better. Two, the ones who agreed, such as Mtshali, Khumalo and Rachabane although they concur, but pointed out that South Africa needed to be independent for the sake of growing a local music industry. Another reason was that although they might still be experiencing the effects of apartheid, they put aside their grief and saw a bigger picture regarding the potential and justification for international networking as musicians. Such mixed views relate to current ideas on collaboration. Meaning, for current collaboration to be successful, considering history, absolute fairness and transparency are critical when engaging in it. Consequently, musical collaboration would yield good results, as musicians would contribute their all as far as their respective roles in the project were concerned.

The role of South African artists in the *Graceland* project

This section discusses the part South African musicians played in the *Graceland* project. Discussing this subject should be helpful in realising the experiences of the participants in *Graceland.* This should also be helpful when attempting similar ventures in future. The

discussion is structured as: the significance of the *Graceland* project; the role of South African musicians in the *Graceland* project; and the spinoffs from the *Graceland* project.

The significance of the Graceland project

According to responses by the participants and existing literature, the *Graceland* project had three important results. It sold 14 million albums (Wright, 2014) within a period of a year, it won numerous accolades, and it played a vital role in the promotion of South African music and its stakeholders. As an outcome of its success, the lives of South African musicians such as the Ladysmith Black Mambazo, Ray Phiri, Shirinda, to name just a few, who participated in the project, were improved. Secondly, although the project did not incorporate the embargo's issues in its content, it raised an uproar in the global community about the apartheid system in South Africa. Notwithstanding perceptions regarding the controversies around this project, however, the wrong timing of the recording of *Graceland* in South Africa played a critical part in South African history. By implication, its existence helped in creating awareness about the horrible situation in South Africa to the global community. Finally, the social aspect of collaboration such as the *Graceland* project is important. In order to develop a healthy music sector, a healthy social element should first be cultivated among the participants involved. Thus, it is appropriate to refer to *Graceland* as a monumental project, which means it could be used as a template in nurturing developing music ventures.

However, it emerged also that because of their lack of knowledge, South African musicians were easily overwhelmed by the opportunities which were presented to them, and did not address some of the key issues that involved their participation in the *Graceland* project, such as whether they were session musicians, or deserved full accreditation as rightful owners of their contribution to the project. Such lack of openness when participating in a project of such magnitude becomes problematic in the long run. For instance, music partnerships could indicate the beginning of bigger future ventures that involved musicians who had worked together before. Ironing out of contentious matters early encourages collaborators to be reliable and honest with each other. However, economic power also played a critical role in collaboration. For instance, because Paul Simon financed the project, the South African musicians were left vulnerable, as they felt constrained to approve all suggestions made to them about the project. This made Simon's word final. Moreover, such a situation could also create a space for manipulation and exploitation of those involved, who lack skills or resources. Notwithstanding the importance of collaboration, unequal partnerships cause a problem, particularly where financial responsibility is involved, as a key aspect in gaining control.

The role of South African musicians in the Graceland project

South African musicians contributed extensively to the success of the *Graceland* project. Spirituality, together with unique rhythm patterns, were fundamental in the establishment of this project, which led to its success. The spirituality in African music proved to be playing a vital role. It enticed the audiences by putting them in a sort of spiritual mode, thereby

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creating an enjoyable moment. Jankowsky's (2007) Masango (2006) and Vilakati et al. (2013: 10) elaborate on the effect of spirituality in music. Because of a firm and persistent rhythm in African music, the spiritual element naturally erupts, coupled with unusual timing in terms of embellishments and improvisations. Although spirituality has be shunned by critics, this component has contributed significantly to the industry. Notwithstanding the lyrical impact, the participation of South African musicians in *Graceland* entailed more than inclusion of instrumentation. Participants such as Phiri, Shirinda and Mtshali supported the presence of spirituality in the music they were performing during tours overseas. Accolades and figures indicating the record sales of *Graceland* reflect the magnitude of the contribution by these practitioners. Paul Simon asserts that this venture was the highlight of his achievements as a musician. This was after he had collaborated with three other nations in his music career. Simon asserts that, among other things, the success of *Graceland* should be credited to its 4/4 time signature, which, according to him, is influenced by the fact that British people lived in South Africa. The 4/4 time signature was a blessing in disguise because of its contribution to South African popular music when fused with playing styles from neighbouring countries, such as Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Overall, South African musicians contributed their indigenous cultural elements in terms of the style of play, singing, the 4/4 time signature, and spirituality for creating a certain character to the music. Apart from taking part in the recording of instruments, arranging and singing, they formed the backbone of the *Graceland* project, thereby creating an authentic musical character that wooed global audiences. However, since South African musicians

were initially involved in their respective projects in South Africa, it is important to look at whether they were affected during recording by the tours of *Graceland*.

How did participating in the Graceland project affect the projects of South African musicians?

Owing to their participation in *Graceland*, South African musicians' other projects were bound to be affected. Most participants returned to their earlier projects, while others engaged in new ventures after their partnership in *Graceland* had ended, which was likely to strain their financial position back home. All the other participants denied having had their projects and social lives affected during their absence, but individuals such as Ray Phiri and Joseph Shabalala indicated that their other projects were affected. For Phiri, his engagement in *Graceland* was bound to cause problems for some if not all the members of Stimela. Mtshali indicated how Stimela was affected when Phiri went overseas. Moreover, since South African musicians were not full-time members like Paul Simon, they were likely to come back and resume their responsibilities where they had left off.

The spinoffs from the Graceland project

In terms of spinoffs from the *Graceland* project, all participants gave the impression that the project was a great financial success. As a result, they were compensated well, except for Phiri, who stated that he did not get all that was due to him form the project. Generally, the revenue of a music venture ensures the smooth running of all its proceedings. It helps in the

marketing and promotion of the project, while sustaining its stakeholders. Specifically, Shirinda commended Paul Simon's integrity as far as their payments in the Graceland project were concerned. Barney Rachabane said that there will never be a greater project than Graceland in South Africa. This matter brings the researcher to the view that if a music product is viable, it can then be perceived as a good investment. It can only be noble and reasonable that parties involved reach a consensus on how to treat each other fairly, and agree how the financial rewards will be distributed in order to ensure the smooth running of the collaboration and similar future partnerships. But apparently this was not the case with *Graceland.* Shirinda and Phiri voiced their concern about how Paul Simon robbed them of their music rights. This implies that there was malpractice regarding the copyright of the *Graceland* project. If true, then South African musicians were deprived of their rightful investments in the form of copyright. One would then conclude that the posh treatments of musicians and huge payments were made to prevent copyright matters from surfacing. Such developments would then be defeating the main goal of collaborations. Should such claims turn out to be true, they would reflect the still existing bullying of the poor by the imperialists who continue to flourish at the expense of the rightful owners of music. However, nothing regarding these claims can be concluded on since the business matters involved are deemed confidential, and require approaching through a court of law.

4.5   CONCLUSION

The focus of this chapter was the presentation of data, data analysis, and the discussion of the perspectives that emerged during data collection interviews. Eight participants were

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interviewed. They were the members of the *Graceland* project and a known figure in popular music academia. A voice recording device was used to capture the interviews. Data collection, analysis and discussion each comprised of the following elements: the background of the study, the role of South African musicians in the *Graceland* project, and the spinoffs from the project. Other views, thoughts and beliefs emerged from the data, and these increased the number of themes which emerged in the first phase of the study. But because of new developments during the interaction with the participants, other sub-themes emerged. The responses advanced by the participants to the questions asked were analysed. The purpose of the analysis was to ensure that the aims and objectives of the study were accomplished and the research questions answered.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INRODUCTION

In this study the implications of the *Graceland* music project were dealt with. South African popular music has the potential to sustain local musicians. The purpose of researching the Graceland project was in order to explore the success of this venture, in order to make suggestions for restoring the South African popular music. Based on the findings of this study, the objectives of the study were achieved, and the research questions were answered.

Qualitative research, with an exploratory design was employed. The data collection tools employed in this study were literature review and interviews. An interview schedule was formulated in order to facilitate the interview process. Coplan (2017) a researcher in popular music was also interviewed. This helped in putting the study in to perspective. Additionally, literature by preceding researchers afforded more data. The perspectives of the American and the South African popular musical culture of the 80s in the context of *Graceland*, the socioeconomic aspects of collaboration in the context of the *Graceland* project, and the politics of collaborations formed part of the discussion. This exercise broadened the perspective of the literature on the implications and prospects of the *Graceland* project, and the South African popular music of the 80s.

5.2 CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

The uniqueness of popular music

The uniqueness of popular music determines how it should be defined. Owing to the difference in where popular music is situated, defining it should then be determined by indigenous people, as the first bearers of culture, and of the practice. This ensures the understanding of the core issues relating to popular music.

The depreciation of American popular music of the '80s

American popular music has been enjoying the spotlight in the music industry. This should be accredited to the technology and marketing methods used in creating quality sound in music, while disseminating it globally. However, because of the evolution of music styles during the 1980s, American music has experienced challenges. Out of desperation to remain relevant, musicians resolved to use vulgar language in their compositions, and to portray nudity, since that was also the period during which visual music gained popularity. This gave emerging music industries such as South Africa's the opportunity of promoting their popular music.

The viability of South African popular music of the '80s

Although South African popular music lacked sophisticated technology during the 1980s, because of its fresh sounds it projected itself successfully to the international scene. The South African musicians who participated in the *Graceland* project benefited from its popularity. As proof of the success of South African popular music, Paul Simon came to South Africa to record *Graceland*, which became a success.

Popular music promotes cohesion

This study has explored the *Graceland* project, which is a collaborative venture. Collaborations in popular music are one of the significant strategies for promoting cohesion among humanity in general. Unity is created during performances where different people from different backgrounds gather for entertainment. It is through these set-ups that audiences network and learn about each other's cultures. These interactions sometimes continue even beyond where music shows take place. Musicians also go through the same process of creating solidarity. They gather at venues with the audience to perform. During performances, interaction and networking between performers and audience, and amongst the audience, also take place.

The decline of live music performances

Live performances were one of the main reasons for the success of *Graceland,* and that of South African popular music. In South Africa, live performances contribute to the financial gains made by local musicians. The current decline of live performances affects the social and economic development of the country. The South African music sector has the potential of helping grow the economy of the country through hosting annual festivals, but because of the decline in live performances, this is no longer possible. For a socially friendly and lucrative music industry to be realised in South Africa, popular music ought to be vigorously employed as among the main attractions of foreign audiences, who will use such events as a good reason for visiting the country.

Spirituality of popular music perpetuates cohesion and returns

Spirituality in pop music promotes social unity while becoming more lucrative. Performances in which certain musicians are spiritually active sometimes result in spiritual dynamism being conveyed to other performers, and is passed on to the audience through the music. The *Graceland* project had South African musicians such as Ray Phiri, M.D. Shirinda, Joseph Shabalala and Isaac Mtshali, who all claimed to be spiritual musicians. Thus, South African music plays an important role in evoking spirituality during performances, and in doing so promotes both human fellowship and financial success.

The income generated by the *Graceland* project

The income generated internationally by the *Graceland* project were substantial. *Graceland* sold 14 million copies within a year. Ray Phiri, Bakithi Kumalo and Barney Rachabane were among those who enjoyed the rewards of playing popular music.

Foreign intervention in African indigenous matters

The cultural embargo played two different roles which reflected on South African musicians. Firstly, the UNESCO initiative to sanction South Africa prevented local musicians from promoting their culture, while also affecting their livelihoods. Secondly, during the embargo, musicians from overseas countries were able to enter South Africa to perform to white audiences under the protection of the apartheid regime. This caused problems since the South African musicians suffered financially. UNESCO, as an organisation which was mandated to monitor the wellbeing of artists, among other things, failed in this regard.

Political entanglement affected popular music

During the apartheid era, South African popular music was used in the anti-apartheid movements against the apartheid government. Musicians were forced to engage in politics through struggle music, out of concern for their society's wellbeing. Some musicians went into exile as a way of avoiding being victimised by the regime. This affected South African

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popular music since exiled musicians could no longer contribute to their communities by nurturing aspiring musicians, and contributing to the country's prosperity.

The suppression of South African popular musicians

Since the regime was determined to maintain apartheid, the musicians were afforded limited freedom in terms of music composition, airplay and performance. For instance, compositions were censored, and if deemed offensive time on air would not be granted for that particular musician.

5.3   RECOMMENDATIONS

Defining popular music from a contextual perspective

Care needs to be taken when defining fundamental aspects of people's practices. This is because certain facets of popular music sometimes deal with more underlying issues. The fact that popular music is universal implies that it also encompasses certain unique traits, depending on the musicians' agenda and objectives. For instance, an individual cannot account for spiritual or traditional music if he or she does not practise the culture whence the music originates. Therefore, African music, because of its uniqueness, its fundamentals, should be dealt with by its originators.

More studies on African popular music

Scholarly information on African music has been part of debates for a long time. Traditional African educational methods, which also include music and other art forms, are perceived as inferior by critics. This is despite the fact that it has also been proven beyond doubt that African popular music forms part of critical elements that are key in music evolution worldwide. African institutions therefore have a responsibility to ensure the development, marketing and preservation of popular music. The creation of a solid academic forum should ensure positive possibilities for South African music. Through further development of South African music, and research, this genre will develop and reach international standard. Furthermore, more lucrative marketing and preservation strategies should be inculcated among musicians. These strategies should be related to current technological and financial markets as well as preparing African musicians for their ever-changing industry.

South African musicians and popular music business cultures

Nowadays, the riches of South African popular music are worthless if not coupled with business and financial acumen. Of particular concern in this regard is lack of business skills among South African music practitioners, who mostly rely on unscrupulous people for assistance in the administration of their music projects. Since it exposes local musicians to financial and copyright exploitation, this practice should be curbed. In America, for instance, formalising music and its business began as early as the 17th century. South African

musicians require administration management as well as entrepreneurial skills in order to cope with and be competent in the music business and its challenges.

Excessive promotion of foreign culture through popular music in South Africa

The issue around promotion of foreign music in Africa is an old challenge. A topic entitled 'Relations between South African and American popular music cultures' in this study tackles this matter. There is numerous research on the importance of popular music as an influence on culture, a tool in political disputes, and a medium for conveying messages. Since popular music speaks to people about various matters that are either positive or negative, it can be used to manipulate systems against the bearers of the music. This also implies that foreign cultures are enforced through popular music. Thus, if the audience listens mostly to Western music, they will be "force-fed" American culture. Young children will thus be groomed in the American way of life. Therefore, in order to avoid the extinction of African culture and indigenous languages, the promotion of Western popular music should be minimised. Moreover, patriotic practices and skills should be instilled among young people from an early age.

The technological aspect of popular music

In recent years, technological development has become a critical element in music making, and it continues at a very fast rate. In order to deal with the plight of technologically illiterate musicians of popular music, technological skills have to be developed. It is also important

that South Africa limit relying on Western countries for innovative technological musical products and skills. This practice should minimise the vulnerability of South African musicians during collaborations.

Promotion of live performances

Live music performances have been proven to play a crucial role in the social and economic development of both music stakeholders and audiences, as popular music brings musicians and audiences of different cultures together. The *Graceland* project is a good example. Audiences from different cultures attend performances. It is during these occasions that performers and audiences share ideas, and learn about different cultures. This strategy serves as a strengthening mechanism for prospective relations and partnerships. Live music gatherings enhance more money for stakeholders. Because of the experience of the hype created by their togetherness, more audiences develop the urge to attend live performances, which implies more returns for event stakeholders. Therefore a culture of regular live performances should be encouraged not only to cement the relationship between the performers and their audiences, but also to generate more income.

Addressing issues around popular music and exploitation

Efforts to ensure that hostile competition, and the employment of unscrupulous political measures in the music fraternity, should be dealt with. This calls for the construction of a South African music industry that is detached from international meddling, and should

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prioritise the national development of musicians who are not exploited by international powers. This approach should assist in the development of a healthy South African music sector.

Popular music relations between America and South Africa

It is noticeable in the literature that relations between South African and American pop music exist. These relations are said to be a result of the historic contacts between the two countries when South Africa was a colony. Forming part of these relations is the 4/4 time signature that is mainly used in the music of both cultures. In this study Simon refers to this element as that which made *Graceland* acceptable to international audiences. Notwithstanding the success of this common element, it is also important that the South African musical culture is not swallowed by Western culture. Uppermost in this partnership should be the promotion of indigenous knowledge systems for the development of South African popular music, and that of the rest of the continent.

Politics and South African popular music

Politics in South Africa should not be granted the space for delaying the progress of South African popular music. Music addresses the daily events and experiences of humanity. Therefore, suppression of musicians for their political beliefs should be a thing of the past. It is the nature of music to talk to any topical issues concerning communities and the world

they live in. Politics and popular music cannot be separated, since musicians are directly affected by both.

Skill development of South African musicians

It emerges from this study that the lack of skills in certain South African musicians who participated in *Graceland* should have been attended to in order to avoid the controversies the project evoked. Numerous studies that discuss the *Graceland* project include allegations of exploitation of musicians by Paul Simon. Unsurprisingly, the careers of earlier African musicians were greatly affected by lack of skills. Even if they had possessed them, the apartheid systems would have made it certain that they lacked resources. Unlike during the 1980s, current and future African musicians ought to be equipped with necessary skills in order to omit the middle man. Music stakeholders need to be skilled in terms of producing and distributing their music projects.

5.2 CONCLUSION

The findings of this study are that the *Graceland* project serves as a platform to interrogate South African musical history, and a springboard for the development of South African popular music. As part of its success, the project provided a living for South African musicians while creating international opportunities for them. However, there existed challenges which concern the development of South African musicians and that of the

industry. Recommendations have been made on how external and internal challenges should be met, as a way of finding possible solutions to current and future complications.

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APPENDIXES

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR THE PARTICIPANTS

1. BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

    South African music experiences a revival of sorts in the 80s

    1.1. How you characterise the music of the 80s?

        1.1.1. Its social role,

        1.1.2. Its political role

    1.2. How did the cultural embargo of the time affect the South African music scene?

        1.2.1. Could the resurgence have attracted international artists such as Paul Simon?

2. THE ROLE OF SOUTH AFRICAN ARTISTS IN THE GRACELAND PROJECT

    2.1. What is the historical significance of the Graceland project?

        2.1.1. What role were you playing in the making of the Graceland?

        2.1.2. How did your participation in the Graceland project affect your other projects?

3. THE SPINOFFS OF THE GRACELAND PROJECT?

    3.1. What would you say are the spinoffs and downfalls of the Graceland project?

    3.2. Could the Graceland project serve as a template to catapult South African musicians to international stardom? If yes, how could this be achieved? If no, why is this the case?

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SOUTH AFRICAN POPULAR MUSIC OF THE 1980S AND THE ROLE OF THE GRACELAND PROJECT: A CASE OF INTERNATIONAL (USA-RSA) COLLABORATION AND CO-PRODUCTION

by

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A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of

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Supervisor: Prof. M.G. Mapaya

Co-supervisor: Dr P.E.A. Ramaite Mafadza

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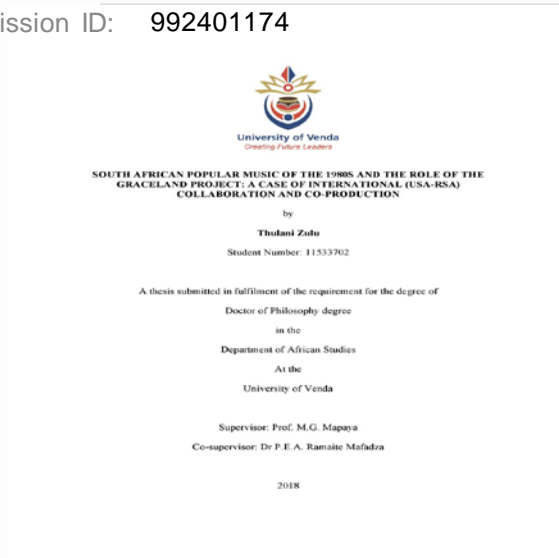**University of Venda**

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