

**The influences of Christianity and
commerce on the culture of popular Gospel
music in post-apartheid South Africa.**

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Sincerely,

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iii. Abstract:

Gospel music is the biggest genre of popular music in South Africa. This popularity can be attributed to various elements that are an integral part of the diverse South African democratic society. As a developing country with a relatively young democracy of just above twenty years, the socio-economic status of South Africa directly impacts upon various spheres of the lives of her citizens. The unique demographics of this country in terms of its history, population groups, languages, religions, socio-political landscape, also play a remarkable role in the evolution of various sub-cultures that represent various groups of South African people, and consequently the overall culture of this 'rainbow nation'.

This study researches into popular Gospel music within two aspects of this broader culture of the South African society, namely: the Christian religion and commerce. Christian churches and the music industry, although generally perceived as unrelated or even opposed in the nature of their operations, both have a stake in Gospel music. It is this intersection that is the subject matter and the research problem of this study which investigates the involvement and intentions of these institutions regarding popular Gospel music. By studying and analyzing various activities and programs of these institutions, the current study seeks to show how the teachings, doctrines and operations of Christianity on one side, and the pursuit of profit on the other, influence the 'culture' of popular Gospel music.

The scope of these activities and programs goes far back to the preliminary stage of conceiving the very initial idea of getting involved with Gospel music, and culminates in the consumption of resultant music products. This study analyzes these activities, and others in-between. For the music industry, these include talent scouting, management, composition, arranging, performance, production and recording, promotion and marketing of Gospel music products. For Christian churches, the involvement with popular Gospel music is both direct, in the usage of Gospel music and artists in Christian church services, and indirect in providing a support base from which music

styles, songs and lyrical contents are drawn. Moreover, Christian churches harbor and indoctrinate Christians, who are seemingly primary consumers of Gospel music. This harboring and indoctrination foster a particular belief system which influences how Christians interact with, and make meaning of, popular Gospel music. All these activities and programs of Christian churches and the music industry regarding popular Gospel music are regarded in this study as constituents of the *culture* of popular Gospel music. This study therefore investigates how these activities and programs of Christian churches and the music industry influence the 'culture' of Gospel music as a genre. Although this study is located within the timeline of post-apartheid South Africa, it takes into consideration the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid, as socio-political occurrences which have had a lasting effect on popular culture.

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Research Background

This study is prompted by my personal experiences, observations and interests in Gospel music, Christian churches and the music industry. There are three particular areas of my life that are directly linked with these 'worlds'. Firstly, I was raised in a Christian family and eventually became a Christian myself. Consequently I got exposed to Christian churches and have been actively involved in church music. At the age of eight I was already playing an active musical role as a keyboard player, and later on as a music director in a church that my father pastored. Later on in my mid-20's, I served as a musical director at EThekwini Community Church, one of the largest and most popular 'black' Christian churches in the city of Durban. After matriculating, I enrolled at the then University of Natal (now the University of KwaZulu-Natal), and soon got involved in a student Christian organization. Within three semesters I was serving in the leadership thereof as a music coordinator. In the year 2013, I accepted the divine pastoral calling into ministry and founded a church in Mayville, Durban.

The second aspect of my life that has influenced me to pursue this study is my exposure to Gospel music. I can clearly recall the sounds of Derrick Ndzimande and Moruti Ndlovu, who are some of the early pioneers of Gospel music, playing

in my father's car in the mid 1980s when I was about five years old. Since that tender age until now, Gospel music has been part of my life and has become one of my favorite genres of music. This exposure to, and personal choice of Gospel music has culminated in the third aspect of my life that has influenced the current study: I am professionally involved in the Gospel music business and have featured in various Gospel recordings as a keyboard player, a bassist, a producer or a sound recording engineer. I have a music company, which amongst other things records and releases Gospel artists and organizes Gospel music events. In 2013 I released my debut Gospel album under this company.

This study builds on my Masters thesis on 'The South African popular Gospel music industry in a nutshell: genre, production, mediation and consumption'. When I considered pursuing a doctoral study, my academic intuition being juxtaposed with my aforementioned life experiences propelled me to choose the current study's research field. However, my scholarly instincts had long begun to critically analyze Gospel music beyond just what had been coincidentally presented to me by life experiences. Through this critical analysis, I began to see a complex interaction between various forces that are at play in influencing Gospel music, particularly in South Africa. I realized various permutations that exist in my own life, for instance that I could have been a maskandi, a hip-hop or a jazz artist. However, my early exposure to, and consequently my personal preference for Gospel music seem to have had an interplay with Christianity in influencing me to be a Gospel artist. Some of the decisions and choices that I made along the journey of becoming a Gospel artist were subconscious, but as I critically reflected while establishing the demographics of this study, I realized that Christianity and my perspective on Gospel music influenced me to take particular decisions. As I ponder, for instance on the process of recording my album, I think about how I decided on the songs, the languages, the style, instrumentation and collaborations to use. Moreover, I recall how I preselected a target audience for my music. Considering the general association of Gospel music with Christianity, I further ask myself why I pursued a career involving

Gospel music. I ask questions such as: 'Was it because I wanted to spread the Gospel? Did I opportunistically want to exploit the possible target audience of Christians at my disposal for personal gains of fame and fortune? Was it because it was just a hobby?' When I further investigated the Gospel music industry and interacted with various people therein, be they artists, producers, promoters, consumers or executives, I realize that these questions could be asked of all Gospel artists, although with different but related responses. It is through this investigative interaction that I further realized that there are trends and styles that are deemed as contemporary contributing factors to a successful Gospel music album and career. I saw a particular common way of doing things, a broader culture in which Christianity and commerce intersects with Gospel music. It seemed to me that this culture is the force that subconsciously, yet directly influenced me and many other artists to choose to ply our trade through Gospel music, for various yet related reasons. These reasons, and the complexity of popular Gospel music are deeply embedded in that:

Gospel music has risen to become one of South Africa's top-selling genres [...]. Explanations for the music's popularity range from the fact that South Africa is a nation of strong religious faith, to its economic growth. [...] Others offer a simpler argument, saying the music industry knows a good product when it sees it (www.news24.com, 12 April 2012).

The popular Gospel music discourse

One of the cumbersome tasks I set out to undertake in my Masters study was to try and define Gospel music, or at least point to the parameters that constitute it as a genre. Most scholars (Cusic, 2000 and 2002; Chitando, 2002; Palmberg, 2004; Mojapelo, 2008; Togarasei, 2007) who have written about Gospel music, have sidestepped the task of clearly defining this genre. Drawing on their works and on my Masters research, I propose four features that define Gospel music, as it will be discussed in the present study, which I discuss hereafter.

Gospel music and the Gospel text

Firstly, I want to advance the argument I made in my MA study, that “text is the main factor that defines a song as ‘Gospel’” (2006: 25). In other words, Gospel music is defined more by its lyrical content than by sonic musical features. As such, it can adopt a variety of styles or sounds, and hence the explanation of “hybrid-genres, like ‘R’n’B Gospel’, ‘Gospel Kwaito’, ‘Gospel Rock’, ‘Gospel Jazz’, Christafarism or ‘Gospel Reggae’, and others of that nature...(which) are achieved by employing ‘Gospel text’ in these genres” (2006: 24). Mai Palmberg highlights the significance of this for the African context:

Gospel music in Africa does not represent a particular musical style, unlike the gospel music created by Thomas A. Dorsey and others among black congregations in the United States in the first half of the 20th century who created an original style on the basis of negro spirituals, jazz, and blues. The music called gospel in Africa is rather defined by its lyrical messages of Christian salvation (2004:28).

Writing about Gospel music in the Zimbabwean context, Ezra Chitando states that “artists utilise various musical styles and instruments to communicate Christian themes. [...]. Thus the term ‘gospel music’ is an umbrella term for diverse musical styles that are united in terms of their text” (2002: 14). Mwenda Ntarangwi shares similar sentiments regarding Gospel music in Kenya. He quotes a popular Gospel Hip-hop (or Hip-hop Gospel) artist Juliani, who says “Gospel [music] to me is not a genre; it is a message, is a message of hope, a message of Good News. The hip-hop or reggae that you use, is just a medium, a vehicle that you use” (2016: 46-47). Rick Warren goes so far as to say that: “there is no such thing as ‘Christian music’. There are only Christian lyrics” (1999: 282). I have defined this ‘Gospel text’ as one whose “theme is premised on the account of Christ’s life and teachings recorded in the Bible, and on the doctrines of the Christian religion” (2006: 17). Ezra Chitando concurs with this when he defines Gospel music as:

The music that embraces distinctively Christian concerns such as the redeeming role of Jesus of Nazareth, the need for conversion to Christianity, ethical

principles governing Christian living, hope in the resurrection of the dead, and others (2002: 14).

In his discussion of Gospel music in Zimbabwe, Lovemore Togarasei agrees fully with Chitando and says that “any recorded music [...] with ‘good news’ about God/Jesus Christ is here treated as Gospel music” (2007: 53). David Basoga shares similar sentiments regarding Gospel music in Uganda. He says that: “Gospel music artists draw on themes featured in popular music [and] transform such themes into lyrics resonating with biblical scriptures” (2012: 143). These African academics are part of Monique Ingalls’ observation that:

Many, if not most, African Gospel music scholars claim that African Gospel music knows no stylistic boundaries and should solely be defined by its Christian-themed lyrics, the motivation of its artists, or the religious commitment of its audiences (2010: 10).

In the South African context, Gospel music is constantly growing and has adopted many styles of popular music. Styles such as Kwaito and Hip Hop that were not only regarded as secular but also ungodly are now thriving sub-genres of local Gospel. Benjamin Dube is one of the first artists to ever bring Kwaito sounds into Gospel through his song ‘Bayangena Bayaphuma’ (track 6 in *Celebration*). I interviewed him on his experiences regarding this groundbreaking work, and have referred to him saying that “Kwaito was regarded as the music of the heathens, as a result I received calls and comments from pastors and other Christians rebuking me about the song, because of what they called a ‘worldly and a heathen beat’, that I used in the song” (Malembe, 2006: 15). To date, there are artists such as Mawat, Cjay and Last Days Fam who are thriving local Kwaito and Hip hop Gospel music brands. The growth of local Gospel does not only manifest through importation and incorporation of ‘secular’ styles, but by also importing church styles. Various artists have, for example, incorporated the styles and songs of protestant churches into Gospel music. For instance, Joyous Celebration’s ‘Umbhedesho’ (Track 1, Joyous Celebration 17 DVD), is a typical popular song of the Anglican church. This song has ‘Christian’ lyrics and meets the first criterion for Gospel music, which however, must be considered along with the other three.

Gospel music, commerce and mass culture

The second element that I argue to be a defining characteristic of Gospel music is 'commerce'. Commerce simply "implies doing something for money. [...] buying and selling of goods and services. This implies financial transactions, which further implies a profit motive" (Stiernberg, 2001: 14). I argue that Gospel music is music produced for commercial gain and its production is premised on the culture of commerce. Some of my respondents have tried to shy away from this assertion by citing 'other' intentions for which they produce their music, whereas others have explicitly acknowledged the business aspect of their music. Later in this study, I discuss in more detail the way that these and 'other' intentions relating to Gospel music have underlying financial connotations, which are either direct or indirect, conscious or subconscious.

The discussion of commerce leads to the third defining element of Gospel music, that is: its premise on mass culture. Because of the imperatives of the commercial culture which aim at maximizing profits and therefore targets masses, Gospel music is produced for mass consumption and is directly linked to mass culture. Simply put, in order to maximise financial profits, the music industry engages in particular programs and activities that aim at reaching and winning the favour of a mass market. The use of the term 'popular Gospel music' in this study, is aimed at clearly mapping the boundaries of Gospel music by attaching it firmly to mass culture. Popular music has been defined as the music that is produced for mass consumption and has commercial goals. Simon Frith defines it "in terms of production and circulation [...], analysing the organisation of mass production, [...] mass consumption, [..., and] commercial popular culture" (1996: 13). Brian Longhurst puts it more explicitly as "the music based on the culture which is produced to be bought and sold on a market, [and possessing] exchange value; and the companies that produce culture do so to make a profit from it" (1995: 4). Robert Burnett concurs, saying that "the goal of (any) business is to strive for a product that maximizes profit. The music industry is no exception to this rule. When we speak of popular music, we speak of music

that is commercially oriented” (1996: 35). Mark Fenster and Thomas Swiss concur, saying that “the production of a mass cultural form like popular music is similar to the production of any other mass-produced product, such as an automobile or a bar of soap” (1999: 226).

Gospel music and Christian or church music have various common features, which to some extent blur the boundaries that separate them. Commerce is a feature which enables us to distinguish popular Gospel music from Christian church music. Ezra Chitando writes about this distinction and says that “there were many hymns and choruses that were composed and performed in various denominations but were not classified as gospel music because they were not [commercially] available as audio or video cassettes” (2002: 14). For such a study as this one, which tackles interrelated Christian-linked music styles and the music industry, it is imperative to distinguish popular Gospel music from other related styles of music. The term ‘popular’, therefore is useful in making this distinction by directly linking the production of Gospel music to the industrial culture of commerce and mass media. These characteristics are plainly evident in the statistics about local Gospel. For instance, Gwen Ansell records that: “Gospel is South Africa’s most popular music genre. Such is the size of the gospel market here that it could swallow all other music genres and still have stomach-space to spare” (www.bdlive.co.za, 2013). According to the *Cultural Industries Growth Strategy* (CIGS) Report, “The gross turnover of the core of the South African music industry is approximately R900 million, with industry experts estimating that the entire industry is worth R2 billion” (1998: 9). Suggesting that Gospel music is the biggest piece of this pie, Gugu Sibiyi says that “Gospel music is the biggest music money-spinner in the country and has shown phenomenal growth during the past several years” (2005: 6). Jonathan Shaw’s survey shows that 74.4% of rural dwellers and 61.3% of urban dwellers in South Africa prefer Gospel music to other genres (2007: 130-131). These statistics clearly point to the commercial aspect and mass-orientation of Gospel music. The current study uses the phrase ‘popular Gospel music’ simply to suggest that

Gospel music is distinctly music that is produced for commercial gains and for mass consumption. In other words, the production of Gospel is premised on popular culture. I expand on the discussion of mass culture and popular culture later in this chapter, where I outline the theoretical framework of this study.

Black culture and the history of Gospel music

The fourth characteristic that I want to endorse as defining Gospel music, is that it is predominantly produced by and/or for 'blacks'. In this context 'blacks' refers to 'black African Americans' and 'black South Africans' in relation to their socio-political, historical and religious circumstances that uniquely distinguish them from 'other races'. These circumstances are herein summarized as 'blackness'. I am well aware that the terms 'black', 'blackness' and 'race' are subjects of ongoing intense academic debates. I talk about these concepts further later in this chapter. History clearly traces the roots of Gospel music to 'blacks' or African Americans. In my MA study (Malembe: 2006), I have written about the history of Gospel music, drawing from Don Cusic (2000), who presents the following stages: Psalms and Hymns in the 17th century, Negro Spirituals in the 1800s, Holiness Songs in the 1890s, Early Gospel in the early 20th century, and Contemporary Gospel in the 1990s. It is noteworthy to highlight that Gospel music, as a distinct style within Christian music only emerged in the 20th century although the stages that preceded its birth date back to the 17th century. Andrew Wilson-Dickson says that "Black Gospel music took on a different character from the beginning, though its identity was not fully established until the 1920s" (1992: 201). The initial stage: the Psalms and Hymns, was characterized by songs in two forms: "the chorale (associated with the Lutherans and Moravians) and the psalm tunes, which developed amongst Calvinists" (Cusic, 2002(a): 44). The texts of these songs were "directly from the Bible; however, the Lutherans used other individually composed texts as well" (Malembe, 2006: 18).

The second stage: the Negro Spirituals, came as a result of the attempts of blacks or slaves to reproduce the songs they had heard in their white masters'

church meetings. However, because of the inability to pronounce some of the words properly, and because of vocabulary limitations, they “often sung them in a manner affecting rhythms which were different from the original” (Cusic, 2002(b): 93-4). Eventually this led to an era of Holiness Songs, characterized by the music which was not only totally different from the music of the whites, but was also composed by blacks. In this era, the Holiness church, which was a black church, “featured a great amount of singing and dancing [...], with half of the service usually comprised of music, [...] foot-stomping and hand-clapping, up-tempo songs, [...] with complex rhythms, shouts and outbursts” (Cusic, 2002(a): 510). This era developed into Early Gospel, which saw ‘blacks’ publishing their music. This element of publishing music was intertwined with commercial aspirations. Thomas Dorsey is generally accepted as the father of this era, because of his influences and contributions to the music, and in the careers of other musicians of the time. One of his remarkable contributions that led to the rise of Gospel music is “[...] creating the Dorsey House of Music, the publisher of some 500 of his songs and the first business whose sole concern was the commercial cause of black Gospel” (Wilson-Dickson, 1992: 204). The early Gospel era, spanning nearly eight decades, had other musicians such as James Cleveland, Aretha Franklin, Dorothy Norwood and Albertina Walker, just to mention a few. The late 1980s to early 1990s saw the rise of a generation of musicians who imported ‘foreign’ sounds to Gospel music, and thus ushered in a Contemporary Gospel era that spans to the present. I have stated that:

Kirk Franklin amongst other artists, the likes of Bebe & Cece Winans, Donnie McClurkin, Tramaine Hawkins and Yolanda Adams, stood out remarkably, bringing into ‘Gospel’ music ‘secular’ sounds of rap, hip-hop, rock, reggae, etc. This era, which stretches to the present, has seen the rise of many Gospel artists, and the fusion of many different sounds, which characterize the contemporary ‘Gospel’ music we know today (Malembe, 2006: 19-20).

This brief history locates the birth of Gospel music in the ‘black’ or African American Christian church. The socio-political and religious circumstances of African Americans since the first trans-Atlantic deportation of Africans as slaves

to Jamestown, Virginia in North America in 1619, until 1865 when slavery was officially declared illegal when the 13th amendment to the American constitution was endorsed, had negative effects on the identity of these Africans. It is a fact that the aftermath of slavery echoes far beyond 1865. The attempts of African Americans to 'find' themselves resulted in a 'new' or 'under-construction' culture upon which Gospel music arose. Mellonee Burnim alludes to this culture and refers to "The Pearl Williams-Jones overviews [which] present a systematic effort to place Gospel music in a conceptual and theoretic framework which emphasizes it as a unique manifestation of black culture" (1980: 65). This assertion is useful in the context of current study, as it points to 'black culture' or 'blackness', as one of the forces behind the birth of Gospel music. Burnim further points to other elements that constitute 'blackness', which are intertwined in the inseparable relationship between Gospel music, 'blacks' and the church. She describes Gospel music as:

A genre strongly entwined and entrenched in the black church tradition, it nonetheless attracts many supporters who identify with its message as much for its communication of black values, experiences and beliefs as for its communication of religion (1980: 68).

Mellonee Burnim clarifies this further by suggesting that Gospel music "loomed from its status as the exclusive property of storefront African American churches to become a dynamic and a viable force in the commercial music industry" (2006: 19). She further describes Gospel music as "a complex form (of music) that embodies the religious, cultural, historical, and social dimensions of the black Christian church" (20). Joyce Marie Johnson concurs and says that "Gospel music is strongly entrenched in the African American 'folk church' tradition [...and is an] expression of African American values, aesthetic, and life experiences" (1995: 185). Mellonee Burnim expounds that "Gospel music is the single existing genre of black music still being produced and performed primarily for and by black people themselves (1980: 65). Don Cusic suggests that although white churches are inseparable from the early history of Gospel music, popular Gospel music grew to become generally identified as the music of black people. He

states that “by the 1990s there was a new lingo in religious music; ‘Gospel’ referred to black religious music while ‘Christian’ referred to white religious music” (2002: 380). This shows that although the history of Gospel music has links with white Christian church, however, the birth of what grew to be called Gospel music was solidly embedded on the socio-political and religious experiences of the African Americans.

The birth of Gospel music in South Africa was within related but different contexts as the American account: slavery in America, and colonialism, the arrival of missionaries and apartheid in South Africa. These socio-political contexts encapsulate the oppressor-oppressed binary relationship, which is the core subject of ‘post-colonialism’, which I discuss later in this chapter. The arrival of missionaries in South Africa brought indelible changes to the social and religious circumstances of the indigenous peoples. I have, in my Master’s thesis given a history of the arrival of missionaries in South Africa, and their influence in the birth of Gospel music. I stated that:

Although Africans did believe in God and did worship him as UMvelinqangi (the One who existed first), way before the white settlement, I however want to trace the birth of South African Gospel music back to the birth of Christianity in South Africa. With the growth of Christianity in different stages, from the arrival of the missionaries, to today’s charismatic movement, Gospel music has also grown drastically (Malembe, 2006: 21).

Joyce Scott points to the inseparable package of religion and music, brought by the missionaries to Africa. She says that “going as church planters to a different culture from their own, they [missionaries] are just as likely to take their own musical styles with them” (2000: 71). She further draws a distinction between the music of the missionaries and that of the African people, and says “their music styles were different. Very different indeed” (ibid). These missionaries would therefore inevitably face barriers relating to cultural differences such as language, style, instruments used, and so on. In a similar manner that gave birth to the eras of Negro Spirituals and Holiness Songs in America, some Africans

could not acclimatize themselves to the music of the missionaries, and consequently “reacted to this foreign-ness by breaking away and forming their own churches, in order to find a place to feel at home” (ibid). I have cited an example of this, quoting Adrian Hasting who says that:

The Zionists developed an African leadership in 1908 when the Zionist Church founder PL Le Roux was replaced by Daniel Nkonyane as the principal leader of the church. This resulted in a change in music; a more African orientated singing style, the usage of traditional drums, and Zulu songs were incorporated in the worship (1994: 82).

The birth of Gospel music came about when musicians and artists started to record Christian music for mass media. Writing about (Gospel) music in Zimbabwe, Mai Palmberg, attests to this by defining Gospel music as “the message of Christ, having left the space of the church and entered the arena of popular culture” (2004: 28). In my MA study, I pointed to the fact that “most of the early artists or groups that pioneered the birth of local Gospel had church bases” (2006: 22). Max Mojapelo also attests to this when saying that “It was later in the seventies that other local Gospel groups surfaced, but like the Messengers, they were church-based” (2008: 319). I have, in my MA study, mentioned examples of various pioneering artists and the respective churches from which they belong. These include King’s Messengers Quartet from the Seventh Day Adventist Church, Reverend Ndlovu who was popularly known as Moruti Ndlovu (the very word ‘Moruti’ means pastor in SeSotho), Derrick Ndzimande from the Church of Jesus Christ, Amadodana aseWesile from the Wesleyan Methodist Church, Solly Moholo from the Zion Christian Church, the Dube Family and Benjamin Dube from the Assemblies of God, and many others.

Lovemore Togarasei also points to a similar trend in the Zimbabwean case, and says that “most Gospel musicians in Zimbabwe belong to churches, and it is those churches which they used as springboards to start their musical careers” (2007: 56). This church-basis of Gospel artists was not just a coincidental

commonality, but was the very core of the birth of Gospel music. However, Gospel music did not become an overnight commercial success. As a matter of fact, Max Mojapelo says that:

Some say it (Gospel music) is an easy terrain because there are so many hymns to choose from, as well as many supporters from churches, [however] record companies were not interested in recording 'hymns' for commercial purposes because there didn't seem to be any profit-making potential (2008: 320-321).

He however points to a turnaround and says that "it was [only] after the success story of Rebecca Malope that most record companies started focusing on Gospel music" (2008: 320). This milestone is one of the many achievements that earned her the title 'queen of South African Gospel'. However, many other Gospel artists contributed to the early development of Gospel music in South Africa. Most of these Gospel artists further pioneered various styles or sub-genres of local Gospel music, being influenced directly by the musical styles of their respective churches. I have stated, for example, how Solly Moholo and the Z.C.C. choir "perform in the uniform of the church, with khaki pants and jackets, caps and boots [and that] Their music is characterised by forceful dancing of foot-stomping and jumping, just like the one performed at their church services" (2006: 22).

This growth of Gospel music to become this multifaceted genre is a direct result of a black culture on which Gospel music is premised. Colonization, 'missionarism' (teachings of missionaries, and the impact thereof on the socio-cultural circumstances of blacks in South Africa) and apartheid had a significant impact in shaping 'blackness', and consequently Gospel music. This impact is summarized as what Joyce Scott, quoted earlier, refers to as 'foreignness', brought by the aforementioned socio-cultural circumstances. Gospel music therefore emerged as one of the tools with which blacks responded to this 'foreignness'. As Mellonee Burnim says that people identified with Gospel music in America "as much for its communication of black values, experiences and beliefs as for its communication of religion" (1980: 68), the same applies for its South African counterpart. It appears that the identification and association of Gospel

music with blacks is as old as Gospel music is in South Africa. This means that from its inception, Gospel music was identified as the music of the blacks. This identification can be verified by the fact that scholars such as Max Mojapelo, who has written a wellresearched and comprehensive account of Gospel music in South Africa, does, however not include whites in this account. The Recording Industry of South Africa (RISA), which is an organization responsible for the lucrative South African Music Awards (SAMAs), seems to have also adopted this distinction. From 2005 to 2013, its categories of Christian religious music comprised: Afrikaans Christian Music, Urban Gospel, African Contemporary Gospel, Traditional/African acapella Gospel, Pop/Rock Christian Music and African Traditional Gospel (these were later fused into 'Traditional Faith' and 'Contemporary Faith' categories). The nominees in the Gospel music categories were all black, and those in the 'Christian music' categories were all white. This is similar to the annual SABC Crown Gospel Awards, which is a premier Gospel awards event in South Africa. Since its inception in 2008, almost 95% of its nominees have been blacks.

In light of this lengthy discussion, the current study therefore defines and refers to Gospel music as black, commercial, music whose theme embodies, upholds or can be linked to the teachings or doctrines of the Christian faith, and is produced for mass consumption. I distinguish this music from the non-commercial liturgical music of the Christian churches and from white, commercial Christian music. As I have stated earlier, Gospel music is continuously evolving in South Africa. This study acknowledges, in accordance with Keith Negus that: "the boundaries of musical genres and components of styles are often transformed as they intersect with other styles" (1996: 163). As such, the identification and association of Gospel music with blacks is also a slightly changing phenomenon in contemporary South Africa. Be that as it may, this study presents and adopts the four aforementioned elements as defining characteristics of Gospel music in the period under discussion.

Gospel music, colonialism, apartheid and 'blackness'

The processes of colonization, 'missionarism' and apartheid have set the stage for a conceptual framework of discourse on 'blackness' in South Africa. Colonialization could be said to have begun as far back as the 17th century when white settlers first arrived at the Cape of Good Hope. Ania Loomba describes colonialism as "the conquest and control of other people's land and goods" (1998: 2). She further says that:

Colonialism did more than extract tribute, goods and wealth from the countries that it conquered – it restructured the economies of the latter, drawing them into complex relationships with their own, so that there was a flow of human and natural resources between colonized and colonial countries (3).

Referring specifically to South Africa, William Pomeroy says:

The British colonial rule reinforced the oppression of the Black majority, treating them as cheap labor on which colonial fortunes were made. It was Black labor, in appalling conditions, which dug out the gold and diamonds in the world's deepest pits. The British colonial policies included non extension of political rights to Africans, pass laws, jobs reservation for whites, and other discriminatory acts (1986: 6).

It was only in 1931 that South Africa gained independence from Britain, although she only became a fully independent nation in 1961. This year marked the beginning of the 'post-colonial' era in South Africa. Ania Loomba cautions that "The word 'post-colonial' is useful as a generalization to the extent that it refers to a process of disengagement from the whole colonial syndrome" (1998: 18-19). She further warns about the complication and complexity of this word and says:

To begin with, the prefix 'post' complicates matters because it implies an 'aftermath' in two senses – a temporal, as in coming after, and ideological as in supplanting. It is the second implication which the critics of the term have found contestable: if the inequities of colonial rule have not been erased, it is perhaps premature to proclaim the demise of colonialism (7).

Loomba simply argues here that once we use the term 'post-colonial', we acknowledge that there was colonialism, that it 'ended', and that that 'end' ushered in a 'new' era: the post-colonial era. But the very word 'post', meaning 'after', is inappropriate while the aftermath of the colonial era is still prevalent. To this, Loomba introduces a simpler, less philosophical form and use of the term 'post-colonialism', which refers to a chronological era that, in the case of South Africa began in 1961.

'Post-colonialism', therefore does not imply the end of socio-political injustices in South Africa. The National Party government which came into power in 1948, introduced 'apartheid' as a constitutional practice. Jacques Derrida defines apartheid as "institutionalized and legally sanctioned racism in South Africa" (2007: 47). A.J. Christopher traces the word 'apartheid' from the Dutch language, meaning "'separateness' or 'apartness'" (1994: 1). This was separation of 'blacks' from 'whites'. He further says that apartheid was "specifically concerned with the control of space, notably its occupation and use on a racial basis" (ibid). Christopher clarifies that when the Nationalist government came into power in 1948, South Africa was "already deeply immersed in colonial segregationism" (2). Deborah Posel argues that actually "the key tenets of this 'Apartheid-idea' were set out in the Sauer Report, a confidential report produced internally for the NP in 1947" (1991: 3). She continues to say that therefore when the National Party came into power in 1948, it was well equipped with "a ready-made, if rudimentary, blueprint for the future" (ibid). She also says that "building upon the foundations laid by previous segregationist regimes, the National Party (NP) government built Apartheid into a monstrously labyrinthine system which dominated every facet of life in South Africa" (1). Apartheid resulted in social, economic, political and religious polarization of 'blacks' and 'whites', rendering one 'race' more advantaged than the other. The NP government legalized apartheid through legislations such as the Population Registration Act of 1950, the Group Areas Act of 1950, the Bantu Education Act of 1953, the Reservation of Separate Amenities Act of 1953 and other similar laws which "laid the

groundwork for a more rigid and thoroughgoing system of racial domination” (ibid).

After many political struggles, resistance and negotiations, South Africa eventually gained freedom, a milestone that culminated in Nelson Mandela being inaugurated as the first democratically elected president in 1994. The opening statement of his inaugural speech, on May 09, 1994, was:

Today we are entering a new era for our country and its people. Today we celebrate not the victory of a party, but a victory for all the people of South Africa. We have fought for a democratic constitution since the 1880’s (www.mandela.gov.za, 24 July 2014).

This victory came as a result of a long struggle against the apartheid government, which Mandela spoke of in April 20, 1964 at the opening of the defence case in the Rivonia trial at the Pretoria Supreme Court, where he, along with other ten trialists were convicted of high treason and eventually sentenced to life imprisonment. He described the struggle as “a national one [...] a struggle of the African people, inspired by their own suffering and their own experience. It is a struggle for the right to live” (ibid). He echoed these words during his inauguration when he said: “Ours has been a quest for a constitution freely adopted by the people of South Africa, reflecting their wishes and their aspirations” (ibid). In sight of this new era and hard-fought-for victory, Mandela prophetically declared that: “Never, never and never again shall it be that this beautiful land will again experience the oppression of one by another and suffer the indignity of being the skunk of the world” (ibid). Whether it talks of financial, ideological, social, racial or any other oppression, I regard this statement as an outline and a blueprint of what an ideal post-apartheid South Africa should be.

Ania Loomba argues that ‘post-colonial’ (and post-apartheid in this context) is not an event, but rather “a process of disengagement from the whole colonial [or apartheid] syndrome...” (1998: 18-19). ‘Post-apartheid’ therefore does not translate to automatic obliteration of the fruits of apartheid, the roots of which run

too deep. This is because, as Loomba argues: “the food, or music, or languages, or arts of any culture that we think of as postcolonial [or post-apartheid] evoke earlier histories or shades of culture that elude the term ‘colonial [or apartheid]’” (17). This means that in any ‘post-colonial’ or ‘post-apartheid’ society, all elements of that society’s culture can somehow be linked to the colonial or apartheid era. In South Africa we have English as a generally accepted medium of communication. However, English can be directly linked to ‘colonialism’. This therefore means that the socio-economic and racial injustices that are still ubiquitous in South Africa, can be directly attributed to colonialism and apartheid. In consideration of Mandela’s inauguration day declarations and the implications thereof, the use of the term ‘post-apartheid’ would therefore be to describe, firstly an era which started in 1994, and secondly, a conceptual theory. The latter has been pointed to by Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge as a stance which “foregrounds a politics of opposition and struggle, and problematizes the key relationship between centre and periphery” (1994: 276). It is within this usage that Ania Loomba asks whether the inequities of colonial (or apartheid rule) have really been erased or we are too hasty “to proclaim the demise of [apartheid]” (1998: 7). The aftermath of apartheid still lingers and manifests in many ways in South Africa today, more than two decades after being declared a democratic state. This therefore requires a thoughtful consideration of Loomba’s advice, that like post-colonialism, post-apartheid then, “is a word that is useful only if we use it with caution and qualifications” (Loomba, 1998: 18).

The culture of Popular Gospel music in post-apartheid South Africa

In view of this discussion, and in agreement with Mishra and Hodge (1994), this study approaches ‘post-apartheid’ from two levels: as an era, and as a philosophical theory. On the first, simpler level, post-apartheid refers to a period, a mere timeframe that began in 1994 and is inclusive all the years thereafter. However, on the second, more complex level, this study refers to post-apartheid as a complex on-going socio-economic and political process that is connected or related to apartheid. It is on this level that this study investigates how present-day

popular Gospel music is possibly influenced by, and/or how it contests or endorses the systems of apartheid. This investigative viewpoint suggests that Gospel music can either be used to undo socio-political, religious and economic injustices of the past and advance nation building, or on the contrary, to re-launch and endorse apartheid practices. The topic of this study: 'The influences of Christianity and commerce on the culture of popular Gospel music in the post-apartheid South Africa', hints at a complex web of determinants and contributing factors that make Gospel music what it uniquely is in the post-apartheid South Africa. Mellonee Burnim says that "Gospel music is far from being a mere musical genre, but rather it exists as a complex of ideology, aesthetic and behavior" (1980: 68). Burnim's "complex of ideology, aesthetic and behavior" is equivalent to what the current study refers to as 'the culture of Gospel music'. There are numerous factors that influence this culture. Monique Ingalls, for instance suggests that "There are three important factors – in economic, technological and cultural realms, respectively – that have contributed to the global creation of gospel and Christian music" (2014: 7). Her 'economic' and 'cultural' factors overlap with the current study's 'commerce' and 'Christianity', which are the two forces that this study proposes as propellants of popular Gospel music in post-apartheid South Africa. In other words, this study investigates how, by pursuing commercial and Christian ambitions, the music industry and Christian churches get to be influenced by the socio-economic, religious and political directives of (post-)apartheid South Africa, and conversely they themselves influence these directives.

The activities of these two institutions, Christian churches and the music industry, are generally regarded as conflicting. Christian Churches are generally accepted as religious institutions, concerned with the spiritual wellbeing of people, connecting them with their Creator, upholding morals and good values that will guarantee believers a happy after-death experience. The music industry on the other hand is generally perceived as an institution that is based on commerce. In this context, the music industry is considered as based on a capitalist system

which in most cases preys upon and exploits the economically under-resourced while favoring and advancing the advantaged. Commerce is the primary driving force behind the existence of the music industry, its comprising corporations and professional personnel who offer services and sell products in order to make profit. This study, however acknowledges that commerce finds its way to Christian churches as well, considering some of the church activities of selling and buying that are focusing more on business and profit-making than on religious matters. The South African Commission for the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Cultural, Religious and Linguistic Communities (CRL Rights Commission) observed activities such as where “pastors instruct their congregants to [...] part with considerable sums of money in order to be guaranteed a miracle or blessings” (2016:3). This commission then set to “investigate and understand issues surrounding - and [to] identify causes underlying - the commercialization of religion” (ibid). For the purposes of this work, I only research into those commercial church activities that involve Gospel music and are of relevance to the current discussion.

I hope to show in this study that the mutual interaction of the music industry and Christian churches due to their common interest in popular Gospel music minimizes the assumed and generally accepted tension between these two institutions. This two-way interaction therefore challenges the very correctness of the assumed tension and conflict between Christian churches and the music industry. It further instigates questions on how this relationship eventually plays out, whether it results in the commercialization of religion, or in the Christianization of the music industry. This interaction seems to intensify the complexity of the Gospel music web, and it further blurs the boundaries within which the two institutions are generally expected to operate. Taking, for example the music of Derrick Ndzimande, a recording Gospel artist that I referred to earlier: More than the seeming fact that most of the consumers of his music, like my father were Christians, some of his Gospel songs - which were commercially produced based on the industrial operations and commercial imperatives of the

music industry - were incorporated into church music and were sung during church services. I can recall one of his songs 'Halala NgoJesu' (Ndzimande, 2002), which became an anthem in many churches, including ours. The flipside of this is that Derrick Ndzimande also recorded numerous church songs in his commercial albums. Some of these songs can be found in church hymnbooks that existed way before Ndzimande was even born. Example of this are: 'Nkosi Bhek' iBandla Lakho' and 'Nxa Ebizwa' which are tracks 6 and 11 respectively in Ndzimande's (1999) *Greatest Hits, Vol. 1*. These two songs are numbers 69 and 240 respectively in the popular hymnbook *ICilongo LeVangeli*, which was first published in 1905.

I have personally observed that the relationship between Christian churches and the music industry, or Christianity and commerce is the main catalyst in the Gospel music production value-chain. Being fueled by post-apartheid nation building objectives, and – as Loomba puts it – attempts of “ disengagement from the whole colonial [or apartheid] syndrome...” (1998: 18-19), commerce and Christianity continuously adopt 'new' contemporary strategies and operations which directly influence the culture of Gospel music. This influence produces a complex Gospel music web in which Christian churches end up having in-house record labels, some pastors - such as I am - are also Gospel artists, Christian church songs that are in hymnbooks are recorded in commercial Gospel music albums, Gospel artists frequently perform in Christian church services and events, popular Gospel songs that are originally recorded in commercial albums are sung in churches as part of church service proceedings, and so on. More than complicating the relationship between Christian churches and the music industry, this influence further complicates the relationship between Gospel music and Christian church music. It is only when I critically engaged with Gospel music as a scholar that I could distinguish between the two, a distinction that I hope to show in this study.

In this two-way interaction between Christian churches and the music industry, Christian churches seem to play some kind of a vanguard role in teaching and fostering particular Christian expectations and values that eventually become defining characteristics of Gospel music. Moreover, Christian churches are seemingly a harbor of the consumers of Gospel music, and consequently are readily available platforms for Gospel artists to promote their music in. The music industry, on the other hand, seems to be the vanguard and owner of the means of production, and the very product 'Gospel music'. In the context of this study, these respective roles are the basis of the aforementioned mutual relationship between these two institutions. This relationship feeds into a cross-culture, 'the culture of Gospel music', which as the topic suggests, is mainly influenced by Christian churches and the commercial aspirations of the music industry, which are further influenced by the socio-political and economic landscape of post-apartheid South Africa.

This study therefore seeks to research into the post-apartheid operations and pursuits of the music industry and Christian churches regarding popular Gospel music, and to provide a better understanding of this complex web: the culture of Gospel music. In providing a better understanding of this culture, the current study therefore investigates the actions, intentions and processes, or the 'what', the 'why' and the 'how' of people and organizations that deal with Gospel music: Christian churches and the music industry in this case. While investigating these actions, intentions and processes, this study further examines possible roles of popular Gospel music in the processes of post-apartheid South African reconstruction, as a possible tool for either nation building and social cohesion, or a tool for colonial advancement. It asks whether by producing Gospel music, the music industry is not actually repelling the economic polarities of the society farther apart. It asks: 'Is the Christian message entailed in Gospel music a vehicle for mending hearts and lives that were destroyed by the apartheid system, or it is a further expansion of the religious aspirations of the missionary oppressors?' 'Is Gospel music disengaging its consumers from, or strapping

them more into the apartheid systems?' These are just some of the many questions that this study hopes to answer, as it offers a better understanding of the culture of popular Gospel music in post-apartheid South Africa.

Chapter 2

Research Framework

Theoretical Framework

I have approached this study within the theoretical frameworks of post-colonialism and of popular culture. Regarding the first, I adopt the distinction that has been made between ‘post-colonialism’ and ‘postcolonialism’. Ivan Polak says that “In the beginning, the term [post-colonial] was used to denote the post-colonial state which had a clear chronological meaning and referred to the period following independence” (2005: 136). He, however notes that “from the late 1970s critics have been using the term ‘postcolonial’ to discuss various cultural/political/linguistic effects and experiences triggered off by colonization which gave rise to the so-called colonial discourse theory” (137). Loomba and Mishra and Hodge, as quoted earlier in this chapter, are in accordance with Polak and other scholars in differentiating between a ‘post(-)colonial’ era or a period, and ‘post(-)colonial’ theory or scholarly discourse.

For the purposes of the current study, I will hereafter use ‘post-colonialism’ to refer to a period, a timeframe from 1961 when South Africa gained independence. This period spans to the present, and is inclusive of the period from 1994, which I refer to as ‘post-apartheid’, when South Africa was declared a democratic republic and elected Nelson Mandela as the first democratic

president. 'Postcolonialism' or 'postcolonial' is henceforth used, as Ashcroft, *et al.* suggest, to refer to scholarly theories that investigate and discuss "the effects of colonization on cultures and societies, [...and] examine the processes and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day" (2000: 168 and 169). This usage of post-colonialism/postcolonialism henceforth excludes those terms in verbatim quotations, the cases which I will duly explain, where necessary.

One of the common subjects between colonialism and apartheid and the subsequent scholarly theories, is the oppressor-oppressed relationship. Some of the scholars who, *inter alia*, offer analysis of colonial impact and the discussions on the contexts and effects of the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, the colonizer and the colonized are Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) and, later on, Edward Said (1935-2003). Said, who was to a larger extent influenced by Michal Foucault, wrote on the subject of 'Orientalism', which he presents as "the ontological and epistemological distinction between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident'" (Said, 1978: 1). In Said's discussion, the 'Orient' is the non-Western, the Middle East, and the 'Occident' is the Western. He defines 'Orientalism' as "a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient" (3). Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin expound on this and say that "The relationship between the 'Occident' and the 'Orient' is a relationship of power, of domination, of varying degrees of a complex hegemony" (2000: 153). More importantly, however, Ashcroft, *et al.* argue that Said's Oriental discussion "is more valuable as a sign of the power exerted by the West over the Orient than a 'true' discourse about the Orient" (ibid). This means that 'Orientalism' does not necessarily discuss the state of the Middle East or the 'Orient' or non-Western, unless such discussion is either presented from the Western or Occident's perspective, or reveals the superiority of the Occident over the Orient. Ania Loomba summarizes Said's 'Orientalism' as:

The Western representation of [non-Western] cultures, [which] promoted a binary opposition between the familiar (Europe, the West, "us") and the strange (the Orient, the East, "them"). [...] This opposition is crucial to European self-

conception: if colonized people are irrational, Europeans are rational; if the former are barbaric, sensual, and lazy, Europe is civilization itself, with its sexual appetites under control and its dominant ethic that of hard work” (1998: 43 and 47).

Homi Bhabha argues that this binarism “seems to be the point at which western rationalism preserves the boundaries of sense for itself” (1994: 102). Bhabha continues to argue that Said’s ‘Orientalism’, which is characterized by this Western/non-Western binarism, “finally allows them [Western and non-Western] to be correlated as a congruent system of representation that is unified through a political-ideological intention, which [...] enables Europe to advance securely and unmetaphorically upon the Orient” (ibid).

Antonio Gramsci wrote much earlier than Edward Said, and being influenced by Marxism, popularized the term ‘subaltern’. Helen McDonald describes ‘subaltern’ as “the general attribute of subordination. [...referring] to any person or group of inferior rank and station. Importantly, it positioned the dominant and dominated in history primarily in terms of class, caste, gender, race, language and culture” (2015: 61). According to Ania Loomba, “‘Subaltern’ was a military term used for officers under the rank of captain, [and was] borrowed from Gramsci, as a shorthand for any oppressed person” (1998: 51). Susobhan Sarkar, a Bengalian historian who got acquainted with Gramsci’s work, introduced it to some of his students in South Asia. This gave birth to a scholarly field of ‘Subaltern Studies’, with scholars such as Eric Stokes, Ranajit Guha, Ajay Skaria, Gayatri Spivak, Dipesh Chakrabarty and many others. ‘Subaltern Studies’, according to Helen Macdonald, is:

The ‘shorthand expression’ for a school of postcolonial thought and historical practice primarily centered on South Asia that emerged at the end of the 1970s. [This school] announced a ‘new’ method to restore history to the subordinated, primarily through the studies of peasant insurgency, [which is] history from below (2015: 59 and 61).

Peter Gran says that 'Subaltern Studies' began "as a way of situating historical research so as to minimize this problem of collision of elite and mass" (2004: 1). Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin write about the intentions of the 'Subaltern Studies' movement, that "recognizing that sub-ordination cannot be understood except in a binary relationship with dominance, the group aimed to examine the subaltern 'as an objective assessment of the role of the élite and as a critique of élitist interpretations of that role'" (2000: 199). Due to the interconnectedness of terms stemming from 'Subaltern Studies', scholars such as Helen McDonald and David Ludden deemed it befitting to distinguish between:

Subaltern Studies which refers to a number of edited [scholarly articles] and volumes that comprise the full title, *Subaltern Studies: Writings on South Asian History and Society*, which was published by the Oxford University Press from 1982 until 2005; the non-italicized phrase, Subaltern Studies which refers to the body, group or movement of scholarship by authors in Subaltern Studies; 'The Subaltern Studies project' which refers to the organized activity of the [aforementioned] Subaltern Studies, primarily its editorial collective, to develop a particular body of knowledge (McDonald: 2015: 59 and Ludden: 2000, 18).

For the purposes of this study, I add a fourth category: 'Subaltern Studies' (in inverted commas or scare quotes), which refers to this aforementioned 'body of knowledge' entailing the discourse, debates and ideas of the Subaltern Studies. I adopt this categorization and use it henceforth.

Although the term 'subaltern', as Loomba says, was 'borrowed from Gramsci', various scholars have however broadened its use vastly, such that "inside and outside, subaltern subjects have been reinvented disparately" (Ludden: 2002, 2). Even the Subaltern Studies although inspired by Gramsci, however, "actually made itself original by divorcing itself from Gramsci to invent a distinctively *Indian* subalternity" (9). Helen McDonald says that "By the 1990s Subaltern Studies was topical across disciplines ranging from history, political science, anthropology, sociology, literary criticism and cultural studies" (2015: 62). As a result, "Subalternity thus became a novelty, invented *de novo* by Subaltern Studies, which gave old terms new meanings and a new beginning for historical studies"

(Ludden, 2002: 16).

My initial interest with postcolonial discourse, including 'Subaltern Studies' and Orientalism, was with the hope that it would assist me to understand and contextualize Gospel music activities in the post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa. I hoped to find how people who have been colonized, and/or their offspring, reconstruct their lives after colonization, and how the aftermath of colonization influences that reconstruction. Although my initial interest persisted, I however got broader perspectives when I began to engage with literature on 'Subaltern Studies', postcolonialism and post-colonialism. I encountered that some of the scholars who write on these subjects seem more to be rewriting colonial history from a post-colonial context, than writing about postcolonialism itself. To make an example, Gyan Prakash's essay, '*Can the Subaltern Speak*', which according to Christopher Lee is "one of the [Subaltern Studies] movement's most well-known essays" (2005: 3), is dealing with a number of issues and theories, drawing from Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze. This essay can, however be summarized as criticizing the writing of the Indian or non-western history by western writers using western methods, without involving Indian or non-western people. She directly challenges these writers, and other scholars who subscribe to their scholarly line of thought, to "rethink Indian colonial historiography from the perspective of the discontinuous chain of peasant insurgencies during the colonial period" (78-79). In this essay, Spivak uses an example of the abolishment, by the British, of Sati, the Indian Hindu tradition of burning a bereaved widow on her husband's funeral pyre. She argues that although this seemed beneficial to Indian Hindi widows whose lives were spared, however, it is the British that benefited more from this new law. Ania Loomba says that Spivak supports her viewpoint by arguing that in this legislation, Sati women are "absent as subjects, [and that] this absence is emblematic of the difficulty of recovering the voices of the oppressed subject and that there is no space from where the subaltern subjects can speak" (1998: 234). In clarifying Spivak's sentiments further, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen

Tiffin say that Spivak criticizes “the Gramscian claim for the autonomy of the subaltern group, which, she says, no amount of qualification [...] can save from its fundamentally essentialist premise” (2000: 200). In further expounding on Spivak’s arguments, Ania Loomba asks the following important questions that are relevant to the current study,

To what extent did the colonial power succeed in silencing the colonized? When we emphasize the destructive power of colonialism, do we necessarily position colonized people as victims, incapable of answering back? On the other hand, if we suggest that the colonial subjects can ‘speak’ and question colonial authority, are we romanticizing such resistant subjects and underplaying colonial violence? In what voices do the colonized speak – their own, or in accents borrowed from their masters? [...] And finally, can the voice of the subaltern be represented by the intellectual? (1998: 231)

In the context of the current study, these questions that Loomba asks expose broader colonialism/apartheid-related issues pertaining to popular Gospel music, and further necessitate an investigation into the relationship between colonialism/apartheid and popular Gospel music, and the aftermath effects of the former on the latter. This investigation, as will be conducted in the current study, will look closely into whether activities of different people and organizations that are involved with Gospel music in South Africa move away from or towards colonial or apartheid systems. In investigating processes involving popular Gospel music, this study considers Lata Mani’s stance (on Spivak’s arguments) that:

The question ‘Can the subaltern speak?’ then, is perhaps better posed as a series of questions: Which group constitute the subalterns in any text? What is their relationship to each other? How can they be heard to be speaking or not speaking in any given set of materials? With what effects? (1992: 403).

She justifies rephrasing Spivak’s questions on the basis that it “enables us to retain Spivak’s insight regarding the positioning of women in colonial discourse without conceding to colonial discourse what it, in fact did not achieve – the erasure of women” (ibid). This viewpoint emphasizes the need to investigate the

role of colonialism and apartheid on popular Gospel music, and to show the damage incurred by the South African Gospel music industry due to injustices of colonialism and apartheid. This dialogue on Spivak's *'Can the Subaltern Speak?'* shows how these scholars discuss more how and why the Indians were colonized, instead of expounding on how that colonization impacts on their post-colonial reconstruction.

The *Subaltern Studies*, which renders it inappropriate to write the Indian post-colonial history without firstly rewriting its antecedent colonial history from the perspective of the indigenous Indian academia, challenged my initial expectation and anticipated use of the postcolonial theory. This stance provoked me not to investigate the circumstantial context of popular Gospel music in the post-apartheid South Africa independent or disconnected from the context of apartheid. Premesh Lalu shares similar sentiments in arguing that "we may have to renew a critique of apartheid if we are to make better sense of the emergence of the post-apartheid [so that] post-apartheid does not merely emerge as development on apartheid" (2008: 268). Lalu suggests that this renewed critique must involve "challenging formulations that specify the meanings of colonialism, segregation, apartheid, post-apartheid and post-colonialism in a developmental linear sequencing" (ibid). He further suggests "an investigation of how [apartheid] is cut of the same epistemic cloth that defines the subjection of agency that is intrinsic to the modes of evidence of the colonial archive" (ibid). Lalu concludes by linking his arguments to Stuart Hall who he says "suggests that the postcolonial does not lend itself to the limited temporary signification that has confounded the question of event in history [but rather...] as a strategy of 'thinking at the limit', perhaps of capitalism and its formidable social and cultural effects" (ibid).

Jacques Derrida warns against disconnecting the postcolonial/post-apartheid contexts from colonial/apartheid ones, pointing to the danger that "there is no doubt that the failure to confront the past by deconstructing the inherent colonial

state and its institutions have inevitably led to the carryover of the disabilities of the past five centuries into the post-independence era” (2007: 42). He asks: “What effort has been put in place to deconstruct South Africa now that apartheid has been abolished?” (43). If we consider, as an example, how apartheid brought about economic polarities between the oppressor and the oppressed, we can point to Black Economic Empowerment (BEE, later amended to Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment, BBBEE) as an answer to Derrida’s question. BEE is one of the strategies of the South African post-apartheid government to ensure “the participation of all South Africans in the country’s economy, and is the basis for normalizing the economy and society” (Adebajo, *et al.*, 2007: 32). However, in terms of postcolonial or *Subaltern Studies* theoretical discourse, the success and effectiveness of BEE policies can only be accurately deduced by comparatively investigating contemporary socio-economic circumstances of the post-apartheid South Africa, to those of its preceding apartheid South Africa. This theoretical discourse emphasizes that such an investigation must be conducted by the formerly oppressed or their descendants, and not by the former oppressor. As a way of practicalizing the postcolonial or post-apartheid or *Subaltern Studies* theoretical discourse in the context of the socio-economic evaluation, a starting point would be to scrutinize the economic circumstances of black people during apartheid South Africa, such as noted by Khehla Shubane, that:

dispossession [of black people] was a key feature of apartheid, and other forms of white domination that preceded it. [...] Black people were [...] stripped of many assets they might have had. [...] Severe limitations were placed on business entities that were allowed in urban townships, [...] ensuring that black people could not build meaningful businesses (2007: 64).

Shubane further notes that “by the 1970s, the deep impoverishment of black people in South Africa was almost complete” (65). This socio-political economic circumstance would then have to be superimposed with its contemporary post-apartheid counterpart. To this effect, Jacques Derrida observes that “the majority of the black population still faces income inequality and deprivation. The skewed distribution of income, resources, and economic opportunities along racial lines, which existed during the apartheid era, has persisted” (2007: 53). Shubane offers

a rather optimistic version of this observation:

Though there is still a long way to go, what has been achieved [...] is remarkable. It has now become possible to conduct a discussion on the black middle-class and what this class has done to earn a comparatively high percentage of the share of income earned by highly paid people in South Africa (2007: 65).

In the context of the current study, I plan to use postcolonial theory to investigate how colonial and apartheid systems impacted upon Gospel music. This study is not researching on the history of Gospel music, however, this investigation is in consideration of the aforementioned stipulation of the postcolonial discourse, which necessitates an inquiry into the colonial before examining the post-colonial. Nevertheless, the current study will not delve into exhaustive historical enactment of Gospel music in colonial/apartheid South Africa, instead, it will consider key relevant colonial/apartheid features, policies or laws and appropriate them applicably to discussions at hand. Since this study investigates the influences of Christianity and commerce on the culture of popular Gospel music in post-apartheid South Africa, postcolonial theory will be useful when analyzing the effect and aftermath of colonialism and apartheid on popular Gospel, the Christian churches and the music industry, and more importantly on the relationship between these three. In line with, for example 'Orientalism' and *Subaltern Studies*, I will approach the current study with the awareness of colonial or apartheid forces that are at play in influencing the present state of Gospel music, commerce and Christian churches.

This awareness is in line with related discussions of Spivak and Mani regarding how the aftermath of colonialism linger into post-colonial societies. In contextualizing these discussions to the current study, a series of questions arise, such as, 'If we hear popular Gospel music in the post-apartheid South Africa, are we hearing 'voices' of black South Africans (as discussed earlier) or are we hearing echoes of colonial and apartheid systems?' 'What are the underlying sources of Christian and commercial activities that involve Gospel music?' 'What and whose measure of standards are being used in activities

involving Gospel music?' 'Could it be possible that the contemporary systems involving the tripartite relationship between Gospel music, Christianity and commerce are a reinvention of a colonialism and/or apartheid?' These and many other such questions are the crux of this study's inquiry.

Postcolonial theory is herein used alongside elements drawn from theories of popular culture. These are both subdivision of, or at the least can be linked to a broader scholarly field of culture. Homi Bhabha offers a very relevant account of culture, which, in the context of the current study presents a link between popular culture, postcolonial discourse and culture. He says,

Culture as a strategy of survival is both transnational and translational. It is transnational because contemporary postcolonial discourses are rooted in specific histories of cultural displacement [...] Culture is translational because such spatial histories of displacement [...] make the question of how culture signifies, or what is signified by culture, a rather complex issue" (1994: 247)

A basic definition of culture, which lays a foundation for Bhabha's discussion (which I will revert to, later) describes culture as a manner in which "people interpret the world around them by developing shared understandings. Culture provides people with rules about how to operate in the world in which they live and work" (H. Rubin and I. Rubin, 1995: 20). Historians, sociologists, anthropologists, philosophers and scholars of politics, religion and media are part of an academic community that studies the subject of culture. Contributions into studies that can be linked to culture have come from a rather broad assortment of scholars such as Theodor Adorno, Karl Marx, Max Horkheimer, Aristotle, Raymond Williams, Edward Said, and many others who coined various terms and subjects such as feminism, postmodernism, structuralism, Marxism, communism, orientalism and socialism. Some of these subjects have challenged generally accepted grammar-related meanings and understandings of terms such as 'race', 'gender', 'class', 'identity', 'language', 'space', 'art', 'fashion' and many others.

One of the sub-topics of the subject of culture is 'popular culture', which is also highly debated within academia. John Storey observes the on-going scholarly discourse on the term 'popular culture' and concludes that, "depending on how it is used, quite different areas of inquiry and forms of theoretical definition and analytical focus are suggested" (2001: 1). As early as the 1990s, scholars such as Chandra Mukerji and Michael Schudsons were already cautioning that "'popular culture' is a difficult term to define" (1991: 3), and as a result, in discussing this subject, they themselves consciously choose to "sidestep a great many terminological disputes with the inclusive claim that popular culture refers to the beliefs and practices, and the objects through which they are organized, that are widely shared among a population" (ibid). Taking into consideration Raymond Williams' discussion of popular culture, John Storey says that "popular culture is simply culture which is widely favored or well-liked by many people" (2001: 6). This assertion suggests that popular culture is mass-oriented. Storey confirms this by saying that "any definition of popular culture must include a quantitative dimension" (ibid). He further says that popular culture is "mass culture" (2001: 8). The inseparable link between popular culture and mass culture is attested to by Dominic Strinati, who says that "mass culture is popular culture which is produced by mass production industrial techniques and is marketed for a profit to a mass public of consumers" (1995: 10).

In further discussing popular culture, it then becomes imperative to look closer into various elements that contribute to the popularity of that particular culture. These elements may include analyzing demographics of people involved with that popular culture, and may further explain reasons that tell 'why', methods that tell 'how', and timings that tell 'when' those people are attracted to, and influence or get influenced by a particular popular culture. This discussion links directly to the approach of the current study which is concerned with how popular culture influences society, and vice versa. In conducting this investigation, Dominic Strinati suggests that the first stop would be at looking closer into the origins of

that particular popular culture, and to ask:

Does it emerge from the people themselves as an autonomous expression of their interests and modes of experience, or is it imposed from above by those in positions of power as a type of social control? Does popular culture rise up from the people 'below' or does it sink down from elites 'on high', or is it rather a question of an interaction between the two? (1995: 3).

In the context of this study, Strinati's viewpoint questions the source or the origins of the culture of Gospel music. Andrew Edgar and Peter Sedgwick seem to answer this question when they argue that:

The activity of the people can be identified in two levels. On the first, people are identified as the producers of popular culture. On the second, more sophisticated level, the people are the interpreters of this culture. Thus [...] mass culture cannot be seen as simply inflicting a message on the audience, despite the use of industrial production and distribution techniques. Rather the audience will interpret, negotiate, and appropriate the cultural artefacts or texts to its own uses, and make sense of them within its own environment and life experience (2002: 285-286).

Edgar and Sedgwick suggest here that the way of life and social organization of people in a given society is influenced by a particular culture that is a direct product of how those people engage themselves in daily activities, which may, amongst others, be social, economic, religious and political. They argue that the actions of these people are further influenced by a particular mindset which determines how they interact with, and make meaning of the issues around them. This can be understood as suggesting that any given popular culture has various levels and areas of operation within which different people within the said culture engage. This multi-level involvement is interconnected, in such a way that consumers of popular culture, for instance, are not just on the receiving end of the popular culture production-chain. Rather, they play an integral part in the process of creating and influencing this culture.

Secondly, Dominic Strinati associates popular culture with commercialization, and questions the influence of one on the other. He asks:

Does the emergence of culture in commodity forms mean that the criteria of profitability and marketability take precedence over quality, artistry, integrity and intellectual challenge? Or does the increasingly universal market for popular culture ensure that it is truly popular because it makes available commodities people actually want? (1995: 3).

Strinati simplifies these questions by asking: “What wins out when popular culture is manufactured industrially and sold according to the criteria of marketability and profitability – commerce or quality?” (ibid). In the context of the current study, Strinati’s question triggers a deeper inquiry into the processes of manufacturing, mediation and consumption of Gospel music. It further questions the intents and priorities of both creators and consumers of Gospel music, in relation to commerce - including costs of making, selling, and buying the music - and quality. This study hopes to offer a better understanding of the relationship between commerce and quality, whether they compete with or complement each other. Whatever the case is, I argue, in concurrence with Edgar and Sedgwick that consumers will interact with the final product in a particular way that is influenced by their particular life experiences and environment. This connects with Keith Negus’ argument that:

There is not simply a type of music that naturally fits the commercial imperatives of the record industry. [...] Hence, although there is a ‘market’ for music, what becomes commercially successful on this market does not do so due to a spontaneous process in which ‘the market’ decides. Neither does what is made available on the market simply coincide with what the public wants (1999: 50).

Negus argues here that the music industry and the consumers of the music continually interact with one another in a gradual process that eventually results in a certain kind of music that becomes available on the market. As he puts it, this music will not simply coincide with what the public wants. If the public makes this product commercially successful, this success will not be by chance, but will be premised on the basis that the production of this music was an interactive process between the producers and the consumers. This study will investigate this two-way interaction, and inquire how some of the activities and perceptions of the consumers of popular Gospel music influence the creation of music and

subsequent events, such as concerts.

The third aspect of investigating popular culture within a particular society, is to scrutinize its ideological role and ask:

Is popular culture there to indoctrinate the people, to get them to accept and adhere to ideas and values which ensure the continued dominance of those in more privileged positions who thus exercise power over them. Or is it about rebellion and opposition to the prevailing social order? Does it express [...] resistance to those in power, and the subversions of dominant ways of thinking and acting? (Strinati, 1995: 4).

Here, Strinati points to societal binarism, which manifests as two groups of people: those who are privileged, in power and dominance, and those who are underprivileged and are subjected to superior powers. In the context of the current study, these may be regarded as referring, on one end to the creators of Gospel music such as record companies, and consumers or audiences on the other. However, I would like to argue that the positions of these polarity groups are not fixed, but either can be dominating or dominated, depending on a particular activity and intention thereof. This is in the sense that, for an example, consumers of Gospel music, who are generally regarded as passive recipients of predetermined products, can actually play an active dominating role in determining a commercial success of a music product. I explore this further in chapter 6. Nevertheless, such an argument is based on my analysis of Strinati's assertion, that popular culture is a possible tool through which either those who are generally perceived as being in power, manipulate the seemingly less powerful, or alternatively, the less powerful resist superior powers.

Acknowledging such intersocietal tensions, Homi Bhabha asks:

How do strategies of representation or empowerment come to be formulated in the competing claims of communities where, despite shared histories of deprivation and discrimination, the exchange values, meanings and priorities may not always be collaborative and dialogical, but may be profoundly

antagonistic, conflictual and even incommensurable? (2004: 2).

I want to answer this question by suggesting that such tensions, whether resulting from downward domination or upward resistance, culminate in some kind of commonality between the dominators and the dominated. When those in power oppress the powerless, or on the other hand, those who are powerless resist those in power, these scenarios create a point of interaction, and yield a commonality between these two polarities. In the context of the current study, this commonality is the actual Gospel music product, whether in the form of a recording, performance, and even Gospel artists themselves. Bhabha argues that “it is in the emergence of the interstice – the overlap and displacement of domains of differences – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated” (ibid). He further says that “the social articulation of differences [whether through downward dominance or upward resistance] is a complex, on-going negotiation that seeks to authorize cultural hybridities that emerge in moments of historical transformation” (3). The current study hypothesizes, in line with Bhabha, that the interaction between makers and consumers of Gospel music yields a common point of reference for these people, resulting in particular elements that eventually get accepted as required characteristics of popular Gospel music culture.

Reverting to Bhabha’s statement with which I opened the current discussion, I find the two terms: ‘transnational’ and ‘translational’ useful in linking the two theories: of postcolonialism and of popular culture. I interpret ‘transnational’ as meaning that any popular culture of any given society at any given point in time has some ‘foreign’ elements of ‘other’ cultures. I want to argue that even within one particular popular culture, (such as the one of Gospel music in this study,) there are intra-societal subgroups, (such as consumers and producers) between which particular intra-cultural elements (such as fandom, songwriting) are in constant transit. In making meaning of these ‘foreign’ elements, societies (in the

case of intersocietal transit) and societal subgroups (in the case of intrasocietal transit) use translationalism to translate and understand these elements, and the societies and groups that make them. These concepts of transnationalism and translationalism are useful in investigating the influences of Christianity and commerce on the culture of popular Gospel music in the post-apartheid South Africa within the theoretical framework of postcolonialism and popular culture. On one hand, transnationalism traces origins of 'colonial' and 'foreign' influences on contemporary popular Gospel music from 'other' nations. On the other hand, translationalism will assist in investigating how popular Gospel music society and its comprising subgroups translate or make meaning of, and engage themselves with popular Gospel music.

Research Methodology

This study has an empirical base, such as suggested by Ranjit Kumar of a study with "conclusions [that] are based upon hard evidence gathered from information collected from real life experiences or observations" (1999: 7). Wayne Goddard and Stuart Melville simply define an empirical study as "a study of things as they currently exist in the real world" (2001: 11). The current study, as this section will show, gathers its data from real life experiences, and observation of activities of people involved with Gospel music. The Gospel music events that I attended and observed are real, non-fiction, and unscripted. Also the questions that I asked to various respondents (see Appendices 2 and 3) inquire about the real world of Gospel music. Considering such questions, John Sumser says that "research is empirical when the questions that one asks can most appropriately be answered by looking at the world rather than by thinking about it" (2001: 6).

Considering the theoretical framework of the current study, I build upon this empirical base and adopt elements of a qualitative study in interacting with the collected data. The theory of postcolonialism and of popular culture, as discussed earlier, suggest that there are 'other' forces that are at play in what may seem to be a 'real' world. This viewpoint suggests that 'real' is rather a

relative term and is subject to interpretation. In the context of the current study, such interpretation is either by the respondents themselves or by me as a researcher. According to Allan Glatthorn and Randy Joyner, a qualitative study “emphasizes a phenomenological view in which reality inheres in the perceptions of individuals. Studies deriving from this perspective focus on meaning and understanding” (2005: 40). Herbert J. Rubin and Irene S. Rubin share similar sentiments and define qualitative study as “a way of finding out what others feel about their worlds” (2012: 1). One of the purposes of this investigation, is such as noted by Rita Brause, which is to “focus on identifying frequently occurring phenomena. These phenomena are often called patterns of behavior” (2000: 122). Based on the earlier discussion on the theory of popular culture, such patterns of behavior are the defining characteristics of a particular culture. Ranjit Kumar summarizes a qualitative study as the one whose purpose “is primarily to describe a situation, phenomenon, problem or event” (1999: 10), which is what this study hopes to achieve by eventually defining the culture of popular Gospel music. Kumar mentions examples of qualitative studies, such as “the description of an observed situation, an account of the different opinions people have about an issue, and a description of the living conditions of a community” (ibid).

This study employs research methods such as interviews, attending, observing and analyzing Gospel music events, and analysis of CDs and DVDs. These are examples of qualitative methods as suggested by various scholars as discussed earlier. Although this is primarily a qualitative study, it does however secondarily employ quantitative techniques. Allan Glatthorn and Randy Joyner support my approach of using both types, by pointing to four kinds of studies that utilize both qualitative and quantitative research. This study’s combination is the one they call ‘qualitative primary, quantitative first’, in which they say, “the researcher begins by collecting quantitative preliminary data as a basis for collecting and interpreting the primary qualitative data” (2005: 40). In some instances, I have used this approach in this study, especially where I, as Ranjit Kumar suggests, had to “quantify the variation in a phenomenon, situation, problem or issue, [...]

and if the analysis is geared to ascertain the magnitude of the variation” (1997: 12).

In establishing the research sample and collecting data for this study, I have primarily used the premier South African Gospel music awards, called ‘The SABC Crown Gospel Music Awards’ - commonly referred to as simply: ‘Crown Awards’. Max Mojapelo attributes the birth of the Crown Awards to the demands, growth and popularity of the Gospel music genre. He says:

By 2007, this genre was the most popular on the local scene that it deserved its own awards ceremony. Organized by Zanele Mbokazi, the launch of the Crown Gospel Music Awards [...] would surely elevate it to even greater heights (2008: 340).

Elsewhere, Crown Gospel Awards have been described as

an annual South African awards ceremony organized by World Gospel Powerhouse which honors, celebrates and promotes the talent and accomplishments of the South gospel music industry in the past year. The inaugural awards were held at the ICC Arena in Durban on 24 August, 2008 and have been held annually ever since (www.tvsa.co.za, 12 May 2013).

According to the founders of these awards:

The Crown signifies the ultimate award that will be adorned to all His servants in Heaven on the last day. The idea was and still is, to salute the sons and daughters in the gospel music industry under various categories. To date the Awards boasts more than 30 categories. The winners are awarded a Crown, for their sterling contribution in the gospel music industry (www.crowngospelmusicawards.co.za, 23 May 2013).

Crown Awards is arguably the biggest Gospel music event in South Africa, which attracts a wide range of stakeholders and interest groups involved in Gospel music. This includes producers, artists, engineers, consumers, retailers and distributors, journalists and broadcasters, and many other stakeholders. The full list of winners of various categories from 2008 to 2013 is enclosed in Appendix 6. I had hoped to get an insight into the criteria used for nominations and final

selection process for these awards, but have unfortunately not been able to access such information. Nevertheless, because of the period it has been in existence, its magnitude and inclusivity of a broad scope of styles of local (and international) Gospel music, and because of its relevance to the current study, the Crown Awards qualifies to be used as a primary tool to determine the research sample of this study.

As an established event of national magnitude, these awards helped me to select artists, producers, songs and albums that have been selected amongst a bigger pool of competitors. In selecting primary respondents for this study, I use the Crown Awards' 'Best Artist' and 'Best Group' categories, outlined in figure 2.1 and figure 2.2. In delimiting this sample further, I selected those artists or groups who have at least five albums and have been actively involved in the music industry for at least ten years. This allows me a wider scope of material per artist. It further allows me to analyze how each artist's music has evolved over time, particularly in the post-apartheid context. Artists meeting these conditions are: Joyous Celebration, Rebecca Malope, Benjamin Dube, Sipho Makhabane and Winnie Mashaba. I have used my discretion to also include S'fiso Ncwane in this list, based on his involvement, contribution, popularity and achievements in the music industry, as attested to by the surveys and his biography that I outline shortly hereafter. Max Mojapelo duly includes all these musicians in his brief but accurate account of local Gospel music in his book about the 'History, Moments and Memories of South African Music'. I do, however use other Gospel artists where necessary and relevant. I have also used various category winners of Crown Awards in different sections of the current study. For example in discussing and analyzing elements of songwriting, I use Crown Awards' 'Best Songwriter' categories; on elements of producing, I use the 'Best Producer' category, and so on. I have also made reference to music awards ceremonies such as the South African Music Awards (SAMAs) and METRO FM Music Awards. These are awards encompassing all genres of popular music, including Gospel.

Year	Name of the winning Artist
2008	Rebecca Malope
2009	Benjamin Dube
2010	Sipho Makhabane
2011	Solly Mahlangu
2012	Ntokozo Mbambo
2013	Winnie Mashaba

Figure 2.1: Winners of ‘The Best Gospel Artist’ awards in the SABC Crown Gospel Music Awards, 2008 to 2013.

Year	Name of the winning Group
2008	Joyous Celebration
2009	Joyous Celebration
2010	Worship House
2011	Soweto Spiritual Singers
2012	Worship House
2013	Simply Chrysolite

Figure 2.2: Winners of ‘The Best Gospel Group’ awards in the SABC Crown Gospel Music Awards, 2008 to 2013.

The following section outlines the biographies of the artists that form the primary research sample of this study. This is for the purpose of validating them as primary respondents of this study and acquainting the reader with them:

Joyous Celebration

Joyous Celebration is one of the most prominent, popular and successful Gospel ensembles in South Africa. It was founded by Lindelani Mkhize, Mthunzi Namba and Jabu Hlongwane in the early 1990s. Max Mojapelo refers to it as a “dream that grew bigger as they [the founders] discovered the need for an incubator of latent talent. The concept grew in leaps and bounds and became an annual event” (2008: 336).



Figure 2.3: Joyous Celebration (source: www.youtube.com)

Lindelani Mkhize confidently says that “Joyous Celebration is not just a choir, but it is a concept and an institution that will exist for many years to come” (Mkhize interview, 03 July 2013). According to the Joyous Celebration website: “The Joyous Concept has always been enigmatic to a lot of people because of its format. We have been referred to as a Gospel Choir. We prefer to be referred to as a Gospel Project, because the crew changes every two years” (www.joyous.co.za, 14 April 2014). This website further explains that Joyous Celebration “records a live CD and DVD during the month of December of each year. An annual tour is then put in place to cover six major cities: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and Durban and Polokwane” (ibid). Joyous Celebration arguably owes its popularity to its variable repertoire which encompasses a wide scope of sub-genres and styles of local and international Gospel music. For the purposes of this research, I however do refer to Joyous Celebration as a choir or an ensemble. In 2013, based on their latest album, ‘Joyous Celebration 17’, Joyous Celebration is comprised of a choir of thirty-one singers and a band of six musicians, and has released eighteen albums as follows:

- 1997 - Joyous Celebration
- 1998 - Joyous Celebration 2, Live at Durban Christian Centre
- 1999 - Joyous Celebration 3, Live at the Market Theatre
- 2000 - Joyous Celebration 4, Connecting the Nation
- 2001 - Joyous Celebration 5
- 2002 - Joyous Celebration 6, Be Inspired

2003 - Joyous Celebration 7, Live in Cape Town
2004 - Joyous Celebration 8
2005 - Joyous Celebration 9
2006 - Joyous Celebration 10, Special Anniversary
2007 - Joyous Celebration 11, Live at the Sun City Superbowl
2008 - Joyous Celebration 12, Live at the Grand West Arena, Cape Town
2009 - Joyous Celebration 13, Live at the Mosaiek Theatre
2010 - Joyous Celebration 14, Life Changing Experience, Live in Bloemfontein
2011 - Joyous Celebration 15, My Gift to you, Live at ICC Arena, Durban
2012 - Joyous Celebration 16, Royal Priesthood, Live at Carnival City, Johannesburg
2012 - Joyous Rewind
2013 - Joyous Celebration 17, Grateful, Live at Rhema Ministries

Joyous Celebration has received the following accolades, inter alia:

2003 – South African Music Awards, Best Contemporary Gospel Album
2004 – South African Music Awards, Best Contemporary Gospel Album
2005 – South African Music Awards, Best Contemporary Gospel Album
2008 – South African Music Awards, Traditional African adult contemporary DVD
2008 – SABC Crown Gospel Awards, Best Gospel Group
2009 – South African Music Awards, Best African Contemporary Gospel
2009 – South African Music Awards, Best traditional/African adult contemporary DVD: Joyous Celebration Vol. 12 - Live at the Grand West Arena, Cape Town.
2009 – SABC Crown Gospel Awards, Best Gospel Group
2010 – Metro FM Awards, Best Urban Gospel

Rebecca Malope

Rebecca Malope's Gospel music career spans three decades. Dubbed 'The queen of Gospel' and affectionately known as 'sis Ribs', Malope started off as a pop artist in the late 1980s, after winning a music talent search 'Shell Road to Fame'. She has won numerous awards and has sold millions of copies of her music in her career. According to 'SA History' website:

All of her first ten gospel albums went gold and the last six were platinum. Malope has sold more than two million copies of her recordings. In 1995 her CD Shwele Baba sold more than 1 million copies in the three weeks after its release, becoming the fastest selling CD in the South African music history (www.sahistory.org.za, 23 March 2014).



Figure 2.4: Rebecca Malope (source: [www. destinyconnect.com](http://www.destinyconnect.com))

This was a milestone that, according to Max Mojapelo “was a paradigm shift from the view of many people even in the music industry itself about Gospel music” (2008: 321). Mojapelo refers to this achievement as “a Gospel revolution” (ibid). Rebecca Malope also hosts a Gospel program called ‘It’s Gospel Time’ on national television. Her contribution in the music industry and in society at large, led the University of Natal - now called the University of KwaZulu-Natal – to recognize that “she deserved the conferment of an honorary doctorate” (Mojapelo, M. 2008: 322). Her discography comprises the following recordings:

- 1992 - Rebecca Sings Gospel
- 1993 - Ngiyekeleni
- 1994 - Umoya Wam
- 1995 - Shwele Baba
- 1996 - Uzube Nam
- 1996 - Live at the State Theatre
- 1997 - Angingedwa
- 1997 - Free at Last: South African Gospel
- 1998 - Somlandela
- 1999 - Ukholo lwam
- 2000 - Siyabonga
- 2000 - Christmas with Rebecca and Friends
- 2001 - Sabel'Uyabizwa
- 2002 - Iyahamba Lenqola
- 2003 - Hlala Nami
- 2004 - The Queen of Gospel and the Village Pope
- 2005 - Qaphelani
- 2005 - The Greatest Hits

2006 - Umthombo
2006 - Live in Soweto
2007 - Amakholwa
2008 - UJehova Ungumadida
2009 - African Classics
2009 - My Hero
2010 - Live at the Lyric Theatre
2010 - Uzohamba Nami
2011 - Ukuthula
2012 - Rebecca Live Concert featuring Tshwane Gospel Choir
2013 - Bayos'khomba

Rebecca Malope has received the following Music awards and accolades, inter alia:

1989 – Best South African Female Artist, OKTV
1993 – Best Local Established Music Show, Coca-Cola Full Blast Music Show
1994 – Best Gospel Singer, South African Music Awards
1997 – Best Selling Album for 'Uzube Nam'
1998 - Best African Gospel Artist & Best Selling Album for 'Angingedwa'
1999 – Best Female Artist and Best African Gospel for 'Somlandela'
2002 – Best Gospel Artist for 'Sabel'Uyabizwa'
2003 – Best African Gospel Artist for 'Iyahamba Lenqola'
2004 – Best African Gospel Artist for 'Hlala Nami'

Benjamin Dube

Benjamin Dube is popularly known as the 'father of contemporary Gospel'. This may be due to his pioneering role in incorporating 'new' sounds and importing 'American' and 'other' styles into local Gospel. In his own words, he says: "Back in the days we were the first, or one of the first Gospel acts to use contemporary musical instruments such as live drums and guitars" (Dube, B. interview, 01 November 2009). According to his website, he "developed the love of playing guitar at the age of 9 and at the age of 11 started playing drums. In 1974, at the age of 12, he started singing in church with the group called 'The Dube Family Singers', in which he played guitar" (www.revbenjamindube.com, 23 May 2014). In 1986, he released the song 'Holy Spirit', which "was a cross-over hit song and chart buster in local radio stations and sold over 25 000 units in the year of its release in RSA" (ibid).



Figure 2.5: Benjamin Dube (source: www.macufe.co.za)

Having been involved in the music industry since the early 1980s, in the late 1980s “he was already a household name who was invited to be a supporting act for the US Gospel star, James Cleveland, when he toured South Africa” (Mojapelo, M. 2008: 332). Dube’s career reached new heights in the early 2000s, after “he cut a deal with Harmony Records in New York, USA, under Epic Record label and recorded his first live album - ‘I Feel Like Going On’ which sold platinum in RSA only” (www.revbenjamindube.com, 23 May 2014). Benjamin Dube owns a record label called Dube Connection cc, licensed to Sony/BMG and Spirit Music. He is also a well-travelled preacher and a pastor of High Praise Centre church in Vosloorus, Johannesburg. Dube’s influence is evident based on the number of artists that he has groomed and continues to mentor, and on his prominence in the ‘Spirit of Praise’, one of the popular local Gospel ensembles. He has sold millions of copies of his albums which include:

- 1999 - I Feel Like Going On
- 2001 - Looking Back
- 2002 - High Praise Explosion
- 2004 - For Every Mountain...Thank You
- 2006 - You Blessed Me Still
- 2007 - High Praise Explosion, Oh Bless Our God
- 2008 - In His Presence
- 2010 - Worship in His Presence
- 2012 - Healing in His Presence
- 2013 - Renewal in His Presence

Benjamin Dube's career is highly decorated by the following awards and accolades, amongst others:

2004, 2005, 2006 and 2010 – various nominations in South African Music Awards.

2009 - 'Best Gospel Artist', South African Music Awards

2008 - 'Best Praise & Worship album', SABC Crown Gospel Awards

2009 - 'Life Time Achievement', SABC Crown Gospel Awards

2008 - 'Gospel Legend' and 'Best Contemporary Artist' awards, One Gospel

Sifiso Ncwane

Sifiso (or S'fiso) Ncwane “the talented composer and keyboardist” (Mojapelo, M. 2008: 335), is one of the local Gospel music heavyweights and reputable domestic brands. His first album entitled 'Vula'amasango' was released in 1999. In the early 2000s, he joined himself to Tshepo Ndzimande, a popular music industry guru and a producer. This partnership gave Ncwane his career breakthrough and saw him releasing five 'platinum-selling' albums and releasing hit songs such as *Umkhuleko*, *Inombolo Yasezulwini* and *Baba Ngiyabonga*.



Figure 2.6: Sfiso Ncwane (source: www.sfisoncwane.co.za)

S'fiso Ncwane is the first Gospel artist to ever win the lucrative 'South African Music Awards - Record of the Year' with his hit song *Kulungile Baba*. Ncwane currently co-owns with his wife, a record label: S'fiso Ncwane Productions. S'fiso Ncwane's discography includes the following albums:

1999 - Vul'Amasango

2001 - Makadunyiswe
2002 - Inombolo Yasezulwini
2003 - Umkhuleko
2004 - S'fiso
2005 - Best of S'fiso
2006 - Baba Ngiyabonga
2008 - Isiphephelo Sami
2010 - Baba Ngiyavuma
2011 - Kulungile Baba
2013 - Kulungile Baba, Live at the Durban ICC

S'fiso Ncwane has received the following awards and accolades:

2009 – 'Classic of All Times' for the song *Umkhuleko*, SABC Crown Gospel Awards
2010 – 'Best Male Artist', SABC Crown Gospel Awards
2010 – 'Best Gospel Song' for the song *Phakama*, SABC Crown Gospel Awards
2013 – 'Record of the Year' for the song *Kulungile Baba*, MTN South African Music Awards
2013 – 'Artist of the Year', The Africa Gospel Music Awards

Sadly, Ncwane passed away in December 2016, having contributed as a respondent into this study. May his soul rest in peace, and may his legacy live on.

Sipho Makhabane

Big Fish Productions' company. He has discovered and groomed other renowned Gospel artists such as Hlengiwe Mhlaba, Thobekile, Pastor Ncanda and Tshepiso Motaung. In his own words he highlights this achievement as one of his unique strengths: "I do not know of any performing Gospel artist who has discovered artists and turned them into successful brands, in a way that I have done" (Makhabane interview, 12 October 2013). Sanelisiwe, the columnist of Drum magazine correctly notes that: "Sipho 'Big Fish' Makhabane is known for producing platinum-selling albums and has won most of the major awards" (<http://drum.co.za>, 22 October 2013). As his company website correctly says, Makhabane has produced numerous award-winning artists, such as "Hlengiwe Mhlaba, Nontando, Israel Mosehla, Mzwakhe Myeni, Tshepiso Motaung, Sechaba" (www.bigfishmusic.co.za, 16 October 2013).



Figure 2.7: Siphso Makhabane (source: www.itunes.apple.com)

Commonly known as ‘Big Fish’, Siphso Makhabane is an artist and a founder of ‘Makhabane’s discography includes:

- 1993 - Thum’umlilo
- 1995 - UJesu Uliqhawe
- 1998 - Uyigugu
- 1999 - Makadunyiswe
- 2001 - Calvary
- 2002 - Akukhalwa
- 2003 - Moya Wami
- 2004 - Nkosi Ngibheke
- 2005 - Umuzi Omuhle
- 2007 - Ngiyamemeza
- 2010 - Siphso Makhabane, Live at Durban City Hall
- 2010 - Ebenezer
- 2011 - The Best of Siphso Makhabane, Live at the Pretoria State Theatre
- 2012 - Ngohlabelela

‘Big Fish’ has been awarded the following accolades:

- 2007 - ‘Best Traditional Gospel album’, South African Music
- 2001 and 2007 – ‘Best Producer’, Glory Awards in Swaziland.
- 2008 - ‘Community Empowerment Award’, The Mama Beka Awards.
- 2008 - ‘Best Traditional Album’, SABC Crown Gospel Awards
- 2009 - ‘Best Traditional Song’, SABC Crown Gospel Awards
- 2010 - ‘Best Gospel Artist’, SABC Crown Gospel Awards
- 2012 - ‘Lifetime Achievement’, SABC Crown Gospel Awards

Winnie Mashaba

Winnie Mashaba is not only popular in South Africa, but also in other neighboring countries such as Zimbabwe, Swaziland and Botswana. As a firm member of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC), Mashaba's music has a strong link with the music of her church. Her breakthrough in the music industry came after connecting with the legendary Solly Moholo, for whom she auditioned and "in no time she was in a recording studio.



Figure 2.8: Winnie Mashaba (source: www.winniemashaba.co.za)

Mashaba's debut album, 'Exodus 20' was released in 2000 and immediately put her in the league of great singers" (www.winniemashaba.co.za, 12 November 2013). This website mentions achievements such as the hit songs: *Menwana Phezulu*, *Re Tla Mo Leboga Kang*, *Joang kapa Joang* and *Ke Rata Wena*, and her collaborations with artists such as Solly Matseba on the song *Koloi ya Eliya*, Sfiso Ncwane on the song *Mahlomoleng*, Merriam Moukangwe on *Tsiu tsaka*, Jerrette Lehlokoa on *Go Tseba Jehovah* and Kutullo Moagi on *Sefefo sa Moea* (ibid). Max Mojapelo remarks that by 2008, Mashaba "had become one of the music promoters' most sought-after live performers" (2008: 331). Winnie Mashaba has released the following albums:

- 2000 – Exodus 20
- 2001 – Ke rata wena
- 2002 – Kea Letshaba Lefasa
- 2003 – Go Tseba Jehova
- 2004 - Bonang Lerato
- 2005 – Bongang Lerato

2006 – Motswelle Se Bapale ka Kereke ena
2006 – Winnie Mashaba in Concert DVD
2007 – O tla ya kae?
2009 – Thola Ngwanesu
2009 - Joang kapa Joang
2009 – Lefu le Tshabeng, Live at Ellis Park Stadium
2011 – Modimo o na le nna
2012 – Bophelo ke Leeto

Winnie Mashaba has received the following awards:

2006 – ‘Best Gospel Artist of the Year’, TUT FM
2008 – ‘Best Song’ for the song ‘Hakena Nako’, One Gospel Awards
2010 – ‘Best Female Artist’, SABC Crown Gospel Awards
2009 – Sekhukhune Achievers Awards in 2009
2013 – ‘Best Gospel Artist’, SABC Crown Gospel Awards

In addition to the aforementioned sampling method, I further used what Paul Olive refers to as: ‘purposive’ and ‘convenience’ samplings methods, in order to strengthen this study’s research sample. He defines purposive sampling as:

A form of non-probability sampling in which decisions concerning the individuals to be included in the sample are taken by the researcher, based upon a variety of criteria which may include specialist knowledge of the research issue, or capacity and willingness to participate in the research (<http://srmo.sagepub.com>, 14 November 2014).

In light of Olive’s assertion, I use my insider’s discretion where applicable and necessary, to include other artists who are not in the above-mentioned figures. I select these artists on the basis of their popularity or relevant link with, and participation in Christian churches and/or the music industry. These artists include Solly Mahlangu, Israel Mosehla, Worship House, Nqubeko Mbatha, and many others.

I further enhance my research sample by employing convenience sampling, which Kristie Saumure and Lisa M. Given define as:

A sample in which research participants are selected based on their ease of

availability. Essentially, individuals who are the most ready, willing, and able to participate in the study are the ones who are selected to participate. A convenience sample is simply one in which the researcher uses any subjects that are available to participate in the research study. This could mean stopping people in a street corner as they pass by or surveying passersby in a mall. It could also mean surveying friends, students, or colleagues that the researcher has regular access to. (<http://srmo.sagepub.com>, 14 November 2014)

Based on this explanation, I conducted two surveys to: a) explore the consumers' concept of 'success' and ascertain 'successful' Gospel artists; and b) ascertain how consumers interact with Gospel music in South Africa. The first survey (see Appendix 2.1) sought to enquire into the notion of 'successful' Gospel artists and how Gospel music audiences interact with Gospel music. I distributed 500 questionnaires to various churches in five of the nine provinces of South Africa, as outlined in figure 2.9. These churches were selected based on either or both of the following two criteria: a) they have a link with Gospel artist(s) forming this study's primary research sample, and b) they have regular activities that involve Gospel music. I have in some instances selected churches with relatively massive congregations over others. I dispersed 100 questionnaires per province. However, an average of eight questionnaires per province were either incompletely filled or not returned, resulting in a sample of approximately 460 questionnaires.

The second survey (see Appendix 2.2) that I conducted was based on convenience sampling. I conducted short interviews with 150 willing respondents, randomly approached at seven different locations, namely:

- University of KwaZulu-Natal, Howard College campus
- Durban Old Market,
- The Workshop Shopping Complex's Amphitheatre in Durban,
- KwaMashu Shopping Mall,
- Maponya Mall in Soweto, Johannesburg,
- Umtata at Eastern Cape, and
- ESikhawini near EMPangeni, north coast of KwaZulu-Natal.

The aim of these interviews was to further ascertain the general public's perceptions of commercial and Christian issues influencing Gospel music in South Africa. This survey is unpacked and discussed in detail in chapter 6.

I further conducted a survey on Facebook (see Appendix 2.3) and posed a question: "Who would you regard as the most 'successful' SA Gospel music artist, and how do you measure that 'success'?" Although this was an informal and an uncensored discussion, various people raised relevant points that endorse the research sample of this study, by picking artists - such as Siphon Makhabane, Rebecca Malope, Joyous Celebration, Benjamin Dube and S'fiso Ncwane - that are already selected through the sampling methods already mentioned. 'Success' yardsticks in this survey include: CD sales, visibility and frequent performances and shows, awards and accolades, assistance offered to assist and groom other artists, international impact, independency and self-effort to build one's career. This survey bears similar outcomes with the Crown Awards in terms of artists selected.

Name and location of the Church	Province	Number of Questionnaires
EThekweni Community Church, Durban	KwaZulu-Natal	20
KwaMashu Christian Centre, KwaMashu	KwaZulu-Natal	20
Apostolic Faith Mission, eMpangeni	KwaZulu-Natal	20
Teleios Revival Centre, ULundi	KwaZulu-Natal	20
Shammah Worship Centre, KwaXimba	KwaZulu-Natal	20
Change Bible Church, Johannesburg	Gauteng	20
High Praise Centre, Vosloorus	Gauteng	20
Assemblies of God, Mamelodi	Gauteng	20
All Nations Revival Ministries, Johannesburg	Gauteng	20
Word Praise Christian Church, Tembisa	Gauteng	20
Word of Life Ministries, Secunda	Mpumalanga	25
Assemblies of God, Standerton	Mpumalanga	25
Jesus Worship Center, Nelspruit	Mpumalanga	50
Wisdom Life Ministries, Umtata	Eastern Cape	50
Umtata Christian Fellowship Center, Umtata	Eastern Cape	50
Worship House, Shayandima	Limpopo	33
Polokwane Christian Fellowship Church, Polokwane	Limpopo	34
Christ the Rock Revival Centre, Tzaneen	Limpopo	33

Figure 2.9: Churches constituting the research sample of the questionnaire survey of this study

I succeeded in interviewing most of the artists that form this study's primary research sample. In addition, I interviewed various persons that are involved with these artists and their music at different levels. There are, however, other local Gospel musicians and music industry personnel that I regard as relevant to this study, due to their active involvement and contribution to this genre, and that I had hoped to include as direct respondents and interviewees, but whom I could not get. This, I attribute to a lack of understanding of academic interviews, which raised expectations of remuneration for doing interviews, and some due to a (two-year) long 'busy-schedule'. Financial constraints hindered me from physically conducting field visits and interviews in some parts of the country. In overcoming these limitations, I conducted telephonic interviews and emailed questionnaires and surveys to some of the respondents informing this study. Appendix 3 outlines the guideline interview questions that I used. In addition to these interviews that I personally conducted, I found other relevant interviews on digital and print media, which I have used.

Generally, all the interviews that I personally conducted were structured with pre-planned questions. In some cases, these questions were sent to a respondent prior to the interview. However, the interviews were informal and respondents spoke freely. Although I would guide the discussion in line with the interview questions, I nevertheless would not interrupt the flow thereof. Most interviews were recorded using a digital recorder. For the ease of downscaling and properly packaging the interviews, I made hand written notes of relevant points of discussions, I referred to relevant sections of the audio recording for verbatim references. Interviewees signed a letter of consent (see Appendix 1) to do the interview. This letter outlines the purpose of the interview, the research topic, the study's ethics compliance, envisaged usage of the data, and other such details. Moreover, this letter outlines the respondent's rights to anonymity, confidentiality and withdrawal from participation. Although the subject of Gospel music may not generally be deemed as sensitive, some respondents however, exercised their rights by requesting anonymity and others requesting some information to be

embargoed for their lifetime, which I have translated to an average of fifty years. These respondents justified their requests on the basis of the shared information having a potential to jeopardize their careers. In such cases, I have used pseudonyms to protect their identity. Moreover, the research data of this study will be under embargo for the period of forty years, i.e. 2014 to 2064.

The following is a full record of interviews that I conducted, in the order of their occurrences. An asterisk (*) denotes telephonic interviews and a hash (#) denotes interviewees with concealed identities, the cases in which pseudonyms are used:

1. Benjamin Dube, a Gospel musician and a pastor, in Johannesburg on November 01, 2009.
2. Pastor H. Luthuli, a pastor of Life in Christ Ministries, at ULundi on January 26, 2011.
3. Pastor S. Mpungose, a pastor and a chairperson of the pastors fraternal, at Nongoma, on January 27, 2011.
4. Pastor Collen Shenge, a pastor of the AFM in Empangeni, on January 27, 2009.
5. Israel Mosehla, a Gospel music artist and a pastor, in Durban on January 03, 2012.
6. Pastor V. Dube, a pastor of EThekwini Community Church, in Durban on January 30, 2012.
7. *Gift McKenzie, a Gospel musician and producer, on February 20, 2012.
8. Lindelani Mkhize, a music industry personnel and a producer, in Durban on July 03, 2012.
9. #Joy Shanduka, a producer and pianist, in Johannesburg on August 16, 2012.
10. *Percy Ingle, Gospel music producer, on October 23, 2012.
11. #Hopewell Ngiba, a Gospel musician, at Umtata, on September 22, 2012.
12. #Hurley Bam, a Gospel musician, in Pietermaritzburg on May 14, 2013.
13. #Michelle Bam, a record industry personnel and an artist manager, in Pietermaritzburg on May 14, 2013.
14. *Benjamin Dube a Gospel musician and a pastor, on May 20, 2013.
15. S'fiso Ncwane, s Gospel artist, on 15 August 2013, in Durban.
16. *Solly Mahlangu, a Gospel musician and a pastor, on September 14, 2013.

17. *Tshepo Ndzimande, a music industry executive and a producer, on September 25, 2013.
18. *Nqubeko Mbatha, Gospel musician and a producer, on October 03, 2013.
19. *Winnie Mashaba, a Gospel musician, on October 03, 2013.
20. *Sipho Makhabane, an executive founder and owner of Big Fish Music, a producer and a Gospel musician, on October 12, 2013.
21. Andile ka Majola, a Gospel musician and a pastor, in Durban on October 20, 2013.
22. *Rebecca Malope, a Gospel music artist, on October 20, 2013.
23. Mthunzi Xulu, a founding member of a Gospel music group – Abahlabeleli baseWeseli, in Durban on October 28, 2013.
24. *Neyi Zimu, a Gospel musician and a pastor, on November 20, 2013.
25. #Chad Adams, a senior sales representative of a distribution company, in Durban on December 05, 2013
26. Charmaine Young of Revolver Records, in Ballito on December 05, 2013
27. J.P. Prinsloo, AV technician for Joyous Celebration, at City Hill church, Hillcrest on December 20, 2013.
28. Johan Marais, assistant audio recordist for Joyous Celebration, at City Hill church, Hillcrest on December 20, 2013.
29. Nino Herr, Malapati's vision mixer for Joyous Celebration, at City Hill church, Hillcrest on December 20, 2013.
30. Adriaan van der Walt, front-of-house engineer for Joyous Celebration, at City Hill church, Hillcrest on December 20, 2013.
31. Paul Modise, Lighting designer for Joyous Celebration, at City Hill church, Hillcrest on December 20, 2013.
32. Themba Ndala, Social Media Profiler for Joyous Celebration, at City Hill church, Hillcrest on December 20, 2013.

I further attended, observed and analyzed the following events that involved Gospel music and were conducted by the music industry and Christian churches. Appendix 4 outlines the observation guidelines that I used.

1. Live studio recording of Benjamin Dube's 'High Praise Explosion - Oh Bless Our God', in SABC M1 Recording studio on October 12, 2006.

2. Hlengiwe Mhlaba's birthday celebration at Pietermaritzburg, on June 07, 2009.
3. Live CD recording of 'Songs and Psalms' at KwaMashu Christian Centre on June 21, 2009.
4. Gospel IZiko Conference at Emperor's Palace in Johannesburg on August 04 and 5 2009.
5. Sunday church service at High Praise Centre Church, Volsloorus, Johannesburg on August 06, 2009.
6. Sunday church service at The Apostolic Faith Mission church at ESikhawini, EMpangeni on September 20, 2009.
7. Sunday church service at EThekwini Community Church at Albert Park, Durban on March 28, 2010.
8. Sunday church service at Christian Worship Center at Newlands, on July 15, 2012.
9. Praise and Worship Workshop at EDwaleni Christian Fellowship Centre, Durban, on September 18, 2012.
10. S'fiso Ncwane 'live' DVD recording concert at Durban Inkosi Albert Luthuli International Convention Centre on November 03, 2012.
11. SABC Crown Gospel Awards 2012 at Durban International Convention Centre on November 18, 2012.
12. 'Apostolic Kingdom Mandate' church service at Life Bible Church International, at YMCA Sports Centre, Pietermaritzburg, on December 02, 2012.
13. CD launch of S'bongiseni Msimang, at Hilton Hotel in Durban, on May 14, 2013.
14. Sunday church service at Covenant Fellowship Church International at Olive Convention Centre, on October 6, 2013.
15. Abahlabeleli baseWeseli's rehearsal in Durban on October 27, 2013.
16. 'Joyous Celebration 18' Live Recording set-up at City Hill Church, Hillcrest on December 20, 2013.
17. New Year crossover service at EThekwini Community Church, 181 Anton Lembede Street, on December 31, 2013.

In addition to the above-mentioned research tools, I further reviewed and analyzed audio-visual products of various Gospel artists. These products include CDs, DVDs, and sleeve notes of various recordings. These are listed in the Discography section under References. I further analyzed articles and

information obtained from various sources such as internet, newspapers, magazines, TV and radio.

Chapter 3

Christianity and Gospel music

Introduction

In this chapter I investigate how and why Christianity interacts with popular Gospel music, and further how this interaction influences the culture of Gospel music in the context of post-apartheid South Africa. In conducting this investigation, I look closely into activities of Christian churches that involve popular Gospel music. In chapter one, I suggested that Christian churches are responsible for teaching and promoting certain Christian values that ultimately get accepted as standard guiding principles and characteristics of Gospel music. I further suggested that members of the Christian community, i.e. Christians, are generally considered to be the primary consumers of Gospel music. Consequently, the music industry targets Christian churches as readily available platforms for promoting Gospel music.

'Christianity' refers to the religion of the Christian community, with particular doctrines and practices which form part of the Christian culture, which I will discuss shortly. For the purposes of this study, I use the terms 'Christian church(es)', 'Christianity', 'Christian religion' and 'Christian culture' interchangeably as referring to contextually interconnected aspects of the Christian discourse. The term 'denomination' refers to a particular group or form of Christianity, while the terms 'assembly' and 'local church' refer to a particular

congregation or a local Christian organization.

Although Biblical history points the 'official' formation of Christianity to a simple gathering of the followers of Jesus in Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts 2 in the Bible, Christianity has grown to be complex and diverse, and according to Linda Woodhead "is the largest of the world's religions, and the most extensive across the globe" (2004: 206). In the South African context, David Chidester, Judy Tobler and Darrel Wratten paint a similar picture, in that "by any reckoning, Christianity provides the basic religious frame of reference for the majority of South Africans" (1997: 2). Pointing at the development of Christianity over time and space, Woodhead states that "Christianity has grown to be a religion of immense diversity. Different periods, contexts, circumstances, groups and individuals activate different resources from the Christian reservoir" (2004: 206-207). Christianity includes diverse groups such as Zionists, Pentecostal Charismatic, Roman Catholic, Methodists, Dutch Reformed, Anglican, and many others. Allan Johnson and David Webber state that these various groups and Christian diversities emanate from different circumstances under which various Christians interact with Christianity. They say that:

The scope of the church is world-wide and brings all people irrespective of their ethnic, racial, social, sexual identities equally into the one body of Christ. Its organization and leadership varies from congregation to congregation according to needs, threats, and cultural backgrounds (1989: 348).

Although Johnson and Webber herein acknowledge the unity of the Christian faith, they also point to its diversity, which they attribute to geographic, social, time-related, and other such elements that eventually determine how different people react to, relate with, and make meaning of Christianity. It is such reaction, relation and meaning-making that give birth to, and define specific diversity groups within Christianity. As hinted in chapter two, the discussion of Christian churches in the context of this study is limited to those churches that have been selected as part of the research sample. These are the churches (see figure 2.9)

that are linked to Gospel artists that are primary respondents of this study and/or have Gospel music activities. I do, however make reference to other churches as well, where applicable and relevant.

I have found it rather difficult to clearly categorize these churches. Nonetheless, my research into various kinds of Christian denominations suggests that all these sampled churches fall generally within Pentecostal and Charismatic groups. Scholars such as Daniel Albrecht (1999), Birgit Meyer (2004) and Paul Gifford (1998) regard Pentecostal and Charismatic churches as interlinked formations. Albrecht, for example, says that he uses “the term ‘Pentecostal/Charismatic’ synonymously with Pentecostal, [understanding the] classical Pentecostal movement rooted in the turn of the twentieth-century revival and the neo-Pentecostal or Charismatic movement of the second half of the century to be two ‘waves’ within one larger movement” (1999: 7). These scholars particularly distinguish between African Independent Churches (AICs) and Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs). Birgit Meyer however starts by highlighting a common ground between the two groups, and points at characteristics that I found prevalent in all the sampled churches of the current study. She says, “More in general, quite similar to AICs, PCCs stress the importance of the Holy Spirit above biblical doctrines and provide room for prophetism, dreams and visions, speaking in tongues, prayer healing, and deliverance from evil spirits” (2004: 452).

However, in mapping the PCCs’ boundaries, Meyer describes PCCs as churches that “appear to derive their mass appeal, at least partly from propagating a complete break with the past” (448). By ‘the past’, Meyer refers to “mainline churches and African Independent churches” (ibid). Almost all these sampled churches have been in existence for less than 30 years, and have a clear history of origins from another church, which is its ‘past’. This is in accord with Meyer’s assertion that locates the “popularity of new PCCs from the 1970s onward” (451). Although some of these churches, such as the Apostolic Faith Mission (AFM) at

eMpangeni, Assemblies of God (AoG) in Mamelodi and Standerton fall under denominations that have been in existence for more than 30 years, however, the particular local assemblies sampled have been in existence for less than 30 years.

Another common feature among these sampled churches, is what Meyer summarizes as a “distinct form, in terms of scale, organization, theology and religious practice” (453). Except for the AFM and AoG assemblies, all the sampled churches have a common organizational form, in the sense that they all have at least one main assembly, with some having branches or satellite assemblies. EThekweni Community Church in Durban for example, has branches in the surrounding townships and others as far as Pietermaritzburg, Paulpietersburg, Kokstad and Melmoth. However, as is the case with all the other sampled churches, all the satellite assemblies report to the main assembly. The case of the AFM and the two AoG assemblies is different only because these assemblies fall within a national network of other numerous assemblies within the mother church. However, as Pastor Collen Shenge of the AFM in Empangeni says, “The AFM allows local assemblies to be independent to the point of using a distinct name, but still operating under the AFM” (Shenge interview, 2009). Consequently, his particular assembly is called Tehillah Christian Centre. Another common organizational form in all the sampled churches is that all their leaders or pastors are founders and are at the top of the organograms of their respective assemblies, unlike, for example in the Catholic church where a local priest is delegated periodically to a particular parish, and accounts to a bishop, who in turns accounts to a diocese, and so forth. Meyer expounds on what she refers to as ‘theology and religious practice’ of the PCCs, and says that “what is distinctly new about the PCCs, is their propagation of the Prosperity Gospel” (453). Such prosperity refers to material and financial prosperity, a subject on which I elaborate further in the following subsection.

The Christian culture and popular Gospel music

I would like to condense the features that are common amongst sampled, and other related Christian churches, into what I refer to as the 'Christian culture' or more specifically the culture of Pentecostal Charismatic churches, the PCCs. Although there may arguably be other elements that characterize PCCs, I would like to focus on those that are relevant to the current study. This relevance is based on the connection that these elements or features make between Christianity and popular Gospel music. In mapping this Christian culture, I would like to narrate a conversation I overheard between a pastor-friend of mine, Bishop Matthews (not his real name), and Bakhe, a renowned, multi-award winning Gospel artist. Bakhe was apparently proposing to come and sing in the conference that Bishop Matthew's church was hosting, occurring over a particular weekend. Bakhe was suggesting coming on a Saturday to attend and sing in the evening service, and stay for the Sunday morning service as well. Being a recorded artist, Bakhe was going to bring 500 copies of his CDs to sell in church during his visit. Bishop Matthews raised a few concerns. Firstly, he was apprehensive because he said that his church has rather a small crowd. Secondly, he stated that selling CDs was going to jeopardize the expected financial gains of the church, in the sense that some congregants would buy CDs with the money that they could otherwise have given to the church.

In mitigating his concerns, Bishop Matthews then suggested two solutions. Firstly, he suggested that they, through his connections, partner with a local Christian community radio station and stage a concert on Friday night and feature other popular Gospel artists as well. In doing so, the radio station was going to avail airtime to publicize not only the concert, but the church conference as well and consequently bring a larger crowd to the party. Secondly, Bishop Matthews suggested that Bakhe rather come on a Wednesday instead of a Saturday, so that he (Bakhe) will rehearse his music with the music team from the Bishop's church. Some of Bakhe's songs were already popularly used in the Bishop's church. Coming on a Wednesday would also allow the Bishop to

connect Bakhe with other pastors who have bigger congregations and who lead what he referred to as “musical churches”. This connection would allow Bakhe to go and sing in these church services occurring at different times between Thursday and Sunday night. Co-incidentally, one of the pastors was also hosting a worship night in his church on the Saturday of that weekend. While mentioning pastors that he could connect Bakhe with, Bishop Matthews abruptly revoked one pastor from the list of possible churches to visit. This was because this pastor was seemingly “difficult to work with”. According to Bishop Matthews, his proposal to Bakhe was a win-win situation for three parties involved: himself, Bakhe and other the pastors. He (the Bishop) would benefit because he would have a bigger crowd in his convention, plus a performance by a renowned Gospel artist. Bakhe was going to have various platforms to perform on, possibly to larger audiences, and to market his music. This was going to increase his chances of selling and possibly clearing his stock of 500 CDs. Thirdly, the other pastors who are Bishop Matthews’ connections, especially the one who was hosting a worship night, were also going to have a renowned artist singing in their churches. This, according to Bishop Matthews, “is good for the church”.

With the current research study within the radar, I engaged Bishop Matthews after his conversation with Bakhe. Firstly, I asked him what he meant when he said that Bakhe’s singing in the churches was “good for the churches”. He supported his statement, premising it on the fact that people have a psychological need of association. He stated that people would love to be associated with a church that hosts an artist of Bakhe’s caliber, and that this would boost the “profile of the church”, and yield positive implications on the church population. Secondly, I asked him to explain the basis of a “difficult to work with” pastor that he eliminated from the list of possible hosts. To this, Bishop Matthews said that this pastor is fastidious and particular about the people and singers that he allows platform in his church. This, according to the Bishop, is because of his generally choosy and self-opinionated nature, which also manifests in “strange theological views, doctrines and the way of doing

things in his church”. Moreover, Bishop Matthews says that this pastor is staunchly inclined to the “old kind of Gospel music”. This, according to Bishop Matthews “is the reason why this pastor has strange style of music and poor sound system which they use in their church”. The Bishop attributes the latter to the fact that although this church has a big congregation and supposedly a good cash flow, this pastor however believes that there are rather “more important things to be done with money in church, other than buying a good sound system”.

This conversation reveals various elements that characterize this Christian culture. It further highlights a number of issues that link Christian church music and Gospel music, and explains various reasons and purposes for which churches use Gospel music. In consideration of this conversation, I would like to suggest four elements that characterize what I refer to as the Christian culture, and that are relevant to the discussion of popular Gospel music. These elements are: 1) Christian themes, 2) Christianity and proselytism, 3) Christianity and commerce, and 4) Christianity and music.

Christian themes

By Christian themes, I refer to various interlinked subjects of the Christian faith. These themes refer to theories, subjects and teachings that inform the Christian religion. Christianity draws its basis from the Bible. One common feature among all Christian churches is that they use and recognize the Bible as (containing) the blueprint of Christianity. Millard Erickson says that “the Bible is the constitution of the Christian faith: it specifies what is to be believed and what is to be done” (1992: 18). Linda Woodhead concurs and says that “all forms of Christianity accept the authority of the Bible” (2004: 207). Alan Johnson and Robert Webber echo similar sentiments, saying that “the universal church acknowledges the Scripture of the Old and New Testaments to be the unique source of theological knowledge for Christians” (1989: 17). The common usage of the Bible results in a common dialect amongst Christian groups, dominated by common words, such

as noted by George Crawford who mentions words such as “‘Jesus’, ‘God’, ‘Hallelujah’, ‘Glory’, ‘Amen’” (1929: 45).

The common usage of the Bible does not however mean that all Christian churches share similar doctrines. Laura Copier, Jaap Kooijman and Caroline Vander Stichele say that “the different ways in which the Bible is engaged in popular culture also raises the issue of its interpretation” (2010: 192). The interpretation of this very one Bible “may mean different things in different types of Christianity” (Woodhead, 2004: 207), and may culminate in many varied doctrines, procedures and systems. Woodhead further says that “like Christianity itself, the Bible is not simple or unitary” (ibid). This therefore suggests that although there is one Bible, different Christians interact with it in different ways, and consequently interpret it differently. However, what I refer to as Christian themes are common subjects that Christians foster, although sometimes using different methods and doctrines.

Christian churches generally teach and promote similar principles of Christianity and have inter-related psycho-social, spiritual and religious programs and activities. Writing about some of the common factors that inform the Christian themes, Alan Johnson and Robert Webber say that:

Some of the marks of this community are its inseparable connection with Jesus, its holy character as those called out of the world, its expression of Christ-like love for fellow believers, its unity, its attention to Christ’s words, its missionary commission, its other-serving view of leadership, its universal ethnic and social composition, and its future pointing to God’s future kingdom manifestation (1989: 335).

Christian churches generally encourage good morals and behavioral standards, with a hope of a peaceful after-death life in heaven. Christopher Partridge says that Christianity as a religion seeks to provide “purpose in life, hope in the shadow of death, and meaning in the face of suffering and injustice” (2009: 499-500). This is informed by Christian theology, which according to John de Gruchy and Charles Villa-Vicencio “has to do with our attempts to speak about God or to

explain what we mean by God” (1994: 4). Nathan Corbitt states that “Theology [...] is a statement of doctrinal beliefs” (1998: 176). He mentions “God, sin and redemption” (ibid) as common themes within Christianity. De Gruchy and Villa-Vicencio argue that these Christian themes entail “theological interpretations of the life, death and the resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth” (1994: 9). In summary, as Johnson and Webber put it, Christianity is a product of “the Christ event” (1989: 325). By ‘the Christ event’, they refer to the life story of Jesus Christ as recorded in the four Gospels of the New Testament and the first chapter of the book of Acts in the Bible. All these many different themes are subjects of a Christian discourse and are shared among Christians, although sometimes with varied emphases.

I have argued in chapter one that Gospel text is one of the defining characteristics of popular Gospel music. The relevance and the importance of the Christian themes to the current study is therefore in the sense that they are the primary source of the lyrical content of Gospel music, which I referred to as the Gospel text. Gospel artists sing about a wide range of subjects connected to various Christian themes. These include praising God, sharing one’s faith, encouraging others, asking divine intervention, testifying about a particular achievement, relating a direct Bible story, and many other subjects. In chapter 5, I will examine particular examples of lyrics of Gospel songs.

Christianity and proselytism

The second common element characterizing the Christian culture, is that Christianity is a proselytizing religion. Proselytism is an act of attempting to convert someone into your religion or belief. Charles Barrett accounts for Christian churches’ culture and interest “in enlisting new recruits for their cause” (1980: 2). As a proselytizing community, Christians use evangelism as a means by which they attempt to convert non-Christians into Christianity. According to Michael Green, the word evangelism comes from the word “*euaggelizesthai*” meaning “to ‘tell good news’” (1993: 56). This good news is “nothing less than

God's awaited salvation, proclaimed by the Messiah himself" (1993: 57). Green further points to this good news as "the gospel" (ibid), which is the message that Christians share with, or to the non-Christian, with the intention and the hope to win them to Christianity. According to Green, Christian churches should evangelize because firstly, it is "the command of Jesus" (1993: 17), generally known as the "Great Commission" (Arias and Johnson, 1992: 11), secondly it is "the responsibility of the church" (Green, 1993: 19), and thirdly, it is "the need of the people without Jesus" (21).

Proselytism as an element of the Christian culture is directly linked to the culture of Gospel music. My fieldwork reveals that many respondents of this study argue and suggest that one of the underlying principles of Gospel music is that it seeks to fulfill the Christian requirement to spread the Gospel. These informants regard Gospel music as another mode of evangelism. Pastor Vusi Dube attributes this link of Gospel music to evangelism to the fact that "Christian churches and Gospel music share the same audience, but use different vehicles to transport the message" (Dube, V. interview, 2012). Solly Mahlangu points to an overlap between himself as a Gospel music artist and himself as a pastor. He says:

Solly Mahlangu is not an artist, in a secular meaning of an artist. But Solly Mahlangu is first and foremost a Gospel messenger. I am a pastor and a preacher. [...] The goal of my music is to influence people positively (Mahlangu interview, 2013).

I want to argue that the said positive influence is equivalent to 'conversion', in Christian terms. Almost all my respondents hint at a Gospel message encapsulated in Gospel music, and further regard their music as means of taking this Gospel to the people. This phenomenon is directly effected into Gospel music by the Christian culture.

Christianity and commerce

The third common element among Christian churches is that they all collect money from their members, in one way or the other. Wyatt Tee Walker says that

“No single item in church life receives as much attention as money” (1990: 1). Writing about EThekweni Community Church (ECC) which is one of the most prominent ‘black’ churches in Durban, Ntokozo Mfusi, a writer for *The Mercury* newspaper, presented a full one page spread article on how money has become a driving force behind this church. She refers to members “...dressed to the hilt in designer threads and shoes, jewellery, handbags, and perfumes” (2008: 12), and comments on “...a fleet of Mercedes-Benzes, BMWs, Land Rovers and other luxury vehicles [that] fill the parking areas” (ibid). She goes on to state how the members of the church are enticed to give, and quotes the pastor saying: “...With Jesus you are a millionaire, you must believe that you have millions that you are about to turn into billions” (ibid). Birgit Meyer says that:

Many PCCs represent prosperity as a God-given blessing and resent the mainline churches for legitimizing poverty. [...] The figure of a charismatic pastor, dressed in exquisite garments and driving a posh car pinpoints that prosperity and being born-again are held to be two sides of the same coin (2004: 459).

Although Pastor V. Dube, the founder of ECC, argues that his intentions are purely based on winning souls into the kingdom of God, his teachings on money have been criticized as being driven by commercial intentions more than anything else. The general 21st-century advancement of social life and particularly the dawn of the democratic era in South Africa seem to have impacted indelibly on religion, as part of the broader ‘popular culture’. One of the common results of this shift is how some Christian churches have become more commercially oriented than religiously focused. Ntokozo Mfusi alludes to this and she explicitly says that “Christian churches have become money-making schemes and part of the economic system of this country” (2008: 12). A number of my respondents allude to the point that some churches would do anything in order to recruit more members, in the hope that the more people that attend their churches, the more money they will collect. In the words of Pastor H. Luthuli, “It is purely a business transaction more than anything else” (Luthuli interview, 2011). Other scholars and members of the Christian community defend offering as a Biblical principle and as a Christian prerequisite. V.Z. Azariah explains the

Biblical basis of giving, basing it on Jesus Christ's words in Matthew 22 verse 21, which says: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (1956: 49). Based on these words, he then suggests three positions from which the concept of giving or offering must be viewed. These positions are: "God the owner of all; God the giver of all; God the Redeemer of all" (ibid). From this viewpoint, and based on Jesus Christ's statement, Azariah therefore suggests that giving is basically returning to God what is His. Azariah further explains types of offering presented in the Bible, and he mentions 1) a tenth or tithe of one's produce, 2) firstlings and first fruits, and 3) freewill offerings. Birgit Meyer's perception of the subject of money in church is summarized as follows:

PCCs owe at least part of their wealth to the fact that they successfully oblige members to pay tithes (10% of their income). To help believers advance, some PCCs offer a small loan to the needy members, which should enable them to engage in trade and become financially independent – an aim desirable not only to the person in question but also to the church, as it eventually yields higher donations (2004: 459).

The discussion involving money ties directly with this study's focus on 'commerce' as an aspect of the Christian culture. Its relevance is in analyzing the motives behind the activities of Christian churches regarding Gospel music. This analysis further investigates a possible thin line between the Biblical and commercial motivations behind the said activities involving Gospel music in churches.

Christianity and music

The final element that I found common to all Christian churches, in all their diversity, is that they all use music. Although music is an integral part of the Christian culture, I however want to discuss it under a separate heading in this chapter, due to its magnitude and pivotal relevance to this study.

Christianity and Music

Douglas Davies states that “irrespective of their theology, churches have used musical forms to chant portions of scripture, to sing old and new hymns, and to be the medium for all sorts of services from the earliest days of the faith” (1994: 43). Studying music’s mission in church, Nathan Corbitt suggests that:

Without question, music has played and will continue to play a significant role in the life of the church. Rich in tradition and founded in biblical examples, we sing and play songs of praise within the sanctuary of public worship. Music is essential in the total life of Christians and Christian communities around the world. Christianity is a singing and musical faith (1998: 17-18).

Monique Ingalls chronicles some of the purposes for which churches use music, and mentions “serving as potent tool for proselytism, encouraging dynamic worship, and resourcing the construction of a distinctive local, regional, and national Christian identities” (2010: 9). Discussing the use of music by Christian churches, Don Cusic says that “one of the most powerful musical trends in both Gospel and Christian music was praise and worship – music in church for the church. It is a music sung to God by believers” (2002: 383). Emphasizing the value of music in church worship, Segler quotes Martin Luther King Jr. who said that:

Music is a fair and lovely gift of God which has often wakened and moved me to the joy of preaching. ... Music is a gift of God. [...] Next after theology I give to music the highest place and the honor. I would not exchange what little I know of music for something great. Experience proves that next to the Word of God only music deserves to be extolled as the mistress and governess of the feelings of the human heart. We know that to the devil music is distasteful and sufferable. My heart bubbles up and overflow in response to music, which has so often refreshed me and delivered me from dire plagues (1967: 95).

Segler categorizes the roles of music in church worship in three ways:

- a) Music points to the aim or spirit of worship. It is not an end in itself, but should encourage spirit of reverence in worship.
- b) Second, music serves as an aid to worship, recalling fundamental truths and sharing experiences of the writers and sharing these experiences with others.

- c) Music may also be an act of worship. For example, when the voice is lifted in praise, the music produced is actually an act of worship (1967: 99).

Worship is one of the common functions of music in Christian churches, and is practised in diverse ways. This study confirms that the meaning and understanding of worship is also varied within Christian churches. In most Christian churches that I visited, and to most Christians that I interviewed, singing is referred to as 'worship'. Generally, the term 'praise and worship' is used to refer to music. 'Praise' is often regarded as fast, joyful music, whereas 'worship' is used to refer to slow songs. Be that as it may, Christian churches preserve forms of music from one generation to the next through oral practice. Generations learn and practice particular styles of music from a preceding generation, and they also pass them on to the next generation. Inevitably, due to changing times and cultural evolution, these styles of worship also change with time. Robert Webber says that:

Forms [of music] must be contextualized to meet the cultural situation of each worshipping congregation, but contemporary worship should not be drastically out of step with the worship heritage handed down by generations of Christians guided by the Holy Spirit (1989: 11).

Over and above the function of worship, music is viewed as having other roles that it plays in the Christian faith. Elaborating on the roles, Nathan Corbitt suggests that:

[Music] plays a priestly role, carrying spiritual movement from within our hearts outward to physical expression. [...] At other times, music is a proclaimer, heralding the good news in melodious tidings. [...] Yet underutilized and waiting for recognition are other valuable functions of education, healing, prophetic utterance, and more (1998: 17).

Thomas Davidson has suggests other functions of church music and music in church, such as "theological, psychological and educational" (1952: 1). This suggests that beyond the generally accepted theological or spiritual uses, there are other functions of music in church as well, namely "psychological and

educational” (2). Benjamin Dube states that:

Human beings are intellectuals. Their intellectual capacity is limited to the resources at their disposal. Sometimes just talking to them is not enough. In order carry the message across, we have to use other mediums as well. Music is undisputedly one of those mediums (Dube, B. interview, 01 November 2009).

In line with Benjamin Dube, Nathan Corbitt attests that music is used as a medium to carry Christian messages across. He says:

Music serves as a channel in which a message is carried from a sender to a receiver. [...] Meaning is communicated in music through linguistic, music, movement, performer, and instrument channels, [...] much like a dialogue (1998: 118).

Music in Christian churches therefore plays various roles. As pointed to by the scholars I have quoted above, the primary function of music in Christian churches is (generally accepted and expected to be) religious or spiritual. However, other scholars such as Joseph N. Ashton suggests ‘other’ purposes for which music is used in Christian churches. Without going into particular descriptive details of how churches use music, I want to discuss three of Ashton’s general points in this regard. Although his writing relates to an earlier period, I find his theories to juxtapose with some of the findings of my fieldwork.

In the first instance, Ashton suggests that church music can be used as a mere “traditional routine” (1943: 1). Elaborating on this, he states that:

Church music is accounted a conventional interpolation, something considered necessary in a certain sequence and proportion in each service. This conception derives either from long tradition the roots of which are dead, or from recent custom which has come from innovations made from time to time, more or less casually, without thought of a sound and consistent practice (ibid).

Inevitably, unless consistently revived, when something is done repeatedly over a long time, the essence and purpose thereof fades away with time. Ashton’s argument here is that some of the music that is used in churches is purely a matter of routine and is used as “padding to fill up time in what is designated as

‘the opening exercises’” (2). He says that “for such, the first part of the service - the part in which music has its chief place - is a preliminary section, not one in which music is employed directly and profoundly for religious purpose” (ibid).

In almost all the church services that I attended as part of my fieldwork, music or ‘praise and worship’, as popularly referred to, is the first part of the service. The duration of this session varies between twenty and forty-five minutes, whereby a wide repertoire of songs is presented, one song after another. In most churches one person, the praise and worship leader, is the one responsible for directing this session, in terms of starting the songs and ensuring that not only the fellow members of the praise and worship team, but also the whole church is participating in praise and worship. I have encountered a rather surprising, yet common trend that occurs when the program director ascends the stage, after the praise and worship session. When, for example, I was attending the service at Apostolic Faith Mission at ESikhawini, the opening remarks of Mr. Mthombeni the program director were: “Before we start with our program, let’s pray”. These are more or less similar words to those said by Pastor Mjaji at EThekwini Community Church when taking over the program: “Let’s open this service in prayer”. Both these statements instigate questions such as: ‘If we are only starting the service or the program now, what have we been doing for the past half an hour or so?’ In the words of Ashton, we were just engaging in ‘a padding and a time-killing’ exercise. I have however encountered churches that use music purposefully as an integral part of their service. Churches such as High Praise Centre in Vosloorus, Christian Worship Centre in Newlands and Covenant Fellowship International in Durban, have well-organized music teams that sing rehearsed and well-presented music which is anything but ‘time-killing exercise’.

Secondly, Ashton suggests that some churches use music “to effect a general emotional warming up” (1943: 2). I did encounter in most Christian churches that I attended, that music is used to stimulate emotions of congregants. This is frequently related to the sermon, in the sense that intense music that evokes

emotions is sung just before the sermon. At the Apostolic Faith Mission in ESikhawini, Njabulo Mbatha, the praise and worship lead singer implored the church members to “close your eyes and bring your heart closer to God, as we are about to hear His Word” (2009). The accompanying music during this time evokes emotions, and is sometimes melancholic. In some instances, during the sermon, the keyboard player accompanies the preaching using ‘strings’ sounds. At Covenant Fellowship Church International, Apostle Dlomo requested the church choir to sing a song *Ngiza Nginje*, (I come as I am) as he was calling people to the altar after his sermon. The singing of this song helps to evoke emotions that lead someone to go to the altar and ‘surrender themselves to the Lord’. These are some of the examples of emotional warming up that Ashton refers to.

In the third instance, Joseph Ashton suggests that music in Christian churches can be used as an advertising tool to attract masses to church. He unpacks this use of music “as belonging rather more to the field of church advertising than strictly to that of religious worship” (1934: 3). He continues to say that:

To attract attendance, special musical programs are arranged, more or less popular and sometimes even of semi-secular character, intended to ‘brighten’ the services and to please the assembled auditors. Such music is likely to have little religious relevancy and to give to the church the character of a place of entertainment or a concert hall. Some of those employing church music as an attraction rather than as a means of worship use it as a decoy to gather an audience, hoping that through the preaching that follows a distinctly religious appeal may be made to those who have been drawn to the church service by the prospect of pleasant music (ibid).

This study’s interest in Christian church music is its link with Gospel music. The relevance of relating the Matthews-Bakhe dialogue, and of discussing the usage of music in Christian churches is therefore to locate Gospel music within the broader field of Christian church music, including Ashton’s suggested uses. The following section seeks to link this discussion of Christianity and music with the

discussion of Gospel music in Christian churches.

Christianity and popular Gospel music

In investigating how and why Christian churches use music, the conversation between Bishop Matthews and Bakhe is useful in distinguishing between popular Gospel music and general church music. This conversation firstly establishes that these Christian churches are mass-oriented and that in their mass-orientation, they use Gospel music and Gospel musicians to attract masses and to enhance their population. As proselytizing institutions, churches use Gospel music as means of attracting non-Christians to Christianity, a phenomenon which David Basoga labels as “a dynamic way of reaching out to people using popular expressions” (2012:143). Basoga further says that “In this context, Gospel music functions as a means of communication, but not only in the context of religion; rather Christian popular music crosses sacred and secular boundaries” (2012: 144). This usage goes beyond recruiting non-Christians, but also seeks to keep and maintain the ‘already found’. Don Cusic has argued that:

Those in contemporary Christian music answer that it is imperative to use contemporary culture, and the medium of music to express a faith that is ageless and, at the same time, forever new. To make Jesus relevant ‘today’, He must be presented in a form that captures what people are hearing, seeing and experiencing. [...] He must exist in contemporary culture, [and] Gospel music puts him there (2002: 391).

Pastor Vusi Dube says that “Gospel music carries the message of the Gospel that we preach” (Dube, V. interview, 2012). According to Pastor Dube, this message is the reason why Christian churches use Gospel music. He further shares that some people who are not Christians relate better to Gospel artists than they do to pastors. As a result, he justifies using Gospel artists and Gospel music as a bait ‘to win souls to Christ’. Pastor Dube’s EThekwini Community Church is famous for being a spiritual home to many Gospel music and secular artists and celebrities such as Sgwili Zuma, Thulani Gah Ndlela and Babo. Christian churches use such Gospel artists to draw masses to their church

services, such as displayed by the posters in figure 3.1. One could mistake these posters for Gospel festivals or concerts, owing to the array of Gospel artists displayed, yet they are advertisements of church services and conferences.



Figure 3.1: Example of posters denoting the usage of Gospel artists by Christian churches (source: various Facebook pages on internet).

This usage of Gospel artists and Gospel music to draw people to church is in line with Don Cusic’s explanation of the three-fold use of Gospel music in church, which is to “proselytize the non-believer, encourage the believer, or praise God”

(2002: 391). He further clarifies this by saying that:

When the music is intended to evangelize, it is directed at non-Christians; when the music is intended to be used for praise and worship, it is directed at God; and when the music is intended for exhortation, it is directed at fellow believers (391-392).

Many people relate to Gospel music and subscribe to the conventions of its culture. Various styles and sub-genres of Gospel music would ensure that different people with different preferences and music tastes find something they relate to within the world of Gospel music. Consequently, the use of Gospel music by Christian churches is a tool for Christians to reach many people, who might not naturally relate to the conventional way of preaching, nor respond to other means of proselytism. The second thing that the Matthews-Bakhe conversation reveals is that these Christian churches use Gospel music by incorporating it as church music. Bakhe's Gospel music songs were already used in Bishop Matthew's church, as part of liturgical music. Writing about the development of church music in the US, Don Cusic notes that:

Churches increasingly used contemporary music in their services during the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s until it was difficult to find vibrant, growing churches who sang old hymns [which had] been replaced by songs from the albums of contemporary artists (2002: 383).

Analysing the use of music in two mega churches in America, Mary Hinton notes that:

Traditional black gospel music has a presence in the service, primarily during the opening praise and worship portion of the service. As people arrive at church and begin to prepare for the service, traditional black, church music is played. There is a distinct shift, however, as the formal service begins. As the choirs file in, the music shifts to contemporary gospel music. The use of contemporary gospel music during church services is not uncommon (2011: 133).

David Basoga reflects on a similar trend in Zimbabwe, and says that "popular [Gospel] music has been embraced [...] and introduced into the church service" (2012: 144). This is applicable in the South African context as well. It has been a common occurrence for me, when attending various Christian church services to

hear popular Gospel music songs being sung as part of church music. One of the questions that I addressed to Gospel artists who are pastors is “how does your music as a Gospel artist influence the music of the church you are pastoring?” (See Appendix 3.2). Artists who are also pastors, the likes of Benjamin Dube and Israel Mosehla, agree to their music being used in their churches. Benjamin Dube says:

In most cases for me, separating my responsibilities as an artist and as a pastor is a difficult task. In fact I take these as two interlinked aspects of my ministry. So, when I am in church I sing any song that comes into my spirit. Some people that are in my band as artist are musicians and ministers in our church. Therefore it comes natural also to them to use my music in church (Dube. B. interview, 2009).

For Pastor Neyi Zimu, “When I am in church I do not handle music matters, there are musicians and ministers who deal with that. However, we do not limit our music to any boundaries, we sing many songs, including Neyi Zimu’s” (Zimu interview, 2013). When I attended a church service at Covenant Fellowship Church International, most of the songs that were sung there are songs by Vuka Afrika, which is a recording ensemble from this very church. The bigger population of the singers-and-musicians-team from this church was comprised of members of Vuka Africa. At the New Year service at EThekwini Community Church, pastor Vusi Dube sang a lengthy repertoire comprised of popular Gospel music songs such as ‘UJehova Ungibiyele’ by Andile ka Majola, ‘The devil is a Liar’ by Sipho Makhabane, ‘Kwahlalwa Phansi’ by Mxolisi Mbethe, and ‘Mhlekezzi’ by Hlengiwe Mhlaba.

Sipho Makhabane points to this usage of Gospel music when accounting for his success as an artist, saying that: “Having my songs sung in churches all over the country is really fulfilling. Songs such as ‘Yek’intokozo’, ‘The devil is a liar’, and ‘Izindonga zeJericho’ are very popular in churches” (Makhabane interview, 2013). Rebecca Malope also has many of her songs sung in Christian churches. Her acknowledgements written in the sleeve of her CD, entitled *Bayos’khomba*, directed to her producer and co-writer, Sizwe Zako, suggest that some of these

songs have duly received acknowledgement. She says: “Now that our music is getting into the world’s church hymnbooks, it is the greatest achievement one can ever ask for”. There are many other popular Gospel music songs that are commonly used within Christian services and gatherings.

I want to argue that in such instances where popular Gospel music songs are sung in church, by the church people as part of the procession of the service, such usage makes such songs to be Christian church songs. This argument suggests that one song can be both a popular Gospel music song and a Christian church song, depending on how and why it is used. When Bakhe’s songs are sung by Bishop Matthew’s church, they are Christian church songs. However, when Bakhe sings them in church, they become popular Gospel song. This assertion is based on the current study’s definition of Gospel music which links it (Gospel music) to commerce, and argues that when popular Gospel artists sing songs that are already available in their own commercial recordings, such an exercise has underlying commercial aspirations, which sometimes may be intertwined with other intentions such as suggested earlier. This exercise gets more complex when such Gospel artists are members or even pastors of those churches, such as the case of Benjamin Dube, Neyi Zimu, and Vuka Afrika. Even in these instances, I argue that singing prerecorded popular Gospel songs in church by the respective recording artist is an activity that maps an overlap between Christian church music and popular Gospel music.

Thirdly, the conversation between Bishop Matthews and Bakhe suggests that different Christian churches have different preferences for, and uphold different theological and doctrinal views about, Gospel music and Gospel artists; hence the fastidious pastor who could not host Bakhe in his church. These varied preferences and doctrinal variations translate to various styles of Gospel music favored by, and used in, various Christian churches. I have argued in my Masters dissertation that Gospel music subgenres and styles correspond directly with sub-divisions of Christianity, depending on their interpretation and understanding

of related theological imperatives (see Malembe, 2006: 29-31).

Fourthly, the Matthews-Bakhe conversation points to the awareness of Christian churches about the commercial aspects of Gospel music. Moreover, this is not just a coincidental and passive awareness, but some churches deliberately exploit this commercial aspect of Gospel music for financial gains, where possible. Bishop Matthews points to financial gains that his church would benefit from Bakhe's visit, and this suggests that Christian churches may associate themselves with Gospel musicians for commercial purposes. I have innumerable experiences of churches staging Gospel concerts and hosting renowned Gospel artists as part of their fundraising strategies. Moreover, I have encountered many churches that have released Gospel albums as part of raising funds and for commercial gains.

Christianity, popular Gospel music and post-apartheid South Africa

Birgit Meyer investigates the socio-political role of Christianity in post-apartheid South Africa beyond its orthodox and generally perceived spiritual role. She says that such an investigation is part of an increasing scholarly inquiry into the socio-political role of Christian churches in society. Meyer notes that "the new PCCs of the 1990s, often emerging in conjunction with processes of democratization and liberalization, urged researchers to pose new questions about Christianity's public role" (2004: 464). An example of such questions is the one asked by Tracy Kuperus:

How do churches and religious organizations, as important elements of civil society, respond to the ongoing process of South Africa's democratization? What is their political voice, and does their public engagement help or hinder democracy's consolidation? (2011: 282).

Kuperus' research work attests to the fact that Christian churches did contribute in shaping the socio-political landscape of South Africa before the democratic era. She has noted that:

Religious institutions have played a critical role in the political changes in South

Africa during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Christian churches and interdenominational organizations, in particular, depending on the context, affirmed or condemned apartheid, and numerous Christian organizations have contributed to the process of South Africa's nation-building experience (278).

John De Gruchy draws a clear parallel between the church and political struggle in the mid 1900s, noting that some prominent politicians were actually also church leaders. He notes that "already in the 1950s, [...] black Christian leaders, such as Albert Luthuli, Z.K. Matthews, and Robert Sobukwe, threw themselves fully into the political struggle" (1986: 233). Kuperus says that during the apartheid era, religion could be used by both the oppressors in promoting apartheid, and the oppressed in resisting it. Ivor Chipkin and Annie Leatt note that:

The apartheid regime politicized Christianity in a number of ways; through the National Party's close association with the Dutch Reformed Church, through apartheid's political theology of race, and through Christian national education. Opposition to apartheid also drew heavily on Christianity. The development of liberation theology in the 1970s gave a platform to the prominence of Church leaders in the 1980s when they became politically active as the state cracked down on the leadership of civic and political organizations (2011: 40-41).

In exploring the role of Christian churches in the post-apartheid context, Birgit Meyer locates Christianity as an important tool for anti-colonial and anti-apartheid nation building, and notes that "recently, the question of PCCs' attitude towards democracy has become a new research focus" (2004: 465). She says that with this attitude, PPCs explore not only the spiritual, but also "the personal, cultural, political, social, and economic dimensions of being born again" (2004: 453). In further clarifying this multifaceted Christian role, Meyer says that "PCCs present themselves as ultimate embodiments of modernity" (459). Paul Gifford shares similar sentiments and argues that "Africa's newest Christianity, while in many ways reinforcing traditional beliefs, also serves [...] as one of Africa's best remaining ways of opting into global order" (1998: 321).

In attaining this multi-faceted goal in post-apartheid South Africa,

Churches are still active in the political arena; their political involvement, however, is far more diverse and less binary than it was during the apartheid years. Moreover, South Africa resembles many other churches in the Global South regarding the growth and the rising political influence of evangelical, Pentecostal, and independent Christianity (Kuperus 2011: 279).

Birgit Meyer has argued that Christianity has gravitated from being dominated by 'mainline' and African Independent Churches, to being dominated by Pentecostal Charismatic Churches. This tilting seems to have had an impact on the involvement of these churches in socio-political matters of post-apartheid South Africa. Tracy Kuperus contrasts the contexts in which Christian churches have been involved with socio-political issue in the two eras. She asserts that:

During the apartheid years, the political role of Christian churches was defined by whether they affirmed, condemned, or tried to offer a neutral position vis-à-vis the apartheid state. South Africa churches today interact with a democratic state that respects religious pluralism rather than an authoritarian state that upholds Christian nationalism (283).

In noting these contexts and eras, Kuperus further contrasts the role of 'mainline' churches and AICs to that of PCCs. She makes, as an example, reference to the role of the South African Council of Churches (SACC), an inter-denominational forum that represents numerous member churches and says that:

The SACC, whose role in politics was dominant during the apartheid years, has become considerably weaker in a democratic South Africa, while the evangelical/charismatic movement, often positing a 'neutral' political position during the apartheid years, has emerged much stronger in terms of political positioning (284).

She further says that this swing yields remarkable changes in how Christianity is generally perceived in the post-apartheid era. Such changes entail:

[new] leadership patterns, the new dominance of forms of Christianity not bound to the original mission churches, the rise of neo-Pentecostal influence, the confusion of identity and purpose in the ecumenically-aligned churches, and a shifting local social imaginary (ibid).

This discussion about the involvement of Christian churches in socio-political matters, and the swing of active participation from 'mainline' and AICs in the apartheid era, to PCCs or neo-Pentecostal in the democratic era is relevant in ultimately investigating the socio-political role of Christian Churches, Christian music, and consequently popular Gospel music in post-apartheid South Africa. Benjamin Dube's involvement in a Christian church and in Gospel music, which dates back to the apartheid era, provides an illustration for this. Having been actively involved both in church and Gospel music, Dube looks in retrospect and argues that the church played an important anti-apartheid role in South Africa. He attributes the birth of freedom primarily to the 'spiritual warfare' of the church. He says that:

What gave us a breakthrough [against apartheid] was the church coming together. [...] We were congregating in stadiums, in halls [and] in different places, where everyone was saying 'Lord be merciful to South Africa, give a black man a break. We need freedom, [and] change'. And God did that, because His people [the Christians], those who are called by His name were humble and they turned from their wicked ways. The church prayed and confessed and repented on behalf of the nation (Dube, B, Interview in Benjamin Dube and Free State Praise Explosion DVD).

Such a prayer-based anti-apartheid approach is encapsulated in the song: 'Nkosi sikelel'i-Afrika', that eventually became part of the South African national anthem in the democratic era. This song is generally accepted to have been written in the late 1800s, by Enoch Mankayi Sontonga, who - considering his work as a teacher in a Methodist mission school in Nancefield, and getting married to a daughter of Rev. Mgqibisa, a minister in the African Methodist Church - was a Christian himself. The song has elements inclined with Christian music of the time, not in lyrical content only, but also in musical features that were contemporary then. These elements are noted by Michael Hawn, who describes them as a combination of "the original western hymn with specific African techniques" (2011: 418). Hawn says that 'Nkosi sikelel'i-Afrika' was "first sung in a broader public forum in 1899 at the ordination of Rev. Boweni, a Shangaan

Methodist minister” (ibid). He further notes its crossover to political arena when:

On January 8, 1912, at the first meeting of the South African Native National Congress (SANNC), the forerunner of the African National Congress, *Nkosi sikeleli-Afrika* was sung following the closing prayer. By 1925, the ANC officially adopted, [it...] as a closing anthem for its meetings (ibid).

More importantly, Hawn points at an anti-apartheid role of this song, which was used in many social contexts. He says that “for decades, black South Africans regarded ‘Nkosi sikeleli’i-Afrika’ as the unofficial national anthem of South Africa and it was sung regularly as an act of defiance against the apartheid regime in churches and at rallies and funerals” (418). The involvement of churches in the struggle against apartheid was beyond just being ‘spiritual’. Church music was an active tool in fighting the apartheid regime and to give courage to the oppressed to persevere and fight on. Some of these songs echoed beyond church pews but were heard and adopted by political activists as well. Songs such as ‘Thula Sizwe’ were common within Christian churches but became a struggle song as well. This song says:

Thula Sizwe, ungabokhala (*Be still nation, don't cry*)
uJahova wakho uzokunqobela (*Your Jehovah will conquer for you*)
Thatha nans'inkululeko (*Take this freedom*)
Inkululeko, Inkululeko! (*Freedom, freedom!*)
uJahova wakho uzokunqobela (*Your Jehovah will conquer for you*)

Some of these songs moved to and fro between Christian churches, political spheres and Gospel music. For example, ‘Somlandela’ was initially a church song. This song was however also adopted by freedom activists who altered some lyrics to fit their particular context. Noting this, H.C. Groenewald says that “by the late 1950s racial discrimination had intensified, and church songs were adapted in a much more forthright way” (2005: 129). The church version of the song is:

Somlandela, somlandel'uJesu (*We shall follow, we shall follow Jesus*)
Somlandela yonke indawo (*We shall follow him everywhere*)

Somlandela, somlandel'uJesu (*We shall follow, we shall follow Jesus*)
Lapho eya khona somlandela (*Wherever He goes we will follow him*)

When used as a struggle song, political activists would however alter the lyrics and substitute the word 'Jesus' with the name of a political figure. In their collection of struggle songs of the African National Congress (ANC), Mayibuye has recorded a political version of 'Somlandela' (track 2 in *The Spear of the Nation*) which substitutes 'Jesus' with (Chief Albert) Luthuli, one of the prominent ANC presidents. Ogbu Kalu observes a similar trend in Nigeria, where "politicians adopted Gospel songs in their campaigns either by borrowing the lyrics and changing the words or by posing as honest born-again Christians" (2010: 37). He makes an example of a song in one of the local dialects, translated: "Jesus, you have won, and whatever befalls, you will win again", and says "the politicians would replace the word 'Jesus' with the name of a politician or symbol of the political party" (ibid).

Benjamin Dube and Rebecca Malope recorded 'Somlandela' in their respective *For Every Mountain, Thank You* and *Somlandela* albums. Both these artists, having been in the music industry as recording Gospel musicians in the apartheid era, recorded numerous songs that addressed socio-political matters of the times, as prayers to God to intervene, or as messages to other South Africans to stop fighting, or as messages of comfort and hope. The following are lyrics of Malope's 'Sicel'ukuthula' (track 8 in *Rebecca Sings Gospel*) and 'Thula Afrika' (track 4 in *Umoya Wami*) and Dube's 'Khululekani' (track 1 in *All Time Favorites, Vol. 2*), which are examples of such songs:

Sicela Ukuthula (We are asking for peace)

(This is the chorus section only, verses are omitted)

Nal'ilizwe liphenduka (*Our country is turning upside down*)
Sicel'ukuthula noxol'emhlabeni (*We are pleading for peace in our land*)
Amabandla mawalamule (*Let the churches intervene*)
Saphel'isizwe, yini? (*Our nation is getting finished, why?*)

Khuzani bo! *(Somebody please intervene)*
Iminyak'emingi sibulalana *(So many years we've been killing each other)*
Kwanele bakithi, *(It is enough fellows)*
Saphel'isizwe sethu, yini na? *(Our nation is getting finished, why?)*
Khuzani bo! *(Somebody please intervene)*

I have no choice but to make this plea,
I can't live life this way
Thinking of it is breaking my heart
Sicela wen'usize *(We are asking you to help us)*

Thula South Africa

Thula South Africa *(Be peaceful South Africa)*
Thanda South Africa *(Be peaceful South Africa)*
Xola South Africa *(Forgive South Africa)*

Makube njalo lapha emhlabeni *(Let it be so here in the world)*
Senze sibe munye njengoba lish'izwi lakho *(Make us to be one as your word says)*
Thel'umoya wakho, sifake umoya wakho *(Pour out your spirit)*
Ngcwele, Ngcwele nkosi yamakhozi *(Holy, Holy King of kings)*

Peace, Peace wonderful peace
Peace, peace, marvelous peace
Peace, peace, I've got peace
Lord you reign today

Benjamin Dube – Khululekani

Uma ngikhumbul'izinhlupheko zomunt'omnyama ngigcwala usizi
(When I remember the struggles of a black man, I am filled with sorrow)
But what are we gonna do with the lack of wisdom and understanding?
Masihlanganeni *(let us unite)*, help one another to overcome
Masibambana ngezandla sizw'esimnyama sizonqoba
(If we hold one another's hand as a black nation, we will prevail)
Masibulalana sodwa sibanga amandla ubuntu buphi na?
(If we kill one another, fighting for power, where is humanity in that?)

Sizwe samakholwa *(Nation of believers)*
Khululekani *(Be free)*
Khululeka mama *(Be free, mother)*
Khululeka Baba *(Be free, father)*

Khululeka Mama (*Be free, mother*)
Khululekani (*Be free*)

In the post-apartheid era, South African Gospel artists have continued to address socio-political issues through their music. Some look in retrospect and sing about occurrences of the apartheid era, while some talk about contemporary issues. Benjamin Dube has recorded a special live album with *The Free State Praise Explosion* in commemoration of students who were gunned down by apartheid police forces on the 16th of June in 1976 in Soweto while they were protesting against the usage of Afrikaans as a language of instruction at schools. This recording featured a crew of more than twenty singers and musicians dressed in army regalia (see figure 3.2), accompanying some songs with toyi toyi dance choreography, which may be interpreted as symbolizing and identifying with the anti-apartheid struggle of the 1976 youth. The outside cover of the album also includes pictures of events from the apartheid era (see figure 3.3), which complements the theme of this project.



Figure 3.2: Snapshot of a scene from *Benjamin Dube and The Free State Praise Explosion, June 16 Commemoration*.

Giving a brief 'June 16 lecture' (track 2) during the recording, Dube says:

This month reminds us of the resolve made by South African youth of 1976, to ensure that SA becomes a country in which they and the next generation could live in peace, justice and harmony. June 16 will always remain central in the history of our country and that changed the course of struggle and the history of South Africa. It produced many young heroes and heroines and some who paid the supreme price and sacrifice and lost their lives in the process of acquiring freedom.

June 16 is a day of reflection, introspection, selflessness, discipline and sacrifice. It is a day on which we must all look back and ask ourselves 'what freedom means', and whether or not our conduct reflect a people who appreciate the meaning of freedom.

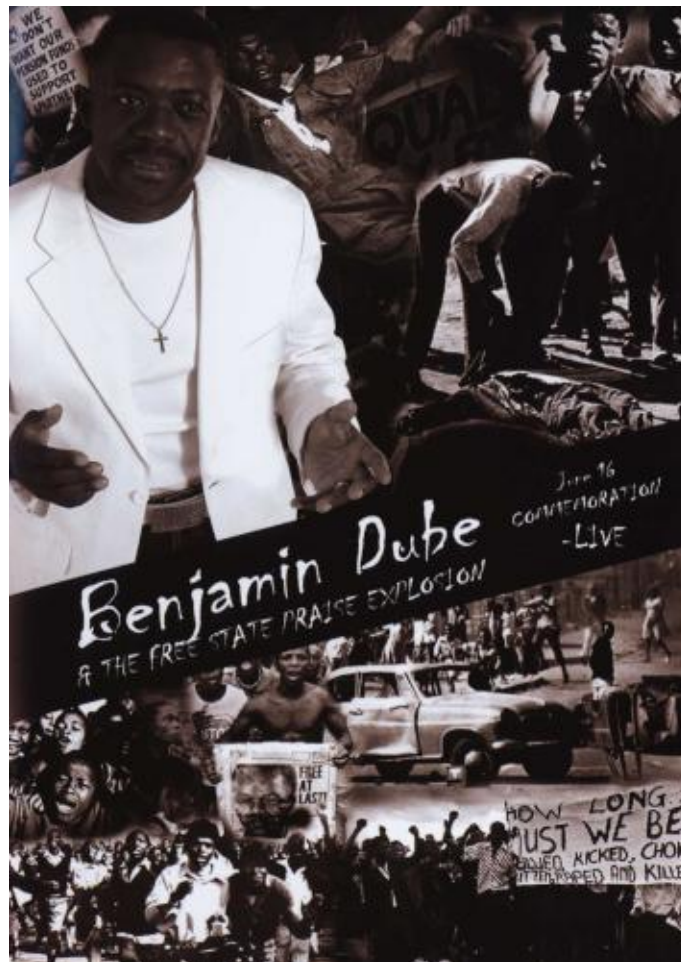


Figure 3.3: Front cover design of the *Benjamin Dube and The Free State Praise Explosion, June 16 Commemoration* DVD.

Solly Mahlangu has also referred to this historic struggle occurrence and has celebrated it through his music. During the song 'Uyamazi loJesu/Bayede/Uban'ongavuma' medley (track 3 in *Obrigado*), Mahlangu says: "Some of you were born after 1976, but some of you, you remember what we did back in 1976. But the struggle has changed, we used to chant, now we are chanting for Jesus". In this medley of up-tempo jubilant songs, he then begins to chant in a manner similar to that done in political struggles and protests, called toyitoyi, where a leader calls, shouting particular phrases in regular rhythm, and the followers respond. This is normally accompanied by a vigorous dance involving interchangeably raising knees while hopping on one leg and raising one arm with a closed fist. Mahlangu however chants with Christian phrases, saying:

Jesus Christ the savior,
Jesus Christ redeemer,
Jesus Christ Jehovah
Jehovah Jehovah Shammah
Eithaaa! Thaaa! Thaaaa!!!

Andile kaMajola has written and recorded a song 'Alive with Possibilities' (track 4 in *Chapter 3 – Live in Durban*), in which he prides himself on being a citizen of the 'rainbow nation', a term used to refer to her diversity of cultures that are united. As the title of the song suggests, he shares his perspective of a country that is 'alive with possibilities' regardless of a gloomy past. He says:

Africa yizwe lethu, siyaziqhenya ngalo
(Africa is our country, we are proud of it)
Africa yizwe loKhokho, siyaziqhenya ngalo
(Africa is our ancestor's land, we are proud of it)
Alive with possibilities
United we stand, divided we fall, it is unity in diversity
United we stand, divided we fall, [We are a] Rainbow nation!

Vuka Afrika has shared similar sentiments in their song 'Siyamukela Ngokubonga' (track 6 in *Vuka Africa*), in which they voice their appreciation of

salvation from apartheid, and further encourage Africans to seize the freedom opportunity. The song says:

Siyamukela ngokubonga insindiso yezwe lethu

(We receive with gratitude the salvation of our land)

Siyamukela ngokubonga insindiso yeAfrica.

(We receive with gratitude the salvation of Africa)

Vuka Afrika khuleka *(Africa Wake up and pray)*

Vuka Afrika shay'izandla *(Africa wake up and clap your hands)*

Vuka Afrika khonz'uJesu *(Africa praise Jesus)*

Vuka Afrika nans'insindiso *(Africa wake up; salvation is here)*

Although there are Gospel songs that are tackling socio-political subjects, I have however encountered that post-apartheid Gospel artists are generally not vocal about politics in South Africa. The above-mentioned songs are rather rare examples of socio-political Gospel songs. Solly Mahlangu's declaration that "the struggle has changed, we used to chant, now we are chanting for Jesus", may be an explanation for this paucity of Gospel songs that directly tackles political issues. This is unlike, for example, Maskandi music, where artists regularly sing songs that talk directly about political issues. IZingane Zoma, for example released a song 'Msholoji', (track 1 in *Msholoji*) in the heat of the ANC's presidential succession race after Thabo Mbeki's first term. In this song they directly object to Mbeki standing for a second term, stating that "everyone wants Zuma to be president" and further that "even Mandela said after him, Zuma would take over". Having been Thabo Mbeki's deputy president, IZingane Zoma say "whose deputy is he now going to be? Allow him to be president". My observation with Gospel music is that some Gospel artists' involvement in politics is mainly through appearances in political rallies, and association with, and endorsement of particular political parties. Such an involvement is similar to the one noted by Lovemore Togarasei in Zimbabwe, where "some Gospel musicians associate themselves with political parties, particularly the ruling party" (2007: 55). He goes on to say that "some Gospel musicians have even held their shows at the ZANU PF headquarters in Harare [...and some] performed at functions

hosted by the ruling party” (ibid). Artists such as Andile kaMajola, Sifiso Ncwane, Hlengiwe Mhlaba are regular features in the ANC’s rallies.

The involvement of post-apartheid Gospel artists in democratic nation building is mainly through socio-economic songs. Such songs tackle a wide range of issues such as poverty, sickness, unemployment and crime, and seek to either encourage those who are victims of these socio-economic ills or to rebuke those who are perpetrators thereof. However, some of these songs, although presented as encouraging and giving hope to the disadvantaged, have undertones of regression and sabotage in relation to goals aimed at socio-economically reconstructing South Africa. Dr. H.Q. Nala, one of the popular pastors in Durban publicly criticized Sifiso Ncwane’s hit song ‘Kulungile Baba’, whose overall theme is that everything is alright if it is in God’s will. In an *ISolezwe* newspaper article, Boniswa Mohale quotes Nala saying “stop singing useless songs. If you are poor and sick, then you sing ‘Kulungile Baba’! Is that the will of God? If it is not good, it is not the will of God and it is not from God” (*ISolezwe*, December 19, 2016). This critical analysis of Gospel songs links directly with one of the questions this study asks, whether, in the post-apartheid reconstruction agenda, popular Gospel music is a tool for building or destruction. I want to argue that whatever the answer to this question is, Gospel music draws its influence mainly from Christian churches. This is in the sense that whatever the role and stance of Christian churches in post-apartheid reconstruction agenda is, that is also the case with popular Gospel music. This is based on the arguments that I have presented in this chapter, analyzing the historical trends of Gospel music in relation to Christian churches, and the latter’s influence on the former in the apartheid and post-apartheid eras.

In the conclusion in chapter 7, I recapitulate and contextualize the discussions of this chapter within the topic of this study. In doing so, I outline the influences of Christianity on the culture of Gospel music, and how Christian churches have modelled the operations of the Gospel music industry. I further contextualize

these discussions within theories of postcolonialism and of popular culture.

Chapter 4

The Music Industry and Gospel music

Introduction: Exploring the concept of ‘success’

I have argued, as one of the propositions of this study, that the activities of the music industry regarding Gospel music are aimed at maximizing commercial profits. In this chapter I look closely into, and unpack, various activities that form part of the process of creating the holistic brand that music companies sell, which, amongst other facets, entails the artist and the album. The purpose of discussing these activities is to link them to commerce, and show the extent to which the music industry invests resources in order to maximize the envisaged financial returns. As a starting point, I would like to argue that all these activities of the Gospel music industry are based on a quest for some kind of ‘success’, a phenomenon which means different things to different people, and hence my usage of this term within scare quotes. This varied understanding of ‘success’ prompts John Stiernberg to issue an advice to every musician to “measure [his or her] own success on [individual] set of criteria rather than anyone else’s” (2001: 70). Bruce Haring supports this advice on the basis that:

The definition of success in music comes from within rather than by some financial measuring stick. There are people who are happy just performing on a regular night at their favorite local nightclub. There are musicians who find nothing but emptiness and despair on worldwide stadium tours (2005: 15).

Stiernberg suggests five possible motivations why people get into the music

business, which he says are to: “make a living, fulfill a dream, create a legacy, benefit other people, and for adrenalin rush” (2001: 11). He says that different people would have varied combinations of these motivations or even have possibility of a “sixth category [which includes] ‘all of the above’” (ibid). In making an example of such a motivation, he quotes one musician who said:

I’ve always wanted to do something with the music that will benefit mankind – the big audience out there. If I’m successful, I’ll make a good living along the way and be remembered as a positive influence on the world. When I hear the applause after one of my performances (or that of someone I’m supporting), I remember what it’s all about – the music (ibid).

In line with this Stiernberg’s presentation, ‘success’ therefore can be regarded as referring to the fruition of a particular motivation. Tshepo Ndzimande, speaking about the process of making a Gospel album said that:

No one embarks on a recording project with an intention to fail. Everyone imagines their album sales reaching platinum status, winning awards, featured on TV, radio and newspapers. All recording artists visualize themselves famous, touring and gigging across the country and even abroad (Ndzimande interview, 25 September 2013).

This is an acceptable generalization and a one that can be safely assumed as applying to all artists. One of the questions that I asked my respondents that are recording artists, producers and record label executives was: “How do you define a successful Gospel music artist, and what elements are necessary in order to reach that success?” (see Appendix 3.1). They offered diverse answers that however point to some quest for some kind of success that characterizes the initial stages of pre-production planning. A diplomatic response from Benjamin Dube was that “success depends on what you want. In an actual fact, to succeed is to achieve a favorable outcome of what you were planning or hoping to accomplish” (Dube interview, 2009). Dube went on to link his version of success to the three goals behind his music, which he says are “firstly to worship God; secondly, to be always in a right standing with Him by living a lifestyle that

'represent Christ'; and thirdly, to get people into the presence of God" (ibid). In emptying the general presupposition that measures success through materialism and fame, Benjamin Dube concludes by saying that "for me, once I manage to move God through my music and lifestyle and be able to move the people to where God is, then I have attained success" (ibid).

For Solly Mahlangu:

A successful Gospel artist is the one who is able to effectively carry the message of the Gospel to the people and be able to connect them with God, such that they value Him bigger than any other thing, including their material circumstances" (Mahlangu interview, 2013).

For Hopewell Ngiba (not his real name):

Success is being able to reach people through your music, and at the same time have your music paying your expenses of making it. You can reach people, but if the money that you use and the expenses that you accumulate in the process of making and marketing the album exceed the income and the revenue that the project generates, your music career will eventually collapse (Ngiba interview, 2012).

Tshepo Ndzimande indirectly links his explanation of a 'successful' Gospel artist to materialism. He says that:

Most people make a mistake of evaluating an artist's success by television and radio airplay, and media exposure. For me, success is how one is able to wisely utilize the money they get from their music. If I see an artist's life progressing, for example, from using public transport, to owning a personal car, or from renting an apartment to having their own residential property; then I can say that artist is succeeding. We have, in the past experienced some famous Gospel artists dying poor. Some of them were highly celebrated, but struggled with hospital bills. For me, I wouldn't say that such an artist was successful, although they might have been famous and celebrated (Ndzimande interview, 2013).

Describing Rebecca Malope's 'success', Muthal Naidoo points to material achievement and says that Malope:

is a celebrity and well known to South Africans. At present, she is writing her

autobiography and has filmed her life story. She owns the recording company that produces her music, and she has her own TV show. She is clearly a very successful artist and businesswoman (www.muthalnaidoo.co.za, 14 December 2013).

In the questionnaires that I distributed as part of data collection for this study, I inquired into my respondents' notion and rationale of a 'successful' Gospel artist (see Appendix 2.1). Out of the 462 questionnaires that I received back, the top ten selected artists, as shown in figure 4.1 in the order of 'success' are: Joyous Celebration, Rebecca Malope, Sfiso Ncwane, Benjamin Dube, Lusanda Spiritual Group, Winnie Mashaba, Siphso Makhabane, Solly Mahlangu, Ntokozo Mbambo and Worship House. Other selected artists include Solly Moholo, Amadodana AseWeseli, Andile ka Majola, Spirit of Praise, Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors, Hlengiwe Mhlaba and Kenny Shivambu.

Artist	Total Votes	Votes per top province
Joyous Celebration	82	31 in Gauteng
Rebecca Malope	71	44 in Mpumalanga
Sfiso Ncwane	67	45 in KwaZulu-Natal
Benjamin Dube	53	18 in Gauteng
Lusanda Spiritual Group	44	45 in Eastern Cape
Winnie Mashaba	37	38 in Limpopo
Siphso Makhabane	33	30 in Mpumalanga
Solly Mahlangu	28	15 in Gauteng
Ntokozo Mbambo	25	13 in Gauteng
Worship House	22	24 in Limpopo

Figure 4.1: Top ten 'most successful' South African Gospel artists/groups according to a survey entailing 500 questionnaires distributed evenly in KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng, Mpumalanga, Limpopo and the Eastern Cape.

I conducted a further informal survey on Facebook, exploring the concept of 'success' by asking a question: "Who would you regard as the most 'successful' SA Gospel music artist, and how do you measure that 'success'?" (see Appendix 2.3). The artists selected by my respondents in this Facebook survey are the same artists in the questionnaire survey above. Both these surveys attested to the multifaceted concept of 'success', proven by the varied manner in which

various respondents measure it. This includes: number of albums released, records sales, having ticket sales sold-out for concerts, personal wealth and material possessions, career achievements and awards, being respected in the industry and having influence and traceable impact on other artists, international visibility and personal music empires. I want to argue that all these measures are directly linked to financial or monetary value of an artist. This argument locates money, a byproduct of commerce, as the main determinant of 'success'.

Angela Beeching supports such an argument on the basis that financial success creates means to keep the music value-chain alive, a resource without which those who make music will eventually fail to do so. She positions financial profits as either a requirement for 'success' or as a yardstick of measuring 'success' in the music industry, and says:

On the one hand are the complete idealists, interested only in *artistic* success, not financial success. They don't care what they have to do to make a living as long as they have time and freedom. These people proudly wear the 'starving artist' badge, and dealing with any aspect of the business of music is viewed as 'selling out'. Unfortunately, this extreme position is difficult to maintain without a trust fund or second income.

On the other hand are those musicians who define success as having a major international career, nationwide acclaim, and the imagined appropriate financial reward for such statute (2010: 142).

John Stiernberg elaborates on Beeching's first category, and says that "Some music people are put off by the concept of profit, feeling that the idea of having something left over after working hard for the money is evil, tacky, low-life, non-artistic, anti-art, or whatever pejorative word comes to mind" (2001: 14). I explored the concept of commerce in detail while interviewing Gospel artists and I posed the question:

Commerce is generally perceived as the driving force behind the production of popular music. Is this the case with Gospel music as well, and with you as an artist? Are there any other intentions for which you produce music? (See

Appendix 3.1).

Lovemore Togarasei asks similar questions within the Zimbabwean context: “Are Gospel musicians there to make money or to spread the Gospel?” (2007: 55). Ogbu Kalu has also observed that “the growth of the Gospel music industry has raised the question about money and mass mediation of religion” (2007: 29). For Benjamin Dube, money has never been a motive behind his music. He says that:

I have been in the industry for more than thirty years, and have never had the pursuits of making money as a driving force. I was raised in a Christian family that taught me that Gospel music is a ministry. The Bible teaches us to seek God first, then all these material things that most artists uphold and run after, will just follow. Once you attain God’s kingdom, you become the pleasure of God and you no longer have to ask anything, but instead, God takes care of you (Dube, B. interview, 2009).

Benjamin Dube supports his perception of commerce by referring to his 2007 ‘In His Presence’ album. Although only this album was recorded at the time of the interview, Dube has since recorded three other similar albums with the theme ‘In His Presence’. These include ‘Worship in His Presence’, ‘Healing in His Presence’ and ‘Renewal in His Presence’, release in 2010, 2012 and 2013 respectively. These albums are all similarly recorded in a ‘live’ set-up, with an average crew of seven musicians and twelve singers. However, what is worth noting is that, contrary to the usual norm of ‘live recordings’, there is no audience in the ‘In His Presence’ productions. Benjamin Dube attributes this difference to God’s direct instruction to him, to “worship Him in seclusion, where God is the sole object of worship” (ibid). This set-up deprives Dube an opportunity to make money through gate takings and ticket sales. However, he was convinced of ‘God’s promise’ that assured him that by prioritizing God in his music, God would take care of him. This, he shared as a validation of his argument that money is not a driving force behind his music.

Don Cusic somehow explains Benjamin Dube’s perspective of music in terms of the relationship between individual Gospel artists and their music. He says:

Just as the secular music industry produces stars, so does the gospel music

industry. The essential difference is that secular stars view themselves as entertainers with music being the most important thing in his/her life while gospel music starts generally view themselves as a minister with music secondary to their own relationship with God. Their role is to convey the gospel message to those who don't believe or encourage those who do believe to keep the faith (2002: 363).

Rebecca Malope also subscribes to this hierarchy and order of importance between the artist, his/her music and the target audience. Being regarded as one of the epitomes of a 'successful' South African Gospel artist, she answers the question of 'success' by saying that:

For me, the most important thing is to heal people, change lives and to spread the message of hope and the message of God, the Gospel through my music. I get fulfilled when I get the feedback from my fans that my music made a positive change in their lives (Malope interview, 20 October 2013).

In emphasizing this point, Malope makes reference to a woman from Mpumalanga, whom she says claims to have been healed and delivered from demonic oppression through listening to her music. South African Music Rights Organization (SAMRO) website echoes a similar incident quoting people affected positively by Rebecca's music. It firstly quotes her saying that "I regard myself as His servant and that of the people" (www.samro.org.za, 03 July 2013). It further says that:

Rebecca's music indeed reaches people from all walks of life. [...] For all the glory, in the end it is the people – the ordinary working folk – of South Africa and beyond whom Rebecca touches with her incredible voice, her inspirational lyrics and her beautiful music (ibid).

This website article further quotes some youngsters from Alexandra Township, who attest that "Rebecca's songs are all about salvation. [...] The songs are nice and they really change one. It is through them that we attend church – we've been saved through her songs" (ibid). This account is one of the stories that would give Rebecca fulfillment, as she points to such instances as the main

driving force behind her music, and that money is the secondary issue. She says that:

When people buy CDs, I take it as their way of appreciating my music and the change that it brings to their lives. In any case, it costs money to record the album, so to make money out of it is not a crime, however it is not the main goal either (Malope interview, 20 October 2013).

Solly Mahlangu echoes similar sentiments. He says that:

Solly Mahlangu is not an artist, in a secular meaning of an artist. But Solly Mahlangu is first and foremost a Gospel messenger. I am a pastor and a preacher. Therefore, for me, the primary thing is to have the right message reaching people. The goal of my music is to influence people positively (Mahlangu interview, 14 September 2013).

In a similar way to Dr. Rebecca Malope's account, Solly Mahlangu relates a story of a family in the Eastern Cape. This family wanted to make a thanksgiving celebration party for their grandmother, and they asked her about her wishes for the event. According to Mahlangu, this old lady mentioned her passionate wish to meet with Solly Mahlangu in person and to have him sing for her during the party. Consequently he was flown to Eastern Cape, and met this grandmother who said to him: "Your music has touched my life immensely, I like your songs and the way you sing our church hymns" (ibid). For Mahlangu, such feedback speaks directly to his main purpose as 'the minister of the Gospel through song'. Nqubeko Mbatha also shares comparable thoughts. He says that for him, music is a gift from God, and further says that "the purpose of my gift is threefold: firstly to serve God, secondly to bless others, and thirdly to provide for me" (Mbatha interview, 2013). He further emphatically adds and says that "and this is the priority order of the purpose of my music" (ibid).

These sentiments shared by Dube, Malope, Mahlangu and Mbatha suggest that their respective involvement with Gospel music is more than just financial gains, although it does involve commerce. Booby Borg attests to this reasoning by

saying, “the truth is that most musicians get involved in the business for love of music – not for love of money” (2003: 19). Borg’s statement is ambiguous, in a similar way that I want to argue the cases of Dube, Malope, Mahlangu and Mbatha. Borg talks about ‘business’, which in one of its definitions is a process that involves, and is driven by, pursuits of money. However, he says musicians do not get in this ‘business’ for money. My argument is that if they were not in it for money, they would make music for free and not use methods that will require them to use money and require money from the recipients of their music. Paul Allen simplifies this argument and says:

Among the first things an income-earning artist must genuinely accept, is that they have chosen a career in the music business [...] Holding themselves out as commercial artists in the music business becomes an acknowledgement that songwriting, performing, and recording are going to be done with the objective of earning money (2007: 23-24).

John Stiernberg explicitly says: “unless you are independently wealthy (some are, but relatively few), the need to make money is a motivator for music people” (2001: 14). All the four aforementioned artists shy away from locating money at the apex of their reasons for being involved with music. However, they all indirectly suggest that without money, the very reasons that they mention as primary to their music involvement, would never materialize, and eventually their careers would collapse. This collapsing would be a direct opposite of ‘success’. In other words, although Solly Mahlangu wants to ‘influence people positively through his music’, this goal will not materialize if his music does not generate enough money. The same applies to the cases of Dube, Malope and Mbatha. I therefore argue in this context that for Gospel musicians, financial success is the ultimate determinant of ‘success’. Henceforth, I therefore use the term ‘success’ to refer to commercial success.

The role of commerce in the South African music industry

Artists can be argued to be the most visible role-players in the equation of

success and commerce in the music industry. However, there are numerous other participants who work behind the scenes to bring about this success. The music industry is very broad and entails numerous departments. Jonathan Shaw presents a comprehensive account of the South African music industry and its value-chain, which is outlined in figure 4.2, in which he breaks down various departments within the record industry into: marketing, artist-and-repertoire (A & R), artist development, production, finance or accounting, and international departments (2007: 207-209). Keith Negus summarizes music industry overview as follows:

All record labels, regardless of their size, identity and specific history, divide their departments or staff into the following occupations: artist-and-repertoire; marketing; public relations; publicity and press; radio and television promotions; sales; business affairs/finance and legal; manufacture and distribution; administration and secretarial (1992: 38).

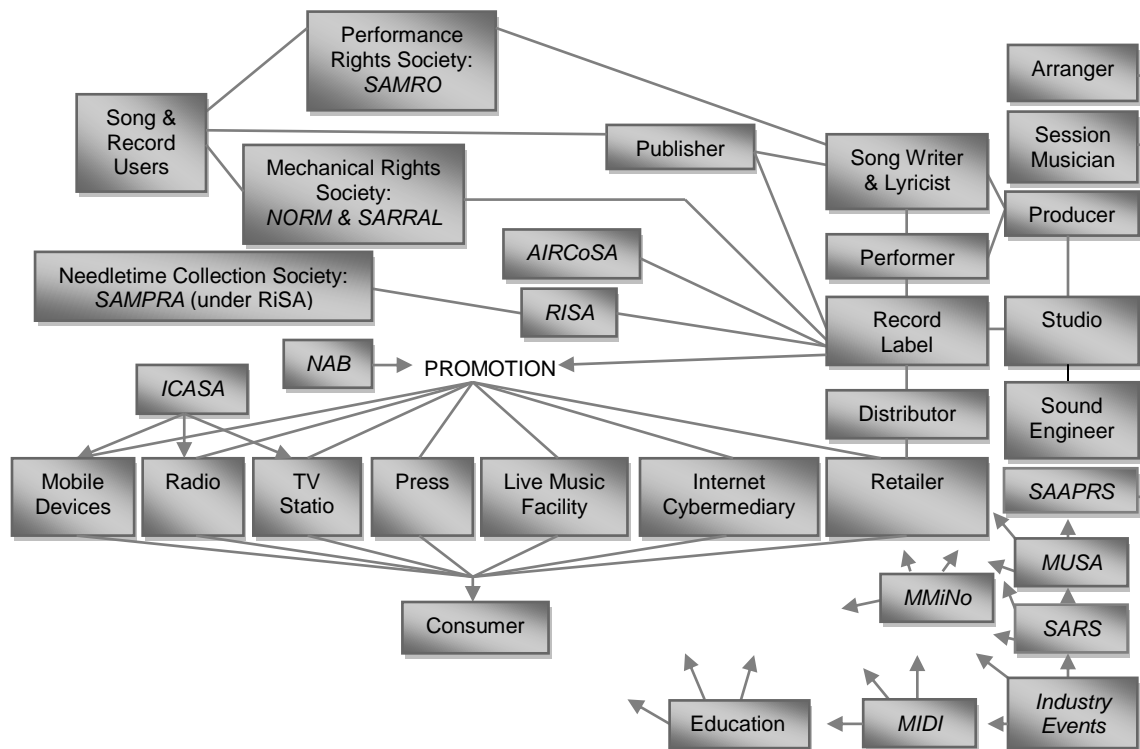


Figure 4.2: The overview of the entire South African music industry (Shaw, 2007: 24)

In the context of the current study, I have encountered that the roles of these departments and personnel are however, not fixed, but vary according to individual company scenarios, operations and magnitude. I hope to show in this chapter that in pursuit of success and maximal commercial gains, various music companies use different version of what Shaw and Negus suggest. I continually use Shaw's account as a point of reference in this, and the next chapters, in order to provide a clear location of various stakeholders within the music industry value-chain.

Financial resources of respective recording companies play an undisputable role in assisting these companies to attain the desired success and maximal commercial gains. The recording industry is arguably the core of the music industry, because of a pivotal role it plays in making available a music product which becomes a medium of operation for all other departments. I encountered that most of my respondents erroneously refer to the recording industry as the music industry, and vice versa. Shaw seems to have also encountered this error, which he duly corrects: "the music industry has been suggested to be synonymous with the recording industry [...whereas] the music industry is far larger than the recording industry" (2007: 20). James Riordan outlines the weight of the activities of record labels within the music industry, and says that "the record business is a major part of the music industry" (1998: 1). Defining the record label, Shaw says that:

Historically, the record label provided the finance to make a record. The label would then produce sound recordings and promote the recording and image of the artist. They also supervise the manufacture and distribution of records. They undertake to shape the artist's sound and image to appeal to wide or niche audience (26-27).

Recording companies vary in terms of size and operations, and are generally categorized into 'major' and 'minor' companies. These are largely distinguished on the basis of their capability to distribute their music. According to Shaw,

'major' companies "have all the departments mentioned above and own the major distributors, [whereas minors] can do everything a major can except distribute" (2007: 209). The ability to self distribute own music to retail shops and other outlets is outlined here as a line of demarcation between 'major' and 'minor' companies. In my own experience, I found out that distribution companies are skeptical to commit into selling music products that have not been tested against the market, nor to do business with companies that do not have a track record of producing sellable products. They want to know whether or not these companies do have substantial budget to market and promote, and create a demand for, their music products. However, this has not disadvantaged 'minors' completely, as there are numerous of them that are thriving. The rise of online music stores has also given 'minor' companies options of selling their music digitally, while others still sell many physical copies in churches and wherever they possibly can. Angela Beeching mentions some of the advantages of 'minor' companies and says:

Today, musicians are taking matters into their own hands and going the do-it-yourself route. Musicians who release their own recordings have some specific advantages: they control the project, artistically and financially, and keep more of the profits, eliminating the need for the middle man (2010: 90).

I want to argue that 'minor' record companies in South Africa present themselves in two categories, which I refer to as 'micro-minors' and 'macro-minors'. The difference between these two categorizations is based on resources available at the company's disposal, which translates to variations in terms of the scope and magnitude of music activities that that company will engage in. 'Micro-minors' generally do not have excessive budgets, and consequently do minimalist production that entails booking a studio, recording the album, packaging it and promoting it. The smallest form of these companies is managed, financed and run by the owner-artist, and has no offices, fulltime staff members, nor production facilities. In this instance, all required services are out-sourced from other companies. On the other hand, 'macro-minors' have operational resources which

include finances, staff and personnel and have facilities such as offices and some even recording studios. Moreover 'macro-minors' are able to stage concerts and promotional shows. In short, 'macro-minors' can operate at the level of 'major' companies, except that, as Shaw suggested, they cannot self-distribute their music, because of the skepticism of distribution companies.

A simple example to clarify this point would be the cases of two 'minor companies': Abahlabeleli Music Production and S'fiso Ncwane Music Production. These companies produced Abahlabeleli baseWeseli and S'fiso Ncwane, respectively. Figure 4.3 summarizes the differences between these companies. Both these companies are minor, because, as Shaw argues, although they can do everything that a major can do, they however cannot distribute their music themselves. Abahlabeleli baseWeseli's album is entitled *Mabakudumise* and was recorded at Dream House Music studio in Durban. The group financed the project through personal funds and financial support from their church. The album is produced by Mthunzi Xulu, the founder of the group. Abahlabeleli baseWeseli booked a studio to record and master their album. In the studio, Lindani Gumede played and programmed all the music, recorded and mastered the album. The audio master was then sent to CDT, one of the main disk manufacturers in South Africa, for disk manufacturing and packaging. Abahlabeleli baseWeseli sell the album themselves in churches and wherever where they can.

On the contrary, S'fiso Ncwane's album, *Kulungile Baba, Recorded Live at the Durban ICC* as its title suggests, was recorded live at the Durban International Convention Centre, in a concert featuring a twenty-vocals-choir, an eleven-musician-band and the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra. This album is distributed nationwide by Revolver Records. Moreover, S'fiso Ncwane engaged in a nationwide promotional tour to market his album. I was privileged to attend this recording, during which Ncwane said: "We intend to sell one million original copies of the album" (Ncwane, S., in Durban, 2012) . In addition, Ncwane even

travels abroad to countries like Nigeria, Swaziland, Botswana, and England. On the 25th and 26th of October, 2013, Ncwane organized an admission-free concert staged at Curries Fountain stadium in Durban, to thank his supporters for the success he was experiencing in the project. S’fiso Ncwane appears frequently in media such as radio, TV and newspapers. The evident difference in the production of the albums of these two artists can be linked to the financial resources available to carry out a production, and clearly displays differences between ‘micro-minors’ and ‘macro-minors’. Most of these ‘minor’ companies are owned by artists, such as in the case of these two cited examples.

	‘Micro-Minor’	‘Macro-Minor’
Example of Record label	Abahlabeleli Music	S’fiso Ncwane Productions
Artist released	Abahlabeleli baseWeseli	S’fiso Ncwane
Name of Album	Mabakudumise	Live at Durban ICC
Where recorded	Dream House Studio	Durban ICC
Musical crew	Instruments programmed by the studio engineer. Three singers doing studio vocal overdubs.	20 vocals choir, an 11 musicians band and the KZN Philharmonic Orchestra
Production Crew	-Produced by Mthunzi Xulu, -Engineered by Lindani Gumede	-Sound, Stage and lighting by Gearhouse SA, -Project Management by Ncwane Communications and Durban ICC, -Audio Recording and postproduction by Sound Rite, -Video Recording and postproduction by ClearVixSA.
Album Marketing	Locally	Nationwide and abroad
Distribution	Self boot-sale at performance and other like venues.	Nationwide by Revolver Records
Target Sales	Twenty Five Thousand	One million copies

Figure 4.3: Differences between ‘micro-minors’ and ‘macro-minors’, using the case study of S’fiso Ncwane Productions and Abahlabeleli Music record labels.

Other examples include Siphon Makhabane who owns Amanxusa Music Production, Andile ka Majola who owns Elinda Music, Kholeka Sosibo who own Kholeka Music Productions, Hlengiwe Mhlaba of Mhlaba Music Productions.

Some of these artists started their companies from scratch, but some migrated from other companies to establish their own. Various reasons cause artists to migrate to starting their own labels, and this has different outcomes for different artists. Rebecca Malope, for instance says that “Some artists start their own labels and prosper, but some fail dismally” (Malope interview, 2013). I asked her about the reasons that would make an artist leave a record company, and why she has stayed with one company for more than two decades. She says that:

If people are not satisfied and do not get enough from the company, then they are prompted to leave. Some leave because there are disputes between them and company bosses, some because they feel their albums are not deservedly promoted. However, I am happy with where I am, although because of growth, I want to explore other options. I won't die on the performance stage, I want to venture more into TV performance, and be independent (ibid).

Malope's sentiments can offer an explanation for Kholeka Sosibo's migration from Bula Music. When this exodus occurred, it was generally reported in the media that there were disputes between her and company bosses. However, she attributed her departure to growth, and said that “my leaving has nothing to do with the business, but I also want to grow. That is why I have started my own company” (*ILanga langeSonto*, 10 May 2009).

In order to show how commerce and financial resources impact upon the success of an artist and/or a recording, I want to contrast the cases of the two artists released by 'minor' companies, with that of Joyous Celebration, which is released by Sony/BMG. Although the landscape of local music companies has been constantly changing, Jonathan Shaw counts Sony/BMG as one of four major companies in South Africa, the others being: “EMI, Universal and Wagner/Electra/Atlantic (WEA), [although] Gallo Record company can also be considered one of the majors but is locally owned and distributes for WEA” (2007: 209). The production magnitude of Joyous Celebration demonstrates resources that 'major' companies invest into their artists. According to the Joyous Celebration's website:

The Joyous Celebration records a live CD and DVD during the month of December of each year. An annual tour is then put in place to cover six major cities: Johannesburg, Cape Town, Port Elizabeth, Bloemfontein and Durban and Polokwane (www.joyous.co.za, 14 November 2013).

In their past ten projects, Joyous Celebration concerts have entailed an average on-stage-crew of thirty singers, eight musicians and one conductor. These artists are generally supported by a behind-the-scenes team of at least ten people comprising project managers, publicists, sound engineers, stage and lighting technicians, hair-and-make-up and wardrobe artists. According to Nqubeko Mbatha, a former Joyous Celebration musical director and co-producers, “the pre-production process of a Joyous Celebration concert takes almost eight months” (Mbatha interview, 2013). Mbatha explains that because of the nature of the concept of Joyous Celebration, projects overlap, in a sense that while they promote one project, they record the next one. He further adds that “Joyous Celebration work is a full-time job. We invest a lot of time and effort in pre-production, and that is evident in the live performances and recordings” (ibid). Besides administration and management tasks, this process begins with auditions conducted in six cities. According to Mbatha, this is a lengthy process with a clearly outlined goal:

Joyous Celebration auditions are a lengthy process aimed at discovering singers who will be able to rise up to production standards that reflect the rich Gospel talent in South Africa. Moreover, these auditions look for artists who have the potential to become independent and successful Gospel artists after being groomed and developed in Joyous Celebration (ibid).

This is true of Joyous Celebration. In its nearly twenty years of existence, Joyous Celebration has discovered, nurtured and released a number of Gospel artists such as Swazi Dlamini, Vicky Vilakazi, Ntokozo Mbambo, Kekeletso Phoofolo, Nobathembu Mabheka, Malusi Ndimande, Xolani Mdlalose, Sechaba, Brenda Mntambo, Margaret Motsage, William Sejake, Dominion, Patrick Duncan. The effectiveness of Joyous Celebration’s mission to develop artists gave birth to a

recording label, Joyous Records, which:

Was established in 2007 to offer musicians from the bigger Joyous Celebration family the opportunity to record their solo albums. This platform has proven to be an effective 'in-house' vehicle for the vast pool of talent that is found in Joyous Celebration to launch themselves into the music industry. [...] Joyous Records is positioned as a Gospel Music powerhouse and is destined to play a big role in shaping the musical landscape not only of South Africa but of the whole world (www.joyous.co.za, 14 November 2013).

Joyous Records has released former Joyous Celebration artists such as Sabatha Masoka, Nobathembu Mabheka, Pastor Patrick Duncan and the group Dominion.

Although neither the co-founder of Joyous Celebration Lindelani Mkhize, nor the former musical director could divulge the estimated bill for a Joyous Celebration production, but considering the magnitude of the auditions, rehearsals and production, one can estimate a figure in the region of five to ten million rands, including the promotional tours. Financial returns are also evidently favourable. According to Lindelani Mkhize, "for the past four years, all Joyous Celebration concerts have always been sold out. Whether we are in Cape Town or Johannesburg, or Durban or Polokwane, it is always the same; we perform to full capacity crowd" (Mkhize interview, 2012). The CDs and DVDs of *Joyous Celebration 17, Grateful* and almost all their previous records are distributed nationwide to all major music retailers such as Musica, Look 'n Listen and Jet Music, through Sony/BMG distribution networks, and are further available digitally in most online music stores such as iTunes and Amazon. Lindelani Mkhize says, "the Joyous Celebration DVD has been amongst the national top five selling DVDs for the last five years" (ibid).

This case of Joyous Celebration is undisputedly one that epitomizes a successful South African Gospel music ensemble. This account further suggests the extent to which Sony/BMG invests in Joyous Celebration, in terms of administration, planning and production. It goes without saying that, even with a good financial sponsor, a 'minor' record label would have to work extremely hard in attaining

such level of production and success. Artists such as S'fiso Ncwane, Sipho Makhabane and Worship House are examples of South African Gospel artists that are released by 'minor' companies, but that have produced products of high aesthetic quality, and that have posed some competition for Joyous Celebration. Nevertheless, their scope of operation is still small compared to Joyous Celebration. Although CDs and DVDs of projects such as Spirit of Praise and Worship House have more or less similar production concepts, in terms of the number of musicians and singers, and stage visual presentations, they are, nevertheless still provincial projects based in Gauteng and Polokwane, respectively, unlike Joyous Celebration which tours, and is acclaimed, nationally.

The individual operations of 'minor' and 'major' companies and their cross-relationship is one of the elements that characterize the landscape of the Gospel music industry in South Africa. The significant strides made by 'minor' companies regarding Gospel music in South Africa can be attributed to the general trends in the music industry. For instance, the technological advances of the twenty-first century have brought about remarkable changes that are narrowing the gap between 'major' and 'minor' record companies. As early as 1999, Tad Lathrop and Jim Pettigrew, Jr. could note these changes:

Today's music market place is remarkably different from what it was just a short time ago. The old music industry structure is rattling under the forces of technological change, increased competition, and rapidly shifting public tastes. [...] The rule of commerce – once dictated by a handful of corporations and executives who ran them – has become infinitely more increasing (1999: 3).

Five years later, Geoffrey P. Hull elaborated on these changes, saying:

Technological advances on the production end of the process meant that recordings could sound better. Diffusion of high-quality, low-cost recording technology into the semi-professional market meant that musicians could create recordings and market them without having to have access to the capital and facilities of a major record company (2004: viii).

A number of 'minor' companies, both 'micro-minors' and 'macro-minors' have easy access to recording studios, and some even have their own recording studios, ranging from the low-end 'bedroom/garage' studios, to mid-range semi-professional studios, and to high-end professional studios. Even those companies who do not have their own recording studios, have easy access to professional studios throughout the country. Cut-'n-Edit studio in Johannesburg has recorded numerous Gospel artists such as Vuyo Mokoena, Siphon Makhabane, Andile ka Majola, Thobekile and Hlengiwe Mhlaba. A company such as Spirit Music Group has its own Spirit Studio, which is a "state-of-the-art recording facility for all local production" (www.spiritmusic.co.za, 12 July 2013). This company releases Gospel artists such as Spirit of Praise, Zaza, Tshepiso, Neyi Zimu, Omega and Benjamin Dube. Worship House, a church based Gospel choir from Limpopo, also boast a high-tech recording facility that is patched to their church auditorium, which allows them to do 'live' recordings with ease.

Keith Negus mentions various roles that 'minor' and 'major' companies have played in influencing popular music. Discussing smaller record labels, he says that "small companies, initially formed independently of major corporate capital, have undoubtedly played a role in popularizing musical styles and opening up spaces within the music industry" (1992: 18). Elsewhere, Negus further says that 'minor' companies "are more aware of and receptive of the new sounds" (1996: 42). Negus' argument states that 'major' companies are less flexible in terms of exploring new sounds and occupying new grounds. He argues that:

As these [minor] companies start finding, recording, producing and selling new types of music and as their recordings start gaining popularity and generating new audiences, so they begin to pose a threat to the market dominance and degree of control of music making enjoyed by the big corporations. This leads to a tension that is resolved by the absorption of the independents, who are co-opted via processes of amalgamation, joint venture or complete buy-out. In the process the large corporations regain or increase their share of the music market and the independents lose their autonomy and become integrated into financial, marketing and distribution networks of the major corporations (1996: 42-43).

According to Negus, these joint ventures with ‘minor’ companies, give large corporations “access to an external source of repertoire and enabled them to use small companies as ‘research and development’ divisions” (1992: 17). Michael Jones looks closely into, and analyzes the rationale behind artists joining ‘major’ companies. He says that:

The reason that musicians work with music companies is because there are certain aspects of their existence as musicians that, potentially, can be enhanced and improved by being supported by companies whose expertise lies in entering markets for symbolic goods (2012: 77).

Nqubeko Mbatha co-owns with his wife a ‘minor’ record label called Koko Records, which released Nqubeko’s debut album entitled *Forever I will Worship*. The marketing of this album was done by Lindelani Mkhize’s Lindelani Mkhize Entertainment, which is also a ‘minor’ label. The album was initially not available in retail shops, which Mbatha says is because distributors categorized it as a “non-selling material due to unpopular styles of music it contained” (Mbatha interview, 2013). However, he says that through personal sales in churches, bookshops and other such venues where he could sell the album, he managed to sell a “substantial number of copies” (ibid). Koko Record’s promotion and marketing of Mbatha’s music increased his popularity and that of his music. His second album released in 2013 is entitled *Sentiments of a Worshipper* and was recorded live at The Atterbury Theatre in Pretoria. The style of music in this second album is more or less similar to the first one. However, I argue that it is the groundwork undertaken by Koko Records in promoting Mbatha’s first album, that created enough hype to catch the attention of Universal Music which contracted his second album on a licensing deal and distributed it to all major retail shops through Universal Music distribution network. Moreover, Mbatha’s style of music (which was initially dubbed by some recording companies as a ‘non-selling material’) has gotten popular over time and according to him “gains more and more positive reception over time” (ibid).

Neyi Zimu is a Gospel musician who has released five albums to date. The first four of these albums were released with a 'minor' company, NN Music Productions which he co-owns with his wife. His debut album entitled *Excited* was released in 2001. After being featured in Benjamin Dube's *Healing in His Presence*, and later in the *Spirit of Praise* albums, Zimu landed himself a recording contract with Spirit Music, a deal that saw him release his fifth album entitled *I trust in You* in 2013, and gained him more popularity than he gained through his previous four albums.

These accounts of Mbatha and Zimu's recordings and involvement with record companies display an interplay and a familiar relationship between 'minor' and 'major' companies. This relationship attests to Negus' arguments that (sometimes) 'minor' companies play a role in popularizing musical styles and creating good competition within the music industry. In these particular instances, although the 'major' companies enhanced the careers of artists in discussion by giving them bigger platforms and exposure, they did not interfere with their original sound. This, however is not always the case. In some instances, 'major' companies alter the style of singing and even the image of artists. A Gospel artist Seputla Sebogodi points to this instance where 'major' companies maneuver artists to fit particular codes and musical styles set by these companies. Sebogodi says, "there are some companies who like to change artists to what they [companies] prefer, which is different from the way s/he [the artist] sings, behaves and is perceived" (*ISolezwe NgeSonto*, 7 December 2008).

Although there is still a gap between 'minors' and 'majors' in South Africa, there are scores of competent artists, songs and quality albums released by 'minor' companies. It is on such observations that John Stiernberg argues that "Corporate versus independent' is more about the structure, size, and scope of the business than the quality of the music or the integrity of the people involved" (2001: 27). He goes on to mention and clarify two myths and realities about 'major' and 'minor' companies. He says:

Myth 1. Big is bad – they are just after the money.

Reality: Big corporate music businesses can be just as committed to their artists and to the music as small independent music businesses. The risk is higher because the cash investment is usually more. As a result, the corporate world generally focuses on safer mainstream music versus fringe or niche music.

Myth 2. Smaller means more artist-focused and therefore better.

Reality: Small independent music businesses can be just as profit-motivated or (regrettably) insensitive to the artistic side of music as a large business. This has more to do with the experience, skill, or personality of the people involved than the size or scale of the company (ibid).

Stiernberg then concludes that: “there is no inherent connection between company size and the quality of the people of the music” (ibid).

In the context of this study, this discussion of record companies is not only aimed at displaying the broad spectrum of record companies dealing with Gospel music in South Africa, but also to show how commerce and financial resources create a gap between these companies. On one hand, this difference manifests in terms of the budgets available for productions, which translates into the magnitude of these productions in terms of how they are marketed, managed and distributed. On the other hand, these differences determine the magnitude of the chances to make more financial returns. This stance suggests that those projects or artists within ‘major’ companies would have more mileage of pursuing financial gains than those in ‘minor’ companies. Later in this chapter, I explore how these financial resources translate into particular activities that seek to bring about particular elements that the music industry regards as necessary for commercial viability of a project.

Gospel music industry and commerce

I attended a CD launch event of S’bongiseni Msimang (at Hilton Hotel on 14 May 2013) during which one radio presenter or DJ requested S’bongiseni to partner with this DJ’s radio station in their ‘Men Against Rape’ campaign, which however

did not have a financial budget. S'bongiseni gladly agreed to the partnership. However, the managing director of Seni Music Production, a 'minor' record company that released S'bongiseni's album quickly interjected and said "As much as we support such initiatives, but I'll be the bad guy who will ensure that we are not abused and exploited in the name of 'there is no budget', even in instances where there are funds". This interjection shows different standpoints between that of an artist, who is willing to perform as much as he can, and that of the company, which seeks to maximize profits through the artist and the music. In interviewing Rebecca Malope, I referred to the fact that at the early stages of her career in the late 1980s, she was singing pop and bubble gum music. I asked her about the decision to change genres into Gospel music. She said that:

Our initial demo recording was Gospel music that we recorded with our church choir, the Congregational Church in Soweto. However, when we took it to record companies, the demo was rejected because the style and genre of music was not popular then. However, they liked my singing and therefore contracted me to record bubble gum music, which was a popular genre of the time, sung by artists such as Yvonne Chaka Chaka, the late Brenda Fassie and Mercy Pakela. However, in our album we included Gospel songs. People loved these songs more than the bubble gum songs. We even sang them in the clubs. Bhut'Sizwe Zako then made a recommendation that we do a full Gospel album. We did. He wrote songs and produced it, I sang. The rest is history (Malope interview, 2013).

The SAMRO profile of Rebecca concurs with this account:

In spite of her spectacular gospel voice, there were several attempts to place Rebecca in the township pop genre for the first few years of her professional career. Songs like *Ma G-Man*, *Cheated*, and *Saturday Night* were not shabby affairs, but it was her Gospel songs that got Rebecca's fans talking about her increasingly popular live shows. So in 1990, Rebecca went back to her musical roots and became an out-and-out Gospel singer (www.samro.org.za, 03 July 2013).

This Malope's story points to the fact that the record company officials, driven by their pursuits of maximizing their financial gains through Rebecca Malope,

decided to record her singing what they regarded as the popular genre of the time. When they however realized that her Gospel songs were more accepted than her pop or bubble gum songs, they then changed her to purely Gospel. S'bongiseni Msimang and Rebecca Malope's cases point to commercial pursuits that are driving forces behind the production of Gospel music, especially from the music industry's perspective. Michael Jones explains this further, saying:

Success for a musician is not identical with success for a music company – companies must make profit and grow, these are inescapable logics of capitalism. Musicians might want to make money but they can be motivated by other considerations, not least of them achieving the acclaim of their peers and of audiences whom they feel appreciate and value the music they make and the performances they give (2012: 77).

Although artists may have mixed purposes regarding their music, however, the music industry, particularly record companies are clear on their pursuits of money. To this, Jonathan Shaw explicitly says that “the music industry is built around deriving revenue from music products” (2007: 20). He further says that “commercial music is just that, saleable for a profit. The fact remains that we are selling products and services, just like any other industry and if it is not going to sell we don't waste our time” (ibid). Robert Burnett also states that “the goal of any business is to strive for a product that maximizes profit. The music industry is no exception to this rule. When we speak of popular music, we speak of music that is commercially oriented” (1996: 35). Mark Fenster and Thomas Swiss concur in saying that “the production of a mass cultural form like popular music is similar to the production of any other mass-produced product, such as an automobile or a bar of soap” (1999: 226). Similarly, Michael Jones says that:

Music companies, as all companies, seek to produce commodities they deem appropriate towards maximum sales, and they expect these to be produced on time, on budget and in a condition that is likely to survive competition from rival and (implicitly) similar commodities (2012: 77).

All these scholars are in agreement that commerce is the key driving forces

behind the activities of the music industry. Although there are arguably ‘other’ forces, such as suggested by some of my respondents, however, I argue that all of them tie with money, in one way or the other. Lindelani Mkhize endorses the stance that suggests commerce as the key force behind music production. He says that “music is business, and there is nothing wrong about that. Musicians and everyone involved in the music make a living out of it, in the same way that anyone who works does” (Mkhize interview, 2012). Asked about her perspective on Gospel music being used as a money-spinner by Gospel artists, Zanele Mbokazi, the founder of the premier SABC Crown Gospel Awards, replied: “In business, business principles apply. Our God owns silver and gold. We want our [Gospel] artists and [the Gospel music] industry to be successful and make money” (<https://mg.co.za>, 13 March 2017). I discussed the business aspects of the record company, with Michelle Bam (not her real name) a record label executive and an artist manager for one of the prominent Gospel artists in South Africa. She says that:

Most people do not like me because they regard me as money-driven. You see, Hurley (not his real name) is a people’s person. Some people talk to him directly and ask him to come and sing in their events. Out of his good heart, Hurley agrees, without telling them the financial implications of the deal. It then becomes my task to follow-up with them and send them a quotation and all the requirements for Hurley to sing for them. I am at peace with that, because I know it is my responsibility. I am the business force behind Hurley (Bam, M. interview, 2013).

Michelle’s responsibilities seem to go beyond just booking gigs for Hurley. She states that “even with the recordings, the CDs and DVDs, it is my core responsibility to ensure that deadlines are met and that distributors and retailers have stock. I am very hands on and we do most of the work ourselves” (ibid). Hurley Bam agrees. He says that:

Michelle has made a huge difference in my music career. That difference although evident in various aspects of my career, boils down to one thing: money. I have been in the music industry as a recording artist for nearly fifteen

years now, but it was not until Michelle managed me, that I began to prosper financially. She has taught me an important aspect of my career: business (Bam, H. interview, 2013).

Tshepo Ndzimande, an A & R director at Bula Music, is explicit about his business mindedness. He says that:

Before everything else, I am a business man. Music is just a tool or a vehicle through which I do my business. Gospel music is a number one selling genre in this country. Therefore, as a business man, I make use of that business opportunity (Ndzimande interview, 25 September 2013).

He further says that “As a record company, we exploit all possible means to maximize the business” (ibid). Ndzimande attributes his A & R responsibilities to the pursuits of making money. He says that:

My duty is a tricky one because firstly I have to discover a talent with a potential to make business. Secondly, I have to convert that talent, firstly into a career for the talent owner, and secondly business for the company. Our policy is simple. Once we discover the talent and the artist agrees to sign with us, we own everything of the artist: the voice, the name and the image (ibid).

For Nqubeko Mbatha, the rationale is simple:

The bottom line is: music is my career. Yes there are other intentions and things to consider, but at the end of the day, I must make a living of what I do, in a same way that a policeman or a doctor or anyone who works does. (Mbatha interview, 2013).

Some Gospel music artists have attempted to Christianize the business aspect of a commercial recording. Pastor Nzama, the leader of the Gospel group ‘Praise Company’ says that their intention is “to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ” (Nzama interview, 2013). I then questioned him about why then use such an expensive and taxing medium as recording and packaging a CD. To this, he said that they want their product to be appealing to their target audience.

Record companies are not the only music industry stakeholders whose

operations are commerce oriented. Almost all music industry role-players pursue commercial gains with their involvement with Gospel music. Chad Adams (not her real name), the sales executive of one of the main Gospel music distribution companies says that:

Distribution is solely about money. We have no intentions of spreading the Gospel or sending some good news to the world. Ours is to get our stock sold at retail shops. You see all these boxes (pointing to a massive pile of boxes at their warehouse), are returns from retail shops because they don't sell. It costs us money to take these to various retail shops across the country, and more money to fetch them back, and even more money to keep them here. Once they are here, artists never bother to fetch them (Adams interview, 2013).

I further asked her about how they decide which artist to distribute, and she answered:

We need to know that the artist has already started marketing the album, and that they have a solid plan and means to continue doing that. Even in that case, we take their products on a consignment terms. We do not manufacture nor buy the stock from the artists. But instead, we take a particular quantity, as we deem sellable, and only pay them based on what is sold (ibid).

Considering this discussion in which various individuals agree and support the fact that commerce is an integral part and goal of the Gospel music industry, Keith Negus is therefore justified in asserting that “the [music] industry needs to be understood as both a commercial business driven by the pursuits of profit and a site of creative human activity from which some very great popular music has come and continues to emerge” (1996: 36). In consideration of Negus’ assertion, I would, however like to argue that without financial resources, this ‘site of human activity’ will eventually run dry and result in a decline, and possibly an end to the emergence of great popular music. This therefore strengthens my earlier argument that the success of a popular music recording or artist simply refers to commercial success. Moreover, this shows the premise of the Gospel music industry within commerce.

Elements of a successful popular Gospel music artist

In an attempt to optimize success, (which this study refers to as commercial success), record labels employ skilled experts who use carefully selected strategies. There are numerous elements that are taken into consideration in attaining maximal commercial profits. Keith Negus suggests six different, but interrelated, elements that are necessary to make a successful recording or album. He mentions:

- 1) The live stage performance, 2) The originality and quality of the songs or material, 3) The recorded performance and voice, 4) Their [artist's] appearance and image, 5) Their [artist's] level of personal commitment, enthusiasm and motivation, and 6) The achievements of the act [artist] so far (1992: 53).

Angela Beeching stipulates “ten basic principles for advancing music careers” (2010: 9). These, she calls “success principles” (ibid), and entail:

- 1) Knowing yourself, which includes knowing your strengths and weaknesses, 2) Knowing your industry, 3) Networking, which he calls ‘Schmoozing’ and involves sharing ‘information and ideas with others’, 4) Researching your options, 5) Cultivating your attitude and being positive, resilient, flexible and professional, 6) Assessing your interpersonal skills, 7) Thinking like an entrepreneur, 8) Communicating what makes you distinct, 9) Having both short-term and long-term goals, and 10) Feeding your soul.

James Riordan also lists his own “ten ingredients for a successful recording artist: 1) Originality, 2) Identification, 3) Vocals, 4) Live appearances, 5) The right image, 6) A hit record, 7) The right teams, 8) Consistence, 9) Reliability, and 10) Contacts” (1988: 29). Riordan’s list overlaps with Negus’, although Riordan’s is detailed. I discuss some of Riordan’s suggested ingredients hereafter, and contextualize them to various activities of the South African music industry with regards to Gospel music.

Originality

Riordan defines originality as “undeniable uniqueness that distinctly separates an artist from others” (1988: 29). Paul Allen says that when scouting for talent, “most labels seek artists who are genuine and unique in their own ways” (2007: 24). Riordan acknowledges that an artist may have external influences, but once they find their originality, they find “their sound and their image, and no one else is quite like them” (1988: 30). Riordan’s explanation of ‘originality’ is parallel to Rebecca Malope’s description of the late Vuyo Mokoena. She says that:

Vuyo had a distinct voice that characterized his sound. He was more than an artist, but he was an institution and an icon that many artists attempt to emulate. There will never be another Vuyo and no one can match his artistry, his stage presence, his perfectionism and his powerful voice (Malope interview, 2013).

James Riordan says that “a forced originality just doesn’t work for very long. Whatever it is that makes an artist original must come naturally” (1988: 31). This somehow relates to Rebecca Malope’s previously discussed account in which her originality was more gravitated towards Gospel music, which her record company tried to pull that towards pop and bubble gum genres. Lindelani Mkhize says that originality is one of the things he looks for in an artist when conducting the ‘I want to sing Gospel’ talent search contest. He says that “many people can sing. But when they sing, it is as if they remind you of someone you once heard. I always tell people: be yourself, it is the best you can be” (Mkhize interview, 2012). In emphasizing the importance of being original, Mkhize attributes the success of Joyous Celebration to its uniqueness that distinguished it from other Gospel acts in South Africa. Giving an account of how the Joyous Celebration project started, he says:

I realized that South African Gospel music lacked variety. It was just predominantly traditional Gospel. The Joyous Celebration concept was just unique, and it is what most South Africans had long been waiting for. I knew what sound I wanted, and with the help of other co-founders, we gathered the right people to bring that to existence. It was fresh and it was unique (ibid).

Mkhize continues and emphasizes originality as one of the factors that have sustained Joyous Celebration over decades. He says that:

Joyous Celebration is one original South African concept. One of the reasons why it is still so popular is that people know that when they go to Joyous Celebration shows, they will get original material. Yes we have external influences and sometimes use other people's material, but all that is skillfully integrated into the sound of Joyous Celebration (ibid).

Solly Mahlangu share similar sentiments in accounting for the secret behind his success. He says "I don't have a secret. I came up with a fresh and different gospel sound. It is what South Africa had been waiting for" (www.sowetanlive.co.za, 12 May 2013).

James Riordan however acknowledges that there is not one artist who exists in isolation, but that everyone is prone to already existing influences. He says that artists' originality "doesn't mean that they don't have obvious influences. No one is totally original" (1988: 30). He goes on to make an example of four rock n' roll artists, and says that "The Beatles borrowed heavily from Chuck Berry and Little Richard, and so did the Rolling Stones, but all four of these acts are very distinct from one another" (ibid). Rebecca Malope alludes to such influences of other singers on her, and says that "it was the voices of some of the best soul singers who provided inspiration. I wanted to sing. I wanted to be like Donny Hathaway, Stevie Wonder, Anita Baker; but using my voice" (www.samro.org.za, 03 July 2013).

Identification

James Riordan describes 'identification' as the connection between the artist and the fans or the audience. Tshepo Ndzimande, a record label A & R executive, says that one of the key elements he looks for in searching for a 'Gospel star', is "the ability to connect with the audience" (Ndzimande interview, 2013). He further adds that "this connection is important to the success of an artist's career. You

can have a good voice and be extremely talented, but if you do not connect with your audience, you can't be effective" (ibid). Percy Ingle, a renowned Gospel music producer in South Africa concurs and says that:

Most Gospel music fans are Christians. Therefore if you sing Gospel music, you have to know Jesus Christ who is the main subject of the Gospel. This knowledge of Christ is what connects the artist with the audience (Ingle interview, 2012).

Benjamin Dube points to 'identification' when discussing the fact that his *In His Presence* series of 'live' recordings does not have 'live' audience, and says:

The audience is able to connect with me or my music even in their homes, cars and wherever where they interact with it. They are able to partake in the worship that we do during the recording in their spaces, at their time; but still have the firsthand experience of the worship. The feedback that we get is phenomenal (Dube interview, 2009).

Nqubeko Mbatha shared similar sentiments in outlining the criteria used to select a 'Gospel star' in the talent contest 'I want to sing Gospel'. He said that "the candidate must be a person that the audience and viewers of the program must be attached to. Remember that the production runs for months, and broadcaster wants viewership" (Mbatha interview, 2013). Winnie Mashaba points to such a connection between the artist and the audience as 'spiritual' more than just musical. She says that "Gospel music is spiritual music. Therefore in order to connect with the audience, you must be spiritually connected to God. Then you are able to give to people what God gives you" (Mashaba interview, 2013).

Vocals

'Vocals' undisputedly play a major role in Gospel music. This study has described Gospel music as the music that is mainly identified through its lyrics. Lyrics are expressed in music through 'vocals'. This therefore sets 'vocals' as one of the top ingredient of a successful Gospel music recording. Keith Negus quotes Hennion (1986) who said that:

The voice is the part of the recording which most directly addresses the listener. It is the singer who, through intonation, phrasing, and para-linguistic vocal utterances, most directly communicates the emotion of a particular song. It is the voice which encodes the identity and the history of a performer and which conveys a singer's authenticity (1992: 89).

Riordan says that "the fact that vocals are an all-important key to having a unique sound is evident when you consider that no two human voices are exactly alike" (1988: 33). He further emphasizes the importance of the voice in the artist's life, in that "the artist's voice is his or her instrument" (ibid). Simon Frith concurs and says that a voice "can be described in musical terms like any other instrument, as something with a certain pitch, a certain register, a certain timbral quality, and so forth" (1996: 187). One of the first things that an A & R person pays attention to, in a potential artist, is their voice. Tshepo Ndzimande says that "the voice is the primary thing. All the other elements are secondary" (Ndzimande interview, 2013). Similarly, Lindelani Mkhize alludes to this and says that "in producing any project, you must first know what sound you want to achieve, and then find the right voice for it" (Mkhize interview, 2012). Percy Ingle also emphasizes vocals as one of the key ingredients for a successful recording. He says that:

Whether it is leading or backing, vocals can't be compromised in a Gospel music production. Gospel music is vocal music. Vocals are like a plate or a vessel in which you dish food. No matter how nice your food is, but if you serve it on a dirty plate, that food won't be enjoyed (Ingle interview, 2012).

In giving biographic details of artists, it is a common trend to describe them primarily by their voices. Examples of such descriptions include Otukile Entertainment's presentation of Winnie Mashaba, which defined her by an "extraordinary mature voice, one that is capable of carrying a myriad of emotions and uplifts those who come into contact with it" (www.otukileentertainment.co, 23 May 2013). Reporting on Ntokozo Mbambo's live *Filled* DVD recording, Mablerh, a reporter of 'Just Curious', one of South African entertainment websites, defines Ntokozo Mbambo by her voice, which she says possesses "the same vocal

prowess of Whitney Houston. She knew that she can belt the high notes but she was not hell bent on killing the crowd with them instead she focused on perfect phrasing and pitch” (www.justcurious.co.za, 22 October 2012). Similarly, Jonathan Perrin of ‘Look Local’ talks about Solly Mahlangu and says that he “is a gospel artist with a voice so moving that he has won the hearts of many fans all over the country” (www.looklocal.co.za, 14 November 2013). According to Entertainment Africa, Hlengiwe Mhlaba “‘gets her sound from Heaven and she sings for the Angels’, said those who have listened to her heavenly voice” (www.entertainmentafrika.mobi, 03 December 2013). Big Fish Music similarly defines Sipho Makhabane as having a voice that “is soulful and [is an] incredible instrument that he uses to sing straight from his heart [in a way] that [makes] the lyrics resonate with everyone” (www.bigfishmusic.co.za, 16 October 2013). One of the uniqueness of the South African Gospel music is the broad spectrum of its subgenres, styles and languages, which may be attributed to the multi-cultural nature of the South African society. One of the common things in the culture of Gospel music in South Africa is rearrangements and cover versions of previously recorded songs. According to Tshepo Ndzimande, “what distinguishes one cover version of song from the other, is the voice that sings it” (Ndzimande interview, 2013). He points to an example of the song: ‘Umkhuleko’ sung by Sfiso Ncwane, Sechaba and Hlengiwe Mhlaba, which he says “is the same song but with totally different spices” (ibid).

Live appearances

‘Live appearances’ is the “ability to put on a great live show” (Riordan, 1988: 34). This can be summarized as performance. Workshopping Gospel music artists and praise and worship teams in his church, Pastor Thomas Mveli emphasized the importance of how a singer appears on stage, and said, “people will see you before they can hear you” (Mveli at EDwaleni Christian Fellowship Centre). Riordan unpacks ‘live appearances’ further and says that:

Being able to perform well on stage is another key element that record

companies look for in a potential artist. [...] You can win fans for life because you genuinely touched them in a live show, in a way that a record could never hope to do (1988: 34).

Lindelani Mkhize says that:

One of the key pillars of Joyous Celebration is performance. We ensure that we keep our fans satisfied. That is why they come back for more, and that is one of the reasons why our shows are always sold out. For this reason, I can tell you that Joyous Celebration is still going to be around for some time (Mkhize interview).

Solly Mahlangu is one Gospel artist whose performances are exhilarating. Reporting on Mahlangu's concert at the fifth edition of the Open Heavens Gospel Crusade hosted by Shiloh Word Miracle Centre Assembly at Harare Gardens, Winstone Antonio dubs the performance as a "five star" presentation and says that "the award-winning Mahlangu set the venue ablaze with an electrifying performance" (www.newsday.co.zw, 12 November 2013). Another Zimbabwean newspaper reported about his performance in another concert in the country and says "Solly Mahlangu gave a scintillating performance at the Harvest House gospel extravaganza show" (www.thechronicle.co.zw, 24 November 2013). The South African Drum Magazine simply defines Solly Mahlangu based on his live performances, and says that he is "known for nifty dance moves and a powerful stage presence, [and] his energetic performances [that] mesmerizes audiences" (www.drum.co.za, 25 January 2013). Another artist who is known for breathtaking performances is Solly Moholo, whose performances are characterized by what members of the Zion Christian Church (ZCC) call 'Mokhukhu'; which, according to Max Mojapelo, is "an energetic foot stomping marathon [...and] a marvel to watch" (2008: 330).

The right image

The culture of Gospel music in South Africa is to a great extent characterized by a particular manner in which artists present themselves, in terms of their visual appearance. Various Gospel music artists maintain particular images, which James Riordan calls 'right images', and defines as "the visual representation of

the artist that a lot of people can relate to” (1988: 35). Consumers of Gospel music encounter with artists’ ‘right images’ in two contexts. The first one is that in which artists appear when performing, which I refer to as performance images. These are images such as shown in figures 4.4.



Figure 4.4: Examples of performance images of various artists. Clockwise from top-left: Veliswa Skeyi and singers, Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors, S’fiso Ncwane and Dominion. (Sourced from various internet websites).

Performance images also include how artists appear when they do ‘live’ recordings, which are performances captured into DVDs and consequently exist way beyond the performance date. In chapter 5 I elaborate on this particular aspect of artists’ images in ‘live’ recordings, under *‘Elements of a successful Gospel Video/DVD’*. In the second context, consumers of popular Gospel encounter artists’ ‘right images’ in social spheres, anywhere beyond performance precincts. These two contexts make artists’ ‘right images’ go beyond being visual presentations of artists, but also to be psychological insights into how consumers

perceive artists. This perception results in a particular socio-economic classification of artists based on how successful and affluent they are, or at least, appear to be.

I want to argue that pursuits for commercial success play a primary role in enforcing 'right images' on artists. This enforcement is threefold. Firstly, I argue that Christianity sets particular standards and expectations that determine 'right images', and get accepted by consumers of Gospel music. Lovemore Togarasei relates to this issue of 'right images' for Gospel musicians. He refers to a case of Fungisai Zvakavapano, a Zimbabwean Gospel 'music star', whom he says has been criticized based on seemingly her 'non-Christian' dress-code in her music video 'Makomborero'. He further asserts that "the issue of [Gospel artists] and Christian women's dress code is a controversial one in Zimbabwe. There are several debates [...] as to whether [they...] can wear miniskirts, trousers and other tight-fitting clothes" (2007: 55). Ntokozo Mbambo tackles this issue in her *Inside Woman* interview when answering the question: "What is your view on how women of God or female Gospel artists should dress?" To this she says:

I think we all as Christian women should dress in a way that brings honor to God and also dress in a way that shows the love of God. We are all representatives of Christ so we should do our part (www.insidewomanmag.com, 14 October 2013).

I have argued and discussed in the previous chapters that Gospel music comes from, and is closely associated with Christianity. This context positions the Christian religion as a vanguard of Gospel music. On the reverse, I have argued that the music industry exploits this position and targets Christians as a target market for Gospel music products. In demonstrating this argument, I want to relate a personal experience. I had a privilege to gain access to Benjamin Dube's holding rooms backstage during his 'live' CD and DVD recording for his *For Every Mountain* album at The Playhouse in Durban in 2002. There was a dispute that arose between Benjamin Dube and his mother, Pastor Grace Dube, who felt that Benjamin's dress-code, although with a formal jacket, was however

inappropriate without a formal shirt and a tie. This may be attributed to the age gap between the two parties concerned, and the change of fashion codes with time. Unfortunately for Dube's mother, it was a bit too late for the attire to be changed. These cases of Zvakavapano, Mbambo and Dube demonstrate that Christianity has played a pivotal role in setting generally expected standards of what the 'right images' for Gospel music artists are. Figure 4.5 shows some of these professionally photographed images of Gospel artists, some which are used for artists' profiles, social media platforms, websites and CDs cover designs. My argument is that Gospel artists wouldn't be obligated to adhere to these standards, unless they stand to benefit, commercially, from doing so.



Figure 4.5: Examples of 'off-the-stage' images of various Gospel artists. Clockwise from top-left: Avante, Simply Chrysolyte, Dumini Mkokstad, Thinah Zungu and Ntokozo Mbambo. (Sourced from various internet websites).

On the second account, I argue that commercial pursuits of recording companies and artists enforce ‘right images’ as a professional requirement for artists. This requirement demands artists to present themselves in a manner that represent the brand they are selling. This requirement entails presenting an image that corresponds with the style or sub-genre of Gospel music that that particular artist is singing. Keith Negus concurs with this assertion and says: “different genres of music have become associated with and signify different images” (1992: 66). James Riordan agrees, saying, “the image should correspond to the music” (1988: 37). Amadodana AseWeseli, a Gospel group comprised of members from the Methodist Church, sings songs that are predominantly from this church. This ensemble has maintained a similar visual representation for most of the time since their inception in 1986, as shown in figure 9. According to Leon Jackson, they are well known for their “trademark jackets and red waistcoats” (<http://wiki.answers.com>, 05 September 2012). Answering a question, “Why ‘Amadodana AseWeseli’ wears the uniform they wear”, Jackson says that it is “because they are from the Methodist Church and men wear that uniform there” (ibid). Even in instances where they are not using red, black and white colors, they however wear uniform jackets and ties, as shown in figure 4.6.



Figure 4.6: Visual Images of Amadodana AseWeseli (source: various websites)

Abahlabeleli baseWeseli, a group which also hails from Methodist church uses similar dress code, as shown in figure 4.7. According to Mthunzi Xulu, the leader of the group:

Abahlabeleli baseWeseli, as the name suggests are based in Wesleyan [Methodist] church. Almost all our songs are church songs, because our main target audience is here in church. We therefore have to appeal to our audience. This uniform makes them to connect with us easily, not only through the music, but also through what they see. After all we are part of the church, and not just outsiders hijacking our church music (Xulu interview, 2013).

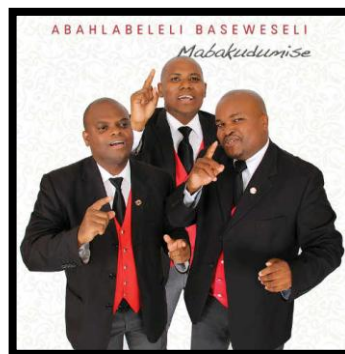


Figure 4.7: A visual image of Abahlabeleli baseWeseli. (sources from the group's Facebook page).

It is an integral part of the culture of Gospel music to have artists appears in particular dress-codes. The use of uniform attires is not uncommon in Gospel music. Various Gospel music artists appear in different visual images that can be linked to the kind of music they do. Such examples include such artists as IGalathiya Indlunkulu and Solly Moholo who both sing Zionist church music; Omama beNqaba yamaKhatholika who sing Roman Catholic Church music, and many others. Figure 4.8 shows some of these artists. Other Gospel artists who sing sub-genres that (are inclined to styles that) have their origins in secular music, also use particular images that correspond with those styles. Artists singing 'Hip-Hop Gospel', for example, use a dress code which entails caps, sunglasses, sneakers and jean pants, as shown in figure 4.9. Some artists wear items that are branded with their names of particular albums that they are promototing at that time. Other artists who do not sing music that is perceptibly

identifiable with a particular church also appear in particular visual image that can be associated with the music they do. My observation is that in most cases, Gospel artists dress-up in a smart, formal and presentable way, as if 'going to church'. This includes suits and ties, formal jackets, formal dresses, and other such attires, as shown in figure 4.5 above.



Figure 4.8: Visual Images of Gospel artists singing Zionist church music. (Sources: various internet websites)

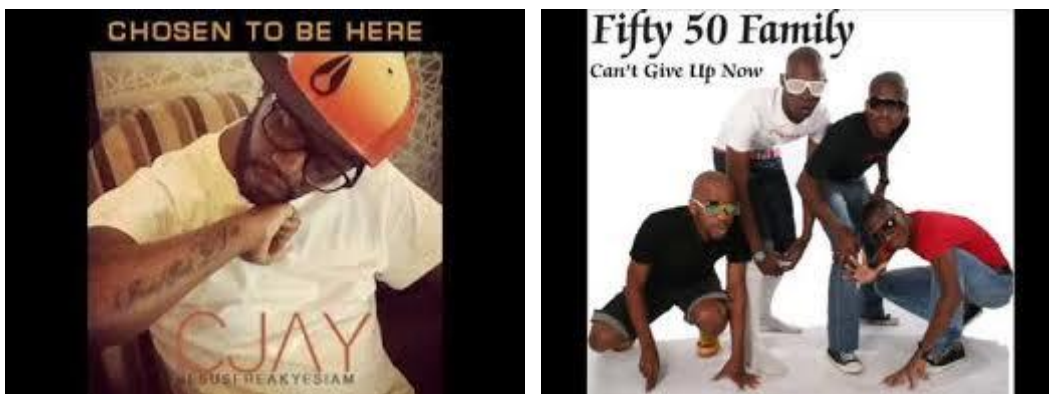


Figure 4.9: Visual images of 'Hip-hop Gospel' artists, (Sources: Respective artist's Facebook pages on internet)

Thirdly, I argue that Gospel music artists use 'right images' to portray a particular social-cultural class which they want to consumers to identify them with. This socio-cultural classification entails who the artist really is/has - or portrays himself/herself to be or to have - beyond his/her music professional duties. This aspect is encapsulated in James Riordan's statement that "the best image for you is also linked to who you are as a person" (1988: 36). Keith Negus expands on 'who you are', to also include "particular attitudes, values and beliefs" (1992: 66). I argue that artists such as Amadodana AseWesile who wear church uniforms as part of their artist's image, do so also as a way of portraying themselves as members of the Methodist Church. This portrayal goes beyond them as artists, but addresses their identity as social beings. Some artists appear in expensive designer label clothes and accessories, drive expensive cars, and live posh houses. However, some artists create this image by hiring and borrowing cars, some live in apartments beyond their financial means, just to live up to the 'right image' they want consumers to identify them with. I recall a case of an artist who was accused of living in up market sea-point apartment, while his parents were living in depilated houses. Another artist friend of mine was accusing another one of borrowing an expensive watch from one multi-millionaire businessman, to use it during his album cover photo shoot. These constructed images are common in Gospel music videos, where artists go an extra mile to portray a particular life of high social class, characterized by expensive cars and houses, beautiful wives and kids, and expensive clothes and accessories. I argue that this third aspect is also predominantly premised on pursuits for commercial gains. This is in the sense that for affluent consumers, this image fits their standards and consequently they will be more likely to identify with the product and buy it. On the other hand, consumers of a lower social class will look up these artists as role-models, whom they (consumers) aspire to be like. This attachment creates fandom, which increases the chances of consumers to buy musical products of these artists.

The right teams

In analyzing recordings and reading album sleeve notes of various South African Gospel artists, one can ascertain the scope of the team(s) involved in making that particular project. Joyous Celebration's *Joyous Celebration 17: Grateful* has arguably a biggest team a South African Gospel music production has ever used, in terms of sub-teams and members. As tabulated in figure 4.10, Joyous Celebration has ten sub-teams, totaling to a sum of sixty-nine members. These sub-teams are comprised of: a choir of thirty one singers, a band of seven musician, five featured lead singers, four event-and-logistics coordinators, one public relations person, one publicity person, two wardrobe-and-styling artists, a production-and-technical team of eleven technicians, an administration team of five officials, and three founders, including a choir conductor. This case of Joyous Celebration outlines teams applicable in the production of Gospel music across its local spectrum. These teams manifest in different combinations and magnitudes, in different projects of various Gospel artists. Making reference to the Joyous Celebration production, I lengthily discuss various teams necessary to make a 'successful recording artist', hereafter.

Figure 4.10: Various teams involved in *Joyous Celebration 17 - Grateful* recording. Source: 'Joyous Celebration 17' DVD sleeve notes. * denotes name of a company rendering particular service, not a person.

<u>Sub-Team</u>	<u>Members and Responsibilities</u>
Founding Members	Lindelani Mkhize (Producer and Conductor), Mthunzi Namba (Lead Singer) and Jabu Hlongwane (Lead Singer)
Band	Siyangqoba Mthethwa: Pianist and Musical Director Drums: Siyabulela 'Sabu' Satsha Bass Guitar: Bheka Mthethwa Guitar: Msizi Mashiane Keyboards: Sbu Mnguni (Organ, keys and effects), Floyd Dlungwane (Second keyboards, synth brass and strings, and Bheki Mthembu (programming and auxiliary keyboards).
Singers/Choir	<i>Sopranos:</i> Xolile Mncwango, Ncebakazi Nkantsu, Thandazile Sibisi, Thembelihle Mbanjwa, Nthabiseng Motsepe, Sibongseni Thela, Palesa Manthoko, Andiswa Mbantsa, Nontsikelelo Shandu, Mahalia Buchanan. <i>Altos:</i> Charisma Hanekam, Siyasanga Kobese, Sphumelele Mbambo, Duduzile Tsobane, Vuyelwa Oke, Mercy Mndlovu, Hlengiwe Ntombela, Mpho Bopape, Nolwazi Ydstral, Nomandla Mfecane, Puleng March. <i>Tenors:</i> Siyakha Mzekeeli, Sibongiseni Mbhele, Xolani Mdlalose, Sylvester Funani, Mkhululi Bhebhe, Nhlanhla Mwelase, Given Mabena, Sibusiso Mthembu, Ayanda Shange, Nhlanhla Zofo, Phelo Bala.
Featured Lead Singers	Khaya Mthethwa, Mbuso Khoza, Bonke Shipalana, Kedebone Malaudzi, Nobathembu Mabeka.
PR and Publicity	Helga Klizanie
Production and Technical	Sharif Baker: Production Manager Sibusiso Mnguni: Stage Manager Vincent Legoathi: Assistant Sound Manager Johan Griesel: Front of House Engineer Event Tech*: Monitor Engineer Sound Headquarters*: Audio Wizardry*: Lighting

Production and Technical (<i>continued</i>)	Eph Production*: Led Screens RM Recordings*: Audio Recording Andrew Thabo Television*: DVD / Visuals Recording Alcapoem (Etabah Visual Suite*): Stage Visual Effects and Sleeve Designer.
Wardrobe and Styling	Lindani Ndwandwa: Costume Designer / Stylist Bokang Ncube: Wardrobe and Stylist Assistant
Event and Logistics coordinators	Mbali Thabethe: Project leader Hlengiwe Masondo: Project Manager Bridget Trollip: Project Assistant Kopano Dimpe: Project assistant
Administration	Boniswa Raluare: General/Operations Manager Palesa Manana: Marketing Manager Sibongiseni Mbhele: Artist Manager Eugene Mpulo: Marketing Collaterals Themba Ndala: Social Media

The Record Label Executive Management Team

The first and foremost important team that determines the success of a recording artist is the executive team of the record label that the artist is signed to. The size of this team is proportional to the size and type of the company, and can range from a committee of officials in a 'major' company, to a single individual in a 'minor' label. Like with any other industrial company, the executive team plays a huge role in ensuring the success of the company's commodities. This team also ensures that 'right teams' are contracted to carry various tasks within the production value-chain. The leader of this team is generally referred to as the executive producer. This could be the president or the founder or the owner of the company. According to Geoffrey Hull:

The label president is usually someone who has experience in A & R, although not necessarily. [...] Label presidents oversee all operations, but depending upon the depth of their personal involvement in A & R, either as producers or 'talent scouts', the other divisions may have additional independence (2004: 131).

Jonathan Shaw stipulates the duties of the label president, which he says are "to provide finance to make a record, [...] produce sound recordings and promote both the recording and the image of the artist [and to] supervise the manufacture and distribution of records" (2007: 26). In short, the label president or the executive producer is the person who is the initiator and the financier of the record. Depending on the magnitude and the financial state of the record label, the label president may have an executive team working with him, and may contract the other teams that work to ensure the realization and 'success' of the record. For various albums released by Spirit Music, Aubrey Peacock is listed as the executive producer. These albums include Solly Mahlangu's *Mwamba Mwamba*, Spirit of Praise's *Spirit of Praise Vol. 4*, Benjamin Dube's *Worship in His Presence*, Omega's *Hayo*, Neyi Zimu's *I Trust in You* and Zaza's *Thank You*. Joyous Celebration Founders: Mthunzi Namba, Jabu Hlongwane and Lindelani Mkhize are executive producers for Joyous Celebration albums. Artists who own the record labels that release their albums are normally credited as executive producers in their album sleeve notes. Examples of such albums include *Kulungile Baba – Live at Durban ICC* by S'fiso Ncwane of S'fiso Ncwane Productions, and *Chapter 6 – UJehova Ungibiyele* by Andile ka Majola of Elinda

Productions, *Filled* by Ntokozi Mbambo of Koko Records.

The Artist and Repertoire (A & R) team

According to Lindelani Mkhize, the first important step in making a successful recording is to “get the right artist for the right project” (Mkhize interview, 2012). According to Geoffrey Hull, this talent can either be “new or used” (2004: 140). By ‘new’ talent, he refers to artists that have never recorded or released an album before. The inverse thereof is ‘used’ talent, which refers to artists doing repeat albums with the record label, or those who have previously recorded albums with other record labels. Hull says that an important tool for the people who make a decision of which artist to sign is “good ears” (141). The exercise of making such a decision is generally referred to as Artist and Repertoire (A & R). According to Hull, the A & R people are responsible for “taking and reducing risks – knowing when to take and when not to take risks, and knowing how to reduce the risk of making a poor choice” (139). Elaborating on the concept of ‘good ears’, Hull says that “ear training for A & R people is going to clubs, and listening to demos from bands, personal managers, and publishing companies. It is knowing some history of popular music” (142). He further adds that “hearing the next big act and signing them before some other label does may simply be the result of being in a right place at the right time” (ibid).

Paul Allen sums up the underlying principle behind recruiting a talent by music companies, and says that:

Labels seek artists who are genuine and unique in their own ways, and who have potential for commercial appeal. Labels will sign an artist because of who they are artistically and because they feel there is a commercial market for their music, and most want to preserve the uniqueness of the artist that makes them special (2007: 24).

Keith Negus agrees with Allen and says that:

Artist-and-repertoire [A & R] staff is formally responsible for acquiring artists, and have been usually described as ‘talent spotters’ – continually engaged in seeking

new acts and material. However, this is only a small part of what they do. Most of their time is devoted to working with the acts who are already under contracts. An A & R person can be involved in every aspect of an artist's relationship with the company; from the initial negotiations and signing of the contract through to the rehearsal, arrangement and recording of songs, to liaising with staff employed in marketing, video production and promotion (1996: 38).

Lindelani Mkhize is one of the people whose names are synonymous with talent scouting and identifying in the South African music industry. He is currently an executive director of A & R at Universal Music, one of the 'major' music companies. According to bizcommunity.com, Mkhize's responsibility is to "develop and further expand Universal's A&R portfolio, specifically for the SA and sub-Saharan Africa markets" (www.bizcommunity.com, 20 August 2013). Responding to this mammoth task entrusted to his care, Mkhize says:

I look forward to unearthing talent across the continent. I am also excited about prospects of igniting a fusion of music that will appeal to us all as Africans, these are exciting times. I want to go back to allowing artists to create the music and ensure that the record company will create the brand. Also, at the end of the day it is all about market share. So I intend to increase Universal's footprint in South Africa and Africa (ibid).

Attesting to Mkhize's appointment, Harry Voerman, Universal Music Managing Director says that:

Lindelani's appointment will further rejuvenate our strategy of strengthening the core of our business – A & R. In addition, he will assist me in all aspects of our business as we continue to transform and reshape our company to reflect the dynamic and challenging environment in which we operate (ibid).

These statements elaborate on the duties and responsibilities of the A & R personnel and team, and the extent to which some music companies will go in employing the knowledgeable people, that will be able identify talent with potential to succeed in the music industry.

Mkhize, as one of the A & R personnel, co-founders and producers of Joyous Celebration, says that “Joyous Celebration is not a Gospel choir, but rather a concept to groom and nurture Gospel talent” (Mkhize interview, 2012). Moreover, Mkhize is the founder of a nationwide Gospel music talent search project called ‘I want to sing Gospel’. Responding to the question ‘what do you look for, when scouting for a Gospel music artist’, Mkhize says: “There are many singers, and these days anyone can record. It is about getting the right artist for the right project” (ibid). Mkhize elaborated on his response by pointing to what he referred to as a common mistake that most people and producers do. He says that this mistake is to think that just because one can sing, then they can record. Mkhize emphasizes the A & R process as one that determines the desired product, and consequently the right voice or artist to bring that product into existence. He adds that “this process is the one that determines the success or the failure of a product, way before it is even recorded” (ibid). Mkhize affirms that Joyous Celebration engages in a nationwide auditions process in Durban, Johannesburg, Port Elizabeth, Polokwane, Cape Town and Bloemfontein, a process that Nqubeko Mbatha described as “detailed and lengthy. The talent that is discovered here is what makes Joyous Celebration what it is. It is the core and the future of the project” (Mbatha Interview, 2013). Themba Masina, one of the A & R persons for the Spirit of Praise choir says that “What we scout for is not just vocal ability, but we want people who know what they are singing about. For us, it is mandatory that every member of this choir must be a born again child of God” (Behind the scenes footage of *Spirit of Praise, Vol 4*).

Accounting for the success of her music career that spans over three decades, Rebecca Malope attributes her success to the musical genius of Sizwe Zako, who played an A & R role in discovering her. Malope’s history records that:

A band, Savuka, not the Johnny Clegg one, entered the 1985 Shell Road to Fame Talent Search competition. [...] “*We actually failed at the beginning,*” she admits. But this failure was not the end of the dream because among the judges was one Sizwe Zako, who saw something in the young Rebecca. “*Afterwards he called me over and said that we should not feel bad and that perhaps the*

problem was that the song that we were singing did not suit my voice," she explains. [...] A year was to elapse until another chance meeting with Zako. [...] "We didn't recognise each other immediately, but when we realised, he said he'd been looking for me for quite some time. The rest is history" (www.rebeccamalope.co.za, 20 August 2013).

This story shows how Sizwe Zakwe's A & R expertise came handy in discovering Malope. Malope attests to this and passionately says:

I always say that Bhut'Sizwe Zakwe and Rebecca Malope are a match made from heaven. He saw potential in me and believed in it. He is the one that gave me a breakthrough and launched my career. He wrote songs and produced my albums. Mine was to sing the songs (Malope interview, 2013).

As I hinted earlier that various roles in the Gospel music value-chain materialize differently in different companies, the A & R is no exception. These A & R cases that I have aforementioned occurred within 'major' recording companies. However, even smaller companies of self-releasing artists do undergo A & R duties. In their simplest form, these duties entail the very decision that the artist undertakes to do a recording. This means that when an individual takes a decision to record and release his or her own album, using whatever criteria, the process of making that decision is within A & R responsibilities. Various artists such as Andile ka Majola, Siphon Makhabane, Abahlabeleli baseWeseli, Kholeka, and many others operate on such self-releasing-artists basis. In these cases such artists were not discovered and approved by someone with an A & R job description, nevertheless, the very act deciding to record automatically puts that artist in an A & R office.

The producer: the head of the production team

Once the talent has been identified, a subsequent step in the process of gathering what James Riordan calls 'the right teams' (1988: 29), is to assemble a

production team. A production team in the music industry value-chain hinges on the person and responsibilities of the producer. Figure 4.11 shows some of these responsibilities and role-players in the process of production.

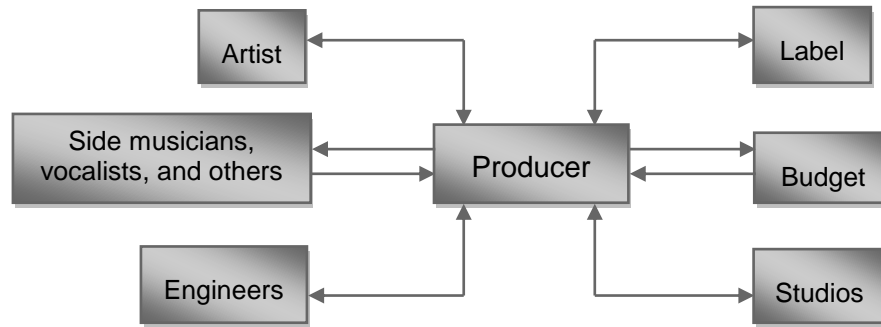


Figure 4.11: The position of a producer and teams involved in production (adapted from Hull, 2004: 154).

Geoffrey Hull says that “it is the record, not a song or music, that is a final product, and it is the producer who is at the center of the creation of that product. The producers have one goal, whoever they are: to complete a finished, marketable recording” (2004: 154). Paul Allen is in agreement with Hull, and elaborates on the duties of the producer as entailing “assembling all necessary elements to take into the recording studio to create the recording. This ranges from reserving a studio, to finding musicians, to helping choose songs for the artist to record” (2007: 113). Keith Negus says that “the record producer extends the work of A & R, making the key decisions about how specific material should be recorded in a studio and supervising the sessions” (1992: 82). In actual fact, Negus says that it is the responsibility of the A & R staff, in liaison with the artist, to identify and contract the right producer for the desired recording. He expands on this by quoting an A & R executive who said that:

Specific types of producers are good for specific types of music. Some are excellent in some areas, but totally irrelevant for others. I look and see what a band has and what it needs in its early development years. First of all, I have an idea of what sort of record the band should make and how it should sound. I look to see what the group has and what the group is actually missing. Then it’s my

intention to get a producer in that would be able to help them in the areas that they're not particularly good at. It may be in the playing area, it may be in the song structure area, it may be in the arrangement of the songs. It may be that they don't require those things so you don't need to get a producer in whose forte is song structures and arrangements, so you get a more engineer-based producer in (1992: 82).

In emphasizing the role of the producer, Lindelani Mkhize says that “it is not the work of the promoters and marketers to make the record sell. A producer is the one who must convince them why the record is worth promoting and marketing”, (Mkhize interview, 2012). In Jonathan Shaw's overview of the music industry outlined earlier in this chapter, and downscaled in figure 4.12, a producer is a gatekeeper for other creative artists into a recording studio or 'live' venue, where the music is recorded for audience consumption. Shaw's overview shows that other creative artists such as the songwriter, performer or the singing artist, the arranger and the session musicians all have to go through the producer. Shaw further describes record producers as:

people with the experience to put the sound and [the music team] together [and...] are usually genre specific and experienced [...] in the chosen genre. They are responsible for overseeing and bringing the creative product into tangible form and [they] maximize creativity for a recording. They take an administrative or managerial role in a recording project (2007: 23)



Figure 4.12: The position of a producer in a recording studio (adapted from Shaw, 2007).

Shaw states that “the better the producer understands the artist’s music and what a paying audience wants, the easier it is to produce the right sound” (190). Figures 4.11 and 4.12 suggest other stakeholders that constitute a production team are directly linked to a producer. The magnitude of a production team depends on the nature of music to be produced and on the resources available at the producer’s disposal. For example, producing an acapella group that comprises three vocalists would require less human and financial resources than producing a thirty-voice choir that is accompanied by an eight-piece band. As Negus suggests, in some instances one person can undertake various duties, for example, an engineer who also produces. An extreme case can present an artist, who is a songwriter that also plays musical instrument, and arrange, and produce, and engineer.

Nqubeko Mbatha, for example, is a co-producer of his album *Sentiments of a Worshipper*. However, he has written eight of the nineteen songs in the double-disk album. Over and above that, he also plays the piano on the recording. Mbatha attributes this to the fact that he is a producer himself, and he understands his mission more than any other person. He further adds that “I however, always ensure that I have a team of creative and critical musicians who always give me their comments on what we do. If I am producing, I get a musical director and sometimes a co-producer” (Mbatha interview, 2013). Similarly, S’fiso Ncwane produced his *Kulungile Baba: Live at Durban ICC* project and wrote more than two-thirds of the repertoire. In the instance of Abahlabeleli baseWesile, for example, Mthunzi Xulu - one of the members of the trio - produced the album, while Lindelani Gumede played all the music and also engineered the project. It is a common instance in South African Gospel music for artists to produce themselves. Example of these includes Benjamin Dube and Solly Mahlangu. Geoffrey Hull suggests three possible reasons why artists want to produce themselves, which include “ego, a desire to be more in control of the creative aspect of their recordings, and a desire to keep more of the available money” (2004: 155).

Percy Ingle however criticizes the one-man production. He says that:

Artists need to understand that even if you are a good producer yourself, but sometimes you need other producers to produce you. This will help you in escaping the trap of doing music for yourself, instead of doing music for the people. Even American artists who are good producers, such as Fred Hammond, Kirk Franklin and etc., get other producers to produce them when doing their personal albums (Ingle Interview, 2012).

There are several producers that are renowned for their production abilities in the South African popular Gospel music industry. Some are associated with particular subgenres of Gospel music. Producers such as Percy Ingle, Siphon Mbhele, Sizwe Zako, Tshepo Ndzimande and Jabu Nkabinde are well-known and highly respected for their individual contributions in producing what is generally accepted as 'South African Traditional Gospel'. Benjamin Dube, Lindelani Mkhize, Mthunzi Namba, Nqubeko Mbatha and Sfiso Mavuso are some of the producers associated with 'South African Contemporary Gospel'.

Selecting songs for the record is part of the producer's responsibility. Whether newly written songs or cover versions of pre-recorded songs, the producer deliberates with the A & R people and the artist on the songs to be used. I will deliberate further on the subject of selecting songs, under the subject 'A hit record', later in this chapter.

The musical team

As already discussed, the producer, in liaison with the record company is responsible for putting together the rest of the production team. Depending on the type and magnitude of the project, this team may comprise backing singers, musicians, arrangers, songwriters, and so forth. In bigger productions such as Joyous Celebration, Spirit of Praise and Vuka Afrika, the musical team may also have a musical director, a vocal director and a conductor working with it, under

the close supervision and guidance of the producer. There are various factors that influence the size of a musical team in Gospel music recordings. One of these factors is that of studio recordings in comparison with 'live' recordings. In a studio recording, two backing vocalists can be used to record and overdub vocals. Musicians who play more than one instrument can also reduce the size of the team. Andile ka Majola's *Chapter 6 - UJehova Ungibiyele* is an example of a studio project that has used a team of four singers. All the instruments were programmed and played by Percy Ingle, the producer and Shadrack Ndlovu, the engineer. Nqubeko Mbatha's debut album, which is a studio project, has a team of six musicians and four backing singers; while his follow-up 'live' recorded album entails a team of ten musicians and six singers.

The other factor that determines the size of musical teams in Gospel music production is that of solo artists in contrast to groups or choirs and the style of music being produced. Evaluating the state of Gospel music in South Africa, Nqubeko Mbatha notes the wide spectrum and many styles within local Gospel. He says:

It is like a musical buffet. Everyone can find something they like, and in the language they prefer. There is traditional, contemporary, AmaZayoni (Zionists music), a cappella, praise and worship, and the list goes on (Mbatha interview, 2013).

Unlike solo artists, whose number of members of supporting teams of singers and instrumentalists is variable, groups have a more or less fixed size of the team. There are groups such as Ukuphila kweGuardian, Galathia iNdlunkulu and iZikhova Ezimnqindi, which are Zionist church choirs such as shown in figure 4.7, which are comprised of a membership of between twenty-five and fifty singers. Groups such as Abanqobi, iThemba, iThimba leAfrica and Yithi Laba are male-voices ensembles with approximately fifteen singers, who sing a-cappella. Spirit of Praise, Worship House, Joyous Celebration and Vuka Afrika are choir-based acts with a minimum of twenty singers, who sing accompanied by a band of at least six musicians. Various solo artists also have a varied range of teams of

supporting musicians. Artists such as Benjamin Dube, Solly Mahlangu, Israel Mosehla, Siphon Makhlabane, Ntokozo Mbambo, Rebecca Malope, Winnie Mashaba, Zaza Mokgethi, Neyi Zimu are solo artists who use live bands and backing singers. The scope of their teams varies from a minimum of three backing vocals and a band of four musicians, to a choir of fifteen vocals and eight musicians. Most artists who sing 'traditional Gospel' do their recording projects accompanied by programmed instruments, where the drums are computer programmed and other sounds are played solely from the keyboards.

Most artists have a more or less fixed team of singers and musicians. Figure 4.13 shows examples of how various artists have maintained more or less similar musical teams for their various albums. Joyous Celebration, although incorporating new members regularly, has however maintained a core of its members, both singers and instrumentalists over time. Groups such as Amadodana AseWeseli have maintained most of their members over time. Ensembles such as Lusanda Spiritual Group and Ncandweni Christ's Ambassadors have anchor lead artists, Lusanda Mcinga and Timothy Myeni respectively. In the case of Lusanda Spiritual Group, Lusanda is the face and the leader singer of the group. Even the album artwork features only her. However, the ensemble comprises eight other singers, the core of which has been with the group for more than ten years. On the other hand, although Timothy Myeni is a founder, the main keyboard player and lead singer of Ncandweni Christ's Ambassadors, however, the ensemble always appears with all its members, an average of twelve. When recording his *Mwamba Mwamba* project, Solly Mahlangu kept a core of eight out of twelve singers and musicians of the team he had used in his debut *Obrigado* recording. Benjamin Dube has also maintained a core of his musical team for his *In His Presence* series of recordings. Nqubeko Mbatha enhanced the team he had used for his debut *Forever I'll Worship* album, when recording *The Sentiments of a Worshipper*. While keeping the core team, he added a number of musicians and singers, which could be attributed to the nature and dynamics of a 'live' recording, as opposed to a studio recording.

Mbatha produced Judith Sephuma's first Gospel album. I asked him about the experience of 'converting', as a producer, a well-known and well-established 'jazz artist' into a 'Gospel artist'. He said: "It was an awesome experience. One of the things that made my job easy is that Judith allowed me the freedom to choose my crew, the singers and the band. So I was able to choose people that I know would deliver" (Mbatha interview, 2013). Most of these people that Mbatha refers to are the ones he used while producing Ntokozo Mbambo's *Filled* recording, and also for his *Sentiments of a Worshipper* album.

Mbatha's skill of assembling a production team is undisputable. From the time when he was the musical director of Joyous Celebration, he introduced and endorsed a number of musicians such as bassists Bheka Mthethwa and Sabelo Masondo, drummer Siyabulela Satsha, and keyboard players Siyanqoba Mthethwa, Johan Mthethwa and Sibusiso Mnguni. There are a handful of singers that Mbatha has also groomed as backing singers. He has used most of these musicians and singers for many projects that he has produced and directed. As already discussed, these projects, include TV shows such as 'I Want to sing Gospel' and 'Gospel Classics'; music recordings such as his *Forever I'll Worship* debut studio album and the subsequent *Sentiments of a Worshipper* live project, Ntokozo Mbambo's *Filled* recording, and Judith Sephuma's *The Experience Live in Concert*. Sfiso Ncwane engaged in a two-days auditioning process, to get the singers that he used for his *Kulungile Baba, Live at the Durban ICC* project. However, he opted to import the core of his resident band for this project, from Johannesburg and Mpumalanga. He says that "I have worked with these guys for a long time when in Johannesburg, Mpumalanga and if I am going to Swaziland. So they understand my music and performance demands and I am comfortable with them backing me on stage" (Ncwane, S. interview, 2013).

Figure 4.13: Various musical teams used for various Gospel artists' albums. (Sources: respective album sleeve notes)

ARTIST	RECORD ONE	RECORD TWO	RECORD THREE
Nqubeko Mbatha	<p>'Forever I'll Worship' <u>Musicians:</u> -Piano: Nqubeko Mbatha -Drums: Siyabulela Satsha -Guitar: Devine Mitchell -Bass Guitar: Sabelo Masondo -Keyboards: Sbu Mnguni and S'fiso Mavuso</p> <p><u>Singers:</u> Mahalia Buchanan, Ntokozo Mbambo, Kukie Mncube and S'fiso Khanyile.</p>	<p>'Sentiments of a Worshipper' <u>Musicians:</u> -Piano: Nqubeko Mbatha -Drums: Siyabulela Satsha -Guitar: Devine Mitchell -Bass Guitar: Sabelo Masondo -Keyboards: Sbu Mnguni, S'fiso Mavuso and Lebogang Morolo -Horns Section: Adam Howard, Sydney Mnisi and Bez Roberts.</p> <p><u>Singers:</u> Mahalia Buchanan, Buhle Thela, Thembinkosi Manqele, Siphon Manqele, Hlengiwe Ntombela and Tebello Sukwene</p>	
Solly Mahlangu	<p>'Obrigado': <u>Musicians:</u> -Piano: Ben Mnisi -Drums: Bafana Sukwene -Guitar: Divine Mitchell -Bass Guitar: Vuyo Manyike -Keyboards: Xoli Thabethe</p> <p><u>Singers:</u> Nomkhosi Mahlangu, Zanele Mokhethi, Lindiwe Mnisi, Gugu Nkosi, Bafana Nkosi, Thabo Mpowa and Bubele Mgele.</p>	<p>'Mwamba Mwamba': <u>Musicians:</u> -Piano: Ben Mnisi -Drums: Bafana Sukwene -Guitar: Divine Mitchell -Bass Guitar: Sabelo Masondo -Keyboards: Xoli Thabethe</p> <p><u>Singers:</u> Nomkhosi Mahlangu, Nomakhuze Ndabula, Lindiwe Mnisi, Vuyelwa Oke, Bafana Nkosi, Emmanuel Mabothe and Bubele Mgele.</p>	

<p>Joyous Celebration</p>	<p>‘Joyous Celebration 15: My Gift to You’ <i>Musicians:</i> -Piano: Nqubeko Mbatha -Drums: Siyabulela Satsha -Guitar: -Bass Guitar: Bheka Mthethwa -Keyboards: Sbu Mnguni, Siyanqoba Mthethwa and</p>	<p>‘Joyous Celebration 16: Royal Priesthood’: <i>Musicians:</i> -Piano: Nqubeko Mbatha -Drums: Siyabulela Satsha -Guitar: Msizi Mashiane -Bass Guitar: Bheka Mthethwa -Keyboards: Sbu Mnguni, Siyanqoba Mthethwa and</p>	<p>‘Joyous Celebration 17: Grateful’: <i>Musicians:</i> -Piano: Siyanqoba Mthethwa -Drums: Siyabulela Satsha -Guitar: Msizi Mashiane -Bass Guitar: Bheka Mthethwa -Keyboards: Sbu Mnguni, Floyd Dlungwane and Bheki Mthembu.</p>
<p>Benjamin Dube</p>	<p>‘In His Presence’ <i>Musicians:</i> -Piano: Benjamin Dube -Ancillary Piano: Alwin Botha -Bass Guitar: Tshepo Mohlala -Drums: Themba Masina -Percussion: Don Stephen -Guitar: Joel Klein -Keyboards: Dumisani Ngcobo and Mncedisi Majola</p> <p><i>Singers:</i> Phuthuma Tiso, Lulama Gqanabisa, Zinzi Xhanti, Tshidi Mphuthi, Margaret Motsage, Zarcia Zacheus, Refilwe Sibiya, Peter Lengweng, Nondumiso Zondeki and Bubele Mgele.</p>	<p>‘Worship in His Presence’ <i>Musicians:</i> -Piano: Benjamin Dube -Ancillary Piano: Zach Zibanyoni -Bass Guitar: Tshepo Mohlala -Drums: Themba Masina -Percussion: Don Stephen -Guitar: Joel Klein -Keyboards: Gigi Xolo and Zach Sibanyoni - Saxophones: Hiram Koopman</p> <p><i>Singers:</i> Phuthuma Tiso, Lulama Lallo, Zinzi Mabothe, Nomakhuze Ndabula, Busisiwe Mnguni, Refilwe Mohlala, Sabatha Masoka, Emmanuel Mabothe, Sibusiso Xulu and Mandla Tshabalala.</p>	<p>‘Healing in His Presence’ <i>Musicians:</i> -Piano: Benjamin Dube -Ancillary Piano: Thapelo Makaten -Bass Guitar: Tshepo Mohlala -Drums: Themba Masina -Percussion: Don Stephen -Guitar: Joel Klein -Keyboards: Gigi Xolo and Thapelo Makaten - Saxophones: Hiram Koopman -Ancillary Bass Guitar: Mandla Nkosi</p> <p><i>Singers:</i> Phuthuma Tiso, Lulama Lallo, Nhlanhla Mdluli, Zanele Mokhethi, Judith Sephuma, Neyi Zimu, Innocent Modiba, Sandile Makhanya, Margaret Motsage, Emmanuel Mabothe</p>

These accounts of various artists' choices of singers and musicians illustrate that the process of choosing 'the right team', singers and musicians in this instance, is not a one that producers just take lightly, but is rather a one in which considerate decisions are taken in formulating the team. These accounts further attest to Negus's argument that "a further contribution the producer makes to a recording is to act as a link between the artist and session musicians. The producer will have worked with a number of musicians in the past and will be able to utilize a contact network" (1992: 85).

The technical team

Technical teams entail people such as record, video and technical producers, sound engineers, vision mixers, camera crews, and stage and lighting crews. The size and composition of technical teams also depend on the nature and the magnitude of the project being produced. In the culture of producing Gospel music in South Africa, there are two common production set-ups: the studio recording and the 'live' recording. The latter entails recording a 'live' performance on location. The dynamics of these two set-ups are related, but different. They are related in the sense that they are both aimed at recording a particular artist and they both end up with a record master. However, they are different because of the different methods and scenarios used in making recordings. These differences are prevalent in performance and technical aspects of the recording. In a studio project, if the artist sings a wrong note or plays the wrong phrase, they are able to stop and re-take or re-do that section. However, as Bruce Bartlett and Jenny Bartlett suggest, in a live recording, there is "only one chance to get it recorded and it must be done right" (2007: xvii).

A simplest form of a technical team may be comprised of a studio sound engineer only. An extreme case, such as the one of Joyous Celebration discussed earlier and tabulated in figure 17, may include various technical sub-teams. These may include sound engineers (front-of-house and monitor or stage engineers), audio recording engineer(s), lighting technicians, and videographers (vision mixer and camera crew). I will not discuss all the responsibilities of these teams in this section, but will elaborate on them in the

next section where I will look at the actual process of making a recording. However, whether recording a live or a studio project, the producer will agree with the record company on the technicalities of the recording. These may include the studio or the live venue to be utilized, the sound engineer(s) and the videographers (in the case of a video recording). The sound engineer is one of the crucial people in a technical team. Keith Negus says that: “while the producer works as director of proceedings, the engineer is involved in technically finding the combinations of settings to create the sounds required” (1992: 82). Jonathan Shaw agrees and says that the sound engineer “works directly with the principles of sound. They have an extensive knowledge of studio equipment and sound principles. They work closely with a producer to produce the ‘correct’ sound for a record” (2007: 25). In the instance of a ‘live’ recording which involves video recording, a ‘technical team’ entails other sub-departments such as audio-visual (which include video and photography), stage and lighting, sound, etc. Other technical support sub-teams may include stage manager, production and technical managers.

The Artist branding team

I have, earlier on, alluded to various personnel that ensure the ‘right image’ for the artist. It is one of the tasks of the ‘artist branding team’ to bring about that image. Although artist branding may be a broad exercise, which goes as far as marketing, however in this context it is discussed in terms of elements that seek to enhance the visual image of the artist, such as wardrobe, hair and make-up. The artist branding team seeks to ensure that the visual presentation of the artist is appealing to the targeted market. Angela Beeching says that “branding involves communicating with a targeted audience using specific, accurate and memorable positive impression” (2010: 46). She further says that “music is a form of communication, a way to contribute positively to the world. Your image and brand should be an extension of this positive energy” (47). Beeching regards ‘artist branding’ as a phenomenon that goes beyond just the visual image of the artist. In addition to the visual presentation of the artist, Beeching says that “branding is about clarifying your identity, mission and reputation” (46). She further says that “branding is about

identifying your core mission and values, then working outward to tell others your story” (ibid). Keith Negus concurs and says that branding the artist “involves an attempt to articulate the authenticity and uniqueness of an artist and to communicate this through a concise image which operates as a metonym for an act’s entire identity and music” (1992: 72). This is in line with various images displayed earlier, which, to a particular extent present the music that various artists do. For example, the way in which groups such as 50 Fifty Family, C Jay, Amadodana AseWeseli and Ukuthula KweGuardian are branded, suggests the styles of music the groups are doing; which is Gospel-Hip-hop/Rap, Gospel music based on the music of the Methodist church, and Zionist church music, respectively.

Michelle Bam (not her real name) highlights the concept of artist branding as one of the important ones in the career of her husband Hurley Bam (not his real name), whom she manages. Hurley Bam is one of the flamboyant and well-dressed Gospel artists, and Michelle says that “this is not just a coincidence. “We soberly deliberate on Hurley’s wardrobe and how we want to portray him as a brand” (Bam, M. interview, 2013). Winnie Mashaba has a similar case. Referring to herself as a brand, she says that:

Just like any other product, it is important that we brand Winnie Mashaba in an appropriate manner. We discussed with my team the concept of the branding we want to adopt. As a Gospel music artist, Winnie Mashaba has to appear the part and be thus branded. My wardrobe and make-up is consciously taken care of by my support team, and is influenced by my Christian and traditional backgrounds (Mashaba interview, 2013).

The Artist Management Team

There are many duties that fall under the office of the artist management, however, varying with different artists, these duties are undertaken in different forms, and by different people operating within the career of that particular artist. Jonathan Shaw suggests various sub-teams that may form part of artist management. As figure 4.14 shows, Shaw suggests “personal manager, road manager, business manager, publicist, attorney and agents” (2007: 25).

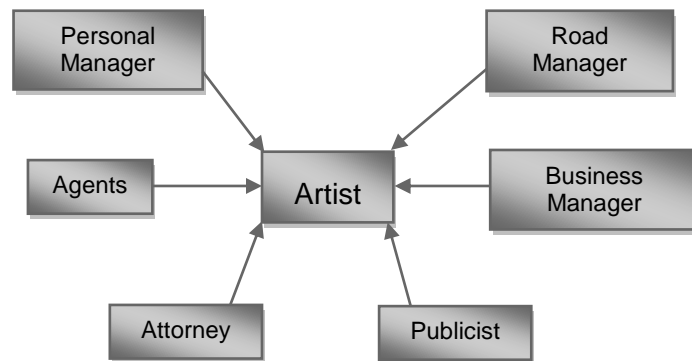


Figure 4.14: The sub-departments of artist management (Shaw, 2007: 25)

James Riordan rather categorizes these teams into “managers, lawyers and agents” (1988: 204-205). The reality of the culture of Gospel music in South Africa is that the concept of artist managers is still a growing phenomenon. There are artists who have fully fledged artist management. However, for some artists, self-management is the best option attainable. Shaw attests to this and says that “the small artist who has no manager may need to engage themselves as managers until they find one” (2007: 158). He discusses the very basis of the need of an artist manager, and says that “you only need a manager when something needs to be done that you can’t do because you lack the power or the connection” (204). He then outlines the duties of the manager, and says that:

Managers hold it all together. They deal with everything and everybody concerned with your (artist’s) career. [...] Managers do what needs to be done. [...] The manager is your right-hand man or woman, your number one career adviser, your mentor, teacher, intermediary, psychologist, best fan and worst critic all rolled onto one (ibid).

Angela Beeching provides a concise and simplified description of an artist manager. She says that “the work of artist managers is booking concerts for their artists, and negotiating fees and contracts for these performances. [...] Managers also create and oversee the development of their artist’s promotional material” (2010: 153-154). She further says that “an experienced, successful manager is someone who has built solid relationships with

presenters – the people who organize concert series, festivals, and residencies” (153). Having suggested various categories of artist managers, Shaw points to a ‘personal manager’ as “the most important person in the artist’s career” (2010: 162). He explains the duties of this person as entailing taking care of “the day-to-day business functions of the artist and act as a general manager and chief operating officer” (ibid). He breaks these down into various possibilities which include:

Developing the artist’s talent, helping in creative decisions, making sure the artist is presentable for the public and maintains their brand image, overlooking publicity and marketing, overseeing the website, selecting other entities the artist may need such as publishers, record companies, publicists, agent, accountant and lawyers, and, staying positive about the artist’s career (2010: 162 – 163).

Shaw further describes the duties of the business manager as entailing “to supervise bookkeeping and tax planning as well as assist in investment decisions and personal financial planning. In other words, they handle all the artist’s money (2007: 169). According to Shaw, this also includes ensuring that “earnings of the artist are collected and other managers and personnel are paid” (ibid). He describes the duties of ‘Agents’ as involving to “market and sell acts to promoters and venues” (170). He says that:

Agents receive offers of employment and negotiate terms of that contract. They are responsible for booking live performances, [...] and can be involved in commercials, tour sponsorship, television specials, personal appearances (such as record signings, pain interviews, etc.) and other areas that promote an artist” (ibid).

An important clarifying statement that Shaw however makes is that “generally the artist only takes on an agent when their live schedule is bringing in enough money to support an agent” (ibid). This particular study has not found a South African Gospel musician who is contracted to an agent.

According to Shaw, the personal manager of the artist normally does not travel with the artist. Owing to that, the ‘road manager’ is contracted, and

travels with the artist. He says that the duties of the road manager include:

Transportation of the artist to and from hotels and venues, paying bills for the tour, collection of earnings while on tour, recording expenses made during the tour or gig, CD and merchandise sales at the event as well as making sure that the stage, sound and lighting are all set up correctly (2010: 172).

On the duties of the 'publicist', Shaw says that "a publicist's job is to publicize the artist and thereby increase their popularity" (ibid). He defines this person in comparison to a public relations officer, who, however "spends time on the telephone talking to media, sending out copies of an artist's new record to media as well as arranging and compiling press kits" (173). He further outlines, as a requirement, that a publicist "should be knowledgeable about the music industry and have contacts and relationships with magazines, radio and television stations and newspapers" (ibid).

From a minimalist, multi-tasking self-managed artist, to a well-established renowned act, almost all the facets of the artist management team discussed above are traceable in local Gospel. In the case of Joyous Celebration, for example, various people who carry out duties of artist management, include Boniswa Raluare who is General or Operations Manager, Sibongiseni Mbhele, who is an Artist Manager, Eugene Mpulo, who does Marketing Collaterals, Themba Ndala who works on Social Media, and Helga Klizanie who does Public Relations and Publicity. As Shaw suggests, "sometimes the best managers are personal friends" (2007: 162), and spouses, I add. This is such as in the case of Hurley Bam, who is successfully being managed by his wife Michelle. According to Michelle, her responsibilities include "everything about Hurley, including bookings, road or on-tour management, public relations, publicity and profiling on social media, newspapers, radio and television" (Bam, M. interview, 2013). She further says that "our approach is to allow Hurley to focus on music and singing, without worrying about all the other administration and logistical issues" (ibid). Hurley endorses Michelle's statement and says that:

She makes my job very easy. Although I like to be hands-on on operations,

but my wife takes care of almost everything, except the music and the singing. She handles my diary, books gigs and organizes performances, handles financial aspects of my career, and even sorts out my wardrobe (Bam, H. interview, 2013).

The basis of the artist manager, as outlined by the Bam couple, is to maximize effectiveness which in this case is achieved by sharing of duties. The artist is allowed space and freedom to focus on the musical aspects of the career, while the manager takes care of operational, administration and other elements thereof. This kind of a set-up would therefore exploit the business aspect of the artist's career, thus ensuring commercial success.

The Sales, Publicity, Marketing and Promotion Team(s)

The observation of this study is that there are blurry demarcation lines between the duties of the 'publicist', 'public relations officer' and that of a 'marketing' officer. This blurriness emanates from the fact that most South African Gospel artists, especially the self-releasing ones, do not have the financial resources to individualize these offices and responsibilities. Bruce Haring points to the wrongly conceptualized explanation of difference between these duties. He says that "marketing is different from promotion and publicity, but often gets lumped into one or both categories [...] the differences between the categories are subtle, but definitive, and should never be confused" (2005: 84).

Themba Ndala, the Joyous Celebration 'Social Media Profiler' says that:

The responsibility of the publicist is to take the information about the artist to the public. This includes all artist information, whether good or bad. However, the publicist does not need even to appear to the public. The work of the Public Relations person, on the other hand, is to manage the information regarding the artist. For example if there is bad news about the artist, may be a scandal of some sort; it is the duty of the Public Relations manager to do damage control, may be issue a media statement or set up a press conference to clarify issues (Ndala interview, 2013).

Shaw states that “a publicist’s job is to publicize the artist and thereby increase their popularity” (2007: 172). Geoffrey Hull explains ‘marketing’ as “a term that encompasses a wide range of activities” (2004: 169). He elaborates on these activities by quoting the American Marketing Association, which defines it as “the process of planning and executing conception, pricing, and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives” (ibid). John Stiernberg defines ‘marketing’ as “the act of developing products (goods and services) and exposing them for sale to a specific customer base” (2001: 63). Bruce Haring dissects these terms, and says that:

Promotion is a direct method of touting yourself (referring to the artist). It can take the form of advertising, where you buy a billboard, a radio spot or an ad in the local alternative weekly. It can be a simple act of putting up queue at the club you are playing. Promotion is a direct way to get the word on your music and your appearances out to a wider audience and usually involves your direct involvement in making it happen.

Publicity is when nominal objective third party decides to discuss you and/or your music. This is usually done without your direct input, but may be guided by a publicist, and includes reviews, features and commentaries in all manner of media on you and your art. It attempts to paint a picture of where you’re at and where you’re going, giving context to your next place in the universe.

Marketing combines elements of publicity and promotion, nut actually is a separate entity that attempts to snare loyalty by subtly manipulating the emotions of potential customers and create an affinity for a product. In this case, that you (the artist) or your band (2005: 84).

In this chapter, I intended to show the extent to which the music industry goes in maximizing the success of artists. I have argued that this success refers to commercial success, and have showed that Gospel music is no exception to this commercial aspiration. Moreover, I have shown the personnel, processes and activities involved in optimizing an artist as a pivotal role-player, on whom the music business hinges. In chapter seven, I revert to summarize the discussions and arguments that I have made in this chapter. I then locate these discussions within the expected outcomes of this study, and derive the conclusion.

Chapter 5

The culture of popular Gospel music in South Africa

Introduction

In the previous two chapters, I looked at the respective activities of Christian churches and the music industry involving popular Gospel music. In this chapter, I build on the discussions of these two chapters and explore how and why these activities influence what eventually becomes available in the Gospel music market. This exploration searches for Christian and commercial drives behind these activities, such as how Christianity and quests for commercial gains influence different music industry personnel to maneuver songs, recordings, performances and music brands, in order to maximize profits. I further investigate how some of these activities get to be accepted and popularized, whether consciously or subconsciously, by different Gospel music industry people, and eventually become defining requirements, features and characteristics of the generally accepted ways in which things are, or ought to be, done. These generally accepted ways of doing things are what I present in this chapter as some elements of the culture of popular Gospel music in South Africa.

Recording Gospel Music

A good starting point of reference in analyzing the processes and intentions of

the music industry involving Gospel music is the music recording process. The actual act and art of recording music is one of the key stages in the music production value-chain. In consideration of Jonathan Shaw's (2007) 'overview of the entire South African music industry' presented in the previous chapter, the process of recording music involve involves departments and personnel shown in figure 5.1 below.



Figure 5.1: Music Industry departments involved in the process of production.
(Adapted from Shaw, 2007: 24)

Although Shaw only mentions 'studio' as the place where the recording process occurs, however, in the context of Gospel music, 'live venues' are a common option as well. In local Gospel music, the boundaries between studio and 'live' productions are somewhat blurry. I have encountered that in some cases, 'live' is used as referring to real instruments played by musicians, as opposed to using electronic sounds from a keyboard or a sequencer. An example of this, is when rhythm beats are played by a drummer using a drum kit, as opposed to being programmed using sound samples in a sequencer or studio software. Although this characterization does bear some element of 'live' music, however, for the purposes of this study, I use 'live' to refer to a performance occurring in the presence of an audience, which participates in, or responds to, the performance and is audible and/or visible in the final audio and/or video product. This usage includes what I refer to as 'live in studio', such as Benjamin Dube's *Oh Bless Our God* project which was recorded in SABC studios, but with a small audience, which can be heard clapping hands, ululating and responding to performances. A studio recording, on the other hand refers to a recording done without an audience. The exclusion, in this

definition, of usage of 'live' instruments as opposed to electronic is because in Gospel music, musicians continuously use electronic and sampled or programmed instruments even in a 'live' set-up. Usage of what is commonly referred to as 'click-tracks', where pre-recorded sounds are played back from a computer during a 'live' performance, is common. Moreover, most sounds are patched from electronic keyboards' sound banks, and not from real instruments. These include such sounds as strings, organs (recent trends include instruments such as Hammond B3 Organ, Nord Organ 2CD), brass, and so forth. I use these definitions of 'live' and studio recordings henceforth.

Writing about the dynamics of the two types of recordings in the context of jazz, Peter Elsdon says:

Studio recordings represent a very different kind of performance from live recordings. There is much to be said for celebrating the dirty, low-fidelity world of the live recording as a more honest and in many ways faithful representation of what happens when musicians (and audiences) engage in the profoundly social interaction that is called performance. This is to see a recording as a complex process which writes itself in the act of appearing to capture a performance (2010: 160).

Although studio recordings are still widely used in local Gospel music, live recordings are however increasingly becoming a popular option. Siphon Makhabane links this change to Christian church culture and says that "in a live recording, you are able to express yourself unrestricted. You just sing as if you are singing in church" (Makhabane interview, 2013). Nqubeko Mbatha also points to market-influenced and Christian-oriented aspects of studio-versus-live recordings, and says:

Sentiments of a Worshipper is my first live project. I had to push myself beyond my comfort zone of sitting behind the piano, and stand interactively with my audience. Times are changing and we have to adapt. People now want live recordings. They want to take the show to their own comfort spaces at homes. More than all that, a live recording allows me to experience the audience's reaction to the performance as I make it. The audience can motivate and inspire you to stretch yourself beyond your boundaries. It is also easy to flow in the live recording because it's like you are singing in church

and you just follow the lead of the Holy Spirit. I tried in one of the songs in *Forever I'll Worship* to create a flowing atmosphere of the Holy Spirit, but the studio limitations got on the way (Mbatha interview, 2013).

A recording process is not just a mere capturing of the sonic or visual aspects of what the artist is presenting, but as Peter Elsdon suggests, it “either reproduces or represents a performance [and involves capturing] performance [...and] studio creations” (2010: 147). Elsdon further states that “what is presented through a recording is not necessarily all it may seem, the access we are given to a musical event is never unmediated, even if the illusion to the contrary may be extremely powerful” (ibid). Don Cusic writing particularly about Gospel music, states that “the performance is not just a show, it is a service too, and the recordings are not just to listen to – they are to be accepted and agreed with” (2002: 363). This brief discussion alludes to the point that there is more to recording music than just sound, audio, visuals and technical equipment.

In her book, *Sound of Africa: Making music Zulu in a South African studio*, Louis Meintjes presents a useful discussion that reveals broader elements involved in a recording project. Although Meintjes is writing about Mbaqanga music, her discussion is also relevant to local Gospel music. Meintjes argues that:

In-studio mixing is a process of negotiation for control over the electro manipulation of style. If style is conceived as a performed and multilayered sign that expresses, constructs, and reproduces the sensibilities of the artists, then recording and mixing is the dramatized struggle over signs embodying values, identities, and aspirations (2003: 8-9).

Meintjes argues that ‘Zuluness’ can be mapped out musically and incorporated into Mbaqanga music, by employing particular elements that characterize ‘Zuluness’. She says that this ‘Zuluness’ is contained in images that “embodied ‘deep Zulu’ cultural values but were constructed interactively by collectivities and interest groups that were professionally, politically, economically, and/or artistically invested in Zuluness” (7). She further states that these elements can be captured technologically in a recording studio

together with the music. Meintjes uses the term 'mediation' to explain a process through which this 'Zuluness' is translated into a sound recording in a studio. I want to expand on Meintjes' presentation and argue that while it is generally understood as a technical and a musical process, studio and 'live' recordings however further enhance, highlight and embrace various elements of personal experiences of individuals and collective music-makers involved in that particular recording. For instance, amongst other elements necessary for 'mediating' 'Zuluness' into/through a record, Meintjes suggests an interplay among characters of the people involved in the recording process. These people include artists, engineers, producers and record company management, coupled with their personal understanding of "Africans, South Africans, and Zulus, as well as about 'tradition' and 'culture'" (8). In addition to characters, Meintjes mentions personal experiences as contributing factors in crafting a recording project. She points to the association of Mbaqanga music with politics, in terms of how, in the early 1990's, a large number of Zulu people supported the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP), one of the political parties in South Africa. She says that "the processes of mediation between Zuluness as a political position, an everyday experience, and a poetic form play a role in the production and consumption of ethnicity and violence" (2003: 17).

Meintjes discusses how the socio-political circumstances of the IFP Zulu people played out in the way they expressed their feelings through song and dance. In analyzing this, she looks at how Mbaqanga musicians similarly expressed their feelings when recording in studio. Making reference to one incidence of a clash between the IFP and African National Congress (ANC) supporters, that led to a raid by the police force, Meintjes analyzes "the roles the studio and creative engagement with recording technology play in making ambiguous the relationship between the event of the raid and the singing and dancing about violent acts" (175). She looks at common features between the political singing and dancing, and studio recording of Mbaqanga, such as "the slow, deep vocal riff and the hostel dwellers' dancing" (ibid). She further looks at how the lyrical content of mbaqanga music is influenced by the politics of the Zulu people, which is inclined to the IFP.

Meintjes' discussion of the influence of politics on mbaqanga music correlates with this study's argument about the influence of Christianity on Gospel music. In the context of Meintjes' arguments, this Christian influence plays out in studio and live recordings and gets inscribed into the Gospel music and its culture. To this effect, the final product of a studio or live production of Gospel music is determined by the characters and experiences of the people involved in the recording. I further argue that largely, Christianity and commerce influence these characters and experiences. This is evident in the choice of singers, musicians and technicians that are selected to work on an album. This choice is based on their ability to produce or contribute to the production of a Gospel album that will be commercially successful. Producers Percy Ingle, Tshepo Ndzimande, Siphon Makhabane and Nqubeko Mbatha alluded to the importance of a Christian foundation in the personnel they choose to be involved with in various Gospel music projects. In my individual interviews with them, they all point to a particular caliber of musicians and singers that they prefer to work with in ensuring the desired 'Gospel sound'. Further to that they require a studio engineer who is competent and understands the style of music they are producing. Nqubeko Mbatha says that "I always ensure to get people who are talented as singers or musicians, and also who are born again. With Gospel music, you can't compromise that" (Mbatha interview, 2013). Ingle attests to this and says that "You need someone who has a personal experience with the Gospel, otherwise they will just be singing about something they do not know, and I tell you, in Gospel music you can tell if this is the case" (Ingle interview, 2012). In pointing to the Christian influence on Gospel music, Tshepo Ndzimande refers to what he calls 'praise and worship', and says "when an artist is singing, you find them getting into the praise and worship spirit and that's when they preach and quote verses, and even sing in tongues" (Ndzimande interview, 2013).

Speaking or praying in tongues is one of the elements of Christianity, which Tony Heilbut refers to as "glossolalia, [...] a fluent kind of gibberish filled with Hebraic-sounding syllables" (1985: 174). Various Gospel artists speak or sing in tongues in some of their songs, for example: Hlengiwe Mhlaba at 04:05 in her song 'Kodlula iZulu Nomhlaba' (track 6 in *Dwala Lam*), Zaza at 00:25 in

'IGama leNkosi' (track 3 disk 2 in *Spirit of Praise Vol. 4*), and Benjamin Dube at 02:55 in Bow Down (track 7 in *High Praise Explosion – Oh Bless Our God*), and 04:44 in Bless the Lord (track 2 in *I Feel Like Going On*). My argument here is that this expression of artists' 'spirituality' comes from a Christian context, and gets captured into the recordings. Analyzing such an expression of extra-musical elements in recordings, Serge Lacasse says, "the aesthetics of recorded music is [...] in individualized performances of feelings and emotions, as expressed by an artist (2010: 226). It stands to reason, based on Lacasse's statement, that these 'spiritual' feelings and emotions of artists are an integral part of a performance, which gets recorded with the music. In other words, in recording a performance, music-makers are actually recording music which is performed in such a way as to convey feelings and emotions, which I want to argue that in the case of Gospel music, are triggered by a performer's personal spirituality and experience influenced by Christianity.

In his *Sentiments of a Worshipper* DVD, Nqubeko Mbatha emotionally presents in series songs whose lyrical theme is based on the person and the death of Jesus Christ, and the resultant salvation of mankind. While singing the popular Andrea Crouch's 'The Blood' (track 15 in *Sentiments of a Worshipper*), Mbatha breaks emotionally into tears to the point of failing to proceed with the song, an instance where the audience joins in a moment of emotional breakdown, with the organist playing melancholy in the background. All Mbatha says in breaking the teary intermission is that "We love Him so much" (ibid). Although some Gospel artists have been accused of acting out their emotions in Gospel songs, Mbatha's breakdown appears sincere and unscripted, in terms of its abruptness, and how the band loses direction, for a moment, before the organist play on. What is relevant here, however, is how Mbatha's performance conveys his emotions, which I argue is evidence of his Christian commitment, such as in the aforementioned case of Mhlaba, Zaza and Dube.

Pastor Vusi Dube mentions this Christianity commitment as a pivotal factor in Gospel music and a prerequisite for Gospel artists. He says:

The first requirement for a Gospel music artist is that s/he must be born

again. The reason why you find some Gospel artists involved in bad things such as drugs, alcohol, illicit sex, is because they do not have a solid Christian foundation (Dube V. Interview, 2012).

This Christian foundation is alluded to by Pastor Sithole of Oasis of Life regarding Gospel artists whom he regards as “ungrounded [who] when record companies come calling, [...they...] decide [...] to opt for a professional career that could lead them down” (www.news24.com, 12 February 2009). Mentioning pitfalls such as drugs, homosexuality, Sithole says, "I tell them, 'You are going to die', [...] The professional route will kill them. They don't know how to maintain their Christian life" (ibid). These pitfalls unbecoming Christian character are parallel to those alluded to by *ILanga LangeSonto* Newspaper reporting on the proceedings of IZiko Gospel Convention, in which a resolution was taken against ill-behaving Gospel artists. It notes that:

Producers and artists attending this convention complained about the way some artists behave and handle themselves. They voiced their disapproval and agreed unanimously that artists who sing this type of music should not behave and handle themselves in an unbecoming manner and lead an ungodly lifestyle (*ILanga LangeSonto* Newspaper, 10 May 2009).

I want to argue that it is such artists that Benjamin Dube was singing about when saying “Bacul’iGospeli, kodwa abaphil’iGospeli” (track 6 in Benjamin Dube’s *Celebration*), translated: “they sing Gospel music but they do not live the Gospel”. Don Cusic points to a particular lifestyle expected of a Gospel artist and says:

The Gospel artist must be sincere, must truly believe what he/she is singing. He may acknowledge the troubles of life, but never doubt the great truth; he may sometimes question aspects of his faith but never abandon the faith. The gospel artist is more than artist, a conduit for God’s voice in the world, a spiritual salesman and a shining example that God is alive and working within an individual’s life (2002: 363).

Delivering a speech at Hlengiwe Mhlaba’s birthday party, Lindelani Mkhize alludes to the importance of Gospel artists who are Christians, and says: “We are grateful for artists such as Hlengiwe, who do not only sing Gospel music,

but also live the Gospel” (Mkhize, 2009). Swazi Dlamini also said similar words when introducing her Gospel music ensemble called ‘Songs and Psalms’, in a concert at KwaMashu, saying: “These are not just singers, but they are born-again children of God and praise and worshippers from different churches” (Dlamini, 2009).

Along with Christianity, commerce also has an effect, a dual effect, on the processes of selecting human resources to be used in a Gospel music recording project. The first one is pointed to by Tshepo Ndzimande, who says that “Studio time is money. We book sessions per hour. So if your singers and musicians are not on top of their game, they will use more time than expected” (Ndzimande interview, 2013). Nqubeko Mbatha says “I always ensure to get people who can easily catch new songs and moreover who can blend with each other. It saves us time and money” (Mbatha interview, 2013). The second fold of the influence of commerce in scouting Gospel music human resources is in terms of the desired final product. As a commodity, Gospel music is crafted to meet particular aesthetic standards, and to bear particular musical elements that appeal to targeted audiences. In aiming to meet these standards, music makers select particular people with relevant expertise, with a hope of achieving a product that will be commercially viable. These said standards also entail technical techniques of recording, editing, mixing and mastering an audio and/or video project. To attain these aesthetic standards, there is a web of non-musical elements that must come together. For instance, the physical attributes of a recording studio or a live venue also do matter. This is because, as Louise Meintjes argues, a recording studio and a live venue are more than just physical spaces, but are also “social, creative, and rarefied spaces” (2003: 16). Not only that, but also the recording technology play its own important role in maximizing the aesthetic quality of a recording, capturing the music that conveys emotions. Meintjes acknowledges this, in the context of recording Mbaqanga music, that and “studio technology mediates the creative process and [...] brings the socio-political and ideological world of apartheid into the heart of the production process” (ibid).

Studios and live venues do not only offer technical, acoustic and physical aspects but entail psychological aspects as well. Keith Negus recognizes these aspects and argues that: “studios are chosen for their atmosphere and technical facilities, and producers tend to develop a preference for a particular environment where they have completed successful work in the past” (1992: 84). He further says that “the interior and the location of a studio can influence the atmosphere at a recording session and have subtle but profound effects on the music produced” (ibid). In the context of live venues, there are particular requirements as well. For an example, Bruce and Jenny Bartlett suggest that consideration is given to venues “where the audience is attentive and enthusiastic, and the background noise is minimal. [...] Ideally the stage should be large so the performers can spread apart for better separation” (2007: 45). I want to add that the seating capacity of the venue itself also plays part in making it a venue of choice.

Artists and ensembles such as Joyous Celebration, Spirit of Praise, Benjamin Dube, Rebecca Malope select venues with bigger capacities, such as the Durban International Convention Centre and Carnival City in order to accommodate a maximum number of their fans. This obviously translates into more financial gains in terms of gate takings and ticket sales. Natal Playhouse, Durban City Hall, Carnival City, Pretoria State Theatre and Mosaic Theatre and Durban Christian Centre’s Alhambra Theatre are also commonly used for live recording of Gospel music projects. A recent trend, mainly by Joyous Celebration is to use Christian churches, such as Rhema Ministries and City Hill Church used for *Joyous Celebration 17 - Grateful* and *Joyous Celebration 18 - One Purpose* respectively.

Many other churches have been used for live recordings, including The Jesus Dome, used by Khaya Mthethwa, Hope Restoration Ministries used by Lebo Sekgobela, Potter’s House Family Church used by Siphon Makhabane, and Christ Worship House used by Worship House. I want to argue that this usage of church auditoriums is aimed at attracting Christians to the concerts, in the sense that Christians will identify more with a church building than with a

convention center, for an example. Based on these observations, I argue that it is safe to make a logical assumption that the decision to use a church building is secondarily influenced by Christianity, and primarily by commerce.

In addition to the aforementioned features, recording studios and live venues have an effect on the aesthetic quality of a recording. This quality includes technical elements such as the physical acoustics, the equipment and technological innovations and the engineer. The music industry has set minimal audio and video technical requirements for music recordings. Video technology advancements, for example, have migrated from analogue, to High Definition (HD), to Full HD, to Blue Ray, and have resulted in music industry companies similarly raising their regulations of music products they involve themselves with, either by playing them on radio or TV, or by including them in their sales catalogue. When I used to run a music studio, I encountered various artists who came with their recordings to the studio to be mastered, because a particular radio or TV station had rejected it, based on its poor aesthetic quality.

Tshepo Ndzimande was very vocal in criticizing some Gospel artists whom he said “take short-cuts and present recordings of poor quality” (Ndzimande interview, 2013). Lindelani Mkhize also highly emphasized the issue of investing in a quality recording. He said, “There is a lot of work that goes into our recordings. We actually record the audio separately from the video, and put it all together in post-production” (Mkhize interview, 2012). I expound on these elements later in this chapter. The point that I am making here, however, is that a Gospel recording of a higher aesthetic quality has a commercial advantage over others that have less or poor aesthetic quality. The relationship between quality and commerce is a subject of on-going scholarly debates. In chapter one, I highlighted the interplay of commerce and quality, referring to Dominic Strinati who asks “What wins out when popular culture is manufactured industrially and sold according to the criteria of marketability and profitability – commerce or quality?” (1995: 3). In simplifying this question, he inquires:

Does the emergence of culture in commodity forms mean that the criteria of profitability and marketability take precedence over quality, artistry, integrity and intellectual challenge? Or does the increasingly universal market for popular culture ensure that it is truly popular because it makes available commodities people actually want? (1995: 3).

I want to argue that the two elements, namely: commerce and quality are not opponents, but rather work together complementarily. In the context of local Gospel, there has been a notable shift towards, and demand of quality projects stipulated by the broadcasting industry, in terms of audio and video quality, and the overall product packaging. I discuss these further in the next chapter.

Finally, Louise Meintjes argues that the perceptions of music-makers about global music influence the production of local mbaqanga. She says that “local ideas about ‘overseas’ [are] an influential concept in South African music production” (ibid). In making this argument, she ascertains that:

Global and local spheres intersect and refrain in the artist’s imagination, as realized in the sonic choices made during the recording. International experiences and stories about overseas co-produce both local artist’s visions of the world out there and their sound as it is recorded onto tape (2003: 175).

The production of local Gospel music is influenced by global trends of Gospel music, either directly or indirectly. I argue that in attempts to broaden their target markets and maximize their commercial gains, Gospel artists import and adopt ‘foreign’ musical influences, especially from the American Gospel industry. When attending the pre-production/set-up and sound check for *Joyous Celebration 18 – One Purpose* recording, I overheard Lungelo Ngcobo, one of the keyboard players commenting about the Nord C2D organ combo that he was using, saying that “this is the closest it can get to the sound of the Hammond B3. I can get Buddy Strong’s sounds from this one”. Evidently, Lungelo considered Buddy Strong, a popular American ‘Gospel music organist’ as an epitome of organ playing for Gospel music. In talking about the future of local Gospel, Nqubeko Mbatha says:

South African Gospel is not very far behind international Gospel. I think the local industry has made huge improvements. We can now share stages with Kirk Franklin, Bebe Winans, Donnie McClurkin, Fred Hammond, VaShaun Mitchell and many other Gospel internationals that have come to South Africa (Mbatha interview, 2013).

The implication of Mbatha's statement is that global trends of Gospel music are the yardstick with which one can measure the state of local Gospel. This is somewhat true, considering the fact that local Gospel has foreign influences in its origins that have been carried across time and space to the present. These are attested to by Lindelani Mkhize, who, talking about the making of *Joyous Celebration 17*, says "We acknowledge other influences from America and other parts of the world" (Mkhize in *Joyous Celebration 17* interviews). Contemporary local Gospel music still draws much influence from American, Australian and other global Gospel. This influence is in terms of the overall sound of 'contemporary' Gospel, such as in the music of Benjamin Dube, Nqubeko Mbatha, Ntokozo Mbambo, Solly Mahlangu, Joyous Celebration; which, amongst many other features, is characterized by sophisticated instrumentation, rhythms and vocal arrangements. The influence of international Gospel plays out in the usage of songs by 'international' artists. These are such songs as Bette Midler's 'God is Watching Us' sung by Rebecca Malope (track 9 in *Rebecca Sings Gospel*), Richard Smallwood's 'Healing' sung by Benjamin Dube (track 3 in *Healing in His Presence*), Richard Smallwood's 'Total Praise', Rev. James Cleveland's 'I don't believe He brought me this far', The William Brothers' 'I'm Just a Nobody' sung by Joyous Celebration (tracks 2, 6 and 8 in *Joyous Celebration 2*), and Andrea Crouch's 'The Blood' sung by Nqubeko Mbatha (track 15 in *Sentiments of a Worshipper*), among many others. I further discuss this subject of 'foreign' influences, in chapter 7.

A Hit Record

I want to argue that the process of recording music, whether in a studio or in a live venue, is motivated by an expected outcome of a 'hit record', which is

primarily motivated by commerce. James Riordan considers 'a hit record' - which he defines as "a single or an album that has everything it needs to become a big seller" (1988: 38) - to be one of the ingredients that are necessary for a successful artist. David Baskerville and Tim Baskerville define "a hit song [as...] one that gets significant radio airplay and sales" (2013: 36). The terms 'hit record', 'hit album' and 'hit song' were popular amongst my respondents when they define their strategies for success. Their usage or understanding of a 'hit song/record' differs, from Riordan's, which considers a 'hit record' as an ingredient, which is something you need in order to make something. An ingredient contributes into making a product, and not the other way around. In other words, Riordan suggests that before you have a successful artist, you must have a hit record. On the other hand, some of my respondents discussed 'a hit record' as a product, something that comes after an artist has become successful. This stance suggests that a successful artist will make a 'hit record'. I find both stances relevant to this study, in the sense that they both regard a 'hit song/record' as an integral component of success.

I remember one friend of mine commenting about one of Kirk Franklin's recordings. Seemingly my friend went into the music shop to buy something else, but saw Franklin's latest release. Knowing the previous albums of Kirk Franklin, and seemingly holding them at high esteem as one of his best ever produced Gospel recordings, my friend bought Franklin's new album, without even previewing it. This is due to the fact that as far as he is concerned, every album that Kirk makes is 'a hit' or at least has some 'hit songs'. To his dismal disappointment, Kirk's latest offering did not, according to his judgement, live to the standard of its predecessors. My friend's expectation was that a successful artist would make a 'hit record'. The flipside of this scenario is that going back in time would take us to a point where Kirk Franklin was not a successful artist. However, after making some recordings, especially his *God's Property* album, he then became successful, such that the albums that he made thereafter, found him already successful. These two scenarios suggest that artists need 'hit songs/records' in order to be successful, and further to maintain that success. Based on this, and supported by Riordan's

assertion that a 'hit record' is the one that has all requirements needed to become a big seller, I argue therefore, as I will show in the following sections, that all the activities involving Gospel music can be linked to commerce or aspirations of making a 'hit record'.

Tshepo Ndzimande suggests that "there is no one person who embarks on a recording project with an intention to fail" (Ndzimande interview, 2013). Having worked in a commercial studio as a recording engineer, I relate with Ndzimande's argument. Almost all artists go out of the recording studio with the energy and optimism of a 'hit record' in their possession. Some talk about massive album sales, some about winning awards, and so forth. It is along such talks that the current study argues that all the activities that the music industry - particularly the recording industry - engages in, are aimed at making either a 'hit record'. This study further argues that while trying to attain these 'hits', the music industry employs various strategies and activities, which I discuss shortly hereafter, that eventually become defining elements of the culture of Gospel music.

One of the questions that I addressed to this research's respondents who are producers, is: "What elements are required to make a 'successful' Gospel song or album?" (see Appendix 3.1). In answering this question, Percy Ingle, a renowned, multi-award winning producer, who has produced a number of 'successful' Gospel artists such as Rebecca Malope, Deborah Fraser, Andile ka Majola, says that:

Although there basic guidelines, but you cannot be so sure that the album will be a success. Yes there are guidelines and production imperatives, but they are not definite. It does not work like a mathematical equation where two twos always give a four. Sometimes you make two songs or two albums, with similar production methods, but get two totally different results in terms of sales (Ingle interview, 2012).

Keith Negus alludes to this uncertainty, by relating his own personal experience, and says:

I found much uncertainty among personnel involved in producing music. Neither business executives, fans, the musicians themselves nor journalists can predict what is going to be commercially successful or what new musics are going to be critically acclaimed (1996: 48-49).

David and Tim Baskerville agree with Negus and ask a question: “Does anyone know which songs will become lasting hits?” (2013: 36). They give a decisive answer: “Not on this earth. In a perfect world, a good song and a hit song would be one and the same. Good songs would become hits, and hits would be good songs” (ibid). This reminds me of a lengthy debate during the Gospel IZiko Workshop, an annual Gospel music conference organized by World Gospel Power House, where the subject of the categories for Crown Gospel Awards was discussed. The uncertainty was based on the categories: ‘The Best Song’ and ‘The Best Songwriter’. The subject matter was based on the question: ‘Isn’t a ‘Best Song’ obviously the one that ‘The Best Songwriter’ would write?’ It however transpired that ‘The Best Song’ is a song that becomes popular, regardless of its musicality. ‘The Best Songwriter’ on the other hand, is the one who pens a song that would probably tick all or most boxes in the musicality checklist appealing to a group of music students or graduates.

Be that as it may, there are some common characteristics and measures that the music industry employs in making a ‘hit song/record’. Acknowledging the success uncertainty, David and Tim Baskerville outline the first step of a working formula to produce successful records and songs, they say:

Some lessons learnt in the past can help predict what might work in the future. Although it is difficult to identify ingredients that might bring a song artistic or commercial success, we can critically examine great songs and see what they have in common (2013: 36).

One of these commonalities is noted by Lindelani Mkhize who says that in order to attain a ‘hit song/record’, “you need a right artist for the right song and project” (Mkhize interview, 2012). Although Mkhize’s response sounds like a simple and a straight forward recipe, however, the two ‘right’ words in his statement are a hidden mystery and variables that record companies do their

best to solve and get right. Referring to this, Keith Negus says that “record companies develop various strategies and working practices to try and deal with uncertainty” (1996: 49). James Riordan maps out “three distinct areas that must come together in a big way in order for a hit to be possible” (1988: 38). He suggests: “[1] A great song, preferably a hit song, [2] a great performance in the studio, and [3] enough exposure for the record to be heard up and down the country” (ibid). In analyzing the musical works of global musical icons such as Franz Schubert, Richard Rodgers, Duke Ellington, John Lennon and many others, David and Tim Baskerville deduce that ‘good’ songs would have the following characteristics:

1. The song is memorable; it sticks in the mind. This is often accomplished by the use of a hook, a catchy phrase or refrain that repeats several times during the song.
2. The song has immediate appeal.
3. The lyrics contain an overall theme and employ vivid phrases or imagery (2013: 37).

David and Tim Baskerville, acknowledging the difference between a ‘good’ song and a ‘successful’ or a ‘hit’ song, state that “even if a song has these basic characteristics of a *good* song, it still has only the potential to become a *hit* song. Achieving that breakthrough will involve a number of other elements beyond the songwriter’s control” (ibid). In addition to the three above-mentioned characteristics, they therefore further suggest the following four, that they say are however, “beyond the composer’s power” (ibid):

4. The song gets an appealing initial performance, hopefully by a well-known performer that is captured in a recording session.
5. The record company gets behind the project and promotes strong airplay for the recording.
6. The song and the recording suit the taste of the current market.
7. The recording is distributed effectively throughout the country (ibid).

These points can be summarized as answering the question: ‘how to make a hit Gospel music song/record’. In consideration of Riordan’s perspective, this question can be revised and rephrased into:

1. How to make a great Gospel song, preferably a hit Gospel song?
2. How to stage a great Gospel music performance in the studio or ‘live’ venue?

These questions bear much relevance and importance to the current study

because in answering them, one will with the same breath give answers to the question of how the music industry and Christian churches, or commerce and Christianity impact upon and influence the culture of popular Gospel music in South Africa. This is because arguably all Gospel artists and record companies work towards attaining ‘a great song’, a ‘hit song’, and ‘great performances’.

I would like to consider Riordan’s questions and attempt to answer them by testing the aforementioned seven characteristics of a ‘hit song/record’ suggested by David and Tim Baskerville. I discuss these elements in the context of the six Gospel songs that have won the ‘Best Song’ (also called ‘The Song of the Year’) in the history of the annual SABC Crown Gospel Awards. Figure 5.2 tabulates these songs. I also want to include S’fiso Ncwane’s ‘Kulungile Baba’ which broke the record by being the first ever Gospel song to win ‘The Record of the Year’ in the South African Music Awards (SAMA).

Year	Artist	Name of the song	Name of the Album
2008	Hlengiwe Mhlaba	Uyalalela	Hlengiwe Mhlaba, ‘Jesu Uyalalela’.
2009	Solly Mahlangu	Obrigado	Solly Mahlangu, ‘Obrigado’.
2010	S’fiso Ncwane	Phakama	S’fiso Ncwane ‘Baba Ngiyavuma’
2011	Solly Mahlangu	Siyabonga Jesu	Solly Mahlangu, ‘Mwamba Mwamba’.
2012	Thinah Zungu	Kwanqab’umusa	Thinah Zungu, ‘Kwanqab’umusa’
2013	Dumi Mkokstad	Mbize	Dumi Mkokstad, ‘Mbize’

Figure 5.2: Winners of the ‘Best Song’ award in the SABC Crown Gospel wards, 2008 to 2013.

Firstly, I would like to present that the 2nd, 4th and 5th characteristics are difficult to prove within the scope (of the fieldwork) of this study, as they would need to be specifically addressed to respective artists, some of which I could interview. Secondly, I want to argue that the 6th characteristic: ‘The song and the recording suit the taste of the current market’ applies to all these songs, for the mere fact that they surpassed many other competitor songs to win the

'Best Song' accolade, having been voted for by the public. This is of course with due consideration of discrepancies of voting systems, and is based on a general assumption that the whole process was a fair one. I further present that the 7th feature regarding nationwide distribution does apply to all seven artists, in the sense that all these albums were available on music stores nationwide. I do acknowledge that David and Tim Baskerville particularly mention 'effective' distribution, and therefore concede a reality of variability in the nature and 'effectiveness' of the distribution of these artists' albums, a phenomenon that is, however, beyond the current study's scope. I therefore would like to discuss the 1st (the song is memorable) and 3rd (lyrics have an overall theme and employ vivid phrases or imagery) characteristics in the context of the seven afore mentioned 'Songs of the Year'. In expounding on the 1st feature, I would like to suggest a difference between a 'memorable' song - a song which stays in the memory because of something striking or unusual that can be associated with it, - and a song which is easily 'memorized' - may be because it is short and simple and is repetitive. I consider both possibilities. However, it is important to investigate, to see if different artists do use these criteria in making and performing their songs.

1. 'Uyalalela': Hlengiwe Mhlaba (Track 1 in *Jesu Uyalalela*)

This is the song that won the 'Best Song' award in the inaugural episode of the Crown Gospel Awards in 2008. The song says:

UJesu ulalela aphenkul'umkhuleko, (*Jesus listens and answers the prayer*)
Letha konke kuJesu ngomkhuleko. (*Bring everything to Jesus in prayer*).

Memorable and has a hook phrase

This is a slow, one-chorus song spanning over four-4/4-bars recurring. The song is easy to memorize. More than the fact that the song is well known within Christian and Gospel music circles, Hlengiwe uses her artistic skill in highlighting various parts of this song as hooks at different times of its duration. For the first one and a half minutes, she firstly establishes the chorus as a whole by singing it repeatedly. She then emphasizes the phrase 'Uyalalela' (he listens), by singing it repetitively. She then improvises,

emphasizing that Jesus listens to everyone's prayer, whether they are rich or poor, and educated or uneducated. She then moves her focus to the tag 'aphendule' (and he answers), which she rhythmically emphasizes by accenting it with the music over two 4/4 bars repeatedly. She also improvises along the theme of the song, stating that Jesus answers in the morning, daytime and even in the evening. A few seconds into the third minute, Hlengiwe then hooks the listener to the phrase 'letha konke' (bring it all), which is sung over and over again. The supplementary music alters the rhythmic accompaniment during this phrase, from a slow, to a groovy double time. Summatively, the song is memorable, but more so, owing to the way Hlengiwe presents it, and emphasize different phrases at different sections of the song.

Overall lyrical theme

The theme of this song clearly paints a picture of Jesus who is always attentive to the prayers that people make to him. The manner in which Hlengiwe Mhlaba highlights and emphasizes various facets of this theme, as discussed in the preceding sub-section, makes it easy to visualize the message of the song. The overall theme of the song, encapsulated in the lyrics, encourages the listener never to hesitate bringing their prayers to Jesus, because He listens to prayers, regardless of one's circumstances, and eventually answers those prayers in due time.

2. 'Obrigado': Solly Mahlangu (track 1 in *Obrigado*)

Chorus 1:

(In Portuguese and Xitsonga: Shangaan)

Obrigado Xikwembu xa matimba! Obrigado! X 2
(Thank you Almighty God, thank you)

(In Xitsonga: Shangaan)

Hi khensile Xikwembu xa Matimba! Hi khensile! X 2

Khanimambo Xikwembu xa Matimba! Khanimambo! X 2

(In IsiZulu)

Siyabonga Nkosi yamakhosi! Siyabonga! X 2

Chorus 2:

(Sung in Xhosa)
Unamandla uThix' esimkhonzayo! Unamandla!
(*The God we serve is powerful! He is powerful!*)

(Sung in Tsonga: isiNdebele)
Hi kakaramba uZim'esimkhontako! Hi kakaramba!
Hi ku tane uZim'esimkhontako! Hi ku tane!

Memorable and has a hook phrase

Solly Mahlangu's *Obrigado*, is also an old church song that I personally recall from my 'Sunday School' days. The song is a repetition of two one-phrased-choruses that are altered into different languages, but maintaining the same meaning, form and structure. Coupled with his energetic stage presence, Solly Mahlangu presents this up-tempo, eight-4/4-bar-chorus, in a celebratory mood. Adding to it being a short and an easily memorable song, Mahlangu's presentation makes it easy to catch and sing along. The word 'Obrigado' is used as a hook, in a sense that Mahlangu, although altering to and fro between languages, keeps on reverting to it, thus highlighting it as the title of the song.

Overall lyrical theme

The theme of this song can be easily carved from the lyrics. This is a song of thanksgiving and praise to the Almighty God. I have indicated that the mood of the song is celebratory and jubilant. Owing to that, the act of thanksgiving that is coupled with praise is portrayed as prompted by a particular deed of God, that makes the singer/songwriter to say that "The God (that) we serve is powerful".

3. 'Phakama': S'fiso Ncwane (track 2 in *Ngiyabonga Baba*).

Chorus:

Phakama Nkosi yeZulu. X2
(*Be exalted King of Heavens*)
Uwengamele umhlaba wonke.
(*Rule over the whole earth.*)
Uwengamele wonk'umhlaba
(*Rule over the whole earth.*)

Memorable and has a hook phrase

This song is easily memorable and has two phrases that are presented repeatedly in an eight-4/4-bar chorus. In the verses of the song, Ncwane improvises and expands on the same chorus, thus slightly altering it. S'fiso Ncwane is arguably one of the best local Gospel music performers with undisputed stage presence, and his presentation of this song makes it easy to catch and sing along. The word 'Phakama' feature frequently and primarily in the various sections of the song. Ncwane also hooks the listener on this word when improvising at the climax of the song.

Overall lyrical theme

This song's overall theme entails surrendering to the superpowers, as the lyrics suggest. S'fiso highlights this theme by elaborating on various aspects of human life over which the 'King of Heavens' should be exalted to rule. He mentions aspects such as 'our homes', 'our lives', 'at work', and so forth.

4. 'Siyabonga Jesu': Solly Mahlanqu (track 1, disk 2, *Spirit of Praise*, Vol. 3)

(In IsiZulu)

Wahamba nathi. Oh, wahamba nathi,
(*You walked with us, oh you walked with us*)
Oh wahamba nathi. Siyabonga x2
(*Oh you walked with us. We thank you*)

Siyabonga Jesu, Siyabonga Ngonyama yeZulu,
(*We thank you Jesus, we thank you Lion of heaven*)
Siyabonga Jesu, Siyabonga x2
(*We thank you Jesus, we thank you*)

(In IsiNdebele, with same translation)

Wakhamba nathi, oh wakhamba nathi
Oh wakhamba nathi, Siyathokoza

Siyathokoza Jesu, Siyathokoza kakaramba
Siyathokoza Jesu, Siyathokoza

(In SeSotho, with same translation)

Wa tsamaya le rona, oh wa tsamaya le rona
Oh wa tsamaya le rona, re a boka

Re a boka Jesu, re a boka tlatlamathjolo,
Re a boka Jesu, re ya boka.

Memorable and has a hook phrase

This song is also an easy to memorize, two-phrase chorus sung in a mid-tempo with a jubilant feel. Like his *Obrigado* song, Mahlangu sings this song in various South African dialects including IsiZulu, IsiXhosa, SeSotho, IsiNdebele, Tsonga/Shangaan and Tshivenda. In the middle of this song, Solly Mahlangu says, “I wish I can sing it in Sotho, but I’m glad even though I don’t know Sotho, but I have my brother who can help me; do you think you can help me?” This he says referring and talking to Kgotso Makgalema, another Gospel artist. Kgotso then sings the song in SeSotho as transcribed above. In his project *Mwamba Mwamba*, Solly does the song again (track 16), and in the middle of the song he says:

“I went to Giyani, when I got there, they said ‘Ay bhut’ Solly, why usishiya thina lukengoma’ [No, brother Solly, why do you leave us out in this song]. Then I said, ‘teach me how to sing it, and this is what they said:...”

Further down in the song, Mahlangu says:

Two months ago, I went to Venda and they said to me ‘Ay, ay, you need to sing it in Venda. This is what they said:”

He then sings it in Tshivenda, saying:

Wa tshimbila na rine, oh watshimbila na rine,
Ohh watshimbila na rine, riya livhuwa.
Riya livhuwa Yeso, riya livhuwa Khosi ya mahosi,
Riya livhuwa Yeso, riya livhuwa.

I want to argue that this usage of many languages makes it easy for different people to remember it because it is sung in their vernacular. Moreover, it increases the scope of its audience and its popularity, in the sense that many people can identify with the song within their own cultural dialects.

Overall lyrical theme

The theme of the song is easily discernible, especially with the jubilant mood on which it is sung. The song thanks Jesus for 'walking with us'. That is the literal lyrical content of the song which is sung repetitively.

5. 'Kwanqab'umusa' by Thinah Zungu (track 01 in *Kwanqab'umusa*).

Chorus:

Kwanqab'umusa, nibona ngiphila njena,
(Mercy refused, as you see me alive)
uThixo akavumanga ngempilo yami.
(God refused with my life)
Wathi qha, ngeke ngivume unyawo lwakho lushelele,
(He said no, I won't allow your foot to slip off)
UThixo akavumanga ngempilo yami.
(God refused with my life).

Memorable and has a hook phrase

In 2012, this song did not only win 'The Best Song' award, but the 'The Best Songwriter' as well. Of the six Crown Gospel Awards 'Best Songs' in this current discussion, this is the longest. Nevertheless, the simplicity and memorability of this song is more in its chorus than its verses. The chorus is presented in a mid-tempo, $\frac{3}{4}$ time signature, and spans over eight bars, and repeated. This song became very popular within Christian circles. I can recall a cellphone captured video of my then three-year old daughter singing the song. This displays how easily memorable the song is.

Overall lyrical theme

The theme of the song gives an account of the mercy of God, which prohibits bad things from happening. This theme is clearly elaborated upon in the verse of the song, which says:

Kwakumele ngihlushwe ukuze ngazi izimiso zakho.
(I had to be persecuted so that I learn your statutes)
Impela njengoJakobe, kwakumele ngilingwe.
(Indeed just like Jacob, I had to be tempted)
Kodwa ngoba mina ngazi ukuthi uyisphephelo sami.

(But because I know that you are my refuge)

Impela nguwe owanqaba nempilo yami.

(Certainly it is you who refused with my life).

When the song returns to the chorus, the theme of 'mercy' is improvised upon, emphasizing that although the singer had done some bad things personally, God through his mercy did not deal with him according to his deeds.

6. 'Mbize' by Dumi Mkokstad (track 01 in Mbize)

Verse:

Ek'seni unguJehova, emini unguJehova

(In the morning you are Jehovah, during the daytime you are Jehovah)

Entambama unguJehova, awuguquki.

(At noon you are Jehovah, you do not change).

Uyawuzwa umkhuleko uma ubizwa okholwayo

(You hear the prayer if you called by a believer)

Wena Jehova ungumabizw'asabele

(You Jehovah are a responder-when-called)

Chorus:

(Dumi) Ngithi Mbize...

(I say call Him...)

(Choir) El Shadai, ah Simakade

(El Shadai, ah the Ever-Standing One)

(Dumi) Mbize...

(Call Him...)

(Choir) Elohim, unguJehovah

(Elohim, He is Jehovah)

(All) Ezintweni zonke unguJehovah.

(In all things He is Jehovah)

Memorable and has a hook phrase

The popularity and memorability of this song hinges upon the word 'mbize' in the chorus. Dumi plays a pivotal role through his improvisation skill to accentuate 'mbize' as the hook of the song. The song is easy to sing and memorize, particularly because of the call-and-response between Dumi and the backing singers used in the chorus.

Overall lyrical theme

The lyrical theme of the song is based on calling upon the Lord. In leading the

song, Dumi shouts 'Mbize', saying 'Call upon Him', and the song presents various names with which the Lord can be called. Moreover, Dumi emphasizes that God can be called upon regardless of circumstantial position of the 'caller'. In emphasizing this, Dumi further improvises around the phrase 'in all things He is Jehovah'.

7. 'Kulungile Baba' by S'fiso Ncwane (track 1 in *Kulungile Baba*)

(Spoken Intro)

Uthi Kulungile noma ngabe kwenzekani

(You say it is ok, no matter what is happening)

Kodwa uma kuvume uNkulunkulu, *(As long as God has allowed it)*

Ayinakuphikiswa intando yakhe. *(His will can never be opposed)*

Uthi noma ngabe kwenzeka izinto ezibuhlungu uthi kodwa Nkosi Kulungile.

(Even when painful things happen in your life, but you say 'Lord, it is ok')

(Chorus, singing)

Kulungile Baba *(It is well, Father)* (Repeated eight times)

(Verse)

Noma kwenzekani-ke Somandla empilweni zethu kulungile,

(No matter what happens in our lives Almighty God)

Noma kukubi noma kukuhle, kulungile kodwa makuvume wena kuyintando yakho. *(Whether it is good or it is bad, but if it is you have allowed it and it is your will)*

Baba noma ukholo lwethu belunyakazisa,

(Even when they shake our faith)

Noma izivunguvungu zifika *(Even when storms come)*

(Back to Chorus,)

(Spoken passage)

Mamela, *(Listen)*

Noma bekuthuka, bekubiza ngagama,

(Even if they insult you, calling you names)

bethi umumbi, bekukhuluma kabi, *(Saying you are bad, talking negatively)*

befuna umshado wakho ubhidlike,

(Conspiring against your marriage to fail)

befuna ukukuxoshisa emsebenzini,

(Conspiring against you to be fired at work)

behleba ngegama lakho, besho zonke izinto ezingasile ngegama lakho,

(Backbiting about your name, saying all evil things about you)

Kodwa uthi 'Nkosi uyabazi wena labantu, uyabazi Amagama abo, Kulungile Baba'. *(But just say 'Lord you know these people, you know their names; it is ok Father')*

Memorable and has a hook phrase

This song is arguably the simplest and the most memorable of the seven songs in discussion, despite it appearing the longest in terms of the transcription of its lyrics. The suggested simplicity and memorability is based on the fact that the chorus of the song is just one line: 'Kulungile Baba' (it is well, Father); sung repeatedly. The melody of the song is also easy to sing and is memorable. S'fiso Ncwane effectively brings 'Kulungile Baba' as the hook of the song, using it frequently in the song and contextualizing it on various life circumstances through which he exhorts the listener to acknowledge and yield to 'the will of the Father'.

Overall lyrical theme

The theme of this song is seemingly abstracted from Jesus' prayer in Matthew 26 verse 39 in the Bible, where He was contemplating avoiding dying on the cross, because of the pain He was subjected to. Amid that agony and distress, Jesus however surrendered his will to God's will. The theme is explicitly outlined by S'fiso Ncwane, through the introductory spoken words, the verse and the spoken words at the end of the song. Summatively, the song leads the listener into submitting their will to God's and not allow circumstances to derail them.

This discussion of the seven 'Best Gospel Songs' is aimed at supporting David and Tim Baskerville's argument that memorability and theme are some of the ingredients that are necessary in making a 'hit record'. I link this to my earlier argument that at the very preliminary stages of making a record, either a song or an album, artists begin from a launch pad of a quest for success. I want to further contextualize and link these ingredients to Christianity and commerce. On one hand, memorable and easy-to-remember songs have a potential to enhance the popularity of the song, in the sense that everyone can sing it. Although this is not a guarantee for a song to become successful, but I want to argue that memorable and easy-to-remember songs are better positioned to succeed than those songs that are not memorable and difficult to remember. On the other hand, the 'overall lyrical theme' ingredient is more

inclined towards the Christian aspect of the Gospel music culture. The lyrical contents of the seven songs that I discussed are all based on the teachings of the Christian faith, and some, as I have shown, are directly traceable to the Bible. Moreover, their inclination to Christianity enhances their commercial opportunities, in the sense that the Christian consumers of Gospel music will identify with, and endorse the music, thus increasing the chances of buying the recording. I further want to argue that these elements do not come coincidentally into Gospel music, particularly in these seven songs discussed. Instead, songwriters, producers, arrangers and performers, influenced by Christianity and commerce, consciously craft songs to bear these elements. Consequently, there develops a common type of songs, with particular elements and features, which are ultimately accepted and perceived as defining characteristics of Gospel songs in general.

Sources of Gospel songs

This study's research work reveals that there are at least three sources of songs that feed into South African popular Gospel music, namely: 1) Original songs, 2) Cover versions, and 3) Church songs.

Original Songs

These are new songs that have never been recorded and made available in a commercial album before, and are either composed specifically for particular recording projects or are retrieved from a songwriter's library of already existing compositions. A few examples of such songs include S'fiso Ncwane's 'Kulungile Baba' (track 2 in *Kulungile Baba*), Andile ka Majola's 'UJehova Ungibiyele' (track 1 in *UJehova Ungibiyele*), Rebecca Malope's 'Bayos'khomba' (track 1 in *Bayoskhomba*). Attesting to songs written for specific projects, Neyi Zimu says that "when I get a call up to write a song it's important for me to know where it is going and who the target market is. I then use the style and lyrics that will appeal to the target audience" (Zimu interview, 2013). Andile ka Majola is a reputable songwriter who has won numerous awards for 'best songwriter' in the Crown Gospel Awards. He says

that “I always write songs and I ensure that at least eighty percent of the songs in my albums is original material” (Majola interview, 20 October 2013). Winnie Mashaba similarly says “in my album *Bophelo ke Keeto*, all the songs are new compositions. In fact I do not like using other people’s songs in my albums” (Mashaba interview, 2013). Speaking about their standpoint as World Gospel Power House towards songwriting, Zanele Mbokazi says that “in encouraging artists to write and compose new material, we have a category of a ‘Best Songwriter’ in the SABC Crown Gospel Awards” (Mbokazi, at Gospel IZiko, 2009). Figure 5.3 shows the winners of this award since the inception thereof.

Year	Songwriter	Name of the song	Name of the Album
2008	Andile ka Majola	Wabamb’ukusho	Andile ka Majola, ‘Chapter 3 – ‘Live in Durban’
2009	Andile ka Majola	Waphikelela	Andile ka Majola, ‘Chapter 4 – Live in ICC’
2010	Percy Ingle	The devil is a liar	Sipho Makhabane, ‘Ebenezer’
2011	Babo Ngcobo	Talitha Cum	Sgwili’s ‘Hamba nam’
2012	Thinah Zungu	Kwanqab’umusa	Thinah Zungu, ‘Kwanqab’umusa’
2013	Andile ka Majola	UJehova Ungibiyele	Andile ka Majola, ‘Chapter 6 - UJehova Ungibiyele’

Figure 5.3: Winners of the ‘Best Songwriter’ category in the SABC Crown Gospel Awards, 2008 to 2013

The art of songwriting feeds directly from the Christian and commercial aspects of the culture of Gospel music. Firstly, this is because new songs, such as tabulated in figure 5.3 have a strong Christian connection in terms of their lyrical content that is based on Biblical texts. Moreover, some of these songs become an integral part of church music. Secondly, some new songs have ability to appetize consumers into buying Gospel albums. This enhances sales and commercial pursuits of artists and record companies. This is enclosed in Sipho Makhabane’s statements that:

Some artists just go to the studio without even songs to record. It is only when they are in the studio that they think of and search for song, and end up taking church songs and popular choruses. Gospel music buyers are tired of the same songs that are recorded repeatedly by various artists. This is mere

undermining of their rights, and violates the value of their money (Makhabane interview, 2013).

I want to argue that new songs are the crux and the soul of the culture of Gospel music and the subsequent Gospel industry. If songwriters can stop writing new songs, I argue that Gospel music would fall into degeneration and eventually extinction. David and Tim Baskerville support this argument in saying that: “Everything begins with the songwriter. [...]. No songwriters, no music industry – it’s that simple. [...] Great songs, and the writers who create them, will always be the foundation of the music industry” (2013: 35).

‘Cover’ versions

The second source of Gospel songs is an already existing ‘library of songs’ comprised of songs in both local and international commercial Gospel recordings. The album-cover notes of various records acknowledge the source of these commercially pre-recorded songs as either originally composed by, or for, the initial artist, or as ‘traditional’. I enquired with various artists what ‘traditional’ means, and it transpired that it is commonly mistaken for ‘public domain’, which – as David and Tim Baskerville put it – refers to “material, such as music or other intellectual property, available for unrestricted use on which the copyright has expired or that has no copyright” (2013: 545). Recording a song that has been recorded by another artist before is generally referred to as ‘covering’ or doing ‘a cover version’ of the original song. In doing cover versions, Gospel songs are either re-arranged, or re-recorded in the same manner as sung by the initial artist. Virgil Moorefield gives a detailed account of ‘covers’, and says “In the context of recording, a cover is generally a complete re-recording of the original material. [...] Strictly speaking, a ‘cover’ is created every time someone performs another person’s song” (2010: 292).

Figure 5.5 presents a few examples of Gospel ‘cover’ songs. Local Gospel artists have given various reasons for them doing ‘covers’. Solly Mahlangu

says that he did ‘UThando Lwami’ (see figure 5.4) in “honor of Vuyo Mokoena for his contributions in the music industry” (track 10 in *Mwamba Mwamba*). Benjamin Dube says that “I love the song ‘Phakama’. I love how Sifiso [Ncwane] has done it. I however have my own personal experience with it, which made me to re-record it” (Dube, B. interview, 2013).

Song	Cover Version	Original/Previous Recording
‘Uthando Lwami’	Solly Mahlangu, track 10 in <i>Mwamba Mwamba</i> DVD	Vuyo Mokoena and Jabu Hlongwane, track 5 in <i>Joyous Celebration 2</i>
‘Phakama’	Benjamin Dube featuring Zaza, track 8 in <i>Healing in His Presence</i>	S’fiso Ncwane, track 7 in <i>Baba Ngiyavuma</i>
‘Healer’	Ntokozo Mbambo, track 7 in <i>Keep on Believing</i>	Track 1 in <i>A Healer Discovered</i>
‘Come Holy Spirit’	Joyous Celebration, track 11 in <i>Joyous Celebration 12</i>	Israel Houghton and New Breed, track 7 in <i>New Season</i>
‘Love you so much’	Nqubeko Mbatha, track 3 in <i>Sentiments of a Worshipper</i>	Hillsong, track 9 in <i>Shout to the Lord – Vol. 2.</i>

Figure 5.4: Examples of artists who have done cover version Gospel songs

Virgil Moorefield says that “in the early days, cover songs [...were a] re-recording to cash in on someone else’s success” (2010: 291). He further explains the intentions behind doing ‘covers’ and says:

If a recording was successful, the song was quickly re-recorded by other record companies in the hope of cashing in on the original song’s success. [...]. There are plenty of covers whose sole purpose seems to be to associate themselves with the original in order to be noticed and to gain legitimacy (ibid).

Moorefield’s account of ‘covers’ incorporates Mahlangu and Dube’s justification of why they re-recorded songs. In Moorefield’s words, they ‘recontextualized’ previously recorded songs on their ‘present’ premises. I however do not turn a blind eye to Moorefield’s suggestion of re-recording of previously recorded songs for “commercial purpose[s]” (2010: 290). Although none of my respondents acknowledged commercial pursuits as one of their intentions behind ‘covering’, I concur with Moorefield, that some songs are re-

recorded with the hope to ride on their previous popularity and commercial success. My argument is based on the trend that most of the ‘covers’ are versions of previously popular songs. The version of Ntokozo Mbambo’s ‘A Healer’, for example, was – according to *A Healer Discovered* CD cover notes – pre-recorded by four other artists. S’fiso Ncwane’s ‘Phakama’ is one of his most popular songs within Christian circles. Similarly, Jabu and Vuyo’s ‘Uthando Lwami’ is arguably one of the songs that put Vuyo Mokoena on a different level on the local Gospel map, having been in the industry for a long time prior to recording it.

In an attempt to relive this popularity and commercial successes, Gospel artists sometimes do compilation albums. In other instances they re-arrange and re-record such songs. Joyous Celebration, for example introduced the concept of *Joyous Rewind* albums. A 2012 release of this album consists of thirty-four re-arranged and re-recorded songs from their previous albums. This kind of a recording is different from a common tendency of compilation albums in the culture of local Gospel music, where artists take various songs from their discography and compile them as they are, into a new album; such as Benjamin Dube’s *All Time Favorites, Vol. 1 (Live)*, Vuyo Mokoena’s *Remembering Vuyo*, Keke’s *Best Live Performances*, Solly Moholo’s *Best of Solly Moholo*, and Rebecca Malope’s *Greatest Hits*. Instead, *Joyous Rewind* re-records previously recorded songs, but with a new feel and in new arrangements.

Another similar common trend characterizing the culture of local Gospel music, is noticeable in artists who feature in collaborative ensembles such as Spirit of Praise and Joyous Celebration. Some of these artists, as shown in figure 5.5, either bring songs from their albums and re-record them with these ensembles, or take songs that they have recorded with these ensembles and re-record them in their individual projects. I want to associate this act with what Virgil Moorefield terms “recontextualization” (2010: 292). In a literal sense, the artist would recontextualize a song s/he did in a solo project - within a collaborative project. In the context of the songs quoted in figure 5.5,

the collaborative projects present artists with new musical set-up, bigger platform and broader audience. I enquired with Lindelani Mkhize regarding this habit, and he responded:

There are artists that are associated with some songs, and inversely songs that are associated with some artists. The song 'In the Shadow', for example, is just Ntokoza Mbambo. So, when an artist re-do a song in a solo album, it is easy to identify them, especially if this song was previously done in a project such as Joyous [Celebration]. The only disadvantage is when the new version of the song in the solo project is of a lower standard than the one in the Joyous project (Mkhize interview, 2012).

Artist and Song	First Recording	Second Recording
Malusi Ndimande: 'Wangenz'umuntu'	Pmb Sounds of Salvation, track 1 in <i>Sekuyozwakala</i> .	Joyous Celebration, track 4, Disk 2 in <i>Joyous Celebration 15</i> , and later in Malusi Ndimande, track 1 in <i>Woza Thixo Wethu</i> .
Patrick Duncan: 'I Press'	Joyous Celebration, track 2, disk 1 in <i>Joyous Celebration 13</i>	Patrick Duncan, track 1 in <i>Worship in Colour</i>
Sipho Makhabane: '(Zawa) Izindonga'	Sipho Makhabane, track 3 in <i>Umuzi Omuhle</i>	Joyous Celebration, track 7 in <i>Joyous Celebration 11</i> .
Nqubeko Mbatha: 'He Paid it All'	Joyous Celebration, track 7, disk 1 in <i>Joyous Celebration 12</i> .	Nqubeko Mbatha, track 5, disk 2 in <i>Sentiments of a Worshipper</i> .
Solly Mahlangu: 'Obrigado'	Solly Mahlangu, track 2 in <i>Obrigado</i> .	Spirit of Praise, track 2 in <i>Spirit of Praise Vol. 1</i> .
Zaza: 'Namhla Nkosi'	Joyous Celebration, track 4, disk 1 in <i>Joyous Celebration 12</i> .	Zaza, track 1 in <i>UMoya Oyingcwele</i> .
Neyi Zimu: 'Come As You Are'	Neyi Zimu, track 7 in <i>Message</i> .	Benjamin Dube, track 5 in <i>Healing in His Presence</i> .
Ntokoza Mbambo: 'In the Shadow'	Joyous Celebration, track 1 in <i>Joyous Celebration 11</i> .	Ntokoza Mbambo, track 12, disk 1 in <i>Filled</i> .

Figure 5.5: Examples of Gospel artists re-recording their own songs in different albums

It only stands to reason, owing to Moorefield and Mkhize's statements, that this re-recording of songs is aimed at publicizing the artist, and linking him/her to an already existing market. Such an act will arguably enhance the artist's status with his/her audiences, especially if the initial version of the song had popularized the artist concerned. In the context of the arguments of this

current study, such popularity will strengthen the commercial viability of the artist, “in the hope of cashing in on the original song’s success. [... and] to associate themselves with the original in order to be noticed and to gain legitimacy (Moorefield, 2010: 291). In agreement with Moorefield, I summarize the intentions of Gospel artists behind ‘covers’ – whether of other artists’ or own songs – and compilation albums as motivated by ‘recontextualization’ and commerce. ‘Recontextualization’ may be appropriated on a Christian or spiritual basis, as an individual artist’s presentation of his/her Christian or spiritual experience with the song. Whatever the rationale is, ‘covering’ is an integral part of the culture of Gospel music in South Africa. Moreover, as this study argues, Christianity and commerce are the main propelling factors behind the re-recording of songs.

Church Music

The third source of songs used in popular Gospel music is church music. It is common to hear a phrase ‘this is the song we use to sing in church’, in popular Gospel music albums. In the song ‘Mopostola Medley’, translated ‘a song medley from the Apostolic Church’ (track 4 in Solly Mahlangu’s *Obrigado*), which features a popular ‘Amen’ song from the Apostolic church, Solly Mahlangu says, “O tlwa mobishopi wa ko Postoli a re...”, meaning: ‘you hear the bishop in the Apostolic church, saying...’. He says a similar statement in his follow-up *Mwamba Mwamba* album, in the track ‘Postola Interlude’ (track 4 in *Mwamba Mwamba* DVD), where he sings another ‘Amen’ song from the Apostolic church. Keke also relates to the same Apostolic church, when introducing the song ‘Mona Mona’ (track 12 in Keke’s *Living Testimony*), where he says “A reye koPostola”, translated ‘let’s go to the Apostolic church’. Similarly, Benjamin Dube, in the song ‘Ngiyamthanda uJesu’ (track 12 in *I Feel Like Going On*), says “I remember back in the church when I was young, the Pastor would say...”. He then restarts the song. Nqubeko Mbatha also gives the source of his song ‘Khumbula eKhalvari’ (track 27 in *Sentiments of a Worshipper* DVD) in his recording, when he says “I remember this song in our church...”

Christian churches have a vast spectrum of songs in hymn books and numerous others whose authors are either not known or incorrectly referenced. Most of these songs are commonly referred to 'amakhorasi' (choruses) and 'praise and worship' songs in Christian churches. The most commonly used church hymnbooks are *Icilongo Levangeli*, *Amaculo AseWeseli*, *Imibhedesho* and *Amagama Okuhlabelela*. Most of these hymn books are written in local vernacular. In popular Gospel music, some of the church songs are recorded as they are in the original version, whether in hymnbooks or the way they are sung in churches, while others are re-arranged and cut-into-size by taking only some parts of it, mostly the chorus or even one phrase of thereof. Sometimes the new songs are given new titles. Figure 5.6 shows examples of such Gospel songs that are particularly taken from church hymn books. There are numerous other church songs that are not recorded in hymnbooks, and whose authors are not known, but that are used frequently in popular Gospel music. Benjamin Dube, for example has a medley of what is commonly referred to in Christian churches as 'amakhorasi', in his *Healing in His Presence* album, which he has added to the repertoire as bonus track. This medley comprises 'Ithuba lokuthandaza' and 'UJesu unobubele nami', which are well known songs within Christian circles, whose authors are not generally known and acknowledged. There are many other such songs.

I enquired with most of my respondents on issue revolving around the usage of songs that are 'originally' church songs, in commercial Gospel recordings. My enquiry pointed to two aspects, namely: a) personal opinions regarding, and; b) possible rationale behind such usage of church songs. Various respondents locate the rationale behind the usage of church songs on the two prime subjects of this research, namely: commerce and spirituality. Others have mauled artists for overusing these songs, pointing to laziness and lack of creativity. On the other hand, other respondents feel it is a justifiable action. Winnie Mashaba says "artists should not recycle songs. You find five people singing one song. I write almost all my songs. It is only when my fans demand a particular song that I record it" (Mashaba interview, 2013).

Mashaba is possibly referring to such artists as Keke, Benjamin Dube, Joyous Celebration and Jabu and Vuyo, who have all recorded their versions of the songs 'Ebusheni Bami' or 'Yek'ubuhle', as shown in figure 5.6.

'Original' Song and Hymnbook Source	Title of the recorded popular Gospel version of the song	Artist and Album
'Siqonda ekhaya', song number 21 in <i>ICilongo LeVangeli</i> .	'Loduma Izulu'	Mthunzi Namba Track 10, Disk 1 in <i>Mercy, Live in Durban</i> .
'Vukani Bandla Bo', song number 112 in <i>Amagama Okuhlabelela</i> .	'Nangu Umthokozisi'	Hlengiwe Mhlaba, track 8 in <i>Jesu Uyalalela</i> .
'Thuma Umlilo Ongcwele', song number 70 in <i>ICilongo LeVangeli</i> .	'Thum'umlilo'	Andile ka Majola, track 7 in <i>Chapter 6 - UJehova Ungibiyele</i> .
'Thela UMoya', song number 69 in <i>ICilongo LeVangeli</i> .	'Thel'umoya'	-Benjamin Dube, track 7 in <i>Healing in His Presence</i>
	'Thel'umoya'	-Joyous Celebration, track 9 in <i>Joyous Celebration 11</i>
'Nkosi sihlangene' song number 6 in <i>Amagama Okuhlabelela</i> .	'Nkosi Sihlangene'	-Amadodana AseWeseli, track 5 in <i>Siyabonga</i>
	"Sihlangene"	-Tshepiso Motaung, track 1 in <i>Sihlangene</i>
'Ngiyamuzwa Umsindisi', song number 157 in <i>Amagama Okuhlabelela</i> .	'Where you lead me'	Benjamin Dube, track 5 in <i>Healing in His Presence</i>
'Inyang'enkul'ikhona', song number 44 in <i>Icilongo LeVangeli</i>	'Inyang'enkulu'	-Solly Mahlangu, track 7 in <i>Obrigado</i>
		-Tshepiso Motaung, track 3 in <i>Sihlangene</i>
'Wenhliziyoyami', song number 188 in <i>Amagama Okuhlabelela</i> .	'Linda Uthandaze'	Fikile Mlomo, Track 2 in <i>Linda Uthandaze</i>
'Ebusheni Bami', song number 217 in <i>ICilongo LeVangeli</i> .	'Yek'ubuhle'	-Keke, track 4 in <i>Revival</i>
	'Yekubuhle'	-Benjamin Dube, track 8 in <i>In His Presence</i> .
	'Ebusheni Bami'	-Jabu and Vuyo, track 4 in <i>ICulo Elisha</i>
	'Yekubuhle'	-Joyous Celebration, track 8, disk 1 in <i>Joyous Celebration 14</i>
'Igama leNkosi liyiyo inqaba', song number 43 in <i>ICilongo LeVangeli</i> .	'Igama leNkosi'	Zaza, track 3, Disk 2 in <i>Spirit of Praise, Vol. 4</i>

Figure 5.6: Examples of 'originally' church songs that have been recorded in commercial Gospel albums.

Tshepo Ndzimande explicitly criticizes this exercise and says that:

It is utmost laziness and it kills the industry. It points to the fact that our artists are not taught the business aspect of their music. They do not know that original songs are a source of income in terms of royalties. It is always good to have artists such as Mkokstad winning the 'Song of the Year' award in the Crown Awards, for a song that is an original composition (Ndzimande interview, 2013).

Ndzimande's statement prompts an argument that commerce also plays a role in influencing songwriting and discouraging recycling old and previously recorded songs. *ISolezwe Newspaper* records Elias Shongwe, a Gospel music artist, lambasting artists who are 'lazy' to write/compose songs, but use church songs. He says "What is worse about these songs is that they are already popular, and they [the lazy artists] alter them here and there and then claim authorship" (*ISolezwe*, 07 July 2008). In the Gospel Iziko Conference, this issue of (over-)usage of church songs by Gospel artists was one of the issues that were discussed at length. Zanele Mbokazi, the president of World Gospel Power House openly criticized the (over-)usage of church songs by Gospel artists. She said "We don't know what you are going to record now because you have exhausted ICilongo" (Mbokazi, at Gospel Iziko, 2009). She was saying this referring to the popular church hymnbook 'ICilongo LeVangeli'. The reporter of 'Just Curious' noted a related comment made in the Crown Gospel Awards, and says: "[My] best moment was when Linda Sibiyana told the musicians to stop singing hymn songs and must start composing. Finally someone tells them at their own event" (www.justcurious.co.za, 26 January 2012).

Other respondents informing this research study share different opinions regarding the recording of church music into commercial albums. Lindelani Mkhize says that "Church music is part of our heritage, and it is our responsibility to preserve it. Recording and re-recording these songs preserve them for future generations" (Mkhize interview, 2012). He further argues that "Re-arranging the song is also another form of creativity, more so because people already have a reference, an original version, for the song being re-arranged" (ibid). Although discouraging lack of creativity and laziness to

compose new songs, Solly Mahlangu, Benjamin Dube and Nqubeko Mbatha, however justify, to a particular extent, the usage of church songs in commercial albums. These artists have included a selection of popular church songs in their albums. In his album *Obrigado*, Mahlangu has included popular church songs such as 'Obrigado', the medley 'Uyamazi LoJesu / Bayede / Uban'onga Vuma, Inyang'enkulu, Lenan'izulu, Masibulele Ku Yesu and Wanga Morena'. Similarly, in his *Sentiments of a Worshipper*, Nqubeko Mbatha has church songs such as 'Yek'umusa', 'Khumbula iKhalvari', 'The Blood' and 'Kwakukhona Umuntu'. Benjamin Dube has recorded many church songs in his albums over the years. The list includes songs such as 'Thel'umoya', 'Ngyamthand'uJesu', and 'Yekubuhle' and 'Esandleni', most of which are found in the church hymnbook *ICilongo Levangeli*.

In justifying his usage of church songs, Nqubeko Mbatha says:

Although I am so much for composition and creativity, however, as a Christian, I have many church songs that are favorites of my own, some of them because of my personal worship experience with them, some of them because of the rich spiritual, or should I say Biblical content. Some of them I like because of their musicality, may be a beautiful melody or chord-work and structure. When doing my recordings, I always want to share these songs with my audience (Mbatha interview, 2013).

Solly Mahlangu says that:

You'll be surprised to know that some of the songs that I have recorded in my albums were not even rehearsed, but were prompted in my spirit during the concert. I do not put 'Gospel' or 'church' labels on my music. If I sing 'Obrigado' in church or in a concert, I do not think 'am I singing Gospel or church music', I just sing. As a minister of the Gospel, I aspire to sing songs that the spirit of God leads me to sing; regardless of the labels they have been given. That is why in my recent recording, I have done a medley of Bob Marley's songs 'One love' and 'Together as One'. What label would I put in these songs? (Mahlangu interview, 2013).

Benjamin Dube shares similar sentiments, and says:

I am a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ more than being artist. If there is a song that I feel the Spirit is leading me to share with a broader audience

other than the people I am able to reach through sermons in church or elsewhere where I preach, I then record that song. Church music is Gospel music after all (Dube, B. interview, 2013).

The usage of church songs is a common occurrence which is an integral part of the culture of popular Gospel music. This usage strengthens and sustains the bond between popular Gospel music and Christianity, and further blurs the already fuzzy boundaries between them. I however argue that this usage does not only show a Christian influence on Gospel music, but also suggests an ulterior motive, aimed at enticing Christians, with the intention of getting them to support the recordings by buying them or going to concerts.

Gospel Music Songwriting

I have acknowledged that the task of separating Gospel songs from Christian church music, as pointed to by Solly Mahlangu in his above-recorded interview, is not straight-forward. As suggested by the earlier discussions in Chapter 1, one song can fall under Gospel music and church music categories, depending on how and where it is used. I have argued that if a song is used in a commercial recording that is produced for mass consumption, it is a Gospel song. However, the same song can be used in a church service for 'religious' purposes, which makes the same song a 'church song'. In the context of this argument, it stands to reason that when such songs are written, they are not written as Gospel or as Christian church songs (although songwriters may have either intention), but rather they take such categorization once they are used and contextualized. It is that particular usage and contextualization that consequently activates these 'Gospel' and 'church' music labels.

I acknowledge the interconnectedness of terms such as 'lyricist', 'composer', 'songwriter' and 'author', which define the responsibilities of the people involved in creating the content of a song. However, for the purposes of the current discussion, I put these terms in one box called 'songwriting', which entails the process of creating a song, incorporating lyrics, music, melodies,

rhythm and other such elements that are generally accepted as defining a song. Different songwriters will obviously write songs for various reasons, which raise the concept of 'success', which I discussed earlier. Whatever the broad spectrum of various songwriters' intentions may entail, one thing for sure is that not one songwriter writes a song with the intention for it to fail. It would be a safe assumption to make, therefore, based on the earlier discussions of 'success', that some of the common wishes, of songwriters would be to:

- Convey a particular message or address a particular issue or subject,
- Make a popular song that will generate fame and/or fortune (in terms of royalties) for the songwriter,
- Create or add to a repertoire for recording or performance,
- Make music for the love of it.

The most popular answers given by my respondents who are consumers of Gospel music, in response to a question of elements that are crucial to a successful Gospel song include: a) lyrics, Gospel lyrics, b) rhythm, c) instrumentation and d) melody. Joyce Scott hints these elements in answering her question: 'What makes a good song?', and says that:

Nobody quite understands what makes some songs become favorites for a long time while others are soon forgotten. Much depends on the combination of words, tune and rhythm and those touches of magic that make it enjoyable (2000: 103).

Scott does not define what she means by 'good', and therefore, for the purposes of this discussion I consequently substitute 'good' for 'successful'; bearing similar explanation as presented earlier. David and Tim Baskerville have cited a link between a 'good' and a 'successful' song. They ask a question: "Is it possible to define a 'good' song?" (2013: 36). Their answer, which is in line with the discussion of success presented earlier, is "Yes, if you know what you are looking for" (ibid). They say, as a principle, a 'good' song "must be well crafted musically and, if it's not an instrumental, lyrically as well" (ibid). The Baskervilles' and Scott's statements both point to musical features and lyrical content of the song.

Gospel lyrics/text

One element that seems to play a crucial definitive role in South African Gospel music, is 'Gospel lyrics', which I also refer to as 'Gospel text'. Although 'lyrics' generally refer to the 'words' of the song, however, scholars argue that 'text' is more than just 'words', but can also refer to the 'meaning' of those words. John Shepherd says that "Text is the visible and tangibly rendered form of language [...] constituted through words" (1999: 157). A simplified explanation of 'text' can mean the way in which lyrics (and the music) are interpreted into deriving some 'meaning'. However, this 'meaning' is not a universal phenomenon, but is applicable to the people who make - or relate to - it. I want to argue that Gospel music lyrics are more meaningful to people inclined to Gospel music and Christianity. This is because some lyrics are taken or narrated directly from the Bible, and are easily understandable by someone who can contextualize them. I remember when one of my High School friends asked me about the song 'UJona Uyabaleka' (Jonah is running away), confused about who Jonah was and why he was running away. However, someone who is a Christian could arguably relate to a story based on a Biblical book of Jonah. Bonnie Wade's assertion clarifies music texts and their meanings: "That music is meaningful, no one doubts. However, great debates have ensued over whether the meaning resides in musical materials themselves or is ascribed to musical materials by someone for some particular reason" (2004: 10). Arguably, Wade suggests that if you do not know or cannot construct a context for a song, you cannot make meaning of that song.

Simon Frith shares similar sentiments, that "to grasp the meaning of a piece of music is to hear something not simply present to the ear. It is to understand a musical culture, to have 'a scheme of interpretation'" (1996: 249). Nathan Corbitt concurs and states that "meanings are bound to the people and cultures who make [and consume] it" (1998: 33). Corbitt further gives an advanced view of song 'texts', which he says speaks to, and gives us a view into the beliefs of the composer of the song. He says that:

Texts are the content of the songs. While the form of the song provides

information about the broader culture, it is the text that provides information about the person's belief system. When we give a 'thin' description about music our understanding merely describes what is being said. In understanding the theology and worldview of music, we want a 'thick' description, which excavates, or exegetes, the meaning of the song within the 'culture' of the composer/singer/listener (1998: 179).

I presented in Chapter 1 that Gospel music is based on a message, a Gospel message which has to be carried across in song through lyrics. Stephen Citron says that "to be successful, every gospel song must have honest scriptural roots and be written with faith" (1986 :126). Elsewhere, Citron says that Gospel lyrics "will of course be inspirational" (273) and "are of the church" (314). Joyce Scott agrees with Citron and says that Gospel songs "should contain Scriptural truth: clear teaching in simple words, no matter how short the song is" (2000: 103).

In analyzing the answers to this study's research questions on 'songwriting', I categorize Gospel lyrics or texts into four, namely: social, Biblical, musical and commercial. In other words, such a categorization argues that Gospel musicians or songwriters write songs in order to address social topics, spiritual or theological matters, or to fulfill a 'musical need', or to make money. These are, however closely intertwined.

Social lyrics/text

The lyrics or texts that I categorize as 'social' are those that speak to, and address societal issues of the general public and carried across through Gospel music. Talking about the subject matter of her music, Winnie Mashaba says that "I also talk about issues facing the country, like crime and HIV/AIDS, and give people advice on how to deal with them" (www.otukileentertainment.com, 23 May 2013). Rebecca Malope and Siphon Makhabane share similar sentiments regarding the motives behind their songs. They both say that their songs speak to social issues that are part of the daily lives of people of South Africa, and they further attribute the popularity of their music to this social relevance. Malope referred to her song

'Isandla' (track 7 in *Sabel'uyabizwa*), and said that "this song talks about many cruel activities that people do in our society" (Malope interview, 2013). Although this song makes neither direct nor interpreted reference to a Biblical verse, Malope however presents it in a manner similar to a Christian activity of preaching. She presents the song as if she is preaching to someone who might be a culprit of suggested ills, and also as a prayer to God to help. This song as transcribed below, does address numerous social ills, such as murder, poverty and rape.

Mfowethu bheka isandla sakho,
(My brother, look at your hand)
 Namhlanje sivule usibhekisise, ubone ukungcola nokuswabisa kwaso,
(Open it today and carefully look at it, and see its filthiness and evilness)
 Izolo lokhu besakha ngenhlonipho nothando olumangalisayo,
(This very yesterday it was building with respect and amazing love)
 Lapho sibambe khona sibamba kuqine, siduduza futhi sijabulisa,
(It held sincerely, with comfort and joy)
 Ukufudumala kwaso kulalisa ngisho nosana oluncane,
(Its warmth would lull a little baby to sleep)
 Kodwa namhlanje abazali bethu balele emathuneni ngenxa yezandla zethu.
(But today our parents are in the graves because of our hands)
 Amakhaya ezihlobo nabangani avalwe ngamahlathi, ngenxa yezandla zethu.
(The homes of our friends and relatives are closed down because of our hands)
 Isandla sala umuntu esithandaza, eguqe ngamadolo, esincenga ethi 'Yoh, ungangibulali'.
(The hand ignores eve if someone implores it, on their knees saying 'Yoh, please don't kill me')
 Kodwa sona Isandla sizoqhubeka sihlabe kuchitheke igazi.
(But the hand will continue to stab and shed the blood)
 Sala ngisho ingane encane imemeza ngezwi elincane ithi 'Uyang'limaza',
(The hand ignores even when a little child screams with a small voice, saying 'You are hurting me')
 Kodwa sona sizoqhubeka sihlabe kuchitheke igazi.
(But it will proceed to stab and shed the blood)
 Isandla siyakumbambatha sikufudemeze, uzwe imizwa yomzimba igijima,
(The hand hugs you and makes you warm, making your feelings tick)
 Sibuye sikwenzele ukudla sikufakele ushevu, ufe uphele wonke umndeni.
(But at the same time, it makes you food and poisons you, wiping out your whole family)
 Namhlanje izandla zethu zishiye izishosha, zashiya nezintandane.
(Today our hands have left cripples and orphans)
 Imizi eminingi ikhala ibhungane ngenxa yezandla zethu.
(Many homes are empty because of our hands)
 Ngabe kwenzenjani ngezandla zethu?
(Ngabe kwenzenjani ngezandla zethu?)
 Mzalwane wami bheka Isandla sakho usibhekisise,
(My brethren, look at your hand, and carefully look at it)
 Ngabe yisandla seqiniso na? Ngabe yisandla sezinyembezi na?
(It is a hand of truth? Or is it a hand that brings tears?)

Ngabe yisandla segazi na? Ngabe siyakha noma siyabhidliza na?
(Is it the hand of blood? Does it build or does it destroy?)
 Uthi uDavide indodana kaNkulunkulu: 'Oh ngiyacela Nkosi, ngiwele ezandleni zakho. Ngingaweli ezandleni zomuntu',
(David, the son of God says 'I beseech you Lord, that I may fall into your hand. Don't let me fall into a man's hand)
 Ngoba isandla somuntu siyasabeka Nkosi, siding uncedo, nensindiso.
(Because a man's hand is terrifying oh Lord, it needs help and salvation)
 Oh Bawo hawukela izandla zethu. Faka uzwelo ezandleni zomuntu, ngegama lenkosi yethu uJesu Krestu. Faka inhlonipho ezandleni zomuntu.
(Oh Father, have mercy on our hands. Put compassion in the hands of the man, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. Put respect in the hands of the man)
 Oh, Nkosi yami asikuthumi Baba, siyakucela Nkosi, ngegama lenkosi yethu uJesu Krestu, Baba siyakuthandaza, sincede Nkosi. Amen.
(Oh Lord, we are not commanding you, but we ask you, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, we beg you our Father, help us oh Lord. Amen)

Chorus:
 Mas'khulumeni, Kwenzenjani na?
(Let us talk, what happened?)
 Kwachithek'igazi kwakhalwa.
(So much blood shedding and crying)
 Mas'khulumeni, Kwenzenjani na?
(Let us talk, what happened?)
 Safa saphela sonk'emhlabeni.
(We are all dying and perishing on earth)

There are numerous other Gospel songs that address social ills facing South Africa. Siphso Makhabane alludes to this and says: "What makes my music popular is that people identify with it because it speaks to their daily circumstances" (Makhabane interview, 2013). South Africa is a third world country, which is regarded as a developing country. Statistics show that social ills such as poverty, crime, unemployment, drugs and substance abuse, gender-based violence, and the like, are prevalent in the society. I want to argue that amongst other propelling factors behind using Gospel music to address these social ills, is commercial endeavors. Many people will identify with the music that is speaking to their circumstances. In a quest to survive those unfavorable conditions, the music soothes and gives them hope. Presented to them within the Gospel context, the people will then identify the music and popularize it. This popularity boosts the commercial opportunities of a musical project.

Biblical lyrics/text

By Biblical lyrics, I refer to those lyrics that are either directly imported from the Bible or are an interpretation of Biblical passages. Gospel music is highly populated with such songs. In some instances, the song has a chorus that is a complete Biblical text, then accompanied by supporting verses. Some of the songs are an elaboration of a Biblical passage. In his song 'Paul and Silas' (track 7 in *I Feel Like Going On*), Benjamin Dube gives a musical rendition abstracted from the book of Acts 16, verses 25 to 31, which say:

²⁵. But at midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them.

²⁶. Suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were loosed.

²⁷. And the keeper of the prison, awaking from sleep and seeing the prison doors open, supposing the prisoners had fled, drew his sword and was about to kill himself.

²⁸. But Paul called with a loud voice, saying, "Do yourself no harm, for we are all here."

²⁹. Then he called for a light, ran in, and fell down trembling before Paul and Silas.

³⁰. And he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"

³¹. So they said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved, you and your household."

In his song, Benjamin Dube says:

(Speaking) This story is found in Acts chapter 16. It is all about the experience that Paul and Silas had. It goes:

(Singing) About midnight hour Paul and Silas were praying and praising, and the other prisoners were listening, listening to them.

Suddenly a violent earthquake, yes, shook the prison to its foundation,

Then the doors opened, yeah, the doors opened.

The chains fell off all the prisoners, yes they did, Oh yes they did.

And the jailer woke up, yeah, then he saw the prison doors opened.

And he pulled out his sword to kill himself, but Paul shouted at him, and said... He said 'No', he said 'No', don't harm yourself, no, we are all here.

He said we are all hear, yes we are, oh yes we are.

Trembling, the jailor fell at the feet of Paul and Silas, and said...

He said 'Sirs', and he said 'Sirs what must I do to be saved?'

And they answered and said 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you..., and you...., and you'll be saved.

You and your family, yes you will, yes you will yes you will.

And he said..., he said..., he said..., I remember down at his knees he

said.... (The song goes to the chorus, which is improvised upon, based on this story).

Similarly in the song 'How Excellent is Your Name' (track 3 in *For Every Mountain*), the lyrics are an abstract from the book of Psalms 8, verses 1, 3 and 4, which say:

¹ O Lord, our Lord,
How excellent is Your name in all the earth,
Who have set Your glory above the heavens!
³ When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers,
The moon and the stars, which You have ordained,
⁴ What is a man, that you are mindful of him,
And the son of man, that You visit him?

The lyrics of the corresponding song by Benjamin Dube say:

Oh Lord our God,
How excellent is Your Name in all the earth,
How excellent is Your Name.
When I consider the heavens, the work of your fingers,
The moon and the stars which you have ordained,
What is a man that you are mindful of him?
How excellent is your Name.

The chorus of Andile ka Majola's 'UJehova Ungibiyele' (track 2 in *Chapter 6, UJehova Ungibiyele*), song is also abstracted from various Biblical passages.

The lyrics of the chorus say:

UJehov' ung'biyele, (*Jehovah is surrounding me*)
UJehov' ungisibekele, (*Jehovah is covering me*)
Ngiyinhlamvu yeso lakhe, (*I am the apple of His eye*)
Akafuni nami, (*He is protective of me*)
Uyalile izingelosi zingibambe ngesandla.
(*He has ordered the angels to hold me by hand*).

This song shares similar content with the following Biblical phrases:

Psalms 125, verse 2: 'The Lord surrounds his people'.

Psalms 17, verse 8: 'Keep me as the apple of Your eye; hide me in the shadow of Your wings'.

Psalms 91, verses 11 and 12: 'For He shall give His angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways. In their hands they shall bear you up, lest you dash your foot against a stone'.

In her album *Filled*, Ntokozo Mbambo has a song entitled 'John 3:16, I've Been Set Free' (track 15 in *Filled* DVD). The sixteenth verse of the third chapter of the book of John is one of the popular Biblical passages, which says: "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life". Ntokozo imports this verse verbatim, into her song. She then adds a reprise chorus which says: 'I've been set free by the blood of the lamb'.

In discussing Christian culture, earlier, I presented proselytism as one of its defining elements. Biblical lyrics in Gospel music are sometimes used to accomplish this activity of carrying across Christian views and teachings, with the hope to recruit 'non-believers' to the Christian faith. Njabulo Ndebele, a Gospel music songwriter alludes to this function of Gospel lyrics. Talking about one of his popular songs 'A Healer', Njabulo says that:

I've spent five years writing songs that are more worked up, sophisticated, and highly sensational. I still have not risen to the level of 'A Healer'. I don't understand what God invested in this song. If you meet such a healer as painted in this song and still resist his appeal, what more would you expect God to do?

This song waters seeds of hope in helplessness. It calls us to recognize Jesus who lived to nurse and heal the sin that caused pain in humanity. He seals his mission with his blood to completely eradicate sin and its eternal consequence. (*A Healer Discovered* CD sleeve notes).

Gospel artists sometimes use Biblical passages to convey particular religious or theological messages to their audiences through Gospel songs. This is similar to what is referred to, as 'preaching', where a preacher would read (a) verse(s) from the Scriptures and then elaborate therein, using his/her own words and intellect. Andile ka Majola's song 'Wabamb'ukusho' (track 2 in *Chapter 3, Alive in Durban*), translated 'She held on to His word', is based on an account of Abraham and her wife Sarah, found in the twenty-first chapter

of the book of Genesis in the Bible; which talks about the birth of their son Isaac at their advanced age. Majola's song says:

Nom'uSarah esekhulile, (*Even though Sarah was well advanced in age*)
Nesibe letho sakhe singenakuhlalwa lutho, (*Even her womb no longer able to conceive*)
Ngish'uAbraham eselahl'ithemba, (*Even though Abraham had lost hope*)
Kodwa yena wabamb'ukusho kukaJehova, (*But she held on to the word of Jehovah*)
Wabamb'ukusho kukaSomandla. (*She held on to the word of the Almighty*)

Majola then uses this story to encourage people out of hopelessness. In the verses of this song, he sings saying:

Ithemba uyalibona liyakunciphela, (*You see the hope fading off*)
Uth'uyathandaz'ebusuku kungathandazeki, (*You try to pray at night, but words don't come out*)
Uth'uyabheka ngala nangala, (*You look on your either sides*)
Sewusele wedwa, kodwa wena bamb'ukusho. (*And you are left alone, but hold on to His word*)

Ngiyazi mina ukuthi uthandazile, (*I know you have prayed*)
Futh'ungenile enkonzweni yokuzila ukudla (*and even fasted food*)
Wamkholwa uNkulunkulu ukuthi uzokwenza izinto ezinkulu, (*You believed that God was going to do great things*)
Kodwa kubonakala sengathi umile akezwa lutho, (*But it seems as if He is stagnant and not hearing*)
Qinisela fana noSara, (*Take courage, just like Sarah*)
Bamb'ukusho kukaJehova, (*Hold on to the word of Jehovah*)
Bamb'ukusho kukaSomandla. (*Hold to the word of the Almighty*).

In extreme instances, Gospel artists literally preach in the middle of the song. An example of this is Mthunzi Namba's 'Mercy' (track 1 in disk 2 of *Mercy, Live in Durban*). The chorus of the songs says:

Mercy rewrote my life
I could have fallen, my soul cast down,
But mercy rewrote my life.

At nearly two minutes into the song, Mthunzi Namba summons the choir to hum the song and the band to play softly, then he goes on to narrate a story, or simply to 'preach', in Christian terms. He says:

The bible says when you read in John chapter 8, there is a beautiful story of a woman who was caught in adultery. The bible tells us that the Pharisees and the scribes took this lady, who was caught in the act of adultery; you can imagine how she looked. The bible says they pulled this lady to Jesus. And

they said to him, preacher, teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. According to the laws of Moses we were taught that when somebody is caught enza lokhu [*doing this*] must be stoned. And they said to Jesus, what you say. The bible says Jesus stooped down with his finger he wrote on the ground. The bible said he stood up and said ongenasono kinina [*he who doesn't have a sin amongst you*], throw in the first stone. The bible says he stooped back again waguqa ngamadolo [*and knelt down*] and wrote again. The bible says one by one from the old to the least they left. And the woman was left there by herself standing there. I'm sure in her mind she didn't know what Jesus was thinking. The bible tells me that Jesus looked at her and said lady where are your accusers, they've all vanished. It was just Jesus and the lady. There is a time where you have to move people away and it is you and him only. There is a time where you have to forget every person you know when you face him face to face. And Jesus looked at her and said where are your accusers now. I can imagine that with the love, compassion the mercy and the grace in his heart he looked at her and she said they are all gone. And he said who condemns you now, and the lady said no one. Jesus looked and her and said I do not condemn you neither go home and sin no more.

Listen, I don't care what you have been doing, but the mercy of Jesus Christ is able to pull you out from the dungeon of sin, from the pit of sin. He can just pick you up. It doesn't matter what you have done. He is just and he is faithful. Tonight we wanna say to each and every one of you that all you have to do is to stretch out your hand and say Jesus I avail myself to you. Forgive me of all I have done. His mercy is able to save you tonight.

The examples of the songs that I have discussed herein show a strong feed from the Bible into Gospel music.

Deciding on the style of music

One of the requirements that David and Tim Baskerville stipulate for a 'hit song' is that it must "suit the taste of the current market" (2013: 37). This 'taste' is entailed in styles and sub-genres, which in the context of South African Gospel music are variable within a broad spectrum. In other words,

different people will find different appealing 'taste' in different styles and sub-genres. One of the key questions informing the discussion of songwriting and arranging is: 'how does a songwriter/arranger decide which style to use'. Amid the questions that I directed to songwriter/producer respondents is: "As a songwriter/producer, do you write a song/produce an album with a target audience in mind? If yes, how does that awareness of your audience influence the process of production?" (see Appendix 3.1). To this, Percy Ingle says:

Every time when I am called to work in a project, either as a producer or as a songwriter, I first do my research. I research about the artist, the company and the audience. There is no way I can just write without firstly knowing who I am writing for. Once I know the market, then I can easily produce a work that will fit into the expectations of that market (Ingle interview, 2013).

Lindelani Mkhize agrees with Ingle and adds that:

One of the challenges facing the industry is that you find good musicians with very good projects and beautiful songs that however do not sell and cannot get airplay. Why? It is because people do not study their market and current trends of what is selling (Mkhize interview, 2012).

Neyi Zimu shares similar procedure and says: "Yes, when I get a call up to write a song it's important for me to know where it is going and who the target market is. Then I use the style and lyrics that will appeal to the target audience" (Zimu interview, 2013). All these artists' sentiments subscribe to Jonathan Shaw's, that "the better the producer understands the artist's music and what a paying audience wants, the easier it is to produce the right sound" (2007: 190). Gospel music recordings are made with particular target audience(s) in mind. This mindfulness is not just to get this audience to listen to the recording, but more importantly to buy the album, as Shaw stipulates that "Commercial music is just that, saleable for a profit" (19). The case of Andile ka Majola's change of style from 'contemporary Gospel' used in his five first albums; to 'traditional Gospel' used in his *UJehova Ungibiyele* album, attests to this discussion. In an interview with him, Andile attributes this change to a conviction by Sipho Makhabane that 'traditional Gospel' is more

commercially viable than 'contemporary Gospel'. This change seems to have yielded Majola the desired record sales boost. According to Charmaine Young of Revolver Records that distributes Andile's Music, "Andile ka Majola's recent album is one of our top-selling products" (Young interview, 2013). This is attested to by the Revolver Top-Seller charts (see Appendix 5). Lindelani Mkhize acknowledges that the sub-genre of 'Traditional Gospel' has been the top selling style of local Gospel, but adds emphatically that "things are however changing" (Mkhize interview, 2012).

I therefore want to argue that local Gospel songwriters, producers and arrangers consciously create and maneuver songs in a particular way that will appeal to their target audience. With the backdrop of this study's argument that most Christian are consumers of Gospel music, and vice versa, I further argue that motivated by their quests of enticing these consumers, artists incline their songs to styles that are popular within Christian churches that are populated with their particular target market. By studying target audiences and locating them within Christian churches, songwriters, producers and arrangers, in Keith Negus' words:

...abide by certain particular generic codes, rules and conventions. [...or] follow the musical styles and trends set by other artists [...or] recognise that a new style has appeared or has become popular and so include this in their set as yet another style to be performed as part of a varied repertoire (1996: 145).

In short, my argument stipulates that the decision of which musical style to use within the culture of Gospel music is mainly influenced on one hand by Christianity, in terms of lyrical content and musical styles influenced by the popular Christian culture, and on the other by commerce, which in this context is maximized by aligning musical products with the trends and preferences of the target market.

Creating a successful Gospel music album

In a similar way that there are ingredients for a 'hit song', there are also ingredients necessary for a 'hit album', specifically a successful Gospel

album. These elements suggest a framework for what would make a particular recording appeal to a particular audience. These elements are not entailed in songs only, but in the entire recording project or album. Michael Jones defines 'albums' as "masters sufficient and suitable to comprise a record of not less than 45 minutes playing time when played at the correct speed and not less than twelve tracks" (2013: 131-132). He further defines a 'single' as "a record containing not more than four tracks" (ibid). The question I addressed to songwriters and producers of local Gospel regarding their consciousness of the target audience when writing a song, also applies to the process of crafting an album. Various respondents point to different elements that are necessary for a Gospel album to succeed. Lindelani Mkhize says that "it must have talent and musical material that appeal to the market" (Mkhize interview, 2012). In addition to these, Solly Mahlangu says "it must have a clear Gospel theme and be skillfully put together" (Mahlangu interview, 2013).

I want to use the case of *Joyous Celebration 17 – Grateful* album to discuss the elements necessary for a successful album. I do however draw from other artists as well, where necessary. This album has thirty six tracks, spanning over two disks, as shown in figure 5.7. I found two relevant reviews (see Appendix 7) of this album on the internet, one by Thabang Molapo and the other one by Ndumiso Hlongwane. Both these reviews endorse the album as having value for one's money. The first review by Molapo is more positive and seems to be presented from a marketer's perspective, in the sense that it points to the positives only. However, the second review by Ndumiso Hlongwane, although also approving the album, draws the reader's attention to some negative things in the project as well. The review is, in any case, written in an informal way, owing to its original style, language and grammar in which it was written, which required translation and major editing. Nevertheless, this review presents a critical approach of a consumer who is knowledgeable of, loyal to and clear about his expectations of the music of Joyous Celebration. What is common between these two reviews is the respective analytical views on the choir's visual presentation and the usage of different styles and sub-genres, and languages. In addition, these reviewers make remarks about the talent of singers and musicians. Moreover, both

reviewers conclude their individual reviews by recommending to the reader to buy the album. This conclusion seems to suggest that the factors that they state in their reviews are meant to be reasons and motivations for the reader to buy the album. This stance supports my argument that the music industry and Gospel artists make use of various strategies, such as entailed in these reviews, in order to enhance their commercial pursuits.

Much deliberation goes into the process of selecting the songs that make the track list in the Gospel album is a thoughtful one. Producers, A & R people together with the artists carefully select songs to formulate the album repertoire. During the process of crafting a record, music-makers deliberate on the style or sub-genre and language to be used for a particular project. Talking about this process in the context of 'Joyous Celebration 17', Lindelani Mkhize suggests that the 'theme' of the project determines the songs to be included in the track list. He says:

In coming up with this year's theme, we had to do an introspection of who we are and where we come from. We had to dig deep and come up with a theme that really represents and showcases who we are. We acknowledge other influences from America and other parts of the world, but this year's theme digs deep into our roots (Mkhize in 'Bonus Back Stage Pass', *Joyous Celebration 17*).

Siyanqoba Mthethwa, the producer of this edition of Joyous Celebration attests to this and says:

When I spoke to uBaba uLindelani Mkhize, he was very specific that he wants a different interpretation of local Gospel. That is why we are emphasizing more on African vernacular stuff. But the interpretation of those songs is not going to be traditional, the sound of local Gospel is going to be a new package all together. The sound is fresh, young and vibey (ibid).

Siyabulela Satsha, the Joyous Celebration drummer adds that the sound is "African and modernized" (ibid). The repertoire of *Joyous Celebration 17* does reflect these sentiments shared by Mkhize, Mthethwa and Satsha, which are: Mkhize's "theme that really represents and showcases who we are", Mthethwa's "African vernacular stuff" and Satsha's "African". This is attested

to by Thabang Molapo's review, where he says that the album has a:

...traditional South African feel to it. The choir looks exquisite in the African-inspired attire in disk 1. [...] The album fuses a variety of South-African inspired genres within Gospel, from your 'tent church' sound to the more 'traditional church' sound, even a bit of maskandi and some upbeat songs (Review A, Appendix 7.1).

I have argued here that one of the ingredients behind Joyous Celebration's success is their all-inclusiveness, which I call 'hybrid Gospel'. Ndumiso Hlongwane (Review B, Appendix 7.2) alludes to this 'hybridity' which is displayed through a variable repertoire:

There are a lot of songs with a Jazzy feel [...] Given Mabena from Afro Tenors, who sings Opera music, accompanied by a violin in his solo [...] She also presents a danceable upbeat *Mthunzi wam*, [which has a] Rock n Roll [feel]. [...] Sphumelele who is popular for Zionist music, also presents her usual. There is a track which 'mgqashiyo-like' and a lot of other traditional songs.

Joyous Celebration further displays this 'hybridity' through various South African vernaculars in which various songs are sung. The two reviewers, Molapo and Hlongwane point to this, in, for example, saying: "Tsonga-song fans you'll love 'Xikwembu Xayina' [...] Buhle Thela leading a Tswana song" (Review A, Appendix 7.1). Ndumiso Hlongwane adds saying, "What I noticed with [songs in] other languages [is that] they [are] all very nice. [...] Charisma singing in Afrikaans [...and] Nobathembu who is popular for IsiXhosa songs" (Review B, Appendix 7.2). Figure 5.8 further shows the 'hybridity' of Joyous Celebration, through examples of songs and styles or sub-genres used in the album. Joyous Celebration has mastered the skill of 'hybrid Gospel' music albums. Moreover, Joyous Celebration is arguably in the forefront of 'cross-genre' songs, by introducing songs that mix various styles and sub-genres. I want to argue that this variety of styles and sub-genres in their concert repertoire increases their consumption market. This, I argue to be one of the reasons behind their concert tickets being always sold-out.

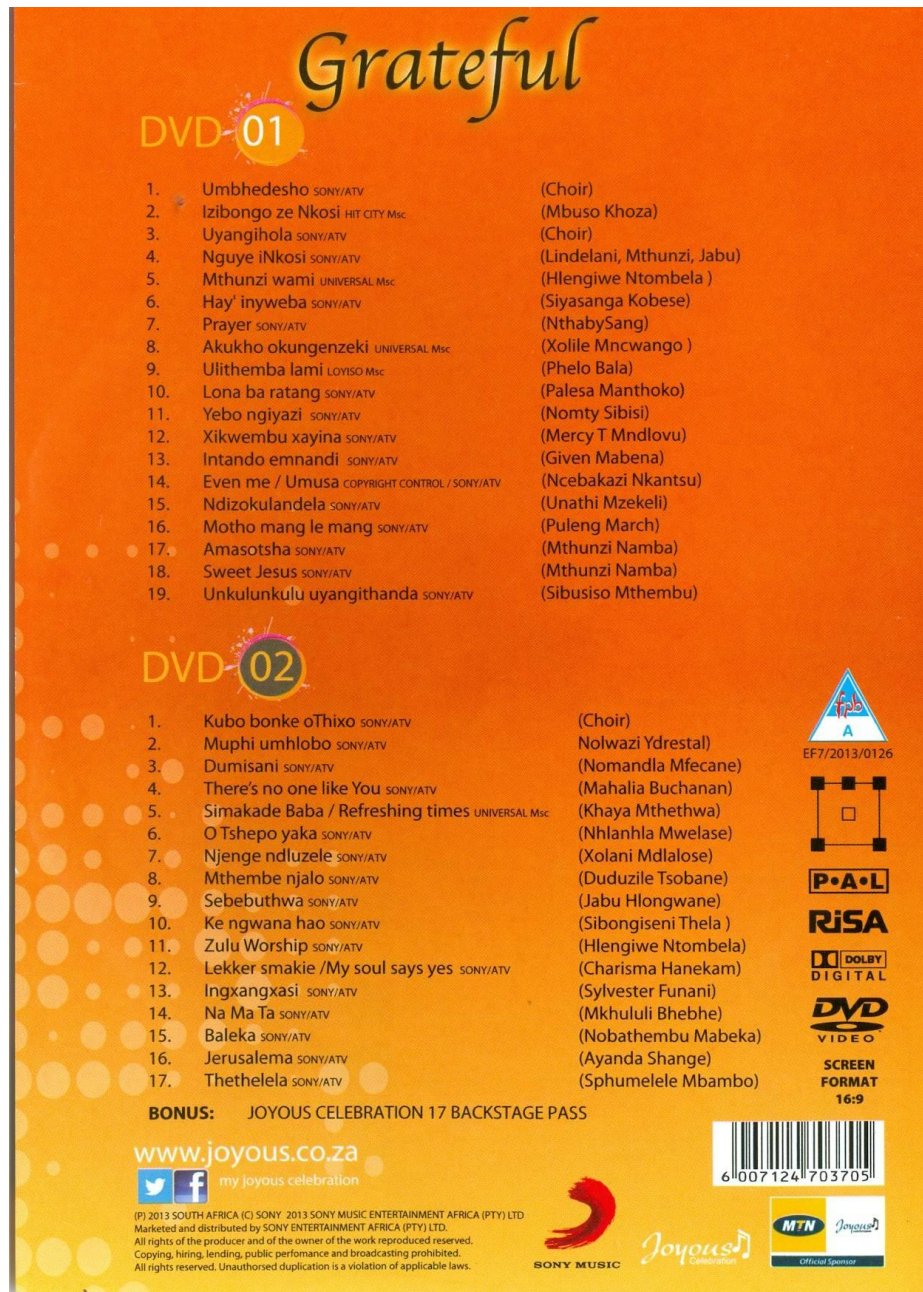


Figure 5.7: The back page of the 'Joyous Celebration 17 – Grateful' DVD

Other Gospel artists also attribute their criteria of selecting songs to a similar concept of a theme of a project. Benjamin Dube, for example, says:

I am very particular about the songs that I use, particularly in my *In His Presence* projects. As you know, these projects have a particular individual theme, upon which I pray and write or select the songs that I will use. For instance in *Healing in His Presence*, I have written a song 'I am not alone', which says that even though I am wounded and hurt, but I am not alone

because in the presence of the Lord I will be healed. I have included songs such as Richard Smallwood's 'Healing' and Neyi Zimu's 'Come As You Are', both of which speak directly to the theme of this project (Dube, B. interview, 2013).

Song Title	Language	Style/Sub-genre
'Umbhedesho'	IsiZulu	'Protestant Church' music
'Uyangihola'	IsiZulu	'Contemporary' South African Gospel
'Hay'inyweba'	IsiXhosa	'Traditional' IsiXhosa Gospel
'Xikwembu Xayina'	Xitsonga/Shangaan	'Traditional' Xitsonga music
'Motho Mang le Mang'	SeSotho	'Contemporary Traditional' South African Gospel
'Simakade Baba/Refreshing Times'	IsiZulu and English	'Hillsongs' Gospel music influence
'Intando Emnandi'	IsiZulu	Opera/Classical music
'UNkulunkulu Uyangithanda'	IsiZulu	Zulu Maskandi
'Na Ma Ta'	Shona	Central African 'Kwasakwasa' music
'There's None Yike you'	English	'Contemporary American' Gospel
'Sebebutwa and Baleka'	IsiZulu and IsiXhosa	Traditional 'itende' church music
'Sweet Jesus'	English	'Africanized' American traditional Gospel
'Ke Ngwana hao'	Setswana	'Contemporary' South African Gospel
'Lekker Smakie'	Afrikaans	Rock n Roll/Country music influence
'Thethelela'	IsiZulu	Zionist church music

Figure 5.8: Examples of languages and styles/sub-genres used in the *Joyous Celebration 17* repertoire.

Benjamin Dube's *In His Presence* projects are perfect examples of theme-oriented albums. *Worship in His Presence* is themed on 'worship', and the songs therein are predominantly 'worship' songs. Similarly *Healing in His Presence* is themed around the concept of 'healing'. Most of the songs entailed in the album have a lyrical content that addresses 'healing'. Benjamin Dube explains his rationale behind this theme and says:

This project is called *Healing in His Presence* [...] because of the trials, challenges and tests that I was going through, prior to the recording. In actual fact, I wanted to call it 'Broken in His presence', because everytime I would come in the presence of God broken. Then I realized that one cannot be

broken in the presence of God and God does not heal. When you are in the presence of God, you come out of His presence healed. That is exactly what is going to happen to anyone who listens to this album, they will receive their healing from any trouble they are facing (Dube in 'In-depth Interview' in *Healing in His Presence* DVD).

Dube says that in the song 'I am not alone' (track 1 in *Healing in His Presence*), God spoke to him in the midst of his troubles, assuring him that he is not alone when he is in the presence of God; and consequently healing is inevitable. Other relevant songs to the theme of this 'healing' album include Richard Smallwood's 'Healing', with the following lyrics:

Don't be discouraged, joy comes in the morning
Know that God is nigh. Stand still and look up, God is going to show up, He is standing by.

There's healing for your sorrow, healing for your pain, healing for your spirit.
There's shelter from the rain.
Lord send the healing, for this we know there is a balm in Gilead to heal the soul.

These lyrics are directly linked to the 'healing' theme. Another relevant song is Neyi Zimu's 'Come as you are' (track 5 in *Healing in His Presence*), which encourages the listener to come to the presence of the Lord, regardless of an unfavorable state, ensuring them of God's 'rest and grace'. Other songs have an indirect, but related message of 'healing'. For example, 'Eshihambanweni' (track 1 in 'Bonus Tracks', *Healing in His Presence* DVD) translated 'At the cross', speaks about the death of Jesus on the cross, and the consequent life and salvation it brought to the believers. This song alludes to 'healing' as a byproduct of the death of Jesus on the cross.

Another example of a themed album is Siphos Makhabane's *Ngiyamemeza*. Big Fish Music's analysis of this album states that:

The message of *Ngiyamemeza* (which is translated "I am shouting") is a desperate plea for help. Siphos Makhabane is shouting to God for help. He is tired of hearing all the media channels reporting about one thing: the

consequences of poverty. He took it upon himself to be the ambassador for the voiceless (www.bigfishmusic.co.za, 16 October 2013).

The idea of 'shouting' for help is herein outlined as an underlying premise and theme of the album, through which he stands as 'the ambassador for the voiceless'. The idea of a theme is however not prevalent to all or most Gospel artists. For Solly Mahlangu, selecting an all-encompassing repertoire is one of his goals when choosing songs for a project. He says:

I always try to include all types of people, whether young or old, educated or uneducated and I try to include as many languages as I can. That is why you'll find old traditional hymns that even an old woman from church can relate to. There are also other songs that appeal to the youth as well (Mahlangu interview, 2013).

In crafting successful albums, it is a common trend in local Gospel to have artists incorporating various styles into a single album. I have, earlier in this study, referred to this as 'hybrid Gospel'. In my MA thesis, I also stated that "most of the local Gospel artists constantly cross generic boundaries, in the sense that they mix different generic styles in one album, and even in one song" (Malembe, 2006: 29). To this, I further argued that "it is as a result, improper to categorize artists according to sub-genre, rather one should categorize songs on the basis of the common stylistic traits and generic codes that they share" (ibid). Be that as it may, the music of artists such as Rebecca Malope and Benjamin Dube is still dominated by the styles and/or sub-genres with which they are generally associated. Rebecca Malope's CD entitled 'Bayos'khomba' is still dominantly 'traditional' South African Gospel, which is mainly characterized by programmed instruments, linear AB song form, I-IV-V chord progressions and four-part vocal harmony. This album, the analysis of which is presented in figure 5.9, features twelve songs and one bonus track. Malope uses four different languages in this album: seven songs are in IsiZulu, two songs in English, other two songs in IsiXhosa and one in Setswana. There are also different styles and musical influences entailed in the album repertoire. These elements show 'hybridity', which I argue is

directly influenced by a quest for a broader target audience, which translates into bigger prospects for financial returns.

Song Title	Language	Song Form/ Structure	Style and/or Musical influences	Lyrical theme
1. 'Bayos'khomba'	IsiZulu	ABABBB...	'Traditional Gospel'	Coming of Jesus to take believers to heaven
2. 'Uphakeme'	IsiZulu	BABBBB...	'Traditional Gospel'	Uplifting and praising God
3. 'Tshwarelo'	Setswana	AAAAAA...	'Traditional Gospel'	Pleading for forgiveness of sins
4. 'Holy Spirit'	English	ABABBB...	Reggae influence	Asking for help from the Holy Spirit to overcome problems, and acknowledging his superiority.
5. 'Ngizelwe Kabusha'	IsiZulu	ABABBB...	'Traditional Gospel'	Testimony of the change effecting 'new-birth'.
6. 'Ngithe Ngihamba'	IsiZulu	ABABBB...	'Afro-jazz' influence	Advice on love matters and guidance in choosing love partners.
7. 'Siyakudumisa'	IsiZulu	BABABB...	'Contemporary American Gospel' influence	Worshipping God for his holiness and love.
8. 'Madiba'	IsiXhosa	ABABBB...	'Afro-pop' influence	Tribute to Nelson Mandela
9. 'Thank you Jesus'	English	BABABB...	'Contemporary American Gospel' influence	Appreciating God and commitment to serving him.
10. 'Jerusalem'	IsiXhosa	AAAA...	'Traditional Gospel'	Singing about Jerusalem
11. 'Ngixolele'	IsiZulu	ABABABBB	'Pop music' influence	Asking forgiveness for sins committed
12. 'Wanyamalala'	IsiZulu	ABABCCD D	'Traditional Gospel' with 'contemporary' influences	Mourning for her lost child who disappeared.
Bonus Track: 'Woza Nawe'	IsiZulu	BbBbBBBb	'Contemporary SA Gospel' with 'kwela music' influence	A call to praise God and partake in joy therein contained

Figure 5.9: Analysis of Rebecca Malope's 'Bayos'khomba' album.

Elements of a successful Gospel music Video/DVD

Recording a live album is a process that has various important elements.

Lindelani Mkhize alludes to this, and says:

Recording a live DVD is a totally different ball game. We have to ensure that the music is up to standard, we have to ensure that the people capturing audio are on top of their game, and also we have to make sure that the video people are on point. What you eventually see in the DVD is the work of many different teams. Fortunately for us, we have been doing these Joyous recordings for many years, and have managed to assemble competent teams. At this point, everyone knows the standard we set for ourselves and what is expected of them (Mkhize interview, 2012).

The end-product of Joyous Celebration DVDs attests to Mkhize's sentiments. Moreover, Joyous Celebration's DVDs have received various 'Best DVD' accolades from South African Music Awards and SABC Crown Gospel Music Awards. I have earlier on quoted Mkhize mentioning Joyous Celebration DVD as 'one of the top 5 selling DVDs in the country'. These facts point to the type of work that Joyous Celebration puts into their DVD projects. During the preparations for the *Joyous Celebration 18* recording, I interviewed various people working behind the scenes, in order to ascertain the amount and magnitude of work that goes into crafting a DVD. To this regard, I also analyse the *Spirit of Praise, Vol. 4* DVD, that has won the 2013 'Best Gospel DVD' in the SABC Crown Gospel awards. The following elements, which I argue to be consciously employed during the production process, transpired as necessary to ensure a high quality DVD, with maximal commercial returns. These elements are besides the musical elements that I have discussed in preceding section above.

Audio

Audio recording is one of the crucial aspects of a video or DVD. Multitrack recording, which is the art of recording every single sound source into its own channel, gives sound engineers freedom to edit, mix and master the audio more clearer than a stereo or a grouped-signals recording. I argue, as I did earlier, that DVDs with high-quality audio have better chances of penetrating

the music industry than those with poor audio quality. I personally recall one of the Gospel artists whose DVD could not be finalized, simply because the audio recording engineer leaked some unwanted sound signals into the recording and ruined it unrepairably. The only option they had, was to reconstruct the audio in studio, using visuals from the live recording as a reference, a rather tedious and lengthy process. Joyous Celebration is a big ensemble with an on-stage crew of more than forty artists. The 'front-of-house' (FoH) or live venue signal routing showed at least 96 signal lines to the venue's sound engineer mixing console (see Appendix 8). According to Adriaan van der Walt, the FoH sound engineer, "every signal is routed individually" (Adriaan interview, 2013). In a performance stage with more than fifty sound signal originators, such as voices and acoustic instruments, and other electronic sound amplifying and monitoring devices such as guitar amplifiers, stage monitors, and loud speakers, the art of isolating individual sound signals from the other sound signals is an important aspect of audio capturing in a live DVD recording. Bruce Bartlett and Jenny Bartlett highlight the complication of sound isolation in a live recording by saying that:

In a quiet recording studio with good isolation between instruments, you have the freedom to mike instruments 1 or 2 feet away if you want. But in a noisy club or auditorium, with band members close together on stage, separation is a serious problem (2007: 62).

In the context of Joyous Celebration, every single signal is treated individually and thus captured (see appendix 8). According to Johan Maris, an assistant audio recordist of the *Joyous Celebration 18*: "we are tracking 96 individual audio signals, on Logic Pro 9" (Marais interview, 2013). This isolation of signals is useful for easy editing and maneuvering of sound signals during mixing in post-production. Excellent sound quality is an integral part of a DVD and enhances the viewing pleasure for the audience. Technological advancement has seen the introduction of High Definition sound production, based on innovative Dolby Digital and 5.1 surround systems. Joyous Celebration's audio production, as shown in the back cover of the *Joyous Celebration 17* DVD (figure 5.7) is based on these formats. This level of audio production matches standards of international recordings and conforms to the

norms of professional commercial projects. This, I presume, is one of the elements scrutinized in judging a 'Best DVD' in popular music awards ceremonies.

Video

The basis of a live DVD, as opposed to a studio production, is the capturing of visuals. This plays out in the form of music videos and full DVD albums. Some local Gospel videos and DVDs are captured using a minimal specification of a single video camera. However, in big productions such as Joyous Celebration's, the video company Malapati, used twelve full HD cameras. These include four steady cameras, seven technicians-handled cameras and one jimmy jib crane mounted camera. According to Nino Herr, the vision mixer, "We mix the show on site. Today we'll take cut-away and back-up shots. We'll do the actual recording tomorrow" (Herr interview, 2013). Talking about the underlying principle informing their recording techniques, Herr says that:

Our responsibility is to capture the performance together with the ambience of the whole production. Our goal is to present an end-product that will give someone at home a front-row-seat experience and even more. We have a very competent camera-crew that knows which shots to take and how to take them. Most of our work is done here on site. Post-production is just to put everything together and put all necessary graphics (ibid).

These sentiments and the magnitude of the technical crew involved in Joyous Celebration DVD 'production' highlight the work that goes into crafting an album fit for a 'Best DVD' accolade.

'Visual enhancers': Lights, and LED Screens

'Visual enhancers' are also important aspects of a live DVD in a sense that they play a significant role in setting and enhancing the mood for various songs. The two divisions of this department are lights and led screens, which is commonly referred to as AV. In the case of Joyous Celebration, Paul

Modise, the lighting design says that:

For me to design and operate the lights for this show, I have to know the songs, their mood and tempo. I select bright fast moving colors for up-tempo songs, and select 'warm' colors such as blue and purple for slow songs. There is a song that speaks about the blood, so I use the red color for that one (Modise interview, 2013).

Modise took time to orientate me on the gear that he is using and operating for the *Joyous Celebration 18* recording, outlined in figure 5.10. This inventory shows the intensity of just one of many sub-departments that are an integral part of the DVD recording. The other aspect of 'visual enhancers' is the LED screens. For low budget productions, different types of stage props and designs have been used in the place of LED screens. In the case of *Joyous Celebration 18* recording, a 4 meter high, by 10.4meter wide LED screen was erected as a stage background. According to J.P. Prinsloo, the AV technician, this screen is made up of 130 individual 0.4meter by 0.8meter LED screens. His responsibility is more or less like the one of the lighting designer, save that he uses moving images displayed on the screen, instead of lights.

Lighting Equipment/Item	Units
Sharp 190W moving beam lights	26
Robe 100 LED Beam lights	14
Robe 600 LED Wash lights	12
Long Man LED Color lights	6
2K Hanging Fresnel lights	16
Follow spots	2
Tiger Touch Console	1
Color parcans	12
Moles Crowd Blinders	4
Haze Machines	2
Fog Glaciator	1

Figure 5.10: Lighting specification for 'Joyous Celebration 18' DVD recording. (Courtesy of Paul Modise)

Prinsloo says that:

I have to analyze the songs in terms of their feel, tempo and message; and

then display corresponding images. For example, if the song is talking about the death of Jesus, I have to find more or less red images and where possible corresponding crucifixion images (Prinsloo interview).

Attending the sound-check for *Joyous Celebration 18* recording, I took note of Lindelani Mkhize addressing the LED screens AV technicians saying “I don’t think that those images will work for this song. They are too busy and they kill it” (Mkhize, 2013).

Artists’ image

The way artists appear on stage also plays an important role in making a DVD successful. I have discussed this subject in details under ‘Right Image’ in chapter 4, where I argued that these images are directly influenced by Christianity, professionalism, music brand and commerce, and by processes of classification of artists. Although chapter 4 discussion was based on non-recording stage performances, and also explored off-the-stage artists’ images, the underlying rationale behind artists’ images are applicable in live DVD/Video recordings as well. In the case of Spirit of Praise, the choir is normally appareled in beautiful outfits with various, but uniform, designs. The same applies with Joyous Celebration, to whose image Thabang Molapo says, “The choir looks exquisite in the African-inspired attire in disk 1 and their more formal-wear on disk 2” (see Appendix 7.1). Ndumiso Hlongwane also concurs in her review (see Appendix 7.2), and says, “[I give] thumbs up to the stylist, they are well dressed. Well done Lindani Ndwandwa and Bokang Ncube, [who are responsible for the their wardrobe]”. Sne Mbatha of Sne Collections, responsible for dressing-up Nqubeko Mbatha and his singers in the DVD production of *Sentiments of a Worshipper*, points to two different sets of attires that he prepared for Nqubeko: “This one is a formal suit for the first set, and this one is for the second set, and is less formal” (in *Sentiments of a Worshipper* behind the scenes footage). To this, Nqubeko says: “He does all my stage clothes, and I am very comfortable in these ones” (ibid).

I want to argue that record companies go through lengthy and costly process,

paying attention to audio and video capturing, and enhancing visuals and artists' images, in order to present DVDs of high aesthetic quality and viable business potential. With the advancement of visual technologies such as internet video-streaming and TV programming, the influence of music videos and DVDs play a huge role in marketing Gospel artists, which has a direct impact on commercial returns. Moreover, such high quality work improves the chances of a production to be accolade as a 'Best DVD' in awards ceremonies. These awards also have positive implications on the productions and artists being acknowledged, in the sense of boosting their rankings and industry profiles, and possibly their performance bookings schedule.

Packaging an album: sleeve design and artwork

Once the process of editing, mixing and mastering audio and video is completed, the recording needs to be packaged into a physical visual envelope that reflects the overall theme of the project. Figure 5.11 shows examples of the artwork of the albums of the SABC Crown Awards' 'The Best Gospel Artists', presented in figure 2.1. This figure shows that most covers of 'live' Gospel recording projects have corresponding pictures from the 'live' event, such as those of Benjamin Dube, Sipho Makhabane and Solly Mahlangu. For projects that were recorded in studio, and subsequent video shot on various locations, such as Rebecca Malope and Winnie Mashaba's, artists do photoshoots and get professional photos that will enhance the commercial viability of the project. These photos adhere to the influences of artists image discussed in chapter 4. The way in which a project is packaged is also one of the important aspects of a recording, which is one of the first things that potential buyers encounter with, in music shops. Consequently such packaging must be professional and attractive to consumers. Percy Ingle says that "the packaging of the album must be professional. We've seen albums with bad pictures and designs. Artists must put efforts into the artwork of their albums" (Ingle interview, 2012). I have a personal experience that supports Ingle's assertion. I once attempted to get three albums of artists I was working with to a music shop in Durban. The shop owner looked at the albums, and without even listening to the music declined one album and agreed to assess

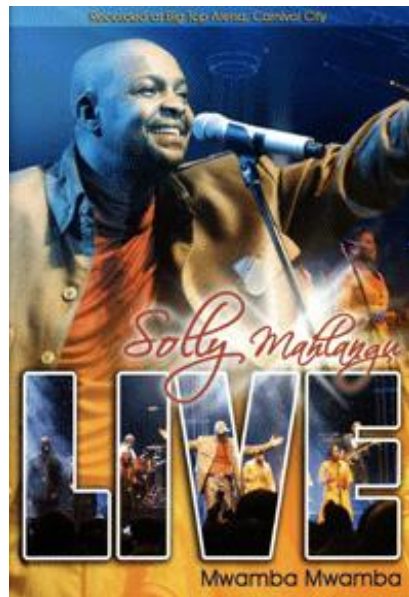
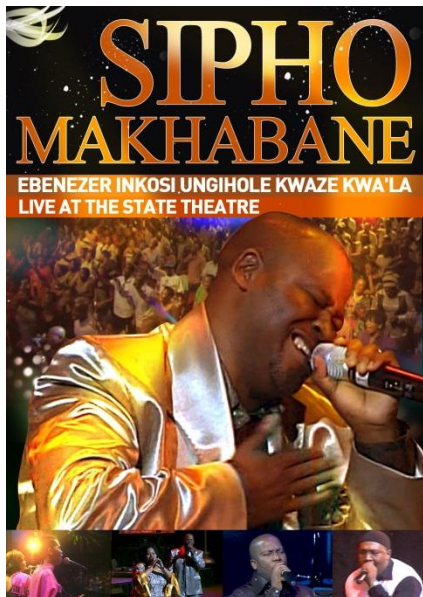
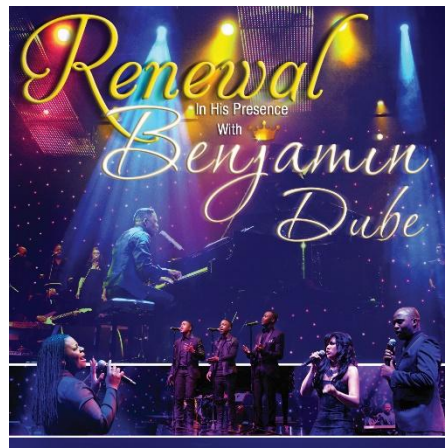


Figure 5.11: Examples of the artwork of Gospel music albums of SABC Crown Gospel Awards' 'Best Gospel Artists'. (Sources: from various websites)

the two. This preliminary shortlisting was based simply on how these albums were packaged. Gospel music albums that are professionally packaged have cover designs that portray an effortful artwork, designed through a collaborative work of graphics designers, photographers and hair and make-up artists.

The packaging of Gospel music albums has similar commercial implications like that of any other commercial product. Gospel artists therefore package their albums in a particular way that is aimed at making them appeal to the buyer. It makes sense that the shop owner used his experience in selling music albums to ascertain which of the three albums was going to sell and further establish the price range for each.

In this chapter, I have argued and shown that the recording industry consciously engages in specific processes of creating and recording popular Gospel music songs and albums. I have shown that sober decisions are taken in determining activities that are undertaken in these processes. Moreover, I have shown that Christianity and commerce influences these decisions, and consequently the final music product. In chapter 7, I draw from this discussion, and locate it within the culture of popular Gospel music.

Chapter 6

Popular Gospel music audiences, Christianity and commerce

Introduction

In this chapter, I investigate the responses of audiences, markets, consumers or fans (I use these four terms interchangeably) of popular Gospel music to how the music industry and Christian churches use Gospel music. I approach this investigation from the perspective that consumers are targeted by the music industry and Christian churches as recipients of Gospel music products. Consequently, from this viewpoint, I argue that these audiences are kingmakers, in terms of determining successful Gospel music products, be they projects, songs or artists. While acknowledging the role of the music industry in crafting successful Gospel music products as discussed in chapters four and five, I however argue that consumers' positive feedback and feedforward responses ultimately determine the success of Gospel music products. These audiences' responses transpire through buying of records, attending concerts, voting for awards, endorsements on social media platforms, and through word of mouth endorsement. I have used Jonathan Shaw's overview of the South African music industry, as a framework and as a reference for locating various roles of different music industry departments and personnel involved with popular Gospel music. Shaw locates audiences as passive participants who receive whatever that the music industry presents to them. However, I want to argue, as I hope to show in this chapter, that Gospel music audiences also play a crucially important, but indirect role in the sustenance of popular Gospel music.

Gospel music audiences and Christianity

Christians are generally perceived and targeted as the main consumers of, and audience for Gospel music. I have, in Chapter 3, identified a three-fold irrefutable link between Christian churches and Gospel music. This link is demonstrable, firstly by a congested traffic of Gospel artists to Christian churches stages, secondly by a two-way interchange of songs between churches and Gospel music industry, and thirdly by a lyrical theme of Gospel songs that is firmly premised on Christian themes. This study further solidifies this link based on the findings of one of its surveys, which is outlined in chapter 2 (see appendix 2.2). This survey reveals that nearly 98% of consumers of Gospel music are Christians and/or associate themselves with Christianity. Figure 6.1 tabulates the findings of this survey.

Total No. of respondents	Questions asked	Yes		No	
		No.	%	No.	%
150	Are you a Gospel music fan?	143	95	7	5
143	Are you a Christian and/or are you a member of any Christian church?	141	98	2	2
143	Do you think there is a link between Gospel music and Christianity? If so, please elaborate.	143	100	0	0

Figure 6.1: The findings of a survey seeking to establish a link between Gospel music, Gospel music consumers and Christianity.

The main questions that this survey asked were intended to ascertain: firstly, if a respondent is a Gospel music fan or not; secondly, if they link Gospel music and/to Christianity; and thirdly if they themselves are Christians. According to this survey, 143 of the 150 respondents are fans and admirers of Gospel music. Of the 143 fans, 141 are Christians and associate themselves with Christianity and belong to, or identify themselves with one Christian church or the other. All 143 fans of Gospel music that partook in this survey point to a link between Gospel music and Christianity. These respondents justify their awareness of this link on the basis that most Gospel musicians are - or at the least, are supposed to be - Christians and some are even pastors. Secondly, they point to Biblical, or 'spiritual' message contained in Gospel songs. The findings of this survey are in harmony with Jonathan Shaw's

statistics, adapted from the South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF). These statistics are a result of a survey that sought to establish genre popularity and asked a question: "Which of the following types of genres are you personally interested in" (2007: 127). In a list of 18 genres, 18 329 000 out of 20 000 000 respondents preferred Gospel music. According to this survey, the popularity gap between Gospel music and the second most popular genre, Kwaito, is humongous. Kwaito had 8 072 000 respondents choosing in its favor. Although in this survey, respondents could choose more than one genre, however, the popularity of Gospel music supersedes that of other genres with a very high margin. Based on the fact that two thirds of the South African population are Christians, and on that more than 90% of the population prefers Gospel music to other genres of music, one can therefore conclude that the majority of Gospel music consumers are associated with Christianity or belong to one Christian church or the other. This concurs with this study's survey, whose findings, summarized in figure 6.1, show that 98% of Gospel music consumers are Christians.

In chapter 3, I pointed to another questionnaire survey that I conducted, involving members of Christian churches, whose purpose also entailed enquiring into how Gospel music audiences consume and interact with Gospel music. The questions that this survey asked (see appendix 2.1) were aimed at studying audience trends, and asked questions such as:

- 1) What is your favorite Gospel music sub-genre or style?
- 2) Who is your favorite Gospel musician or artist?
- 3) What are your particular expectations on Gospel music artists and their music?
- 4) When listening to Gospel music, what do you pay most of your attention to, between the music (instruments, harmonies, arrangements), lyrics and the musician?

This survey revealed that Gospel music consumers are particular about their preference of music. Although there is a notable melting of sub-genre boundaries and an increasing crossing of genres or what I, in chapter 5 referred to as 'hybrid Gospel', Gospel music audiences are still particular about Gospel music as a genre. Their particular expectations, entailed in responses to the third question, include:

- 1) Artists' behavior that befit someone singing 'Christian music', and not characterized by negative publicity, drugs and alcohol abuse, 'improper love relationships', crime and violence. Some respondents were explicit that they expect Gospel artists to be Christians,
- 2) Dress codes that are presentable and respectable, are not skimpy and short, are not revealing private body parts,
- 3) Songs lyrics that are uplifting and constructive, with no insults and vulgar.
- 4) Respect for consumers in presenting recordings and performances that show effort, originality and professionalism.

On the fourth question of the survey in discussion, of the 500 respondents, 51% (255 people) pay attention to lyrics, while 27% (135 people) scrutinize the person singing, and 22% (110 people) focus on the music, which entails instrumentation, arrangements, and so forth. I want to argue that these statistical figures and consumers' expectations are not by mere chance, but are a direct influence of Christianity on consumers' perceptions of Gospel music. These Christianity-influenced perceptions determine how they engage with, and make meaning of Gospel music. There is no formal platform where consumers of Gospel music congregate to discuss popular Gospel music, its events and its artists. I argue that it is in Christian churches and through the doctrines and teachings of Christianity, and through the authoritative association of Gospel music with Christianity, that these consumers conceptualize these expectations and standards. In an attempt to appease and allure these consumers, the music industry adheres to these demands. Consequently, they get embedded on the culture of popular Gospel music and get accepted as standard guidelines and expectation of how Gospel songs, events and artists should be, and eventually become defining features of the culture of popular Gospel music.

Gospel music audiences and Gospel music production

I have argued, contrary to Jonathan Shaw's overview of the music industry value-chain, that Gospel music consumers are active contributors to, and determinants of, the culture of popular Gospel music. Henry Jenkins asserts that fans are not just passive recipients of music products, but that they are "consumers who also produce, readers who also write, spectators who also participate" (1992: 208). Roy Shuker supports this notion and points to

scholarly debates that regard audiences of popular culture as “active determinants of cultural production and social meanings” (2005: 13). These sentiments are in one accord with Keith Negus who argues that:

there is not simply a type of music that naturally fits the commercial imperatives of the record industry. Although there is a ‘market’ for music, what becomes commercially successful on this market does not do so due to a spontaneous process in which ‘the market’ decides. Neither does what is made available on the market simply coincide with what the public wants (1996: 50)

Negus suggests that the production of music to what is eventually available on the market entails a process that involves the music industry on one end, and the consumer on the other end. Expounding on the role of music consumers in determining the music, Negus introduces the concept of ‘active audiences’ or ‘creative audiences’, which he says “reuse and appropriate cultural commodities [of the music]” (1996: 52). Negus argues that these audiences engage critically with the music and are an essential part of the process of its creation. Henry Jenkins supports this perspective and argues that:

Fans are neither regressive, obsessed, alienated individuals nor a manipulated collective mass. Instead, fans are imaginative, discriminating people who are capable of making a number of fine distinctions and who actively participate in creating the meanings that become associated with popular music (1992: 26).

It is on this account that Jenkins suggests, as quoted earlier, that fans do not only consume, but also produce; do not only read, but also write; and do not only spectate, but also participate. In the context of the current study, this stance unequivocally suggests that consumers of popular Gospel music are an integral part of the processes and activities that characterize its culture. Simply put, Jenkins argues that consumers and fans of Gospel music are as important as the artists and other stakeholders involved with Gospel music. His argument bears crucial relevance to the current discussion, in the sense that he suggests that audiences of popular Gospel music are able to select from a pool of music products - be they artists, songs, albums, concerts, and so forth - those that will eventually be deemed as successful and deselect

those that will not. Moreover, his argument suggests that these audiences will then determine what is generally accepted as 'proper' Gospel music, how it should be presented, by whom, and where. This is true considering the fact that no matter how much effort an artist can put in making a song, an album or staging a concert, if consumers do not buy it, nor buy tickets to that concert, this artist will be deemed as unsuccessful in that particular regard. On the contrary, when consumers endorse a particular product, it becomes a yardstick for successful products, and bear characteristics that other artists would eventually copy, in quest of success. These characteristics consequently become defining features of a successful music product, such as discussed in the previous chapter. These generally accepted standards and expectations also consequently become part of the popular culture of Gospel music.

One of the questions asked in the questionnaire survey that I discussed in the preceding section, sought to inquire into the expectations of Gospel music fans regarding Gospel music artists. I showed that the findings of this survey show that consumers of Gospel music are socialized in a way that raises specific expectations regarding Gospel music and Gospel artists. I showed that these expectations are directly linked to, and are informed by Christianity. In the previous chapter, I discussed how music creators such as songwriters, composers, producers, arrangers and artists consider their markets or target audience when engaging in the process of making music, and consequently maneuver their music and employ particular elements and styles in order to meet the expectations of these target audiences. Jonathan Shaw explains this process further, and says "the better the producer understands the artist's music and what a paying audience wants, the easier it is to produce the right sound" (2007: 190). My argument is that this conscious consideration of the target audience suggests that the makers of popular Gospel music are fully aware of trends and standards that are being, or have been created by audiences, and consequently generally accepted as defining elements of popular Gospel music and its underlying culture. It is on this basis that I argue, and concur with scholars such as Negus (1996), Jensen (1992), Shuker (2005) and Jenkins (1992), that consumers of popular Gospel music

are not just recipients of finished and pre-determined cultural products, but that they are active role-players in shaping Gospel music and consequently its culture.

Various Gospel artists attest to the importance of their fans, and duly acknowledge them in the notes on their albums covers, such as follows:

Joyous Celebration:

To all our partners from all over the world, there is simply no way we can say “thank you” enough. You call yourselves fans, we call you partners. God bless you all for your support over the years. You inject daily doses of life on everyday basis with your support, [and] this revives our spirit and keeps us going. Do not stop what you are doing because you represent God (*Joyous Celebration 14: Life Changing Worship CD*).

Nqubeko Mbatha:

To the fans that have supported this ministry by buying an album, or coming to the shows or even sending me love through social platforms: I appreciate you and pray God’s love over your life (*Sentiments of a Worshipper DVD*)”.

Spirit of Praise:

[Thanks to] You [the fans], for being loyal followers of Gospel music, particularly our Spirit of Praise Ministries. We pledge to you to be faithful to our calling and assignment, to the glory of our Lord God (*Spirit of Praise, Vol. 4 DVD*).

Benjamin Dube:

To all my fans, Twitter followers, Facebook friends: [thank you] for your encouragement and support (*Healing in His Presence DVD*).

Mthunzi Namba elaborates on the importance of the Joyous Celebration fans, and says that:

Joyous Celebration is the people who like the music of Joyous Celebration, the fans who buy the music. When they listen to the music that we produce, wherever they are: at home, while they are driving or at the office, they rejoice joyously. So they are Joyous Celebration, and we are just instruments that God is using (*Joyous Celebration 17 Backstage Pass – Bonus Footage*).

Gospel music consumers and commerce

In chapter 4, I have argued that music industry success is equivalent to commercial success. In the current chapter, I have further asserted that consumers of popular music are gatekeepers through which this commercial success materializes. This is because,

“[It is] the general public [that] buys concert tickets, records, merchandise, and related material created by musicians and promoted by the industry. Fans vote with their pocketbooks – meaning they buy what they like and come back to the music that they enjoy on a repeated basis (Stiernberg, 2001: 14).

Consequently, like in any commercial industry, recording labels, music companies and artists in general, need music consumers in order for their music products to be successful. This need is concisely encapsulated in Michael Jones’ assertion that:

Musicians need paying audiences; only paying audiences allow them to be just musicians and not workers of some kind who play music in their ‘spare time’. [...] It is impossible to separate musicians who make music for markets from the industrial process of making music commodities (2012: 99).

In the context of the current discussion, Jones suggests that music makers seek to make and maximize profits through music products and commodities, and that in so doing, they cannot succeed without consciously and actively considering their audiences, target markets and fans who are consumers of the said commodities. I argue that this consideration entails closely analyzing the consumers’ responses to products on the market. This is in terms of what albums are selling, songs are downloaded and topping charts, concerts are sold out, and so forth. These commerce related indicators send unneglectable messages to artists and record companies. John Fiske summarizes this process by saying that: “For the industries, fans are an additional market that not only buys ‘spin-off’ products, often in huge quantities, but also provide valuable free feedback on market trends and preferences” (1992: 46-47). Fiske’s presupposition suggests a cyclical relationship between artists and the recording industry on one end, and the consumers on the other. I argue that this relationship is cyclical and exists in a scenario where each stakeholder needs and depends upon the other.

As shown in figure 6.2, in this relationship, the music industry feeds forward to the fans through spin-off products such as CDs, DVDs, songs, concerts, and in some cases, clothing merchandize. On the other side, fans or consumers feedback to the industry through what I call industrial behavior, which entails financially endorsing or rejecting music products. This industrial behavior entails how consumers respond commercially to the spin-off products that the music industry makes available on the markets.

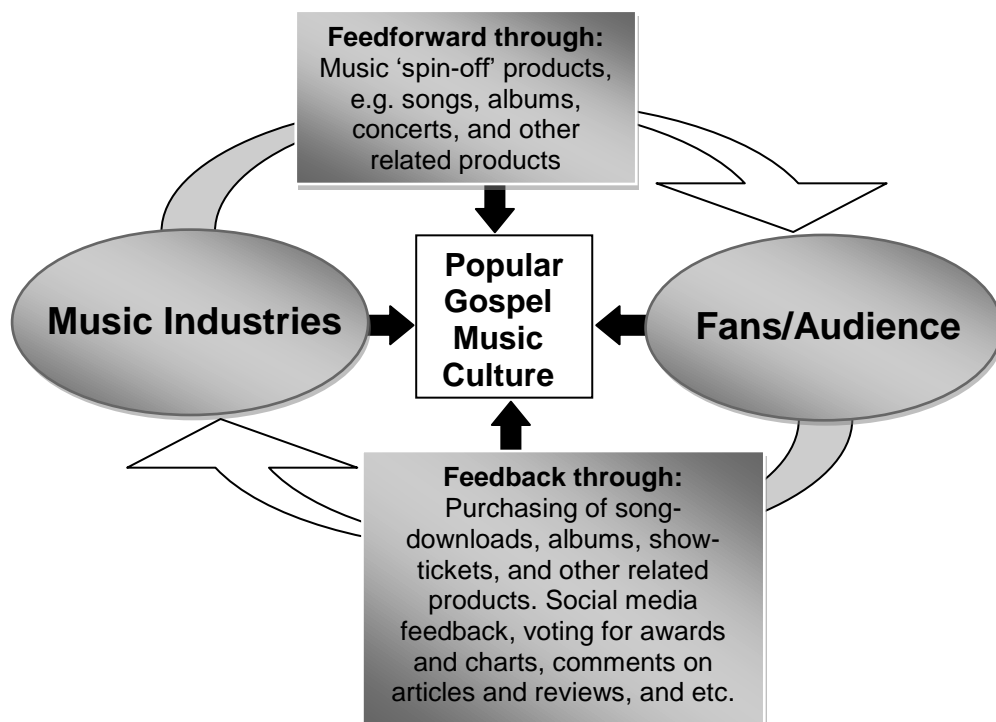


Figure 6.2: A cyclical interplay between music industry and Gospel music fans

This response translates to album sales, concerts and shows attendance, music downloads, music-charts ratings, and voting for songs/albums/artists for selection in awards and related accolades. On a less industrial scale, this feedback entails feedbacks on social media platforms, comments and feedback on print and digital articles and reviews. I firmly assert that for the music industry to exist and survive, it needs to consider the feedback from its target audiences and avail more products bearing similar or related elements with the previously successful ones.

The current chapter emphasizes the stance that relocates audiences from a

passive receiving end, which is outside the music production chain, and rather places them as active participants inside this chain. This stance is endorsed by John Fiske who highlights the importance of the role that fans play in the production of popular music and its underlying popular culture, and says:

Fans discriminate fiercely: the boundaries between what falls within their fandom and what does not are sharply drawn. And this discrimination in the cultural sphere is mapped into distinctions in which the social boundaries between the community of fans and the rest of the world are just as strongly marked and patrolled (1992: 34-35).

In the context of the current discussion, Fiske proposes that the suggested interplay between the industry and the audiences determines the demarcations and boundaries of the culture of popular Gospel music. As the industry provides feed-forward and the audiences the feedback, this cyclical interplay influences the culture of popular Gospel music, in the sense that it ultimately determines what kind of music and which artists are regarded as popular and successful, and those that are not. Within a pool of industrial music products, this interplay selects those products that will thrive, and separate them from those that will not. In this regard, “popular culture is produced by the people out of the products of the cultural industries: it must be understood, therefore, in terms of productivity, not of reception. Fans are particularly productive” (Fiske, 1992: 37). Here, Fiske emphasizes the fact that fans are not just recipients of popular culture, but are producers as well, and that they will “make their culture out of the commercial commodities of the cultural industries. [...] Culture is [...] related to the commercial interest of the culture industries” (30). This affirms the current study’s preposition that commerce, as a primary premise of the industrial operations involving popular Gospel music, is one of the main factors that influence the culture of popular Gospel music.

Rebecca Malope, Joyous Celebration and Sifiso Ncwane are some of the Gospel music artists who epitomize success. In the context of the current study, their success can be summarized and validated by the responses of the markets, the Gospel music consumers, to their music products. In 2009,

when Malope celebrated her 41st birthday, *Sowetan* published an article crowning her as the then “South Africa’s top-selling musician, [having] now sold at least 3,7million records, [...and] the late Brenda Fassie [being] the only South African who has sold more music than Malope” (www.sowetanlive.co.za, 23 February 2017). According to Malope’s web page, “Her first ten gospel albums went gold and the last six platinum” (www.rebeccamalope.co.za, 23 February 2017). This website further records Malope’s commercial milestone, stating that “in 1995 *Shwele Baba* sold more than 1 million copies in 3 weeks, becoming the fastest selling CD in the history of SA music” (Ibid). Joyous Celebration’s career is similarly characterized by massive album sales of “over three million units” (<http://joyous.co.za/achievements>, 23 February 2017), sold-out concerts, and various accolades as mentioned in chapter two. Figure 6.3 tabulates the unit album sales of Joyous Celebration’s CDs and DVDs.

CD Album	Album Sales Status	DVD Album	Album Sales Status
Joyous Celebration 19	Gold	Joyous Celebration 19	Platinum
Joyous Celebration 18	Platinum	Joyous Celebration 18	Double Platinum
Joyous Celebration 17	Platinum	Joyous Celebration 17	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 16	Platinum	Joyous Celebration 16	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 15 Part 2	Gold	Joyous Celebration 15 Part 2	Platinum
Joyous Celebration 15 Part 1	Platinum	Joyous Celebration 15 Part 1	Double Platinum
Joyous Celebration 14	Platinum	Joyous Celebration 14	Double Platinum
Joyous Celebration 13	Double Platinum	Joyous Celebration 13	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 12	Double Platinum	Joyous Celebration 12	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 11	Platinum	Joyous Celebration 11	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 10	Double Platinum	Joyous Celebration 10	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 9	Triple Platinum	Joyous Celebration 9	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 8	Triple Platinum	Joyous Celebration 8	Triple Platinum
Joyous Celebration 7	Triple Platinum	Joyous Celebration 7	Platinum
Joyous Celebration 6	Quadruple Platinum	Joyous Celebration 6	Double Platinum
Joyous Celebration 5	Septuple Platinum		
Joyous Celebration 4	Quintuple Platinum		
Joyous Celebration 3	Quintuple Platinum		
Joyous Celebration 2	Quadruple Platinum		
Joyous Celebration 1	Quadruple Platinum		

Figure 6.3: Joyous Celebration’s CDs and DVDs unit albums sales (<http://joyous.co.za>, 23 February 2017)

In the same manner, Sifiso Ncwane’s 2014 album entitled *Bayede Baba* followed suit on the success of its predecessor, *Kulungile Baba*, which sold “more than 238 000 copies and still counting [...and] became his best seller,

compared to his previous eight albums, and in less than a month. The Vodacom USSD stream code ring tones for the song *Kulungile Baba* reached over 900 000 subscribers” (<http://showbizzone.co.za>, 23 February 2017). Figure 6.4 outlines the commercial success of *Bayede Baba*, in terms of this album’s physical copies sales, songs digital downloads, and awards it won.



Figure 6.4: Industry statistics of Sifiso Ncwane’s *Kulungile Baba* (twitter.com/sfisoncwane, 23 February 2017)

Gospel music ‘fandom’

In his discussion of ‘fandom’, Henry Jenkins places much importance on fans as people who play an active role in determining and upholding the defining characteristics, and mapping boundaries of a particular popular culture. Jenkins distinguishes between a supporter and a fan, the latter being more involved than a mere supporter and goes an extra mile to the extent of investing finances, time and emotions in support of that particular culture. Jenkins describes this involvement and investment as ‘fandom’, which he argues to result in fans assuming ownership of, and develop particular terms, demands and expectations regarding that particular culture. Consequently, he argues that “fandom is a common feature of popular culture in industrial

societies” (1992: 30). In emphasizing the role of fans in popular culture, Jenkins says that through ‘fandom’, fans:

Select from the repertoire of mass-produced and mass distributed entertainment certain performers, narratives or genres and take them into the culture of self-selected fraction of the people. They are then reworked into an intensely pleasurable, intensely signifying popular culture that is both similar, yet significantly different from, the culture of more ‘normal’ popular audiences (ibid).

It is through this distinction that Jenkins separates fans from mere supporters and followers. He acknowledges that all popular audiences engage with, and make meaning of popular culture in different ways. He, however distinguishes how fans engage in this exercise, in the sense that they “often turn this semiotic productivity into some form of textual production that can circulate among – and thus define – the fan community” (1992: 30). This distinction positions fans not as insignificant individuals operating in their own self-regulated respective spaces, but rather as a collective community, a fan community, which is actively premised within, and involved in, a respective popular culture. He argues that through ‘semiotic activity’, this collective fan community contributes “meanings of social identity and of social experience” (37) into its respective popular culture. This means that a fan community within a culture of popular Gospel music does not only produce self-defining elements, but those of the broader Gospel music culture as well. In other words, “at the level of fan organization, [fans] begin to produce equivalents of formal institutions of official culture. [...] and produce a] fan culture [...] that echoes many of the institutions of official culture (Jenkins, 1992: 33).

Simply put, although there is a general audience for Gospel music, however, Gospel music fans will behave and engage with music products in a conscious and preselected way that is distinct from normal supporters’ coincidental one. Consequently, this fandom breeds a particular popular Gospel music fan culture, which share similar elements with the main culture of popular Gospel music. In clarifying this popular Gospel music fan culture, I am going to further refer to Jenkins, and discuss some of its elements.

Fans' mode of reception

Jenkins firstly suggests that “fans adopt a distinctive mode of reception” (1992: 209). Expanding on this, Jenkins makes an example of TV viewing and distinguishes on how a child viewer, a housewife, and a husband would view TV. He says that a child viewer would have a “selective attention” (209), a housewife on the other hand would have an interest that is divided between “television programming and other household activities” (210) and a husband “may watch television somewhat indiscriminately but often makes the broadcast the focus of undivided concentration” (ibid). He discusses these ‘modes of reception’ as reflecting “different interests the viewers bring to their relationship with the media and [that these modes] are shaped by the different social conditions which these viewers experience in their everyday lives” (ibid). Distinct from these three viewing modes, Jenkins argues that the viewing of someone who is a fan is another different mode of reception. Firstly, he says that “fan viewing is characterized by a conscious selection of a specific program which is viewed faithfully from week to week” (ibid). Secondly, he says that “fans are motivated not simply to absorb the text but to translate it into other types of cultural and social activity” (ibid).

The findings of this study are in line with Jenkins’ arguments. I have already discussed the findings of the survey on Gospel music consumers show that Gospel music consumers have particular expectations on Gospel musicians and their music. In the words of Jenkins, these audiences do not just ‘absorb the texts’ presented to them as finished products. Instead, they interact with the product in the same way that a ‘fan’ viewer consciously selects a specific program which they view faithfully. I took note of how, within an audience of Gospel music, some people, the fans, behave differently from the rest of ‘normal’ followers. This distinction is evident in how Gospel music fans passionately sing and dance along with the artist, and further how they anticipate and demand some of the songs from the said Gospel artists in live performances. For example, Solly Mahlangu has a song entitled ‘Siyabonga Jesu/Wahamba Nathi’ (track 15 in *Mwamba Mwamba*). The irony about this song is that although it is one of the songs that put Mahlangu on the national map as a Gospel artist, but its popularity went before its recording in

Mahlangu's albums. In other words, by the time Solly Mahlangu recorded this song in his *Mwamba Mwamba* production at Carnival City in Johannesburg in 2012, it was already popular. This is besides its earlier inclusion in the *Spirit of Praise, Vol. 3* album, in which also Solly Mahlangu sings it as a 'sing-along' that people already knew. The relevance of this song to the current discussion is that when recording the *Mwamba Mwamba* project, Solly Mahlangu 'presumably' comes to the end of his concert repertoire, and says his thank you remarks:

Well, thank you all for coming,
We will see you in the next recording,
Go well, go safe and God bless you (ibid).

Eventually the audience starts shouting, screaming and erupting in song:

Wahamba nathi,
Oooh! Wahamba nathi,
Oooh! Wahamba nathi,
Siyabonga!!!

Solly Mahlangu is interrupted in his 'goodbye and thank you speech', and he light-heartedly says:

Oh, I'm sorry bazalwane (brethren),
Oh, I'm sorry I forgot!

He then bursts into song, singing the hit song 'Siyabonga Jesu/Wahamba Nathi', and the audience erupts into jubilant and ecstatic singing. Similarly, in S'fiso Ncwane's DVD recording at Durban ICC, the audience shouted singing Ncwane's hit song 'Kulungile Baba' (noted from the event on November 03, 2012). To this, Ncwane responded by singing this song, in which the audience sang lively along. These examples speak to the fact that fans of Gospel music consciously interact with the music in a similar way that a fan viewer would, mindfully selecting specific programs that they view loyally. In this context of Jenkins' fan viewer, fans of Gospel music do not only relate with Gospel music in terms of the songs that they already know, for example, Solly Mahlangu's 'Siyabonga Jesu/Wahamba Nathi' or Sifiso Ncwane's 'Kulungile Baba'. But, in addition to that, they have a particular way in which they accept

and interact with new songs presented to them. As Jenkins says, these fans translate these new songs “into other types of cultural and social activity” (1992: 210).

This is a common apparent fact within Gospel music and Christian circles that fans would translate Gospel songs into church songs. In various Christian church services that I attended, I observed such singing of Gospel songs as ‘praise and worship’ or liturgical church songs. These include EThekwini Community Church (New Year cross-over service on December 31, 2013) where Andile Majola’s ‘UJehova Ungibiyele’ and Siphon Makhabane’s ‘The Devil is a Liar’ songs were sung; Covenant Fellowship Church International (Sunday church service on October 06, 2013) where Vuka Afrika’s ‘Isihlalo Somusa’ song was sung; Life Bible Church International (Apostolic Kingdom Mandate Conference on December 02, 2012), where Ntokozo Mbambo’s ‘In the Shadow’ song was sung; and High Praise Centre, where Benjamin Dube’s ‘Into thy Presence We Come’ song was sung. In these instances Gospel music fans, or Christians, interact with and translate Gospel songs into ‘other types of cultural and social activity’, which is Christian church music.

Gospel music audiences as interpretive community

The second level of fans operation that Jenkins suggests is that “fandom constitutes a particular interpretive community” (1992: 210). Making an example of a reading fan, he points to ‘interpretive communities’ such as “fan club meetings, newsletters, and letterzines [that] provide a space where textual interpretations get negotiated” (211). Jenkins argues that “the meanings generated through this process certainly reflect, to some degree, the personal interests and experiences of individual fans” (ibid). This Jenkins’ assertion can be easily associated with Gospel music fans. In this instance, Christianity itself provides a point of reference from which Gospel music texts are negotiated. There are ministries and departments within Christian churches that present possible platforms for the negotiations of textual interpretation of songs. Such ministries include music, choir, praise and worship teams and so forth.

In one of the church events that I attended at EDwaleni Christian Fellowship Centre (Praise and Worship workshop on September 18, 2012), where Pastor Thomas Mveli, teaching about Biblical principles of Praise and Worship alluded to some songs that he referred to as 'non-Biblical'. He made examples of songs such as Deborah Fraser's 'Abefundisi Abawrongo' (in which Fraser sings 'we do not want wrong or evil pastors') and Rebecca Malope's 'Isandla'. Pastor Mveli elaborated on his judgment of these songs as 'non-biblical', saying that they have 'no scriptural backing'. His point was based on using such songs in church. He further elaborated on his point that songs need not only have Biblical reference, but have contextual meaning as well. He referred to the song 'UJona Uyabaleka', meaning Jonah is running away, by iMvuselelo yaseNatali, stating that although this song is directly abstracted from the book of Jonah in the Bible, and summarizes the story of Jonah running away from being sent to Nineveh but rather fleeing to Tarshish; however, it contains no spiritual relevance that would qualify it to be sung in church. Similarly, Pastor Collen Malinga at Christian Worship Centre (Sunday service on July 15, 2012) shared similar sentiments about Vuyo Mokoena's 'Njalo' song, which says:

Njalo, njalo njalo, (*everyday, everyday, everyday*)

Siyathandaza, siyanikela, siyadumisa, (*we pray, we give, we praise*)

Njalo! (*Everyday*).

Although I would personally argue that the song emphasizes these important Christian activities, i.e. praying, giving/offering and praising; however, Pastor Malinga criticized this song saying that it is a complaining song that every day we pray, we give and we praise, and further stated that the song is 'non-Biblical'.

These examples point to the fact that Christians as fans of popular Gospel music are interpretive communities. In this context, there are particular events and programs involving Gospel music, such as training workshops, church services, and other similarly related services that Christian churches engage in, through which they generate meanings of popular Gospel music. Moreover, these examples endorse Jenkins' suggestion that these "meanings generated through this process certainly reflect, to some degree, the personal

interests and experiences of individual fans” (1992: 211). In support of Jenkins’ notion of interpretive community, these examples that I have referred to, further denote remarkable trends about the people who are criticizing the said songs. Firstly, they show that these people have critically interacted with the songs. Secondly, these people have located these songs within ‘other’ communities or institutions out of Gospel music, which are Christian churches or Christianity in this instance. Thirdly, these examples show the personal interests (or the lack thereof) and experiences of the said pastors, in the sense that they are able to draw from what they know to be ‘Biblical’, and contrast it with the said songs.

Gospel music audience as an alternative social community

On the third account, Jenkins suggests that “fandom constitutes an alternative social community” (1992: 213). Elaborating on this statement, Jenkins says that:

The fans’ appropriation of media texts provides a ready body of common references that facilitates communication with others scattered across a broad geographic area, fans who one may never – or only seldom – meet face to face but who share a common sense of identity and interests (ibid).

This study has established a strong bond amongst fans of Gospel music. This bond is as a result of a shared interest, that is: Gospel music, and as Jenkins suggests, is “not defined in traditional terms of race, religion, gender, region, politics, or profession, but rather a community of consumers defined through their common relationship with shared texts” (1992: 213). Jenkins further says that this community exists “not so much as a vehicle for interpreting and commenting upon primary texts, than as a means of building and maintaining solidarity within the fan community” (ibid). A common trend within the culture of Gospel music, is fans interacting cordially in Gospel music events. Figure 6.5 shows fans of Joyous Celebration interacting joyously during a performance. These fans are arguably not acquaintances, but rather people who met, some for the first time at the concert venue. However, through a common shared interest, and as “subconscious means of building and maintaining solidarity within the fan community” (ibid), these people interact at a level of close associates.



Figure 6.5: Joyous Celebration audience during one of the performances of the ensemble (Source: www.joyous.co.za).

I have alluded to a Facebook survey (see Appendix 2.3) that I conducted, inquiring into perceptions regarding successful Gospel artists. This survey's voluntary respondents reveal that there is a 'social community' that shares a common interest of Gospel music. Although most of the respondents are total strangers to each other, they however interact in a particular manner during the conversation on Facebook. This discussion points to a generally common paradigm amongst fans of Gospel music, which is premised upon, or influenced by Christianity, and yielding a social community that shares Gospel music. Although these respondents present different musical preferences and 'tastes', they however all present themselves as staunch loyalists of the said social community.

Conclusion

Having premised much earlier discussion of this study on the music industry and Christian churches, this account of audiences or fans brings a different, yet important perspective in this study. Consumers play a very important role in keeping the wheel of Gospel music turning. As I have suggested their location on the map of the culture of Gospel music, consumers/fans/audiences are directly linked both to commerce and Christianity, which I argue in this work to be the main influencers of the culture of local Gospel. As a popular

music that is premised on Christianity, Gospel music is primarily consumed by Christians. These Christians are therefore targeted by music makers as consumers of their musical products. This therefore links directly to the commerce facet of this study. Commercially, these Christians are targeted as people who will buy the musical products and attend concerts that the music industry makes available on the market. This simply means that if consumers or audiences were eliminated in the music production value-chain, music making for music makers would be reduced to a mere hobby, with no returns, whether financial or otherwise. As such, this study concurs with Michael Jones who asserts that: "It is impossible to separate musicians who make music for markets from the industrial process of making music commodities" (2012: 99). I revisit the subject of fans/consumers/audiences in the final conclusion in chapter 7.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

Summary

My primary goal in this thesis was to provide a comprehensive narrative of popular Gospel music in post-apartheid South Africa, as a genre that exists and thrives through a link to, and influence from both Christianity and commerce. In chapter one, I defined popular Gospel music as music with lyrical content based on, or that can be linked to, the teachings and doctrines of Christianity, and is produced with aspirations for commercial returns, and for mass consumption. This thesis discussed how Christianity and commerce coexist as forces that create and sustain a mutual relationship between Christian churches and the music industry, based on their respective involvement with, and interest in, popular Gospel music. These institutions modify Gospel music products to meet Christian and commercial imperatives that are set, either by the record companies, or by the consumers of Gospel music products. Examples drawn in this thesis from different popular Gospel music artists, projects and institutions, show how the processes and outcomes of this modification get to be generally accepted as terms and standards of production of popular Gospel music, and consequently as defining elements of the culture of popular Gospel.

Guided by elements drawn from theories of postcolonialism and popular culture, discussed in chapter 2, I investigated why and how Christian churches and the music industry use popular Gospel music. I adopted the

term 'post-colonialism' as referring to an era that succeeded a colonial era, and 'postcolonialism' as a web of philosophical theories that entail complex details of the processes of colonization and its aftermath, and the binary relationship between the colonizer and the colonized. I drew from theories within Subaltern Studies, which suggest methods of analyzing and rewriting colonial history from the perspectives of, and by, the previously colonized, and not from the perspectives of, and by the colonizers and their offspring. In contextualizing the elements drawn from theories of postcolonialism and Subaltern Studies within the South African context, I outlined three eras, namely: the colonial era, which arguably dates as far back as 1652, till 1961; the apartheid era, which overlapped with the colonial era from 1948 and lasted until 1994; and the present continuous post-apartheid era, which began in 1994.

Alongside postcolonialism, I drew from theories of popular culture, which I explained as a culture that is premised on activities of mass groups of people. Three aspects of popular culture theory provided a framework for this study's discussions. Firstly, people in any group that exists within parameters of a popular culture can be divided according to two roles: that of producers, and that of interpreters of that particular culture. I argued that these roles are not permanently attached to a particular sub-group of people within that group. This is to say, for instance, that the role of production of music within popular Gospel music *culture* is not permanently affixed to the recording industry, but that consumers also do play an active role in determining the terms and standards of this process. Secondly, I drew from Dominic Strinati (1995), and investigated the relationship between commerce and quality in the context of popular culture. This investigation emanated from an inquiry into the possible outcome of the process of commercializing popular culture. On this, Strinati suggested that either commerce would prevail over quality, or vice versa. This is to suggest that commerce and quality are in contrast. This study, however, has shown that in the context of popular Gospel music, the two are not necessarily conflicting, but complement each other. This observation supports the notion that Gospel music production is based on commercial aspirations, and further that the music industry consciously strives to adhere to particular

standards of quality products that are aimed at maximizing these commercial gains. Thirdly, I looked closely into the concept of the binary relationships between sub-groups within the popular Gospel music culture, which I will revert to, later in this chapter.

In chapter 3, I discussed popular Gospel music in relation to Christianity, and the context of its use by Christian churches. I outlined Christianity as one of the most popular religions locally and internationally. Guided by the theoretical framework of postcolonialism and Subaltern Studies, I explored the involvement and intentions of Christian churches with popular Gospel music. I discussed four elements of the Christian culture that I argued to be forces behind the link between churches and popular Gospel music. These elements are: a) Christian themes, which are subjects and doctrines of the Christian culture, derived from the Bible; b) proselytism, which refers to acts of recruiting non-Christians into Christianity by Christians; c) commerce, which deals with Christian perspectives of money, and corresponding commercial activities by Christian churches; and d) music: which deals with how and why Christian churches use music in their services.

In further showing the link between Christian churches and Gospel music, I drew a parallel between these four selected elements of the Christian culture, and this study's definition of Gospel music. Through this comparison, I presented how, and explained why Christian churches use Gospel music alongside the general Christian church music, and consequently how this Christian usage eventually becomes a means through which Christian influences diffuse into popular Gospel music. Firstly, through this link, I showed that the lyrical content of popular Gospel music songs is drawn from, and is influenced by Christian themes. Secondly, I discussed money as one of the elements of the Christian culture, which corresponds with how commerce is one of the forces behind, and defining elements of, the culture of popular Gospel music. Thirdly, I showed that Gospel music has various styles and sub-genres, in the same way that Christian churches uphold varied preferences and styles of music, based on their respective musical preferences and doctrinal convictions. This parallel is not coincidental, but

sub-genres of Gospel music are representative of different types of Christian church musics. The fourth similar feature between the Christian culture and popular Gospel music is mass-orientation. Popular Gospel music is produced for mass consumption, which is similar to how Christianity is also mass-oriented in the sense that Christian churches proselytize and evangelize in an attempt to recruit large numbers of people.

These common elements between the cultures of Christianity and of popular Gospel music provide a three-fold explanation of the existence of Gospel music in Christian churches. Firstly, Christian churches use Gospel music and Gospel musicians as a bait to draw people into Christianity. Secondly, Christian churches adopt some Gospel songs, songs that have their origins in commercial Gospel music recordings, and use them as part of their church music. Thirdly, the usage of Gospel music by Christian churches is sometimes motivated by commercial objectives.

In further exploring the relationship between Christianity and popular Gospel music, and the influence of the former on the latter, I discussed the involvement of Christian churches in the struggle against apartheid in South Africa. Drawing from scholars such as Paul Gifford (1998), Birgit Meyer (2004) and Tracy Kuperus (2011), I discussed the birth of Pentecostal Charismatic Churches (PCCs), and how their operations differed from that of African Independent Churches (AICs), which they arguably stemmed from. PCCs' mass orientation, structural organization and the promotion and preaching of the 'prosperity Gospel', are features that distinguished them from AICs. PCCs were politically active during the apartheid and were vocal in the struggle for freedom, but became politically passive in the post-apartheid era. Their political involvement is traceable through their usage of anti-apartheid 'Christian songs', such as *Thula Sizwe*, *Somlandela* and *Nkosi Sikelel'iAfrika*, which addressed socio-political issues of the time. These songs were used beyond church boundaries, in socio-political events as well. This political involvement of Christian churches influenced Gospel musicians to also involve themselves in the struggle against apartheid. Artists such as Benjamin Dube and Rebecca Malope recorded songs such as *Sicel'ukuthula* (we are

asking for peace), and *Khululekani* (be free), respectively, which were directly addressing socio-political issues. Unlike during the apartheid era, there is a paucity of Gospel songs that address socio-political issues in the post-apartheid South Africa. This is directly owed to the political passiveness of churches in this era. I discussed some of the few songs that celebrate democracy and freedom in the post-apartheid South Africa, but argued, drawing from Solly Mahlangu's statement, that 'the struggle has changed, we now chant for Jesus', which suggests that for Gospel music artists, political involvement is now less of a priority, if any at all.

In chapter 4, I used a framework provided by theories of popular culture and I investigated how and why the music industry involves itself with popular Gospel music. This investigation showed that music industry role-players, including record companies, producers, promoters, musicians and artists engage themselves with popular Gospel music in a manner that uniquely characterizes and defines this genre. This investigation aimed, firstly, to show that there is a culture within which popular Gospel music in South Africa is premised, and secondly, to explore the dynamics of this culture. This culture is informed by how and why different stakeholders who are involved with Gospel music create, produce, interact with, and make meaning of Gospel music. I presented Jonathan Shaw's 'overview of the entire South African music industry', and argued that the culture of local Gospel music is determined by the manner in which music company executives, producers, artists, songwriters, promoters, wardrobe and make-up artists, audiences, retailers, educators, talent-scouters, sound engineers and technicians modify popular Gospel music products - including songs, performances and artists - and use specific strategies, in order to ensure that they generate maximal financial profits. This, in short, shows that commerce is one of the forces that drive and influence the culture of popular Gospel music, a notion supported by scholars such as Mark Fenster and Thomas Swiss (1999), Robert Burnett (1996), Jonathan Shaw (2007) and Michael Jones (2012). In further showing the commercial intentions of the music industry, I discussed the concept of 'success', and argued that, although there are various yardsticks for measuring Gospel artists' success, commercial success is the ultimate goal of

every popular music artist and of the recording industry. Without commercial success, the music industry would eventually collapse.

In exploring the culture of local Gospel, I showed that artists are released either through 'major' or 'minor' record companies. I further categorized 'minor' companies into 'micro-minors' and 'macro-minors'. I made reference to John Stiernberg (2001) who argued that the quality of music should not be necessarily assumed based on the size of the company that produces it. Sifiso Ncwane's 'Kulungile Baba' recording is an example showing that 'minor' companies are well capable of making successful quality music products, amid limited financial resources. Be that as it may, commerce impacts upon the dynamics and operations of 'minor' compared to those of 'major' companies, in relation to budgets available to fund recording projects and their subsidiary activities. I referred to Sony/BMG's Joyous Celebration and I argued that 'major' companies have bigger budgets for music projects, and consequently have better opportunities and avenues for making successful records and of having higher financial returns than 'minor' companies.

Drawing from scholars such as Keith Negus (1996) and Geoffrey Hull (2004), I discussed, how 'minor' companies are more flexible and open to 'new sounds' than 'major' companies, which rather opt for those sounds that already have established markets. However, when 'minor' companies successfully present 'new sounds' that break into markets, 'major' companies then adopt these sounds by having their own artists incorporating these sounds to their music, or by signing the 'new sounds' artist, or even by merging with, or buying the 'minor' company responsible for the newly-found money-spinner. I further showed a growing tendency for Gospel artists to start their own record companies under which they release their albums. Examples of these include Sipho Makhabane's Big Fish Music, S'fiso Ncwane's S'fiso Ncwane Productions and Nqubeko Mbatha's Koko Records. These companies seem to have bypassed traditional routes and standards set by 'major' companies, and have succeeded by taking musical routes that are less explored by these 'majors'. I however argued that these 'minor' companies require a combination of financial capital, human resources and established

networks, in order to survive in pursuing their uncommon strategies stipulated in Chapter 4.

In analyzing the activities and programs of the music industry regarding popular gospel music, I showed how the music industry endeavors to adhere to standards and expectations of the industry and consumers, with the goal of optimizing commercial profitability. I referred to scholars such as Keith Negus (1992), Angela Beeching (2010) and James Riordan (1988), who suggest particular, common elements of successful music products. For example, Riordan's ingredients of a successful recording artist include: originality, identification, vocals, live appearances, right image, right teams, and a hit record. As discussed in Chapter 4, the music industry endeavors to maximize the effectiveness of these ingredients in making music productions commercially viable. In doing so, the industry engraves these elements as generally accepted standards and defining elements of popular Gospel music, and subsequently as elements of the culture of local Gospel music. I discussed the subject of Gospel artists' on-stage and off-stage images, which include how artists present themselves through conduct, dress codes, picture and video images. Riordan (1988) defines 'right images' as the visual portrayal of artists that music consumers identify the artists with. The images of Gospel music artists images are influenced, firstly by Christianity, through its general standards of dress codes that befit a Gospel artist. Secondly, these images are professional requirements that form part of the overall branding and representation of artists and their respective music. Thirdly, artists uphold particular images as a statement of class and affluence, with which they want their fans to identify them. Some of these images of class and affluence are not genuine, but are enacted and created to psychologically influence how Gospel fans perceive Gospel artists, with the hope of winning their support.

In Chapter 5, I considered the centrality and the importance of audio and visual music recordings – CDs, videos and DVDs entailing songs, singles and full albums - as primary commodities for the music industry operations. These music products are expertly maneuvered to appeal to target markets. I discussed the ways in which commerce and/or Christianity inform this

maneuvering, resulting in elements that eventually are accepted as characteristics of popular Gospel songs, particularly successful Gospel songs, and are ultimately embedded in the culture of Gospel music. I argued that in the same manner in which the music industry pursues success in relation to recordings and artists' careers, it also strives for 'hit records', which are records that have all necessary elements for them to sell in high volumes. As a starting point for the recording industry in making records, I analyzed the dynamics of the processes of recording Gospel music in a music studio and in a live venue. Recording companies select particular studios, 'live' venues, engineers and technicians, producers, singers and musicians, that will expertly and skillfully create a product that will adhere to industry standards, appeal to audiences and consumers and consequently sell in high volumes. Studio and live recording set-ups offer different dynamics for popular Gospel recordings. Live recordings are becoming a more effective option for Gospel artists, an option that is directly influenced by Christianity in the sense that set-ups and environments of live recordings are similar to those of church services. In these environments Gospel artists do not only sing for their audiences, but they interactively engage with them as an integral part of these recordings. In these recordings, artists are able to express their emotions and spirituality in a more flexible manner than they would in a studio.

In investigating experiences of Gospel artists and of the supporting crew during the process of recording popular Gospel music, I made reference to Louise Meintjes (2003) who discusses the processes involved in recording Mbaqanga music. Meintjes identifies external influences of 'Zuluness' in Mbaqanga music, which in the current study is parallel to the external influences of Christianity (and commerce) in Gospel music. In this discussion I showed that music industry stakeholders - including artists-and-repertoire (A&R) personnel, producers, and studio engineers - prefer Gospel artists, studio session singers and musicians who are Christian, over those who are non-Christian. These music industry stakeholders attribute their choice of artists, firstly, to their convictions that Gospel music has an element of spirituality that a non-Christian cannot effectively articulate. They consider this spirituality to be a connecting factor between the artist and music consumers,

which I have argued to be mostly Christians. This, although directly linked to Christianity, is also influenced by commerce, in the sense that artists who are Christians will make more profit than non-Christian artists because the former will yield a stronger artist-audience/consumer relationship, thus optimizing commercial opportunities. Secondly, Gospel music producers prefer Christian Gospel artists because they understand Gospel music better and are consequently easy to work with. This translates into shorter studio and rehearsal sessions, and consequentially lower production costs.

In contextualizing studio or live recording as a process of making a hit record, James Riordan (1988) suggested expected outcomes of this process, including: a great song, a great (studio or live venue) performance, and enough exposure for the record. David and Tim Baskerville (2013) add that a hit song must, amongst other elements: a) be easily memorable, b) have a clear lyrical theme, c) suit the taste of the market, and d) be distributed nationwide. In exploring these elements and contextualizing them in relation to local popular Gospel music, I discussed the six 'Best Gospel Songs' that have been selected in the SABC Crown Gospel Music Awards between 2008 and 2013. These songs, in their chronological order, are: Hlengiwe Mhlaba's '*UJesu Uyalalela*', Solly Mahlangu's '*Obrigado*', S'fiso Ncwane's '*Phakama*', Solly Mahlangu's '*Siyabonga Jesu*', Thinah Zungu's '*Kwanqab'umusa*' and Dumi Mkokstad's '*Mbize*'. My discussion of these songs confirmed the elements of a hit record suggested by Riordan and the Baskervilles, and consequently validated these elements as part of the culture of popular Gospel music.

In the context of hit songs and 'Best Gospel Songs', I probed the sources of Gospel songs, and investigated how Christianity and commerce influence the decisions of composing and/or selecting songs for recordings. This investigation revealed that as part of the culture of popular Gospel music, songs may be: a) originally composed, b) retrieved from Gospel recordings that are previously made by the same or other artists, and presented anew as cover-versions, or c) imported from Christian church music. The songs from the latter category are taken from church hymnbooks or from generally used

church songs, some of whose authors are not identifiable. Christianity and commerce both influence the decisions of choosing these songs, in the sense that Christians are targeted as audiences and market for Gospel music. Recording companies scout for songs that these Christian consumers will identify with, thus maximizing possibilities for financial profits. In the light of this discussion, the music industry can be seen to use Gospel music as a bait to catch Christian consumers.

When composing original Gospel songs, composers closely consider lyrics or text and style or sub-genre (which includes language) as key elements necessary for optimizing success of a popular Gospel song in South Africa. One of the defining characteristics of Gospel music is text or lyrical content that is based on Christian teachings and traceable to the Bible. Rebecca Malope's song '*Isandla*', exemplifies how Gospel music songwriters use Biblical texts and Christian perspectives to address social issues such as crime, unemployment, diseases, rape and poverty.

Style or sub-genre is the second element that comprises the art of songwriting or composition. In an attempt to make a song appeal to a particular targeted market or audience, songwriters, arrangers, producers and artists choose particular styles over others. Some styles are associated with, or come directly from, church music of particular churches. As an example: Zionist popular Gospel music comes directly from Zionist churches. Similarly, most Pentecostal Charismatic churches use a wide variety of music styles, and what I referred to as 'hybrid Gospel'. Consequently, in an attempt to attract members of, for example, Zionist churches into buying their music, music-makers use Zionist church styles in their music. Alongside style, the language used for songs is also carefully selected in line with the targeted market. Similarly as in the case of musical styles, the recording industry uses 'hybrid Gospel' and incorporates more than one language in one song or album, in an attempt to broaden their audience scope. This discussion of text, style and language further shows the influence of Christianity and commerce in the culture of local Gospel, in the sense that these elements are deployed to lure Christians, an act that will maximize prospects for financial profits.

Music videos and DVDs, as part of the commercial products within the culture of Gospel music, are also carefully crafted to yield optimal commercial gains. This crafting requires a combination of components, including: an expert art of technologically capturing visuals through cameras, visual enhancers such as stage and lighting, artists' on-stage images entailed in dress codes, make-up and hairstyles. All these and other components of music videos and DVDs are carefully attended to by expert personnel, who endeavor to optimize their aesthetic quality, with the underlying primary goal of maximizing its commercial viability and competence. These elements of a successful recording are identifiable in projects such as Joyous Celebration's 'Joyous Celebration 17 - Grateful', Benjamin Dube's 'In His Presence' collection, and Rebecca Malope's 'Bayos'khomba' recordings. In the case of 'Joyous Celebration 17 - Grateful', the album reviews by Ndumiso Hlongwane and Thabang Molapo discuss and show how elements such as song texts and themes, languages, and styles, visual presentation and artists' image, choice of singers and musicians, form part of the culture of Gospel music.

Album packaging is another ingredient that is pivotal to the success of a recording, as it can give one album a commercial advantage over others. I drew from various examples of projects and showed standard and common trends of how Gospel music albums are packaged in South Africa. Gospel artists use professional photographs that suggest their own professionalism, the brand of music they are conveying, and some level of socio-economic class. These photographs adhere to particular standards and expectations that are fostered by Christian churches, in terms of what a Gospel artist can wear and what they should not wear.

In chapter 6, I investigated popular Gospel music culture from the perspective of audiences and their response to how the music industry and Christian churches use Gospel music. Drawing from scholars such as Henry Jenkins (1992), M.L. Jones (2012), Keith Negus (1996) and Roy Shuker (2005), I argued that consumers of Gospel music are not just passive recipients of music products, but are active participants and contributors into the processes of making the music and mapping the boundaries of its underlying popular

culture. Gospel music consumers are gatekeepers to the commercial success of artists and the entire music industry. This is because they are the ones who buy music products, thus distinguishing those products that are successful from those that are not. Sales statistics of artists such as Joyous Celebration, Rebecca Malope and S'fiso Ncwane show how consumers have supported these artists' products, a support that is valued in millions of rands.

Christianity influences how fans of popular Gospel music engage with, and make meaning of this genre. This study showed this through three surveys that sought to establish: a) the relationship between Christianity and Gospel music fans, and b) Christian influence on how fans interact with, and make Gospel music. These surveys revealed that most consumers of Gospel music are Christians. Findings by Jonathan Shaw (2007) on national and music industry statistics, support the fact that Gospel music is the most popular genre in South Africa, and that at least 75% of the population of South Africa consumes Gospel music. This study's three surveys further showed that Gospel music consumers link Gospel music with Christianity, and that when interacting with Gospel music, 51% of the consumers pay more attention to the lyrics, 27% to the artist singing, and 22% to the music (instruments, voices, style, etc.). Christianity directly influences this order of priorities through its teachings and doctrines that influence perceptions of standards and expectations of Gospel music products, in terms of, firstly setting parameters around what music qualifies as Gospel music, and secondly, which artists qualify to sing it.

The subject of Gospel music fans and commerce shows an important interaction between the music industry and the audiences. In this interaction, the industry produces, and makes available in the market, a wide selection of music products such as songs, albums, concerts and tours. This process, I referred to as 'feed-forward'. On the other side of this interplay, Gospel music audiences select and favor some of these products over others. This process I called 'feed-back'. This 'feed-back' by audiences determines successful and unsuccessful records, songs, albums, concerts and artists. Through this interplay, elements of successful products get to be adopted and popularized

as defining elements of the culture of Gospel music.

While discussing audiences, I introduced the concept of 'fandom', as presented by Henry Jenkins (1992). Jenkins distinguishes between ordinary supporters and fans, in the sense that the latter go an extra mile in supporting Gospel music, to the extent of investing their finances, time and emotional resources. This 'extra mile' produces a fan culture, which is characterized by how these fans interact with and support Gospel music, in a loyal and unwavering manner. This fan culture is informed by three elements. Firstly, 'the mode of reception', which entails an uninterrupted manner in which fans consciously and dedicatedly interact with Gospel music products, thus translating their texts into social and cultural activity. Secondly, an 'interpretative community', where personal interests and experiences of fans are used to negotiate textual interpretations. Thirdly, as an 'alternative social community' where fans share similar interests through their common relationship with shared texts, regardless of their otherwise different demographics which may be geographic, social or economic.

Locating popular Gospel *music* within popular Gospel music *culture*

As a way of concluding, I would like to advance the discussions I made in chapters 3 through 6 by contextualizing them within the theories of popular culture that I discussed in chapter 2. In doing so, I establish how the intersection of Christianity and commerce, influences the culture of popular Gospel music. In broader terms, this discussion seeks to locate and outline the dynamics of popular Gospel music within the broader context of the culture of popular Gospel music. There are particularly three aspects of the theory of popular culture that I would like to build upon here, as part of the conclusion for this study.

Firstly, I would like to explore the relationship between producers and consumers of popular Gospel music. Dominic Strinati presents these as 'people below' and 'elites on high'. While discussing popular culture in chapter 2, I argued that these are positions that are not permanently affixed to a particular socio-economic group of people in the society, but rather represent

roles that are variably played by different groups. This argument suggests that one group of people can occupy a 'people below' space or 'elites on high', depending on what role in popular culture they are playing at a particular moment. In the context of the current study, these roles of production and consumption of popular Gospel *music* must not be confused with those of production and consumption of popular Gospel music *culture*, although the two are related. In the latter context, the role, for example, of production of popular Gospel music is firmly affixed to record companies, and that of consumers is affixed to audiences or fans of popular Gospel music. In the context of the culture of popular Gospel music, however, the fans of popular Gospel music can play the role of producers of particular aspects of popular Gospel music culture, while producers of popular Gospel music play that of consumers of those aspects. This raises the question of whether popular (Gospel music) culture ascends from the 'people below' or it descends from 'elites on high', or it springs up somewhere in between when these two interact.

Dominic Strinati, asks whether popular culture materializes "from the people [below...] as an autonomous expression of their interests and modes of experience, or is it imposed from above by those [elites] in positions of power as a type of social control?" (1995: 3). In consideration of the discussions made in previous chapters, I want to conclude that in the case of popular Gospel music and its culture, the relationship between its various stakeholders, particularly the music industry and consumers, is not fixed, but is rather on a continuous upward spiral motion, and that, depending on a role at hand, a higher position can be occupied by either producers or consumers of popular Gospel music. These role-players, as shown in the previous four chapters, engage with popular Gospel music in different ways, and for various reasons. The music industry is involved for commercial pursuits, while Christian churches and/or fans are involved for Christian psycho-spiritual reasons (which sometimes also include commercial, which Christians justify as spiritual or Biblical).

I conclude that these reasons and subsequent involvement of these

stakeholders are the vital forces that keep this spiral structure rotating upwards. Although some of these stakeholders do not fulfill their desired goals, which translates into 'unsuccessful' projects, their initial actions of attempting to make successful projects fuel the upward rotation of the popular Gospel music culture. The position, therefore, of who is at the top at a given point in time, is determined by who is benefiting from, or fulfilling their goals within the rotating whole, at that given point in time. If the music industry, or a subsidiary thereof is making profits, it occupies the position on top, which it sustains through the commercial support of the consumers. If Christian churches are getting more people coming to their churches, and/or make (more) money, and/or derive psycho-spiritual fulfillment through their usage of Gospel music/artists, they then occupy the top position at that point in time. I further conclude that this momentary benefit creates desire and a quest for even more benefit for a stakeholder on top. Consequently, this automatically pushes this stakeholder to consciously optimize, exploit and exhaust the benefit season, and eventually to restart the process. For the recording companies, this translates to more promotions, road shows and concerts, which when exhausted, necessitates the recording of a new project. On the other hand, for Gospel music consumers and/or Christian churches, this translates into getting more Gospel music products, either by using more Gospel artists/songs in church services, or by attending more Gospel concerts and events, or obtaining and listening to, or watching more Gospel recordings.

In chapter 2, I discussed the question of downward dominance and upward resistance suggested by Strinati (2002), Negus (1996) and Edgar and Sedgwick (2002). This discussion argued that those in advantaged top positions exercise social dominance on those in disadvantaged positions below, who in turn respond to this dominance by resisting it. In this regard, I conclude that because of the interdependent nature of the relationship of popular Gospel music stakeholders, the question of 'dominance' versus 'resistance' could be reformulated as one of 'dominance' and 'cooperation'. Unlike the forced dominance in the former discussion, the dominance of popular Gospel music stakeholders is determined by how much benefit that particular stakeholder is getting from their respective involvement with popular

Gospel music. I have suggested that the magnitude of this benefit at a given point in time is the one that puts this stakeholder on a superior position. Although this benefit materializes through the involvement of those on a lower position, this involvement is not resistant in nature, but is rather voluntary and cooperative. Those on a lower position cooperate because of their own pursuits and goals regarding their involvement with popular Gospel music.

Take, for instance, the case of the wide repertoire of popular Gospel songs sung by Pastor Vusi Dube at a New Year service at EThekweni Community Church, which I discussed in chapter 3. In the context of popular Gospel music culture, this church is in a position of dominance during this one church service. Its benefit through the usage of these songs may be that they uplift the church spiritually, or draw more people to church, or convey a particular message of the church, or even create a particular psychological effect that influences people's perception of the church. The owners of these songs do not resist, but cooperate with this usage by Christian churches because they (owners) need the resultant publicity, which (they hope) will eventually result in record sales and/or artist bookings in this, or other, churches and/or live events. In another scenario, say Joyous Celebration stages a Gospel concert at the Coca-Cola Dome, or releases a new album, which are both with the underlying intentions of making money. When their goal is (being) met in this regard, this will put them on the upper position on the upward spiral structure of popular Gospel music culture. The fulfillment of their goal, however, lies with the consumers or fans who must buy tickets or the album. Although these fans have to pay money for Joyous Celebration's pursuits to be fulfilled, they will not resist such dominance because of their own goals and pursuits in this equation. For them, attending this concert may be spiritually uplifting. Consequently, they will cooperate with Joyous Celebration by willingly attending the concert or buying the album.

The third aspect of popular culture that I want to present in this concluding section of this study is that of production and interpretation of popular culture, as discussed in chapter 2 drawing from Bhabha (1994 and 2004), Strinati (2002) and Negus (1996). In the context of a fixed vertical relationship

between the 'advantaged elites on high' and the 'disadvantaged below', this discussion suggests that one of the two groups will produce particular aspects of a popular culture. For the other group to engage with this culture, it will interpret it based on its own environment, life experiences and belief systems. The research stance that I presented in chapter 1 problematizes the very association of these two, rather different institutions: the music industry and Christian churches. In this regard, to suggest that when these institutions collaborate in the context of popular Gospel music culture, one of them will produce a culture that the other one will (have to) engage with, is rather far fetched. The answer to the question of why Christian churches would engage in an aspect of popular culture that is produced by the music industry, or vice versa, is not obvious. To comprehend this, one needs to understand the interdependent nature of the relationship between these institutions, as presented earlier. Although they are institutions premised on unrelated pursuits, they however exist and intersect in popular Gospel music culture, through their common interest in popular Gospel music. So when, for instance, the music industry, being driven by business intentions, implement particular activities that involve popular Gospel music such as discussed in chapters 4 and 5, this will produce particular elements of popular Gospel music culture. On the other hand, driven by their own different interests, Christian churches and/or fans of popular Gospel music will interact with these elements in a manner that is not stipulated by the music industry, but by their own life experiences, environment and beliefs.

As an example, if Big Fish Music stages a live recording concert for Spho Makhabane at Durban Playhouse, it considers aspects such as members of the production team, dress code for the on-stage crew, repertoire of songs, and other such elements discussed in chapters 4 and 5. All these elements are aimed at ensuring, firstly, that the concert will be sold-out, and secondly that it will yield a commercial product that has the potential of selling in high volumes. These elements circulate among recording companies and producers of popular Gospel music and are/get embedded in the culture of popular Gospel music. On the other hand, Christian churches and/or fans of popular Gospel music do not have an interest in having Durban Playhouse

full, or the album attaining triple-platinum sales status. However, driven by their own pursuits, which I have argued to be primarily psycho-spiritual, they will engage with this event and buy concert tickets or the album. This engagement materializes through interpretation and contextualization of the elements of popular Gospel music culture produced and presented by the recording industry, which in this case translates to: the venue, the line-up, the repertoire of songs, and other related elements of a live show. Fans' interpretation of this live show is directly informed by life experiences, beliefs and environment of these fans, which I have argued to be primarily influenced by Christianity. This influence could, for example, be in terms of Makhabane's songs that are sung in a particular church, need for spiritual enrichment expected through Makhabane's ministry, association of Makhabane with some Christian values, or admiration of Makhabane's artistry.

Although both these stakeholders, Big Fish Music and fans of Gospel music, are engaging in a common live show at the Durban Playhouse, their intentions and engagement are not the same. This live show produces a commonality, which I quoted Homi Bhabha referring to, in chapter 2, where he argued that "it is in the emergence of the interstice – the overlap and displacement of domains of differences – that the intersubjective and collective experiences of nationness, community interest, or cultural value are negotiated" (2004: 2). Although Bhabha was particularly referring to the context of the 'orient' and the 'occident', as presented by Edward Said, his sentiments apply generally to principles of popular culture, including popular Gospel music. In this instance, this negotiation occurs between producers and consumers, the recording industry and Christianity-influenced fans. All these role-players exist within the culture of popular Gospel music, through their different respective involvement with, and interests in, Gospel music. These involvement and interests create a common ground, and an interstice that results in a relationship that is the source of the existence and sustenance of popular Gospel and consequently the popular Gospel music *culture*.

Popular Gospel music therefore exists firmly through a bond between the music industry, Christian churches and fans of popular Gospel music, which

results in the culture of popular Gospel music. The varied vested interests of these interdependent parties, which are in this study summarized into commerce and/or Christianity, are the two forces that keep popular Gospel music and its subsequent culture alive. For these generally unrelated parties to survive in this popular culture, Bhabha's argument of popular culture in general, is applicable, that "their strategies of survival are both transnational and translational" (1994: 247). The relevance of Bhabha's assertion is two fold, one of which I discuss in the following section. In the current discussion, 'transnational' refers to the fact that these stakeholders are, in the context of colonialism, similar to nations that have to interact with one another, thus migrating certain elements of popular culture from the oppressing nation to the oppressed nation, and vice versa. In the recent example of Makhabane's concert, these 'nations' (may) represent Big Fish Music on one end, and Gospel music fans/consumers on the other. Bhabha's second aspect is 'translational', which simply refers to interpretation, in the sense that for each of the two 'nations' to engage with the other, it must firstly make meaning of the culture of the counter party, using its own experiences and environment. For fans to go to Makhabane, they will firstly absorb the concept of this concert into their own environment, system of beliefs and experiences, and not into that of Big Fish Music. This is what will make these fans buy concert tickets or CDs/DVDs. On the other hand, Big Fish Music will have to align the production of the show with the expectations of the fans, even though their (Big Fish Music's) underlying objective (not explicitly presented) maybe to make money.

Does the subaltern speak? The culture of popular Gospel music in post-apartheid South Africa

I want to advance the preceding discussion by presenting it in the context of post-apartheid South Africa, and of some elements drawn from the theories of postcolonialism, as discussed in chapter 2. One of the key subjects of colonialism that I explored is the binary relationship between two parties involved in any given colonization process. This relationship is such as presented in Edward Said's (1978) discussion of 'Orientalism', which deals with the 'orient' and the 'occident', and in the Subaltern Studies, which

explores the relationship between the colonizer and the colonized, or the oppressor and the oppressed. Both these stances suggest a clear distinction between these two conflicting subgroups, where the oppressor/colonizer/occident dominates and imposes its culture and systems on the oppressed/colonized/orient. In chapter 2, I discussed this binary relationship in the South African context and drew a parallel between aspects of colonialism and of apartheid. I drew from scholars such as Loomba (1998), Ashcroft *et al* (2000), Mishra and Hodge (1994), who suggested a difference between post-colonialism and postcolonialism. This study adopted postcolonialism (and postapartheid) as a theoretical framework through which to investigate and discuss “the effects of colonization [and apartheid] on cultures and societies, [...and] examine the processes and effects of, and reactions to, European colonialism from the sixteenth century up to and including the neo-colonialism of the present day” (Ashcroft, *et al*, 2000: 168 and 169). This is on the basis that the aftermath of colonialism and apartheid lingers in South Africa far beyond their formal abolishment in 1961 and 1994.

I now want to tie the discussions of chapters 3 through 6 to post-colonial and post-apartheid South Africa. I have shown through the analysis of songs, albums and artists that popular Gospel music is a product that reflects a multi-cultural post-apartheid South Africa, one which represents various languages, styles and social issues of the ‘rainbow nation’. I argued that this versatility is directly influenced by Christian churches, and that the music industry exploits it as a bait to lure consumers of popular Gospel music and to expand the consumption scope of popular Gospel music products. I have shown in chapter 1 that the genre of popular Gospel music is commercially thriving and is the biggest of the genres of popular music in post-apartheid South Africa. This commercial success is firmly anchored on the fact that this multifaceted genre is connected to a strong, self-sustaining culture of Christianity, which provides resources, means and demand for the consumption of popular Gospel music products. To put it more explicitly, I conclude that without its link to Christianity, popular Gospel music would not be as massive and commercial as it is. Don Cusic affirms such a conclusion, and says:

Christian [particularly Gospel] music has succeeded in selling recordings

because it is music by Christians, for Christians, about Christians and Christianity. Although many claim their intent is to reach the “lost”, their commercial success comes by reaching the “found”. It is an insular world, distrusting of – and distrusted by – the secular world. It is a sub-culture with its own traditions, language, and rules that has succeeded because it has established an alternative world to the mainstream popular culture. This world is filled with Christian media and marketed by Christian organizations (1995: 394).

One of the issues birthed by the democratic South Africa is the economic emancipation of the previously oppressed. This goal was clear from the onset, and is the force behind the ‘Black Economic Empowerment’, and later the ‘Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment’ policies discussed in chapter 2. I conclude that these and other pro-black economic strategies impacted on the growth of the Gospel music industry, which includes thriving black-owned labels such as Big Fish Music, Spirit Music, Koko Records, Sfiso Ncwane Productions, Joyous Records and many others. In addition, these policies can be argued to be the force behind the inclusion of black executives in previously white-managed companies, such as that of Lindelani Mkhize as an executive director of A & R at Universal Music, discussed in chapter 4.

As discussed in chapter 2 and highlighted above, scholars such as Edward Said (1978), Ania Loomba (1998), Homi Bhabha (1994), and Helen McDonald (2000) define the binary relationship between the colonizer and the colonized as a fixed relationship of power, dominance and oppression by the colonizer over the colonized. In this context, the colonizer is permanently regarded as progressive, civilized and superior, while the colonized is stagnant, barbaric and inferior. Moreover, the colonizer selfishly uses these attributes to exploit material and human resources from the colonized, with little or no regard for the colonized. In other words, this relationship is firmly anchored on a mission to enrich the colonizer, at the expense of the colonized. In this context, whatever regard the colonizer has for the colonized is not necessarily for the benefit of the colonized, but is primarily to optimize the productivity of the colonized so as to maximally benefit the colonizer. It is from this perspective

that Gayatri Spivak discusses the relationship between the Indian Hindu community and the British colonizers, and argues that the British benefitted more than the Indians, when the former abolished the tradition of burning Hindu widows. On this account, Spivak asks whether the spared widow, whom she refers to as the 'subaltern' can really speak, and if so, in whose voice does she do so, her own or that of the British colonizer. I want to discuss this binary relationship in the context of the culture of popular Gospel music involving, firstly, South Africans only, and secondly, South Africans and the international community.

On the first account of popular Gospel music culture involving South Africans only, I refer to the earlier point of conclusion stating that the position of superiority is not permanently affixed to one role-player, but can be occupied by either producers or consumers of popular Gospel music, depending on the circumstances of an individual role-player's involvement with popular Gospel music at a given point in time. In the context of postcolonialism, this suggests that if the music industry occupies a position of superiority, it does so due to its own selfish commercial pursuits, with little to no regard for the consumers, but rather at the expense of the consumers. Inversely, if Christian churches and/or popular Gospel music fans are momentarily in a position of superiority, it is because they have selfishly employed strategies that will benefit them psycho-spiritually, with little or no regard for the music industry. If either party does consider the other, it is primarily because it wants to optimize its benefit from that party, not because it really wants to empower it. The irony in this relationship is that, as concluded earlier, these role-players need each other for them to survive within the culture of popular Gospel music. Moreover, the momentary dominance of one party is directly influenced and made possible by the other party.

The mutual reliance of the music industry and consumers points to the complexity of the relationship between these role players. This complexity suggests that the momentary dominance or occupation of a higher position of one role player, over the other, is not solely because of the solitary efforts of that particular dominator. Considering that the recording industry carefully

maneuvers the processes of producing popular Gospel music products, to the specification preset and largely determined by the market or consumers through the Christianity influence, I therefore conclude that the artists do not sing solely in their voices, but also in those of consumers of Gospel music. When the music industry selects particular venues for Gospel concerts, and selects particular musicians and songs, and dresses artists in a particular apparel, and uses particular images for album covers, these are not done on the sole terms of the music industry, but also that of the consumers. In other words, this position of superiority is not solely a position of the music industry's dominance over consumers.

Similarly, if Christian churches and/or consumers of popular Gospel music products are occupying a position of dominance by, for example using and benefitting from, a particular hit Gospel song in their services, for any of the reasons stipulated in chapter three, it does so predominantly for its own pursuits, and much less, if at all, for that of the Gospel artist who sings that song. If a particular Christian church hosts a conference and invites, as a crowd puller, a Gospel music artist, it does so not because it mostly wants to empower that artist, but more so because it wants to advance its own agendas and church missions. Although such an artist may benefit, such as in the case of Bakhe and Bishop Matthews stated in chapter 3, such benefit is however secondary, at least from the churches' perspective. Also, if an individual fan of popular Gospel music buys their favorite Gospel music DVD, or makes a collection of Gospel songs and albums, or attends Gospel events, they do so for their own psycho-spiritual gratification, with less or no regard for the performing artist. This is despite the fact that the artist in performance or album will benefit commercially from this fan's gratification. In these contexts of consumers being in positions of superiority, the same questions arise: are they there solely on their terms or also on those of the music industry and Gospel artists? If churches holler in melodious *Jehovah is Your name* of Benjamin Dube, or individual fans dance to irresistible rhythms of Siphon Makhabane's *Zawa iy'ndonga zeJericho*, or an audience gets emotionally lost in Sfiso Ncwane's melancholic *Kulungile Baba*, are these consumers of Gospel music products doing so on their own terms or on those also preset

and stipulated by the recording industry? My conclusion is that the occupation of the position of dominance by Gospel music fans is not solely as a result of their contributions, but those of the music industry as well.

I further conclude that the aforementioned respective positions of the music industry and Christian churches and/or consumers of popular Gospel music in relation to each other raise the question of the subaltern position. This question is encapsulated in Lata Mani's breakdown of the question: 'Can the subaltern speak?' into sub-questions such as: "Which group constitute the subalterns in any text? What is their relationship to each other? How can they be heard to be speaking or not speaking in any given set of materials? With what effects?" (1992: 403). In the context of the question: 'Does the subaltern speak?', I conclude that popular Gospel music in South Africa offers a location that allows role-players to interchange their statuses of 'elites on high' and 'people below'. The previously marginalized group can be converted into mainstream players, and accordingly occupy the superior position, while the previously advantaged can cast off their superior status and occupy a subaltern position. This unique occurrence is owed to the interplay between commerce and Christianity, in the sense that, firstly, the music industry targets Christians as consumers, and secondly, Christian churches unintentionally create a location and a space where ownership of the popular Gospel music and its market can be moved from previously advantaged entrepreneurs and corporations, to those who were excluded from the economy, particularly black artists, entrepreneurs and companies.

With regard to establishing the position of the local Gospel music industry in relation to its international counterpart, two main questions arise: a) what is the position of the South African popular Gospel music industry in relation to other industries, particularly the American Gospel music industry? and, b) how do commerce and Christianity affect this relationship and consequently the culture of popular gospel music in South Africa? In chapter 5, I referred to Louise Meintjes' discussion of 'Zuluness' as an external influencer of Mbaqanga music, and I discussed 'foreign' influences on local Gospel music. I highlighted this 'foreignness' through cover versions of Gospel songs that are

originally recorded by non-South African Gospel artists, particularly the Americans. I also pointed to how some South African Gospel artists look up to some Western Gospel artists as role models. I further showed a slowly growing trend of South African Gospel artists who go and perform abroad. Although America is not a former colonizer of South Africa, it has many similarities with colonizers. Firstly, its role in the birth of Gospel music, discussed in chapter 1, suggests its superior position over other countries, including South Africa, that adopted Gospel music. Secondly, its position in global politics and world economies, and its influence over developing and the third world countries locates it as one of the 'privileged elites on high', which, in this context, puts South Africa on a relative position of 'underprivileged people below'. These relative positions of America and South Africa, and consequently that of their respective Gospel music industries, at face value suggest South Africa to be in a subaltern position.

I want to formulate the current point of my conclusion by referring to the case of Joyous Celebration. Towards my final stages of writing this thesis, Joyous Celebration travelled abroad to the United States of America, to record their 21st annual live album: (the title of which I found very relevant to the current concluding discussion) *Joyous Celebration 21 – Heal our Land*. This recording occurred on December 03, 2016 at Bishop T.D. Jakes' Potter's House church and featured the renowned Potter's House Mass Choir. Later on, Joyous Celebration toured the US East Coast, and performed at Philadelphia. They also performed in Brooklyn, New York where they were hosted at [Love Fellowship Church](#) by Hezekiah Walker, who is a renowned American Gospel artist and pastor. In the context of postcolonialism and the relative positions of America and South Africa, this example of Joyous Celebration triggers a web of questions such as: Where does the title 'Heal Our Land' locate South Africa in the context of postcolonialism? Could the 'wounds' that are being healed be those of colonial injustices that resulted in poverty, wars, poor living conditions, and so forth? Could it be that in this case, Joyous Celebration uses the platform of being in the land of a super-powerful country and prays using the 'American voice' requesting the healing of former colonizers from self-inflicted scars of violence and exploitation

against fellow humans, and of selfishness and greed? If Joyous Celebration goes to record and perform in America, is it doing so as an act of exporting a South African product, or of collecting American experience and bringing it home? If South Africans sing popular Gospel music, in whose voice are they singing? Is the South African Gospel industry regulated by South African standards or by those stipulated elsewhere?

The two cases of either exporting a South African product, or importing an American experience have their own manifold possibilities that display the complexity of popular Gospel music in South Africa in relation to the international Gospel music world. Firstly, South Africans, Joyous Celebration in this case, could go to America assuming a subaltern position, like that of a former colonized who is entangled in the aftermath of colonization, such that they cannot function independently of the former colonizer. In this instance, the music of the subaltern is inferior and needs the voice of the superpower for it to be heard. Secondly, Joyous Celebration could go to America to showcase their genuine and independent product. In this instance, Joyous Celebration assumes a dominant position and uses its own self-constructed voice. Thirdly, the idea of importing American experience suggests, on one hand, that Joyous Celebration is a subaltern that cannot survive in South Africa without an endorsement of the former colonizer. It shows a need of an external voice of the super-powerful, in order to complete and affirm the subaltern attempts of the previously disadvantaged. Fourthly, this scenario mirrors that of how colonizers left their countries, went to foreign countries and selfishly exploited them for their own benefit, and eventually took resources of these countries back to their original countries, and used them for their own advancement. In this case, Joyous Celebration's American tour could be regarded as means of collecting American resources and bringing them into South Africa, to use them to advance their own interests. These scenarios raise questions regarding the exact position of popular Gospel music in South Africa, in relation to the global one.

In attempting to answer such questions, I find it useful to investigate the underlying goals and the nature of this international tour. I consider Lindelani

Mkhize's perspective on the position of Joyous Celebration in this regard, where he says, "Joyous Celebration is bringing the motherland [Africa] to Potter's House [America]" (musicinafrica.net, 17 March 2017). Elsewhere, Mkhize explains Joyous Celebration's approach to the trip, and says:

Joyous [Celebration] is an African group, [...] over the years we have been showing our Africanness. Even when we do an English song, we do it in our own [...] African way. We will make sure that we stick to everything that has made Joyous [Celebration] what it is today, [and] we can't now change [our] music and do American music, trying to be something that we are not" (www.iol.co.za, 17 March 2017).

It would take another study to analyze the finished 'Joyous Celebration 21' product in relation to Mkhize's sentiments, and moreover, in comparison to other American Gospel music products. However, at this point these sentiments give an indication of a subaltern who is divorcing/divorced from the legacy and aftermath of colonization. The twist in this is that Joyous Celebration in this regard took its production to America, a scenario that further complicates the aforementioned subaltern scenario. At the crux of this complication is the relationship between, and the relative positions of, 'Africanness' and 'Americanness'. Mkhize's choice of 'motherland', suggests a superior position of Africa over America, in a similar sense of the mother-child positions. Moreover, Mkhize is explicit about the processes that have made Joyous Celebration emphasize their 'Africanness', which also includes 'Africanizing' English or American songs. In addition, he clearly distinguishes that from 'American music', which he defines as 'something that we are not'.

The global commercial and aesthetic positions of the American Gospel music industry, compared to that of the South African one, would generally be considered as suggesting the opposite of Mkhize's sentiments. This is in the sense that America has, and continues, to play an active influential role in the culture of popular Gospel music globally. This influence is evident even in South Africa, such as in the cases of imported songs, and role-modelling discussed earlier. Even in the case of 'de-Americanized' South African Gospel music products, the question of the voice, the dialect and the resultant effects with which, in this case, Joyous Celebration speaks, raises the question of the

subaltern position of South Africa in relation to America.

In solving this conundrum, I further maintain my earlier concluding argument that in the context of popular Gospel music culture, these positions are not fixed, but rather they depend on the extent of the fulfillment of a particular goal that drives each party at a given point in time. In this case, I conclude that if, by going to America, Joyous Celebration benefitted more than Potter's House, this benefit puts the former on a superior position, and the latter on a subaltern one. Although I could not research further into this Joyous Celebration's tour, my own personal analysis is that following their successful '*Joyous Celebration 20, Live at Moses Mabhida Stadium*' project, the next sensible route for Joyous Celebration to take would be to explore international avenues. I therefore perceive that this international tour was aimed at boosting the Joyous Celebration profile with the local and international music industries, expanding the market scope, and creating eligibility for international ceremonies such as the Grammy Awards. The strategy to record in America, at Bishop Jake's church, was one of the best ways to fulfill these goals, and I argue that Joyous Celebration benefitted more than Potter's House Church in this regard.

The final point of conclusion that I want to discuss in this regard, is that Christianity and commerce are once again the forces behind popular Gospel music and its culture even at global level. I conclude that it was not a coincidence or convenience that Joyous Celebration recorded particularly at Potter's House Church, and also performed at Bishop Hezekiah Walker's church, which are both Pentecostal-charismatic churches. I argue that this is because of the aforementioned influences of Christianity on popular Gospel music, and the conscious targeting of Christian churches and Christians as consumers of Gospel music products. No other platform could be more effective in introducing a popular Gospel music brand to a global Gospel music market than at a Pentecostal-charismatic church whose pastor has influence on, and reputation with, the Pentecostal-charismatic Christian fraternity and its popular culture. Joyous Celebration's commercial pursuit was the other force that influenced this trip. The aforementioned expected

outcomes would all translate into financial gains.

Christianity and commerce are the two forces that are the premise for the culture of popular Gospel music, and they make and keep the relationship between various Gospel music stakeholders alive and thriving. In the context of postcolonialism, these forces make it possible for parties such as Joyous Celebration and Potter's House Church to relate and engage with each other, because of their shared interest in popular Gospel music. As suggested by Homi Bhabha (1994), for these generally unrelated parties to engage and survive in this relationship, they need to be aware of 'transnational' elements that characterize the other party, and further translate these elements using their own experiences and environments, in order for this party to align these elements with their own pursuits.

Both Christianity and commerce, as we know them today, are phenomena that are not originally South African, but are imported systems that are largely influenced by global superpowers. To suggest, therefore that popular Gospel music in South Africa is influenced by Christianity and commerce, may equally suggest that it is influenced by 'foreign' powers. This suggestion links directly to ongoing broad debates on the subject of colonialism, questioning whether the previously colonized did or did not have the innate ability to develop themselves, without the influence of the former colonizers. If we consider Christianity and commerce, as we know them today, to be 'foreign' cultures that were brought along by the colonizers, we open further debates on how native religion and indigenous trade and commercial systems that were already in place when colonizers invaded Africa, would have turned out. We pose questions of whether or not Africans were able to advance their indigenous cultures to have an authoritative and clearly audible voice in the twenty-first century global society. In the context of the current study, this perspective challenges the suggestion that by being influenced by 'foreign cultures' of Christianity and commerce, local popular Gospel music therefore occupies a subaltern position. This argument questions the ability of the native South Africans to have been able to advance their own indigenous cultures without the foreign influences of the colonizers.

The stance taken by Lindelani Mkhize in explaining Joyous Celebration's tour, is useful in identifying the possibility of a South African bred popular Gospel music genre, which is characterized by 'Africanness' and not by 'Americanness'. Mkhize's assertion speaks directly to the issues raised in Subaltern Studies that in the context of postcolonialism, popular Gospel music must not be written and read from the perspective of the former colonizer, but from that of the former colonized. This is to say that popular Gospel music culture in South Africa is not to be defined by 'foreign' parties, but by South Africans themselves. No matter the standard and level of acclamation 'globalness' and 'Americanness' are at, when it comes to popular Gospel music in South Africa, 'Africanness' is, or should be, the yardstick with which to measure this genre. I therefore conclude that, although commerce and Christianity are 'foreign-modeled' practices in South Africa, through 'translationalism', South Africa has interpreted these 'transnational' practices in a manner that personalizes them in relation to local experiences and environments. Consequently, these influence South African popular Gospel music culture through 'Africanness' entailed in experiences, beliefs and environments of South Africans, and not 'foreignness'.

The two contexts within which I have discussed the binary relationships existing within the culture of popular Gospel music - involving firstly, South Africans only, and secondly, South Africans and the international community - suggest possibilities of a modern form of colonization: neo-colonization or neo-colonialism. The current study's conclusion asserting the fluidity and flexibility of the dominant and subaltern positions within popular (Gospel music) culture suggests a revolutionized colonialism. Neo-colonization suggests that, unlike in the former kind of colonization, any local or internal role-player from within one popular culture can rise up to colonize other fellow players in that culture. In this context, neo-colonialism is not defined by the description of the role played by that particular stakeholder, but rather by the accomplishment of their intentions regarding that role. Even in international contexts, such as presented in the case of Joyous Celebration, neo-colonialism presents new possibilities for 'people below' or the disadvantaged

to confront the 'elites on high' and colonize them for their own benefit, regardless of their respective roles in popular culture within which they coexist. I therefore conclude that popular Gospel music is one of the places where previously marginalized sub-groups within its popular culture can penetrate and upset the system, through an interplay between Christianity and commerce, and claim ownership of spaces and positions that could previously be occupied only by a certain sub-group of elites.

The future of popular Gospel music in South Africa

Based on the discussions and conclusions of this study, my personal projection is that, due to its strong premise on commerce and Christianity, Gospel music will continue to grow and dominate the music industry. In order to make a living, people employ various commercial means. Hence, as a commercial product popular Gospel music will continue to exist as one of the leading genres in the music industry. On the other hand, religion and psychological needs to associate are some of the integral parts of human society and culture. It is on this account that, in a quest for psycho-spiritual fulfillment, people continue to associate themselves with different religions. The fact that the Christian religion has existed for at least two millennia, suggests that it has stood the test of time. Being a proselytizing religion gives it thriving prospects of always having people who associate themselves with it. In the context of this study, Gospel music owes its existence to Christianity, and breeds and grows through the association of its consumers with Christianity. Consequently, Christianity will continue to ensure the existence of Gospel music and be the vanguards thereof.

Projecting into the future of popular Gospel music on the basis of what has been established in this study, particularly regarding how Christianity and commerce influence it, the following will likely contribute to the growth and sustenance of this genre:

- Technological innovations and easier access to recording studios will result in an increase in the population of Gospel artists. However, the

influence of Christianity, particularly how Christians run their church services, will continue to yield an inclination towards live recordings over studio projects. In an attempt to capture the spontaneous (and sometimes rehearsed) psycho-spiritual effects of popular Gospel music, Gospel musicians will opt more for live recordings than for studio projects. A close compromise to this will be live studio projects, such as Benjamin Dube's 'In His Presence' projects.

- The already thin line and cross-trading between Christian church music and popular Gospel music will persist. Gospel artists will continue to use Christian church songs for their recordings. Concurrently, churches will continue to adopt popular Gospel songs and use them in their services. As part of this tendency, more and more church choirs, church 'praise and worship' leaders and pastors will continue to emerge as popular Gospel artists.

- 'Hybrid Gospel' music will grow further and overshadow other sub-genres of local Gospel music. This will manifest in either individual songs that bear characteristics of more than one sub-genre, or in artists employing various individual styles in their albums' repertoires.

- As in the case of Joyous Celebration, local Gospel music will progressively experience international breakthrough. This will manifest in a two-way traffic of local exports and international imports, which will see local artists gaining intercontinental exposure. In this two-way traffic, international Gospel artists will frequently feature in South African Gospel music (and Christian church) projects. In recent years international Gospel acts such as Israel Houghton and New Breed and Bebe Winans have recorded their live albums in South Africa. Such a trend will persist.

These points summatively suggest that local Gospel is still going to experience massive growth and will remain in the forefront of local genres in the music industry. Its future can be summed up in Siphos Makhabane's words that he uttered as a judge in the final episode of the 2014 *'I Want to Sing Gospel'* talent search program: "Those who say that Gospel music in South

Africa is going down, are lying. With such a talent as shown by these finalists, Gospel music has never been stronger” (Sipho Makhabane, 19 June 2014).

Topics for further research

Popular Gospel music in South Africa is a subject that has not received the scholarly attention that it merits, regardless of it being massive and popular. The current study attempted to cover as much ground as possible, but inevitably had limitations. The following topics could be taken up in further research:

- Globalization condenses previously segregated spaces and cultures into one global village. There is a dire need to clearly define South African popular Gospel music, and what constitutes ‘African’ and ‘South African’ musics.
- There are other elements that are linked to commerce and Christianity, that influence the culture of popular Gospel music in South Africa. Amongst James Riordan’s suggestion of ‘Ten Ingredients for a successful artist’, this study could not discuss: consistency, reliability and contacts.
- Marketing is another important element of popular Gospel music. Although hinted in this study, it was not discussed in full length. The link between Christianity and popular Gospel music results in a unique marketing strategy of Gospel music to a readily available audience, and through readily available platforms, in Christian churches.
- Popular music has been widely impacted upon by the rise of technology in the 21st century. This impact is notable in easier access to recording studios, the rise of cyber-space and internet industrial operations. A specialized investigation into how these technological innovations (have) affect(ed) popular Gospel music merits scholarly attention.
- South Africa has a number of Gospel music programs on TV and radio, which present local Gospel music from different viewpoints. The role of

TV and radio on consumers' perceptions of popular Gospel music in South Africa is a subject worth exploring.

- Awards ceremonies and accolades, charts, reviews, and rankings have a direct impact on popular music artists and their careers. This is also worth researching in greater detail.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Consent Letter for interviewees

Consent to participate in the interview.

Dear Sir/Madam

We thank you for agreeing to participate in the interview with Siphon Malembe regarding his research work at the University.

Siphon Malembe is a student at the School of Arts, College of Humanities, University of KwaZulu-Natal. His research study is entitled: ***“The Influence(s) of Commerce and Christianity on the culture of Popular Gospel Music in South Africa, 1998 – 2013”***. This study looks at the roles played by Christianity and Commerce in the way that Gospel Music is produced, performed and received by the fans/audiences. As part of collecting relevant information for this study, it is necessary to speak to people who have been and who still are actively involved with Gospel music; and particularly within the music industry, Christian churches and fans of Gospel music. It is for that reason we have asked your participation.

Kindly take note of the following:

- This study is approved by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Humanities of the University of KwaZulu-Natal.
- The sole purpose of this interview is for academic purposes, and hopes to contribute to academia and knowledge; and to document different roles played by different people into Gospel music in South Africa. As such, there is no financial remuneration or benefits for participating in this study
- Your participation in this study is voluntary and you have no obligations to participate. If at any point in time – before, during or after the interview – you decide that you do not want to participate or to continue with the interview, or answer certain questions; you are free to say so and even withdraw your participation. Such withdrawal will not have any negative consequences to you.
- This will be a verbal interview, which is estimated to take 45minutes to an hour.
- The questions are based on your personal experience, involvement, opinions and observation about matters regarding Gospel music, the music industry and Christianity or Christian churches. If you regard some questions as too personal or having potential harm to you, your

career, image, relations, etc., you are free to say so, and to refuse to answer such questions.

- If you decide that some of the information or answer you have given is confidential and want it to be kept private, your decision will be respected and adhered to. This includes your identity, which in this case will be presented as anonymous or you be given a pseudonym.
- Where necessary, you can decide to put restriction and keep anonymity to some data, information and names; for a period of time. In this case, this data/information and names will be embargoed for the period stated by you.

If you seek any further clarity or have questions, please feel free to contact Siphon Malembe at 0123456789, (call/sms/whatsapp) or on email on abcdef@tuvwxy.com. Alternatively, you can contact his supervisor, Dr. Christopher Cockburn at (987) 654 3210 or by email at aeiou@ukzn.ac.za. If you have complains and concerns related to ethical issues resulting from your participation in this interview, you can contact Ms. Phumelele Ximba at (987) 654 0000 or by email at: fgjhk@ukzn.ac.za.

Consent to participate:

I, _____ hereby agree that I have read and understood the information stated above; and further hereby consent to participate in this study.

- For my identity, please use: | *My real name* | *A pseudonym* |
- There are some sections of the interview that I will request to be treated as confidential and private | Yes | No |.
- Please | *Do* | *Do not* | restrict/embargoed the record/data of this interview for a period of _____ years.

Signature of participant

Date

Signature of witness

Date

Appendix 2: Research Surveys

Appendix 2.1: Questionnaire survey involving 500 members of various Christian churches, inquiring into Christian perspectives on Gospel music and Christianity:

1. How do you define Gospel music?
2. In what way do you think Gospel music differs from other genres of popular music?
3. What role do or should Christian churches play in bringing about that distinction of Gospel music from other genres of popular music?
4. What (do you think) is the role and function of music in your church services?
5. What is your favorite music and who is your favorite musician?
6. What is your opinion on the commercialization of Gospel and of church music?
7. What is your opinion on the secularization of Gospel and of church music?
8. How does your being a member of a Christian church influence the way you perceive and receive perception of Gospel music?
9. Between the music (e.g. instruments, harmonies, arrangements), the lyrics, and the musician, what do you pay most of your attention to, when listening to Gospel music?
10. What are your particular expectations on Gospel music artists and their music?

Appendix 2.2: Short interviews survey involving 150 randomly selected members of the general public, inquiring into perceptions of Gospel music consumers regarding Gospel music.

1. Are you a fan of Gospel music?
2. What is your favorite Gospel music sub-genre or style?
3. Who is your favorite Gospel musician or artist?
4. Between the music (instruments, harmonies, arrangements); lyrics; and the musician, what do you pay most of your attention to, when listening to Gospel music?
5. What are your particular expectations on Gospel music artists and their music?
6. Are you a Christian?
7. Is there a link/connection between Gospel music and Christianity?

Appendix 2.3: Facebook survey to establish Gospel music consumers' opinions of 'successful' Gospel artists in South Africa. (Accessed from: www.facebook.com/sipho_malembe, on November 25, 2013.)



Sipho Malembe: Who would you regard as the most 'successful' SA Gospel music artist, and how do you measure that 'success'?



Knowles Nkiwane: It is hard but for me, I can say someone that have worked himself to the top and helped other artists [and] worked with them from zero until they can stand on their feet.



Sipho Malembe: And who is that artist for you, Knowles?



Knowles Nkiwane: For now Big Fish [Sipho Makhabane], [and] Lindelani Mkhize. Yikubona kwami (*That's my opinion*).



Sipho Malembe: Yah, they really have helped a lot of other artists those two!



Gugulethu Makarateka Sibiya: Derrick Nzimande



Bayanda Yandie Madinga: Rebs [Rebecca Malope], Sipho Makhabane, Joyous Celebration bosses [Lindelani Mkhize, Mthunzi Namba and Jabu Hlongwane].



Thulani Ga Ndlela: S'fiso Ncwane has done it, by himself, the only artist, if it's jazz festival ukhona (*he is there*), if it's house kwaito he'll be there, maskandi he'll be there, cumin kusho ukuthi (*to me it means that*) all the audiences loves him, and uzimele (*he is independent*) no middle man konke akwenzayo kuza kuye (*all that he does comes to him*).



Thulani Ga Ndlela: Sipho [Makhabane] no (*and*) JC [Joyous Celebration] bosses bona badla ngabaculi (*prosper through other artists*) whereas S'fiso [Ncwane] is an artist himself, he is running his own baby!!!



Malusi Mtetwa: Rebecca, remember when she use to get most awards that were voted by people. Nqubeko and Ntokozo although they have not reach[ed] their peak. But they are the leaders in their gospel genre. Of course Sifiso Ncwane, to win Song of the year in SAMA speaks volumes. I would like to say Benjamin Dube but his sales are up and down, although he has a consistent audience following.



Thulani Ga Ndlela:

Malusi don't measure ngama (*with/though*) awards because one person can spend R10000 evota (*voting*) so, it's not a true reflection. Awards don't sell music but strong marketing, what made Zahara receive awards is the marketing that was put long before awards.



Lulama Lulu Njapa:

But how do you judge if a gospel artist has been successful? Is it by

selling more CDs, winning awards, visibility? Because then maybe you just want to know which artist in general has been successful. I would like to think that gospel artists should be judged differently when it comes to success.



Malusi Mtetwa:
Ngyavuma Sompisi (*I agree Mr. Ndlela*).



Malusi Mtetwa:
Relevant question Miss Njapa. CD sales should be the best reflection of success. Since that's the main product he/she is trying to sell. Awards may not be the true reflection of the category they are won for.



Lulama Lulu Njapa:
Is that the main product though? Or at least, should it be? You often hear gospel artists saying they just want to preach the gospel blah blah blah. The selling CDs thing usually comes as a secondary thing. So do you measure the success of the secondary?



Malusi Mtetwa:
That's the main product. So the product must be sold. That's how the Gospel is preached by selling the CD. Unless they prefer their products to be pirated. As Ga [Thulani Ndlela] has mentioned about Ncwane, shows/gigs do pay bills. So more gigs can mean you are doing well.



Sipho Malembe:
Lulu, do you think that would be an honest purpose for someone? Or it is just a 'sugar-coated' bait to attract consumers?



Fisokuhle Fiso Mbonambi:
Pastor Benjamin Dube. International recognition. That's how I measure musical success.



Sipho Malembe:
Oh? That's an interesting measure of success, Fiso!



Lulama Lulu Njapa:
But that's how it is now Maestro [Sipho Malembe]. Gospel artists are attracting consumers with that preaching the gospel message. You never hear them talk about the business of it. So that's the sugar coating part.



Andile Ailo Maqoma:
Visibility does not define success of a gospel artist. You find artist who only sell in two provinces but their sales are way beyond those who supposedly sell "nationally".



Martin Mgiba:
Jonathan Butler for his internationally recognized work, Rebecca Malope for being the face of SA Gospel music, JC [Joyous Celebration] for their contribution to the worship 'culture' of the Church in SA. Let us not forget

the Afrikaans folks.



Malusi Mtetwa:

How can I forget Jonathan [Butler].



Martin Mgiba:

"Falling in love with Jesus" is destined to be a hymn like other great songs [such as] (Total praise and thirsty). That is an important song.



Nolizwi Mbobo:

Derrick Nzimande and Rebecca Malope. They influenced most gospel artists in South Africa and abroad.

Appendix 3: Interviews Guideline Questions

Appendix 3.1: Guideline questions for interviews with Gospel artists, producers and music industry personnel, where applicable:

A: ARTIST'S BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Artist's name:

1. How did your Gospel music career start and what influenced you into Gospel music and not other genres of music?
2. For how long have you been in the music industry as a recording artist/producer?
3. How many commercial Gospel music recordings have you made to date; and with which companies did you record/release them?
4. Who are the key people that stand out as influential in your career, that worked with you: e.g. producers, engineers, session musicians, and etc.?
5. What awards or accolades have you received in your career?

B: GOSPEL MUSIC AND CHRISTIANITY

6. Do you regard yourself as a Christian? If yes, What Christian Church are you associated with or do you belong to?
7. Are you actively involved in your church, and are there any responsibilities or activities that you do? If so, please specify.
8. How does your being a Christian and/or your involvement in a Christian church influence you as a Gospel music artist and your music?
9. In what way do you think Gospel music differs from other genres of popular music?
10. Do you think these differences are an advantage or a disadvantage? And why?
11. Are there any requirements that you think every Gospel musician should have?
12. What role do you think Christian churches play in influencing Gospel

music to what it is?

13. Please rate the following elements of music in the order of your priority in valuing a Gospel project; 1 – Most Important, 2 – Important, 3 – Less Important

Words/Lyrics	Music/Instrumentation	The artists, i.e. the person and the personality of the artist	
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C: GOSPEL MUSIC AND MUSIC INDUSTRY

- 14. In producing Gospel Music, what elements do you think are necessary to make music to be Gospel music?
- 15. What role do you think the music industry plays in shaping Gospel music to what it is?
- 16. How does your involvement with the music industry influence your association with your Christian church and your views of general church music?
- 17. How/where does the music industry promote Gospel music?

Appendix 3.2: Guideline questions for interviews with pastors

- 1. How would you define the music of your church?
- 2. Music is an integral part of the Christian faith. Why do Christian churches use music in church services?
- 3. What ingredients or elements are necessary to qualify a song as 'Gospel'?
- 4. Is there a difference - or what is the link - between Gospel music and Christian church music?
- 5. What influence(s) do you think Christian churches or Christianity in general, has in shaping Gospel music to what it is?
- 6. What is your take on commercialization of 'church' songs, and why in your opinion do artists record church songs in their albums?
- 7. What is your take on the usage of commercial Gospel songs in churches, and why do you use Gospel music in church services?
- 8. How important or significant is the (character of the) person who sings Gospel music?
- 9. What is your opinion on 'non-Christian' artists singing/performing in church?
- 10. What is your take on adoption and incorporation of styles of music that are known to be secular, e.g. kwaito, hip-hop, etc. into church or Gospel music?
- 11. The Christian faith is known for winning the lost. How far would you go in using music as a bait to catch the lost? Where would you draw the line between Christian and secular music?
- 12. How do you define a successful Gospel artist?

13. Would you agree with the statement that most consumers or fans or audiences of Gospel music are in churches or are simply Christians? If so, why?
14. There has been an increasing number of Gospel artists who emerge as pastors and starting churches. Critics have condemned this as an opportunistic move, driven by personal motives and hopes of using stardom and fame to attract church members. What is your take on this?
15. In your opinion as a pastor in SA, what is the 'Christian' state of the Gospel music industry? Are Gospel artists conscious of the Christian aspect of Gospel music or they are just simply artists?

Appendix 4: Observation Guidelines for Gospel music events attended

1. In what/which venue is the performance/church-service being held (church auditorium, community hall, club, stadium, etc.)?
2. What is the visual presentation and dress-code of the musician(s) (in case of a popular Gospel musician performing)?
3. What music is being performed (performance repertoire)?
4. What are the musical features of the performance:
 - 4.1. What is the band composition?
 - 4.2. What are the musical arrangements?
 - 4.3. What are the lyrics of the songs?
5. In case where a popular Gospel musician performs in a church service and in a concert, what is his/her relationship with the audience/congregation? Is it a two-way or a one-way performance?
6. What is the audience/congregation composition (any music industry personnel in church, and any Christian churches' officials in concerts)?
7. How do audiences/congregants respond to popular Gospel music?

Appendix 5: Top Gospel Sellers for Revolver Records

REVOLVER RECORDS TOP SELLERS

Sales by Inventory Code 01/08/2013 to 28/10/2013

Item : CDEP005 - ANDILE KA MAJOLA CHAPTER 6 UJEHOVA UNGIB
Item : CDSFI003 - SFISO KULUNGILE BABA
Item : CDSFI004 - SFISO NCWANE LIVE DURBAN ICC
Item : DVDSFI004 - SFISO NCWANE LIVE AT THE ICC DURBAN
Item : CDTOP002 - DUMI MKOKSTAD MBIZE UJEHOVA
Item : CDKMP001 - ISRAEL MOSEHLA ENDAWENI EPHAKEME
Item : CAMCD143160834 - CHRIS CHAMELEON HERLEEF PSALMS EN GESANG
Item : CDKMP004 - ISRAEL MOSEHLA LIVE
Item : CAMCD143160835 - PIET SMIT EERSTE LIEFDE
Item : CDBMP002THABILE - THABILE MYENI QHUBA PHAMBILI
Item : CDUMB003 - MXOLISI MBETHE UJESU UYAPHILA
Item : CDTOP003 - BETUSILE KUPHELELE
Item : REVCD2 - REVOLVER JAZZ-VOL 2
Item : CDGNMC005 - BUTHO & YOLANDA VUTHELA VOL 1 EWE NKOSI
Item : CDGOLD06 - GLORY OF THE LAST DAYS UBUKHULU BOTHANDO
Item : CDKOL002 - KHOLEKA KUZODLULA
Item : CDTOP001 - MXOLISI MBETHE NOMETHULE
Item : CDGNMC04 - BUTHO VUTHELA AH!MVELINGQANG!
Item : OBRCOMB002 - SOLLY MAHLANGU MWAMBA MWAMBA
Item : CDKMP002 - ISRAEL MOSEHLA PRAISE & WORSHIP ENCOUNTE
Item : OBRCOMB001 - SOLLY MAHLANGU OBRIGADO CD&DVD
Item : CDKMP003 - ISRAEL MOSEHLA CROWN HIM LORD
Item : REVCD3 - REVOLVER JAZZ VOL 3
Item : CDMMP011 - MALIBONGWE IYO CALVARY
Item : CDEG001 - ANDILE KA MAJOLA LIVE IN DBN CHAPTER 3
Item : DVDVMP008 - VELISWA SITHI UYINGCWELE
Item : CDMNTI025 - SHONGWE & KHUPHUKA GROUP KUNGUMUSA KA JE
Item : CDYWM01 - YOUTH WITH MISSION YEBOKAKITHI
Item : REVCD253 - CULTURE LIVE IN SOUTH AFRICA
Item : CDQOBI02 - ABANQOBI BAYOJABULA
Item : CDSKSG018 - YOUTH WITH MISSION NDIZELWE NGOKUTSHA
Item : CDAMP036 - KHOLEKA SIYAKUVUMA
Item : CDGOLD05 - GLORY OF THE LAST DAYS NGIZOLIBONGA
Item : OBRCD02 - SOLLY MAHLANGU MWAMBA MWAMBA
Item : OBRDVD02 - SOLLY MAHLANGU MWAMBA MWAMBA LIVE
Item : CDNCA029 - GLORY OF THE LAST DAYS UMLILO ONGCWELE
Item : CDGOLD04 - GLORY OF THE LAST DAYS UMOYA UYAKUDINGA
Item : DVDGOG001 - GOG HELEN LOCAL MOVIE
Item : INTGCD50632 - ISRAEL & NEW BREED JESUS AT THE CENTRE
Item : DVDKMP004 - ISRAEL MOSEHLA LIVE
Item : CDMMP18 - MALIBONGWE LIVE EAST LONDON
Item : CDSMPR003 - KHANYISA AMANDLOVUKO
Item : REVCD10 - REVOLVER JAZZ VOL 4
Item : CDVMP007 - VELISWA SITHI UYINGCWELE
Item : CDSFI001 - S'FISO NCWANE BABA NGIYAVUMA
Item : REVCD120 - BURNING SPEAR LIVE IN PARIS (DBL CD)
Item : OBRCD01 - SOLLY MAHLANGU OBRIGADO

Appendix 6: Winners of various SABC Crown Gospel Awards categories, 2008 to 2013.

2008

Categories and Winners:

1. Best Gospel Group: Joyous Celebration
2. Best Gospel Song: Ncandweni - Zulu Khaya Lami
3. Best Acapella: Umlayezo Wesikhathi
4. Best Amazion: Galathia Indlunkulu - Lilodwa Igama
5. Classic Of All Times: Hlengiwe Mhlaba - Rock Of Ages
6. Best Traditional Gospel: Siphon Makhabane - Ngiyamemeza
7. Best Album Contemporary Traditional: Jabu Hlongwane
8. Best Female Gospel Artist: Deborah Fraser
9. Best Male Gospel Artist: Vuyo Mokoena
10. Best Gospel Artist: Rebecca Malope
11. Best Praise and Worship: Benjamin Dube
12. Best Producer: Lindelani Mkhize - Joyous Celebration
13. Best Songwriter: Andile kaMajola
14. Best DVD: The Plain Truth
15. Best Gospel Instrumental: Condry Ziqubu (Abanye Bayawela)
16. Best Gospel Video: Worship House
17. Best Newcomer: Pietermaritzburg Sound Of Salvation (SOS)
18. Best Selling Artist: Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors
19. Lifetime Achievement Award: Rebecca Malope

2009 Categories and Winners:

1. Best Male Artist: Keke
2. Best Acapella: Abanqobi
3. Best Pop/Rock: Proxy
4. Best DVD: The Plain Truth
5. Best Gospel Artist: Benjamin Dube
6. Best Newcomer: Banele Mahlangu for the album 'Ngibonga uJesu'
7. Best Gospel Group: Joyous Celebration
8. Best Traditional Song: Siphon Makhabane's Ebenezer, from 'Ebenezer'.
9. Best R&B/Rap Album: Jabu Nkabinde, 'My Hero'.
10. Best Amazion: Trust in Christ for the album Lihle Izulu
11. Best Music Video: Worship House, 'Cast All Your Burden'.
12. Best Song Writer: Andile kaMajola for the song Waphikelela, in 'Chapter 4 Live in ICC'.
13. Best Female Artist : Hlengiwe Mhlaba, 'Live at Durban Playhouse'.
14. Best Contemporary Album: Nomusa Dlomo with Vuka Africa
15. Best Praise And Worship : Rhema South, 'Reach Out'.
16. Best Jazz: Margaret Motsage, 'Dwala Lami'.
17. Classic Of All Times: Sfiso Ncwane for the song Umkhuleko in 'Umkhuleko'.
18. Best Gospel Producer: Jay Hlungwani, 'Worship Unlimited by Jay'.
19. Best Gospel Song: Solly Mahlangu, Obrigado in 'Obrigado'.
20. Lifetime Achievement Award: Benjamin Dube

2010 Categories and Winners:

1. Best Male: S'fiso Ncwane
2. Best Female: Winnie Mashaba
3. Best Acapella: Abanqobi
4. Best Maskandi: Intombi kaJehova
5. Best DVD: Uche
6. Best Engineer: Woleni
7. Best Gospel Artist: Siphon Makhabane
8. Best New Comer: S'gwili and Babo
9. Best Gospel Group: Worship House
10. Best Traditional Gospel: Kholeka Dubula
11. Best R&B/Rap: Intense
12. Best AmaZion: Believers in Christ
13. Best Gospel Music Video: Margaret Motsage
14. Best Songwriter: Percy Ingle
15. Best Contemporary Album: Karabo Mongatane
16. Best Praise Album: Uche
17. Best Worship Album: Israel Mosehla
18. Best Gospel Jazz: Sifaniso Bophela
19. Classic of All Times: 'Mphefumlo wam', by Lundi Tyamara
20. Best Gospel Producer: Big Boy Mlangeni
21. Best Gospel Song: 'Phakama' by S'fiso Ncwane
22. Best of Africa: Cuco
23. Best Church Choir: St. Michael's Church Choir
24. Lifetime Achiever Award: Sizwe Zako

2011 Categories and Winners:

1. Best Worship Album: Israel Mosehla
2. Best Jazz (Solo/Group): Swazi Dlamini
3. Best Gospel Producer: Nqubeko Mbatha
4. Best Afrikaans Gospel: Joe Niemand
5. Best Church Choir: Katilehong Gospel Choir
6. The Best of Africa Gospel: The Moipei Quartet
7. Best Male Gospel Artist: Solly Mahlangu
8. Best Female Gospel Artist: Hlengiwe Mhlaba
9. Best a cappella (Solo/Group): Abanqobi Group
10. Best R&B (Solo/Group): Ambani Ramaru
11. Best Rap Gospel (Solo/Group): Fifty 50 Family
12. Best Rock Gospel: The Plain Truth Band
13. Best DVD: Spirit of Praise
14. Best Engineer: The Plain Truth Band
15. Best New Comer: Bakhe Dlamini
16. Best Gospel Group: Soweto Spiritual Singers
17. Best Traditional Gospel: Thobekile Mkhwanazi
18. Best Gospel Music Video: Dominion
19. Best Song Writer: Babo Ngcobo
20. Best Contemporary Album: Dominion
21. Best Praise Album: Sifaniso Bophela

22. Best AmaZion: The New Galile Church
23. Best Gospel Artist: Solly Mahlangu
24. Best Gospel Community Radio Show: Vibe FM - Umthombo Wokuphila
25. Best Gospel Radio Show: Ukhozi Fm -Indumiso
26. Best Gospel Song: Solly Mahlangu
27. Best Gospel TV Show: House of Praise
28. Classic of All Times: Ntokozo Mbambo

2012 Categories and Winners:

1. Best Gospel Classic of All Times: Avante – Qina
2. Best Gospel Songwriter: Thina Zungu
3. Best Gospel Poetry: Vusimuzi Phakathi
4. Best Gospel Rap: Last Days Family
5. Best Gospel a cappella (Solo/Group): Reality 7
6. Best Gospel Engineer: Mark Montgomery
7. Best Collaboration Gospel Song: Redeemed
8. Best Gospel Female: Ntokozo Mbambo
9. Best Praise Album: Kgotso Makgalema
10. Best Traditional Gospel: Ncandweni Christ Ambassadors
11. Best Contemporary Album: Karabo Mongatane
12. Best Worship Album: Big Fish Worship Chapter 1
13. Best Gospel Male: Israel Mosehla
14. Best Gospel Newcomer: We Will Worship
15. Best Gospel R & B: Dr. Tumi
16. Best Gospel Group: Worship House
17. Best Community Outreach: True Faith Gospel Choir
18. Best Gospel Producer: Jonathan Hamilton
19. Best Church Choir: Tack National Gospel Choir
20. Best Gospel Music Video: Sibongile Sibeko
21. Best of Africa: Freddy Whales
22. Best Gospel DVD: Keke Phoofolo
23. Best Gospel Group: Worship House
24. Best Contemporary Album: Karabo Mongatane
25. Best Gospel Afrikaans: Inverwondering
26. Best Amazion: Ukuphila Kweguardian
27. Best Gospel TV Show: It's Gospel Time
28. Best Gospel Radio Show: Siyadvumisa
29. Best Gospel Community Radio Show: Gospel Tunes
30. Best Gospel Artist: Ntokozo Mbambo
31. Best Gospel Song: 'Kwanqab'umusa' by Thina Zungu
32. Lifetime Achiever: Siphon 'Big Fish' Makhabane

2013 Categories and Winners:

1. Best Gospel Rap: Cjay – Jesus Freak
2. Best Worship Song: Sicelo Moya – Awesome
3. Best Praise Song: Worship House – Batho Retang Morena
4. Classic of All Time: Hlengiwe Mhlaba – UJesu Uyalalela
5. Best Newcomer: Shaun P – Everyday
6. Best DVD: Spiritual of Praise Vol. 4 – Live @ Carnival City

7. Best Female: Vicky Vilakazi
8. Best Traditional: Lufuno Dagada – My Practical God
9. Best Male: Jabu Hlongwane
10. Best Gospel Music Video: Andile KaMajola – UJehova Ungibiyele
11. Best Contemporary Song: David Dayo
12. Best Jazz: Mabongi Mabaso – Tshama
13. Best Acapella: Ithimba Le Africa – Hamba NoJesu
14. Best Rock: Niel Higgins – We Lift You Up
15. Best Pop Gospel: Zama and Voice Ministries – The Pleasure of Praise
16. Best Church Choir: Christian Family Church
17. Best Gospel Group: Simply Chrysolite
18. Gospel Poetry: Sbo Da Poet
19. Best Collaboration: Takie Ndou – Psalmist
20. Best Gospel Producer: Nathi Zungu Umlondi – Nathi Zungu
21. Best Song Writer: Andile KaMajola – UJehova Ungibiyele
22. Best R&B Gospel: Bongzi & Collin – Live Again
23. Best Community Outreach (Artist/Group): Tebs David
24. Best Engineer: The Plain Truth Band All In
25. Best of Africa Gospel: Brother Peter – Mozambique
26. Best Community Outreach – Church: Durban Christian Centre
27. Best Amazion (Solo/Group): Ukuphila Kweguardian
28. Best Gospel Radio Show – Community: Lefa Phetho - Thetha Fm
29. Best Gospel TV Show: It's Gospel Time
30. Best Gospel Radio Show – Commercial/Pbs: Umhlobo Wenene
31. Best Gospel Song: Dumi Mkokstad - Mbize
32. Best Gospel Artist: Winnie Mashaba

Appendix 7: *Joyous Celebration 17: Grateful Reviews*

Appendix 7.1: Review A, edited: Thabang Molapo's review (www.learningloveaffair.com, 14 July 2013):

Joyous Celebration [JC] 17 is a [...] musically strong album, with a traditional South African feel. The choir looks exquisite in the African-inspired attire in disk 1 and their formal-wear in disk 2. Not only do they have a different new sound on this album, but I also noticed some new unfamiliar faces. The album fuses a variety of South-African inspired genres within Gospel, from your 'tent church' sound, to more 'traditional church' sound, and even a bit of maskandi and some upbeat songs. This album showcases the vocal versatility of the choir. If, like me you've been a great Joyous Celebration fan and have over the years grown fond of some lead [singers...], you'll be thoroughly disappointed to hear that the likes of Tebello Sukwini and Zodwa Mahlangu have left the choir. Also Nqubeko Mbatha has moved on from his role as musical director. As skeptical as I was about this album, I was very impressed. The old saying is true: 'change is good', and the anointing of the Lord remains. What I really love about this album is that finally I had the opportunity to hear the voices of

those choir members who had not often led [songs before]. NthabySang [...], the lady who leads *Mopholosi Morwa Modimo* in JC 16, leads a beautiful song called the *Prayer*. It is such a new sound for JC. The song is themed around the life changing prayer of salvation. Also new on this album is Given Mabena, a famous dancer and opera singing with the group: Afro Tenors, who does a moving classical rendition of *Intando Emnandi* with violin in background. [This is] by far one of my favorite songs in the album. Though many songs like *Umbhedesho*, *Uyangihola* and *Lona Ba Ratang* may be widely known amongst South Africans, the rendition on this album makes them sound so fresh. You'd even think you have never heard them before. I was also impressed to discover a new talent on the album, the beautiful Hlengiwe Ntombela oozes [with] energy and talent. Her song *Mthunzi Wami* will remind you of the opening track from the JC 16 album. [It is] so beautiful. For all the Tsonga-song fans, you will love *Xikwembu Xayina*. Disk 1 has 19 great songs.

Disk 2 features household names like the 2012 South African Idols winner, Khaya Mthethwa and music power-house Nobathembu Mabeka. I was so happy to see Buhle Thela leading a Tswana song and dancing. On this album she leads *Ke Ngwana Hao* and communicates each word so well. Dudu Tsobane was my highlight on disk 2 as she leads *Mthembe njalo*, a song about the dependency of the Word of God. [It is] simply beautiful. Surely the Lord is good and is doing great things through Joyous Celebration. I hope this review inspires you to go get yourself a copy. The DVD was only R 139.99 at Musica. Most of their songs are evangelical.

Appendix 7.2: Review B, (Edited and some phrases translated from IsiZulu): Ndumiso Hlongwane (<https://ar-ar.facebook.com>, 18 July 2013).

When I saw [JC 17] for the first time I was like: 'what da hell', but second time around, I can fully say: 'Job well done to the Joyous team'. [The] introduction will remind you of Roman Catholic Church. This is an impressive introduction indeed. What I noticed with this DVD is that they tried a lot of new things, [such that] some fans might disapprove. But then, change is good. Let me start with Mthunzi and Jabu, what a bore. I feel their time is up, they are depriving other kids an opportunity. There is [a] trio [song] for these founders: Lindelani, Mthunzi and Jabu on track 4, [entitled] *Nguye Inkosi*. It is interesting to see Lindelani forcing [to sing] like Mzekezeke [...]. But he sounds ok, just ok.

There are a lot of songs with a Jazzy feel, like *Uphi Umhlobo*, which is sung by Nolwazi Ydestal, our sister who sang as if she was afraid of singing when she sang in 'Joyous Rewind', messing up such a beautiful song *Ngemboze*. My dear Phelo Bala sings *Ulithemba Lami*, and he is smartly dressed. Joyous Celebration likes [to use] established singers. Phelo is from the group Bala Brothers, and now there is also Given Mabena from Afro Tenors, who sings Opera music, accompanied by a violin in his solo on the song *Intando emnandi*, which is one of my favorite songs in this DVD, although he is wearing a jacket like one of the audience members. There is also Puleng, who tried a career in music and failed dismally. She nails [the song] *Motho mang le mang*. What I noticed with [songs in] other languages [is that] they [are] all very nice. Mercy is back with a bang, [and] Charisma singing in Afrikaans. Mkhululi Bhembe is wearing army regalia this time. The beautiful slim-bodied Palesa Manthoko also sings a song.

I'm so happy to see most of my favorite singers leading. Siyasanga Kobeso who sang the popular *Noyana* [song] is leading. The tall lady Dudu Nhlapho is leading. Nomthi Sibisi the lady who sings off-key in the song *Igama likaJeso* also leads a song here.

Let me now talk about those who sang excellently. Hlengiwe Ntombela [sings] *The Zulu Worship*. She is uplifting. She also presents a danceable upbeat *Mthunzi wam*, [which has a] Rock n Roll [feel]. This lady is amazing, I just love her. My beloved Ncebakazi Nkantshu, the one we know singing *The Work of the Blood* sings at her best. Ntabiseng uplifts your spirit with *The Prayer*. Xolile Mncwango, the new unnoticeable lady, that you can ignore at first, but as she sings further, she mesmerizes you. Nomandla Mfecane [and] Xolani Mdlalose also bless me so much. I was disappointed by the underperforming old-time Joyous Celebration favorites in this DVD: Mahalia, Unathi Mzekeli, Ayanda Shange, Sylevester, Nhlanhla Mwelase. May be they will impress me as I continue to watch this DVD. But they must give others a chance, we've has enough of them.

Khaya Mthethwa my future hubby is [also] featured. As usual, he never disappoints. Nobathembu who is popular for IsiXhosa songs, impressively sings *Baleka*. Sphumelele who is popular for Zionist music, also presents her usual. There is a track which is 'mgqashiyo-like', and a lot of other traditional songs. It's a job well done.

The visuals on stage are so beautiful. [I give] thumbs up to the stylist, [the choir and band] are well dressed. Well done Lindani Ndwandwa and Bokang Ncube. There is

no gap left by Ntokozo and Nqubeko Mbatha. I miss Brenda Mntambo and Zodwa, my darlings.

I will rate this DVD 7 out of 10. I still feel 'Joyous [Celebration] 14' was just amazing, followed by 'Joyous [Celebration] 9', then '[Joyous Celebration] 16'. [In 'Joyous Celebration 18', I would love to see Nhlanhla Zofo and Nontsikelelo Shandu leading songs, and the old men such as Mthunzi retiring. [I also] expect to see the ever present, well-dressed couple in the audience. They love Joyous Celebration and they always sing along as if they know the songs. You even see some men that sit in the audience as if they were forced to come to the show. There are also those who are overactive, especially when they see that the camera is on them.

Get yourself a copy, [an] original copy please.

Appendix 8: Signal routing for *Joyous Celebration 18* recording. (Courtesy of Hertz Design)



Hertzdesign

Artist & Venue: Joyous Celebration
FOH Console: Soundcraft Vi6-96ch
Mon Console:

Multi	FOH	Mon	Input	Mic/DI	Insert	Stand	Artist
1			Kick IN	B91			Sabu
2			Kick OUT	B52		Short	Sabu
3			Snr Top	B56		Medium	Sabu
4			Snr Bot	SM57		Short	Sabu
5			Snr 2	B56		Medium	Sabu
6			Hi Hat	SM81		Medium	Sabu
7			MD Talk-to-Band	Switch Mic		Tall	Siya
8			Rack 1	B98 or D2			Sabu
9			Rack 2	B98 or D2			Sabu
10			Rack 3	B98 or D2			Sabu
11			Floor 1	B98 or D4			Sabu
12			Floor 2	B98 or D4			Sabu
13			Ride	SM81		Medium	Sabu
14			OH Left	SM81		Tall	Sabu
15			OH Right	SM81		Tall	Sabu
16			SPD - SX	DI			Sabu
17			E Bass	DI			Bheka
18			A Bass	DI			Bheka
19			E Guitar	SM57		Short	Chunky
20			Ac Guitar 1	DI			Chunky
21			Ac Guitar 2	DI			Chunky
22			Nord Stage EX L	DI			Siya
23			Nord Stage EX R	DI			Siya
24			External Modual L	DI			Siya
25			Sequencer 1 L	DI			Sabu
26			Sequencer 1 R	DI			Sabu
27			Sequencer 2 L	DI			Sabu
28			Sequencer 2 R	DI			Sabu
29			M3	DI			Floyd
30			XF7	DI			Floyd
31			3rd Keyboard for Floyd	DI			Floyd
32			Kronos 61	DI			Lungelo
33			Kronos 73	DI			Lungelo
34			External Modual L	DI			Lungelo
35			External Modual R	DI			Lungelo
36			Leslie Lo	SM57		Medium	Lungelo
37			Leslie Hi	D112		Medium	Lungelo
38			Perc 1	C1000		Tall	LM
39			Perc 2	C1000		Tall	LM
40			Perc 3	C1000		Tall	LM
41			Rx 1	UHF B87			
42			Rx 2	UHF B87			
43			Rx 3	UHF B58			
44			Rx 4	UHF B58			
45			Violin	UHF Lav			
46			Sop 1	UHF B54			
47			Sop 2	UHF B54			
48			Sop 3	UHF B54			

49		Sop 4	UHF B54			
50		Sop 5	UHF B54			
51		Sop 6	UHF B54			
52		Sop 7	UHF B54			
53		Sop 8	UHF B54			
54		Sop 9	UHF B54			
55		Sop 10	UHF B54			
56		Alt 1	UHF B54			
57		Alt 2	UHF B54			
58		Alt 3	UHF B54			
59		Alt 4	UHF B54			
60		Alt 5	UHF B54			
61		Alt 6	UHF B54			
62		Alt 7	UHF B54			
63		Alt 8	UHF B54			
64		Alt 9	UHF B54			
65		Alt 10	UHF B54			
66		Alt 11	UHF B54			
67		Ten 1	UHF B54			
68		Ten 2	UHF B54			
69		Ten 3	UHF B54			
70		Ten 4	UHF B54			
71		Ten 5	UHF B54			
72		Ten 6	UHF B54			
73		Ten 7	UHF B54			
74		Ten 8	UHF B54			
75		Ten 9	UHF B54			
76		Ten 10	UHF B54			
77		Ten 11	UHF B54			
78		Ten 12	UHF B54			
79	FOH only	Drum Hall L				
80	FOH only	Drum Hall R				
81	FOH only	Drum Plate L				
82	FOH only	Drum Plate R				
83	FOH only	Vox Rev L				
84	FOH only	Vox Rev R				
85	FOH only	Vox Delay				
86		External Modual R	DI			Siya
87	FOH only	Laptop				
88		Perc 4	SM57	Tall		Drummer 2
89		Perc 5	SM57	Tall		Drummer 2
90	FOH only	AV				
91		Perc 6	SM57	Tall		Drummer 2
92		Perc 7	SM57	Tall		Drummer 3
93		Perc 8	SM57	Tall		Drummer 3
94		Nord Lead 4	DI			Bheka
95	FOH only	Snr Delay				
96		Perc 9	SM57	Tall		Drummer 3

49		Sop 4	UHF B54			
50		Sop 5	UHF B54			
51		Sop 6	UHF B54			
52		Sop 7	UHF B54			
53		Sop 8	UHF B54			
54		Sop 9	UHF B54			
55		Sop 10	UHF B54			
56		Alt 1	UHF B54			
57		Alt 2	UHF B54			
58		Alt 3	UHF B54			
59		Alt 4	UHF B54			
60		Alt 5	UHF B54			
61		Alt 6	UHF B54			
62		Alt 7	UHF B54			
63		Alt 8	UHF B54			
64		Alt 9	UHF B54			
65		Alt 10	UHF B54			
66		Alt 11	UHF B54			
67		Ten 1	UHF B54			
68		Ten 2	UHF B54			
69		Ten 3	UHF B54			
70		Ten 4	UHF B54			
71		Ten 5	UHF B54			
72		Ten 6	UHF B54			
73		Ten 7	UHF B54			
74		Ten 8	UHF B54			
75		Ten 9	UHF B54			
76		Ten 10	UHF B54			
77		Ten 11	UHF B54			
78		Ten 12	UHF B54			
79	FOH only	Drum Hall L				
80	FOH only	Drum Hall R				
81	FOH only	Drum Plate L				
82	FOH only	Drum Plate R				
83	FOH only	Vox Rev L				
84	FOH only	Vox Rev R				
85	FOH only	Vox Delay				
86		External Modual R	DI			Siya
87	FOH only	Laptop				
88		Perc 4	SM57		Tall	Drummer 2
89		Perc 5	SM57		Tall	Drummer 2
90	FOH only	AV				
91		Perc 6	SM57		Tall	Drummer 2
92		Perc 7	SM57		Tall	Drummer 3
93		Perc 8	SM57		Tall	Drummer 3
94		Nord Lead 4	DI			Bheka
95	FOH only	Snr Delay				
96		Perc 9	SM57		Tall	Drummer 3

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