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Dancing through the Crisis: Survival Dynamics and Zimbabwe Music Industry*

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The details of how Zimbabwe – once lauded as the jewel of Africa – slid into a mess over the past decade have been well chronicled (see Melber 2004; Harold-Berry 2004; Vambe 2008). President Robert Mugabe and his ruling ZANU PF blame the economic meltdown on the British and their allies the United States of America, Australia and the European Union, who are vindictive over the fast-track land reform programme that forcibly wrests land from white farmers. Mugabe's critics blame corruption, dictatorship, gross disrespect for the rule of law and no protection of private property, jeopardizing productivity and foreign currency earnings through the land reform programmes, and the abuse of human rights as the main causes of the country's problems (Mhiripiri 2008). At a time of very serious political and economic crisis, Zimbabweans seem to be entertaining themselves with music. There has been a massive shut-down of manufacturing industries, but the music industry remains resilient. According to the country's Central Statistics Office, inflation is the highest in the world, reaching as high as 100,000 per cent by mid February 2008, even exceeding that of war-ravaged Iraq, which is second highest at 60 per cent. Zimbabwe's crisis has created paradoxes such as poor billionaires and the fastest-shrinking economy outside of a war zone. Unemployment in formal jobs was as high as 80 per cent in January 2008. Despite all this, the music industry looks vibrant, and shows no signs that the big recording companies – Zimbabwe Music Corporation (ZMC), Records and Tape Promotions (RTP), Gramma and Ngaavongwe – will shut down or relocate to South Africa as most other companies have done.

In the Zimbabwe case, the political economy of the music industry is of special interest because, *prima facie*, it seems as if there is nothing particularly 'political' about the music produced. The main musicians hardly sing any scathing political

content, and there is no banning of music shows for political reasons. It is worthwhile to investigate how the different stakeholders in the music industry sustain audiences' and buyers' interest, given that Zimbabwe is arguably one African country where local really is 'lekker,' with more local records selling compared to foreign productions. Socio-economic and political dynamics and marketing techniques are crucial in ascertaining the survival and growth of the Zimbabwe music industry. There exist both strong and tenuous links between the Zimbabwe music industry and South African and global music production, distribution and consumption systems, especially now that there are millions of Zimbabweans in the Diaspora. These links are important in evaluating the artistic productions of Zimbabwean musicians and what they derive from the industry.

The Zimbabwean music industry has produced its own stars across different genres and styles. Star names abound in the genres of *sungura*, *mbira*, gospel, acapella, jazz, Urban Grooves, etc. It is important to investigate whether the local star system is generally helpful to the quality of lives of the majority of musicians. All types of music have been commodified and are aggressively marketed (Chitando 2002; Brusila 2002:35-45; Connell and Gibson 2003; Jenje-Makwenda 2005; Chari 2007; Souza 2007). Inventive marketing techniques that are largely informal are used to attract audiences and persuade consumers to expend their hard-won cash on entertainment. Zimbabwean musicians perform several live shows each week, with the big names drawing as many as 10,000 people on exceptional shows. Bands and fans contribute to a local scene; the local music dissemination infrastructure includes churches, beer halls and concert halls in low-income, high-density population areas, and elegant clubs and hotel auditoriums. Recorded local music has a competitive advantage over foreign music, which is hardly imported due to foreign currency limitations and the absence of international distribution networks. With limited choice, local music sells rapidly, and the *sungura* music genre sells best.

The Zimbabwe Recording Industry

The concepts of 'majors' and 'Indies' adopted from the American music scene since the 1970s, where 'majors'¹ are large companies with substantial capital and power, and 'Indies' are small independent labels operating in marginal markets, are to some extent applicable to the Zimbabwean music industry (Starr and Waterman 2003:9; Mhiripiri 2004). The majors often play a 'conservative' role, 'seeking to ensure profits by producing predictable music for a large middle-class audience', but occasionally cautiously adopting new genres, artists and styles, especially those identified by the 'Indies' to minimize commercial risk. The 'Indies' are more entrepreneurial as they are often compelled by their circumstances to be more daring, search out new talent, create specialized niches, and feed new styles

into the mainstream (Starr and Waterman 2003:306). The Indies bring forth important influence and changes on the musical scene by introducing new genres, a trend that reflects the way marginal genres such as disco, punk rock, funk and reggae were popularized in the United States of America (Starr and Waterman 2003:306).

There is a vibrant music industry in Zimbabwe and over 20,000 families draw their livelihood in part or whole from something related to music (Mhiripiri 2004; Mhiripiri and Mhiripiri 2006). Zimbabwe is unique in that Zimbabwean citizens wholly own its local recording and distribution companies. Incidentally, Elias Musakwa, currently the biggest local music mogul who owns majority shares in the 'majors' – Zimbabwe Music Corporation (ZMC), Gramma, Record and Tape Promotions (RTP) and Ngaavongwe – is himself a musician. Big international conglomerates such as WEA, SONY/CBS, EMI, BMG, etc., including South African interests, have local branches in most African countries, but not in Zimbabwe. For many years now, these companies have sold their music through a licensing agreement with Zimbabwean companies. For instance, Zimbabwean companies RTP, Metro Studios, Spinalong and Makro jostled for a marketing and distribution deal with South Africa's Mobile Music Trust, which recently recorded Alick Macheso's album *Ndezwashwe-eh!*² Crossline Studio of South Africa recorded *sungura* musician Somandla Ndebele's new album *Chitendero*, and another South African company, Replication Pvt Ltd got the contract to distribute the album regionally while Metro Studios distributes in Zimbabwe.³ Macheso's *Ndezwashwe-eh!*, released in August 2008, quickly sold 100,000 copies in the first week, 25,000 of them in neighbouring South Africa – no small achievement given that big American stars, Kanye West and 50 Cent, who released albums around the same time, sold about 700,000 copies each during the first week.

In many African countries big recording conglomerates record and promote local artists from revenue that comes from the sales of international megastars. However, in Zimbabwe, the biggest selling local acts have sustained the industry, at least for big companies such as Gramma and RTP (Fagerjord 1995; Eyre 2005). In Zimbabwe, local music substantially out-sells international repertoire. During the colonial period, two South African companies (Gallo and Teal Record Company Central Africa, owned by Lonrho) set up local subsidiaries in Zimbabwe. These two companies had also acquired exclusive licenses for local distribution of big international labels. The two were soon bought off after 1980, with the coming of majority rule. The new ZANU PF regime tried, where possible, to sever all uncomfortable links with apartheid South Africa.⁴ After independence, Teal produced records under the Gramma label in order to get a double allocation of foreign exchange from the state, and the latter name has survived. Gallo changed its name to a more 'Zimbabwean' name, Zimbabwe Music Corporation.

In the post-colonial period, ownership of the capital assets in the music industry has been hazy and proprietors not clearly known (Fagerjord 1995). This mystery remains unresolved today, in the post-2000 period full of rumour and speculation. Allegations have been recently made that people linked to the ruling ZANU PF are quickly acquiring interests and taking over control of major recording and distribution companies. In a situation where there are no alternative radio and television stations, this stifles opposing or divergent and other subaltern voices (Eyre 2004; Vambe and Vambe 2006; Chikowero 2006). Legal provisions for a second independent broadcaster are available in the Broadcasting Services Act, but applicants have failed to convince the license-issuing Broadcasting Authority of Zimbabwe that they have the requisite capital and expertise to run a viable station with local money. Suspicions are rife that the license will be given to a ZANU PF supporter, and it is speculated that the favoured candidate is President Mugabe's nephew and business tycoon Philip Chiyangwa, who is already sponsoring foreign programmes such as European soccer on national TV. These national broadcasting stations, recording companies and music promotion companies are all partly implicated in the success or failure of particular musicians or bands.

Some bemoan the fact that there is now 'complete control' not only of the airwaves through restrictive legislation, but of the music industry in particular through its direct ownership and control by the government and party officials. Government's patronage and its multifarious influences range from the commissioning of musicians to play favourable music, the giving of gifts ranging from musical instruments, studios, and even farms to sympathetic artists,⁵ 'inviting' musicians to perform at government sanctioned festivals, and senior government officials singing and producing music which is then played on the few state-owned channels.⁶ My theoretical framework critically examines the dynamics of the Zimbabwe music business given the background of economic crisis, and how some musicians and their support systems are prospering despite the crisis.

Theoretical and Methodological Framework

Music is a form of cultural expression for individuals and social groups, but is also a commercial commodity that circulates in demographic markets (Connell and Gibson 2003). It is now trite to say the media are an industry just like any other industry, but the study of the actual strategies and dynamics, especially the marketing, publicity, financing and economics of the industry, are often ignored. I intend to establish how both political and commercial imperatives dictate what types of music are locally available, where and why, and who decides the proliferation.

Critical writings abound on the political meanings and identity implications of Zimbabwean songs (Kahari 1981:78-101; Pongweni 1982; Zimunya 1993:129-

135; Kwaramba 1997; Turino 2000; Vambe 2004; Vambe and Vambe 2006; Chikowero 2006). Critical theory has always viewed music as a commodity that is mass-produced and distributed for the purposes of de-politicizing the masses for financial gain (Adorno 1941; Callahan 2005), but few writers scrutinize the music industry's business and financial operations and related dynamics (Zindi 1985; Fagerjord 1995; Chitando 2005). As much as critical preoccupations with identities and political concerns are pertinent, cultural epistemology also needs to remain cognizant of business operations within specific political systems. A variety of strategies and techniques are being used to woo audiences, and in this process some benefit while others lose out. The range of actors within the Zimbabwe music industry will be mapped out below, tracing the creation of its value-chain and noting who is rewarded more and why. Artists often depend on intermediaries to get their music to markets and then pay them something from the proceeds.

Contractual relations between artists and intermediaries are often skewed in favour of the latter for several reasons. Martin Kretschmer (2005) notes there is an oversupply of creative ambitions in the arts, a situation that is manipulated by intermediaries – publishers, record companies, broadcasters or club venues – who act as selectors or gatekeepers. Intermediaries facilitate an artist's productions for a mass market. When the intermediary is powerful because of ownership and control of vital resources and opportunities, there is the likelihood that she or he extracts more from the proceeds arising from her or his liaisons with the artist. Contracts, therefore, often are asymmetrical, and the bargaining power of artists early in their careers is usually weak, while the bargaining power of consistently successful artists is often very high.

Intermediaries have to rely on the reputation of the musicians for their own business success; hence, power dynamics are not always fixed and static as there are constant negotiations, tensions and renegotiations in changing circumstances. Since it is difficult to predict the next star or the next hit, commercial intermediaries tend to favour known artists with a track record, and proven sounds or genres. However, while record company executives endeavour 'to guarantee their profits by producing variations on the "the same old thing", they also nervously eye the margins to spot and take advantage of the latest trends' (Starr and Waterman 2003:9).

In Zimbabwe, there are no institutions for social benefits for artists. As in most less developed countries, kinship and social networks play an important part in the early stages and during lean periods of artistic careers. In such circumstances, most musicians sustain themselves significantly with income from non-copyright, and even non-artistic activities (see Pratt 2004). Very few artists achieve the basic minimum ordinary living standards from copyright income or live performances alone, and even fewer musicians manage to survive on music earnings alone. Sophisticated marketing and distribution techniques are needed to

ensure the profitability of the music industry, which nevertheless still largely depends on the sales generated by few mass selling songs, the so-called 'gold', 'silver' or 'multiplatinum' recordings. In advanced music industries such as in the USA and Europe, a multi-media strategy promotes the release of a potential hit song or album, creating something similar to 'a multi-front military campaign run by a staff of corporate generals' (Star and Waterman 2003:393). Alongside the hits, celebrities and stars or superstars are created using media glitz and glamour. Songs are cultural commodities, but the personas of artists created by and through the media are also availed for popular consumption so that art and artists are both consumables. All the media glitz and glamour, however, may be of little help without a supportive policy environment that encourages the music industry.

A Supportive Policy Framework and Corresponding Impediments and Problems

While human rights organizations and the political opposition incessantly complained about the 'draconian'⁷ legislation enacted by the ZANU PF government at the turn of the century, ironically Zimbabwean musicians have been celebrating the introduction of policies favourable to them. State intervention provided legislative mechanisms that enhanced the formation of alliances, networks and distribution systems within local 'scenes'. Besides assisting with recording facilities, the government diversified Kingston's booksellers into music retailers, and the quasi-governmental Zimbabwe Broadcasting Holding stations were a ready broadcaster for all types of music (see Connell and Gibson 2003:119). The Broadcasting Services Act (2001) stipulates a 75 per cent local content quota requirement for local broadcasters. The local stations, which are all state-owned, respect this provision and the youth station Power FM actually converted the quota to 100 per cent local content, during Minister Jonathan Moyo's tenure, resulting in many youth groups emerging to fill the available air time. Many independent recording and promotion companies also emerged to take advantage of new opportunities. All types of music that were previously side-lined due to established recording companies' commercial expedience suddenly found an opportunity on the market. ZBC is a de facto broadcasting monopoly and the biggest music user, hence the biggest payer of mechanical rights royalties to musicians. Along with the programming quota system, the duty-free importation of musical equipment has boosted the growth of the local music industry, making its products economically viable for public consumption.

Anti-piracy campaigns and the adoption of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act in 2004 gave renewed importance to rights holders, especially musicians. Royalties for musicians accrue from direct record sales or the public use of music under license in commercial spaces such as radio, night-clubs, buses, etc. In fact,

recording companies are currently inviting musicians or heirs of deceased musicians to renegotiate contracts, especially those signed during the 1970s and 1980s, which were exploitative, often offering only a one-off payment and no further royalties out of subsequent productions and re-prints. This invitation arises at a time when old music is being reissued using newer packaging and delivery technology such as CDs and cassettes.⁸

Government policies in support of music festivals and the equipping of musicians merits special attention, but some of the state's actions and policies have also had negative ramifications for the music industry. These include the economic decline that followed the land reform programme, sanctions and travel bans which affect some Zimbabwean musicians, the long and unpredictable electricity outages, the fuel shortages which make it difficult to stage live shows throughout the country, and the widely condemned May 2005 destruction of illegal structures and flea markets in urban areas known as *Operation Murambatsvina/ Operation Restore Order* (see Tibaijuka 2005; Vambe 2008; Mhiripiri 2008). Hit hardest by this operation were the flea markets, the biggest buyers and sellers of local music. Flea markets were characterized by loud-playing music from open stalls. Emmanuel Vori, the Sales and Marketing Director of Gramma, was quoted as saying, 'We lost 30% worth of sales as a result of the displacement of informal traders.'⁹ *Operation Chikorokoza Chapera* – a government-sanctioned police raid in 2006 on (illegal) small, informal mines also had a similar negative impact on particular top musicians. When these miners were dispersed and lost their income, some musicians saw audiences dwindling, especially in the mining regions.¹⁰ Music production and consumption and the uses of leisure time also invite a study of the critical geographies and the soundscapes on which Zimbabwean popular music, identity and place are mapped (see Connell and Gibson 2003).

The informal sector in Zimbabwe is arguably the mainstay of the majority of Zimbabweans, and 'adverse' government policies and actions have repercussions on the performance of the music industry.¹¹ Audiences are a significant factor of the Zimbabwean music industry and their demographics still need thorough study. Since the Zimbabwean economy is now 80 per cent informal sector, and 20 per cent largely under-paid formal sector in the civil service or parastatals, it means those in the informal sector dictate the pace. In fact, the current crisis best suits these speculators most of whom pray that the status quo prevails as normalcy and order may not offer such opportunities to those who do not have special qualifications. The informal sector has produced Zimbabwe's contemporary *nouveau riche*, and these have ensured the up-market movement of selected *sungura* acts in particular, acts that were previously associated with the urban poor and rural 'bumpkins' not long ago. The shows are an occasion to parade the 'who's who' of society, to show off fashion, and to otherwise flaunt newly-acquired wealth.

The *nouveau riche* play the raw *sungura* in their posh vehicles, and the style has now moved up market into elegant venues such as the Harare International Conference Centre (HICC) and Sport Diners.

Some musicians have complained that secret directives given to DJs and the sole broadcaster not to play musicians viewed as anti-establishment have had a negative impact on the latter's popularity and income.¹² With such impediments, it is intriguing to investigate how the Zimbabwean music industry and musicians exhibit sheer resilience, inventiveness and imagination where obstacles are numerous. Indeed, the Zimbabwean crisis has been prolonged. Paradoxically, it is deeply entrenched and normalized that obstacles and the outright absurd appear commonplace in Zimbabwe.¹³

Live Performances and the Gala Tradition: Income Mainstay and Impediments

Live shows, the mainstay of musicians' earnings, are also full of paradoxes. Zimbabwean musicians can play as many as three shows per week, and even more when there is a public holiday. Record sales also depend on live shows as musicians who conduct live shows often sell better than those who do not. However, a variety of shortages – fuel, transport, beer and beverages – diminish the earnings of musicians. Fuel shortage often restricts musicians and audiences to easily accessible venues. Fuel is not only a major consideration in planning, but now forms part of the contract with promoters. Shortages of beverages and beer can depress attendance at shows as well as the artists' earnings. Fuel shortages also create problems in the public transport sector, which is licensed to play popular music by ZIMRA, and which also publicizes new releases to travellers. There are also numerous prolonged electrical power cuts that jeopardise live shows, which occur mainly during evenings. The power cuts are both a result of the SADC region's growing consumption without corresponding regional production growth, as well as a failure by the Zimbabwe electrical authority to adequately pay in foreign currency for the power imports from Zambia, Mozambique, South Africa and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Inventive show promoters now insert assurances in their media advertisements for alternative power sources for fans such as 'standby generators available'. The industry is adaptive to adversity and can even manipulate it to an advantage, such as offering their productions as a fun diversion to people whose homes have been darkened by power outage.

Musicians are also taking advantage of international opportunities by staging shows all over the world. *Mbira* players have been well received in Japan, where they also conduct lessons on *Mbira* playing. *Sungura* and gospel have a large following in the United Kingdom. Macheso made a rather unsuccessful maiden performance

in Australia where Mtukudzi has played before during a world tour. He was not well received, and this is attributed to poor publicity as well as audience demographics in Australia, where most of the Zimbabwean émigrés are either students or teachers who are out of touch with developments in Zimbabwe.¹⁴ Mtukudzi and Mapfumo, and the Bhundu boys in their last days together, are classified under the amorphous 'World Music' tag, largely hybrid cross-over genres that suit the tastes of Western people. Zimbabweans in the diaspora now constitute the biggest audiences of Zimbabwean musicians' shows abroad. *Sungura*, the peasant and working class, raw and rootsy sound of Zimbabwe, has found a market in Britain and South Africa. The successes of live performances and record sales of these sounds that are not yet 'globalized' into the ways of 'World Music' can be partly explained by the large diasporic influx of Zimbabweans who, in their nostalgia for home, find 'authenticity' in what may be too fast and giddy for the usual western aesthetic. However, Zimbabweans are also introducing their foreign friends and acquaintances to Zimbabwean rhythms.

Musicians are trying to maximize attendance figures by embarking on collaborations and stage sharing at shows and by performing at state-sponsored galas. Most of these have been within a given genre, but there are now combined shows of stars from different genres, such as Mtukudzi and Macheso, Macheso and Roki (Urban Grooves). Family shows are also organized during school holidays to attract the youth market and their parents at convenient daytime hours and appropriate venues, maximizing revenue by playing again in the evenings for adult revellers. Incidentally, it is in the genres of gospel music where numerous female stars such as Fungisai Mashavave, Shingisai Suluma and Mercy Mutsvene have emerged, although other secular rhythms have stars such as world-renowned *mbira* player Chiwoniso Maraire, and Plaxedes Wenyika in Urban Grooves. These women employ media stunts similar to those of their male counterparts and use digital technology such as websites for publicity (see Mangoma 2004; Chari 2007). There are also many female dance groups that accompany live bands or play to contemporary popular music in different types of venues. Indeed, popular music has made such inroads that the top civil servants and ruling party heavyweights appropriated a recent gala where attendance was strictly through invitation.¹⁵

Galas are part of a government calendar of commemorative music concerts. They are organized in honour of an historic event or public holiday such as the *Independence Day Gala*, the *Heroes Splash* and the *Unity Gala*, or they may commemorate a national figure such as the two late Vice Presidents, Simon Muzenda and Joshua Nkomo, who were honoured by the *Mzvee Bira* and the *Umdalawethu Gala*. 'Galas' are associated with ZANU PF as they are organized under the auspices of the openly partisan Ministry of Information and Publicity.¹⁶ Government has always been involved in the organization and promotion of

such events, starting with the 18 April 1980 independence celebration at Harare's Rufaro Stadium. That was probably the first large-scale *pungwe*¹⁷ in post-independence Zimbabwe, with Bob Marley as the highlight.

State patronage has resulted in favoured entrepreneurs and musicians benefiting from the performance, recording and distribution opportunities specially created in the industry. Various music professionals cut their entrepreneurial skills with the tacit backing of the ruling party and government. Different government ministries support musicians and promoters, and selectively allocate financial and material resources and organizing opportunities to party supporters. Before the introduction of the National Economic Revival Programme which permits duty-free importation of musical instruments, a selected few musicians such as Green Jangano of the Harare Mambo Band had regulations waived after approaching influential politicians. Young promoters such as J.B. Matiza, the late Peter Pamire of Pams Promotion, Philip Chiyangwa and Clive Malunga, developed the trend of music promotion as part of the official black empowerment policy. Clive Malunga - a liberation war veteran - organized the Jenaguru Music Festival for most of the last decade under his Jenaguru Promotion, a registered private corporate identity. Many other people have since come to sponsor and promote events of varied sizes and status. These include gospel music 'moguls' Elias Musakwa with his annual Ngaavongwe Festival, Pastor Admire Kasi with the Nguva Yakwana Festival, and the numerous Jazz festivals.

While these 'privately' organized festivals proliferate and their promotion goes without much notice, the same cannot be said about the music 'galas' organized by the Ministry of Information and Publicity. Arguably, participation in live broadcast and televised galas has either made or hampered the music careers of both old, established musicians and new, upcoming youth groups. For example, Saco and the promising youth group Eden Boys, who were openly pro-land-reform, sank into oblivion, and the crowds dwindled in some urban venues at privately-organized shows by Andy Brown, Cde Chinx (aka Dick Chingaira), and the late Simon Chimbetu. Cde Chinx, a regular performer at galas, hardly appears on top-selling record charts, and has virtually stopped playing at privately-organized venues. However, young musicians of the Urban Grooves genre such as Roki and Africa Revenge gained popularity at these galas; so too did these events enhance the fame of *sungura* stars Tongai Moyo and Alick Macheso.¹⁸

Ostensibly, older regular participants at the galas have benefited substantially from the system of state patronage. Some are beneficiaries of the land redistribution programme. Others have had private state-of-the-art recording studios built and equipped. Beneficiaries of one type or another include Andy Brown of the Band Storm, Cde Chinx, Tongai Moyo, Hosea Chipanga, The Mahendere Brothers, Alick Macheso, and the late Simon Chimbetu. Discourses abound on the

participation or non-participation of particular musicians with regard to their relationship to ZANU PF and government. Some are 'forced' to participate, though they are elusive when asked directly whether they participated involuntarily. Ironically, other groups complain they have been deliberately excluded from participation or constrained by the attendant performance fees. Popular press reports often divulge the tensions, discomfort, struggles and contradictions involved in the issue of participation. As with all topics on Zimbabwe, the galas have discursive implications. They define one's relation to the government and to ZANU PF although they ostensibly ought to be national and above narrow partisan party politics. Galas are occasions to 'manufacture consent' and reconstruct and recreate historical memory, for those in control and in power, and alternatively, they are a site of struggle and offer an opportunity to dissenting voices. The staging of these galas has employed a system of alternating host cities amongst the different geo-ethno-political provincial capitals, in order to give them a national character. One unique gala was held in Chimoio¹⁹ in 2004, and this may be seen as a curtain raiser to the 2005 parliamentary elections where ZANU PF adopted the slogan and motif 'Zimbabwe will never be a colony again!' The ZANU PF stance has led to the isolation of Zimbabwe with attendant hardships on Zimbabweans who may want to travel abroad for any number of reasons including live performances.

Visas and Performances Abroad

While prominent ZANU PF officials and politicians are under a travel ban in the United States of America (USA), the European Union (EU) and Australia, Zimbabwean musicians who want to perform in Britain have been worst affected by overly stringent and punitive visa and work permit regulations. Promoters struggle to bring Zimbabwean musicians into Britain, but sometimes the implementation of these restrictions is ludicrous. Self-exiled singer Thomas Mapfumo, based in the USA, was denied a visa to perform at the 2007 Womad music festival on the spurious suspicion he would not leave the country after his performance, although festival organizers properly invited him. In 2004, gospel singer Fungisai Zvakavapano-Mashavave was refused a visa on similar suspicions. British immigration officials rejected her visa application, rather oddly citing 'conditions' in Zimbabwe. The rejection reads in part: 'Taking into account the circumstances in the country you come from, I am not satisfied that on the rule of probabilities you will return after your performance.'²⁰ The authorities probably suspected Fungisai would seek refugee status.²¹ It is not, however, totally untrue that some musicians, soccer players and ordinary Zimbabweans have in the past breached visa requirements and over-stayed in Britain. British immigration authorities have even refused transit visas to guests of the Zimbabwe government.

In the propaganda war, Zimbabwe is inviting popular world personalities, journalists and artists to visit the beleaguered country and then speak a fair and 'informed' opinion on the Zimbabwe situation (Mhiripiri 2008:152-154).²²

Uneven Relations with Show Promoters

Apart from difficulties with travel arrangements, musicians wishing to perform at home and abroad have to contend with challenging relationships with promoters as well. Musicians view music promoters differently in different contexts. They are variously seen as good people who create opportunities for shows and pay handsomely while taking the risk of poor attendances, bad weather or competitors in the music promotion business; or as confidence tricksters who reap where they have not sown, or as outright exploiters. Some promoters are praised by musicians in song lyrics as psychic rewards. However, promoters are also viewed with suspicion and accused of various misdemeanours. For instance, the husband-and-wife gospel duo, Charles and Olivia Charamba, have blamed promoters for confining them to Harare at the expense of entertaining fans elsewhere.²³ Alan Chimbetu was dumped without payment on his debut UK shows,²⁴ and Nyamandi was not paid, or, had one of his band members mysteriously paid the rest of the band's dues whilst they were playing live on stage.²⁵ Some promoters in turn blame musicians for drunkenness or other breaches, such as accepting upfront payments, but failing to appear for concerts as agreed contractually.²⁶

Successful musicians now want relative independence from promoters, something similar to reconfigurations of their relations with recording and distribution companies. In 2008, crowd-pullers Oliver Mtukudzi and Alick Macheso, planned joint shows that would exclude professional promoters and other intermediaries. The two musicians anticipated huge profits after a crowd of 10,000 people attended their joint Harare show at Glamis Stadium in March 2007, organized by an independent promoter – Ghetto Fabulous Entertainment. Ghetto Fabulous Entertainment fulfilled their side of the bargain by duly paying performance and appearing fees in advance. The promoter thereafter reaped handsomely from gate-takings, beverages and food sales. The massive turnout planted the idea in Macheso and Mtukudzi, and *The Herald* quoted Mtukudzi referring to a lucrative self-promotional joint venture: 'It would be our project.'²⁷

Macheso and Mtukudzi were diplomatic, and delicately reassured to retain independent promoters for other future shows as required. 'Indeed, promoters lessen labour for us when they organize shows, but we cannot employ them all the time. Sometimes we have to do things on our own and give our fans the very best in our own way,' Macheso said.²⁸ Since Macheso and Mtukudzi own promotion companies, *Cheso Power* and *Tuku Music Production* respectively, these would merge specifically for the arrangement of the joint show. The chain

integration of different services under single musician-lead enterprises and the formation of strategic alliances among these enterprises seem imminent, despite the complexities associated with services concentration.

Foreign-based Zimbabwean and South African promoters and recording companies are now favourites of Zimbabwean musicians. They fork out large sums to attract the musicians, paying recording, video production and publicity costs, and moreover providing artists with handsome living allowances.²⁹ Music theorist Tendekai Kuture qualified South Africa's superiority over Zimbabwe in the music industry, and the reasons why Zimbabwe's best are trekking down south for all purposes. He observed that Zimbabwe has always trailed in sound engineering skills and technology. During the days of analogue recording when the 36-track equipment was the most sophisticated in sound production and output, the best equipped Zimbabwean studios perhaps had 16 or 24 track suites. Again, local producers, though good and innovative, are self-taught and work on mediocre equipment.³⁰

Lack of finance to acquire state-of-the-art equipment as it enters the market is daunting given that local audiences are accustomed to quality productions, due to varied media exposure. Musician and pioneering Indie recording entrepreneur, Innocent Utsiwegota of Country Boy Records, has elsewhere summarized the problems of matching with wealthier South African and global rivals, who also have the advantage of their own bigger and richer home markets.³¹ Gospel singer Shingisai Suluma, on the other hand, preferred recording her greatest hits album in China instead of South Africa after making quality and expense considerations.³² Ironically, while Zimbabwean top artists are getting contracts abroad, some musicians from Zambia, Mozambique and Botswana opt to record in Zimbabwe.³³ It is quite clear that products and the brands of different musicians are produced via different value chains with varying degrees of specialization and perceived value to their audiences. The value chains of music products and the extent and types of specialization are explored in the next section.

Value-chain and Specialization in the Music Industry

The complex process of music production involves people with different skills, even before the music is packaged and distributed. Besides singers and instrumentalists, there are technical people involved in engineering and production, and there are the various other service-providing staff in the entertainment industry, making the music industry extend its boundaries across commerce and culture (Starr and Waterman 2003:8; Mhiripiri and Mhiripiri 2006:79). All these people ought to be rewarded according to their contributions. Ideally, musicians, as the core workers, should benefit more than other service providers or intermediaries, but this is not normally the case. Negotiating and bargaining powers depend on

varying factors such as the age and experience of the musician, who owns and controls the capital and resources necessary in music production (instruments, transport and venues, etc.), and various other factors (Kirkegaard 2002; Kretschmer 2007). While barriers of entry into the music industry may appear minimal, most musicians have had little formal education, which leaves them prey to unscrupulous intermediaries, especially on sophisticated contractual issues.

Sungura, a local fusion of East African *kanindo* and DRC rhythms usually sung in indigenous languages, mainly Shona, is the mass-selling music genre. It is a fast-paced beat originally associated with rural people and the lower working class. But it has since made inroads into upmarket venues. The best-attended shows are usually those of the *sungura* stars of the moment, Alick Macheso of Orchestra Mberikwazo Band and Tongai Moyo of Utakataka Express. The recording majors in Zimbabwe are capitalizing on the popularity of the *sungura* beat and musicians often complain that they are forced to copy the beat and style of top-selling acts if they want to be recorded by the majors, who choose conservatively to minimize risk by sticking to tried genres. Many musicians testify they have over the years been asked to play the popular *sungura*, especially musicians experimenting with other types of sounds (Turino 2000; Brusila 2002:38).³⁴ Musician Alick Macheso criticized an engineer with Gramma for encouraging other musicians to imitate his trademark bass guitar resulting in a proliferation of similar but monotonous works.³⁵ Recording companies do this in order to flood the market with popular and profitable records, since they cannot guarantee what 'the next big thing' will be. As long as the distribution and promotion system for a particular kind of music brings profit, it will be mass-produced (Callahan 2005:xxi).

The Mainstreaming of other Genres: Urban Grooves, Gospel, Mbira and Jazz

Acts playing alternative genres are being mainstreamed steadily and new non-*sungura* stars are often recorded and featured in the media. Genres that are now receiving considerable attention and interest include *Mbira*, played on the original instruments without necessarily mixing the rhythm with guitars, gospel music with a variety of beats, and Urban Grooves (UG), which is a mixture of local rhythms with R & B, reggae, acapella, etc. The eclectic UG perhaps best confirms the internationalization of the Zimbabwean beat in ways described by Roger Wallis and Kristner Malms (1984) as lending uniformity of the global rhythms and beats. Urban grooves is fast moving from being marginal, and carving a market niche and creating a more concrete genre identity, thereby attracting recognition from the industry and critics. The market is fast accepting the genre although it also has its critics. Detractors cite lack of originality, plagiarism of rhythm and lyrics, 'Americanization' and that it is merely the localization of established

international genres such as reggae, hip-hop and R & B, jazz, and even *Kwaito* and *soukous* (Mangoma 2004; Muzari 2003).³⁶ However, the genre thrives in spite of criticism and the artists, mainly youths of both sexes who are usually below 30 years old, have been invited to state-organized functions and galas where they actually cut their teeth in terms of performing for a public other than their own peers. They are also performing at prestigious occasions graced by the middle class and affluent.³⁷ They have also moved from being a preserve of the 'Indies' through getting contracts with the 'majors'. For instance, Gramma established an Urban Grooves unit early in 2007 with its own Arts and Repertoire (A&R) manager. The current A&R manager has relied on existing and known musicians in this genre to create her own stable unit, but she has also identified and recruited new talents at youth contests.³⁸ The music recording experiments by Rangarirai Muvavarirwa of Tonderai Studio and Innocent Utsiwegota of Country Boy Records are credited with parenting the hybrid beats of the 1990s that led to the current proliferation of studios. What is to be ascertained is whether by virtue of its 'cosmopolitan' nature UG will penetrate regional and global markets and be appreciated by youths and fans with similar interests. There are encouraging signs because some of these UG music videos are played on *Channel O*, the regional TV music station, and a few young artists have travelled to the UK to perform for largely Diaspora Zimbabwean audiences.

Zimbabwe music awards have also incorporated the UG genre in its categories, and UG artists are eligible to compete in open contests against those in any other popular genre. Urban Groover Roki won the Video of the Year and Song of the Year awards against established musicians such as Alick Macheso, Oliver Mtukudzi and Tongai Moyo at the 2007 Zimbabwe Music Awards (ZIMA). Many promoters quickly lined up shows for him, in which he is now sharing the stage with established musicians such as Macheso, and former radio presenter James Maridadi has described him as a 'future icon of Zimbabwean music'.³⁹ Some of these young musicians have landed recording contracts with South African firms.⁴⁰ Many gospel and *mbira* musicians have also received accolades, with Shingisai Suluma recently being appointed a UNICEF ambassador to work with children in Zimbabwe, due to her educative lyrics.⁴¹ All these activities may be considered part of a general industry-wide marketing effort. The next section will critique specific marketing activities of some musicians and their promoters.

Marketing and Promoting Zimbabwean Music

There is very little investment in marketing and promotion of musicians and their songs by recording and distribution companies in the pre-launch, launch and post-launch phases. Zimbabwean artists often do their own marketing and public relations independently, using the press, live shows and posters to market their

music and performances. They solicit the media for publicity, visiting pressrooms and studios even without invitation, looking for interviews or to leave copies of their music. Journalists and DJs have divulged that they get most of their music directly from individual musicians, rather than from recording companies. Some leading recording companies admit that they may snub the media because of bad reviews that are counter-productive and that ultimately have a negative effect on sales. The majority of recording and distribution companies are accused of not doing enough in promoting artists both within and outside Zimbabwe, hence most musicians have achieved success and popularity mainly through their own individual networking efforts (Eyre 2005:38).⁴²

The recording companies have not entirely disputed the criticism, but cite financial constraints. In this regard, Julian Howard, a former director at Gramma and ZMC has said:

... yes, we do not spend vast amounts of money on marketing. If we did, we would be out of business. It makes no sense to outlay tens of thousands of dollars on marketing a product that will only sell a few hundred or even a few thousand units.⁴³

The recording companies, however, do sponsor some music programmes on radio and television to showcase new releases. Live shows are musicians' income mainstay and also function as a major site of publicity and marketing, and the most adept of musicians also sell albums and other promotional merchandise at their shows. Successful musicians are engaging foreign recording, distribution, and promotion companies when eyeing international markets, or even for local markets, suggesting the existence of a ceiling on what local intermediaries are prepared to offer. Artists quickly opt for alternative intermediaries following the expiration of a previously binding contract. Musicians opt out of a stable contract in preference for relatively flexible and attractive contractual conditions offered in another.⁴⁴

The first groups to have some measure of international success in Europe and America were Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited, Stella Chiweshe, Marshal Munhumumwe and The Four Brothers, the Bhundu Boys, Jonah Moyo and Devera Ngwenya Band. The Bhundu Boys were a sensation and signed a lucrative deal with Warner Brothers. This group's rise and fall is a poignant anecdote of the potentially exploitative relations between naïve African musicians and unscrupulous Western intermediaries.⁴⁵

The post-apartheid dispensation in southern Africa has seen a new set of complex configurations and contractual relations emerging, with the stronger South African economic players slowly gaining control and leverage over the Zimbabwe music industry – at least outside Zimbabwe, since the local scene is

strictly under local entrepreneurial ownership and control. The relationship has been beneficial to the quality of life for the musicians involved, and most have been quick to testify to that benefit. The quality of music productions is remarkable and has obviously boosted local sales, but of late a worrisome development has arisen with Zimbabwean acts taking long to distribute albums at home after launches in South Africa, UK and USA. The lure of foreign currency and the need to kill international piracy has been implicated, yet the move has increased piracy amongst Zimbabweans.⁴⁶ While the Bhundu Boys' case is sad testimony of the possibility of skewed negotiating powers between Zimbabwean musicians and foreign intermediaries, the excitement of making it abroad (especially in South Africa) during worse times at home seems to make musicians gloss over their relations with their new associates, and generally there have not been many publicly recorded incidences of protest and displeasure. Still, it remains true that the media seems to have the power of success or failure for musicians and the relationship between the stars and the media is varied, with some stars or 'wannabe' stars going so far as to seek unorthodox means of getting their names in the press.

Musicians, Superstars and the Media: Problems of *Payola*

Zimbabwe boasts a range of locally-based musicians with mixed fortunes. There are very few successful 'stars' such as Oliver Mtukudzi, Elias Musakwa, Alick Macheso and the Charamba couple, amongst others with visibly high standards of living, as exemplified by their ownership of posh vehicles and elegant homes. These may view music as their single major source of income. Amongst the nation's panoply of paradoxes, there is also a string of financially poor 'billionaire superstars'.⁴⁷ These artists, presumably the Urban Grooves young stars, attain 'overnight superstar status' promoted by radio, television and print media, and yet remain impoverished. Such an anomaly explains the high incidence of destitution and why the industry is stereotyped as a haven for vagabonds who are in the glitz today, but die as paupers.

In the entertainment sections of the Zimbabwean popular press, we now find mass-mediated charisma or notoriety and the private lives of musicians. Sex scandals, excesses, debauchery and anything else sensational are capital for both the media and the stars. The private lives and public personas are fast dissolving into each other, and boundaries are now hazy. Some artists are exhibitionist deliberately, both on and off stage. Charity and goodwill events cannot be overlooked, yet these do not attract as much attention and inspire remembrance as the sexual scandals and eccentric antics. A new crop of musicians has emerged that purposefully manipulates the mass media; they are quite adept at stimulating public fascination with their personas as well as with their music. Macheso and Moyo have created public personas of 'rude boys', 'flashy guys', and have feuded

in the media. Tongai Moyo has his strong fan base amongst the informal illegal gold miners known as *makorokoza*, and he is referred to as *Mukorokoza Mukuru* – Senior Illegal Miner. His media fights with music rival Macheso momentarily abated between December 2007 and February 2008 when Moyo's health was reported as failing and Macheso raised funds to help a 'brother', thus revealing that what they had been doing all along was media-play.⁴⁸ However, the moment Moyo seemed to have recuperated enough in March 2008, he spurned the donations, made accusations about musicians cashing in on his name through staging dubious fundraising shows, and protested he was not 'a charity case'.⁴⁹ Such media-conscious artists have been described as 'self-conscious authors of their celebrity, creators of multiple artistic egos, and highly skilled manipulators of the mass media' (Starr and Waterman 2003:394-395; see also Waterman 2002:19-34). Scholars and journalists then create a veritable industry out of analysing stars' social significance.

The quest for publicity raises ethical and legal questions, especially where *payola* is involved.⁵⁰ *Payola* refers to inducements given to broadcasters and journalists in order to extract airplay and good reviews. The state broadcaster has suspended some producers who demanded bribes to play music videos. Wonder Guchu, the entertainment journalist for *The Herald*, confirmed that the practice is widespread, but quickly made pertinent qualifications. Journalists may demand payment as precondition for publicity. Some musicians give unsolicited tokens of appreciation. Other musicians openly seek for attention and readily offer inducements. Musicians and journalists might just be familiar friends. In the worst situations, journalists become 'partisan' and promote one musician against another. Such scribes fuel and perpetuate feuds and dangerous rivalries between bands and fans.⁵¹ Another very important ethical concern in the relationship between stars and the media is the issue of copyright. The issues raised by copyright laws and their infringement by the media and other parties often give rise to controversies or even litigation.

Controversies over Copyright and Royalties

Although a few wealthy African stars have emerged over the decades, the economic situation of the majority of African musicians is far from admirable (Kirkegaard 2002:53-54; Pratt 2004). African states have tried to empower artists through crafting supportive legislation. In this vein, Zimbabwe's Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act prescribes that rights-holding artists accrue revenue from both the royalties subsisting in the contracts that they sign and also from collective rights management often known as mechanical rights. Mechanical rights are those arising from artist works publicly performed by other parties for commercial gain, such as on radio and television stations, in buses, restaurants and cinemas.

Evidence on the ground, however, shows that live band performances, rather than royalties, are the mainstay of the Zimbabwean musicians' income. This is true even for the biggest selling actors, who are not spared from hectic schedules where at times they perform three shows per week, some of them all-night long. While legislation, structures and mechanisms for the efficient collection and distribution of royalties are in place, there are, nonetheless, frequent protests and expressions of discontent, especially from the musicians. Of course, recording companies profess fair dealing and fair play, and claim that they even subsidize a lot of poor-selling music albums.⁵²

There are three types of contracts between publishers and musicians. One requires an artist to sign a recording deal, which promises that he or she will receive a percentage (royalties) of the proceeds of the sale of each unit of the product. The recording company or publisher covers all recording, origination, printing, manufacturing and other costs. Royalty rate in the instant can be as low as 10 per cent. The second type of contract requires an artist to sign a pressing and distribution agreement, where the artist pays all the manufacturing costs, and the recording company stores and distributes the product. The artist can get as much as 85 per cent royalty rate. The third scenario is when the artist pays for production costs and is solely responsible for warehousing and distribution; hence the recording company retains no royalties. Zimbabwean musicians are changing stables in consideration for what they think is the best proposition, and those who are relatively successful need more royalty percentage income and leeway.

The crux of the problem is the politics and management of sales or collection statistics, and how these are administered before the musicians eventually get their share. Statistics are contentious and controversial, with recording companies willingly providing figures for marketing purposes to show that their stable is doing well, yet paradoxically withholding them when it comes to issues of remunerating other rights holders.⁵³ Again, only these companies know exactly how many copies are printed at a given time and what is then presented to artists is always questionable; perhaps only some tenuous trust keeps the relationship between the parties. The issue of royalties will remain contentious, especially with the musicians gaining more insight in the relationship between production costs and laboratory costs. For most media products the manufacture of copies is much cheaper than the cost of origination. Export of local music should also be used to subsidize local failures, and international markets ought not to deprive home markets, but should be developed at relatively little extra cost (Tomaselli 1988:139-140).

Collecting societies ostensibly working on behalf of musicians, such as ZIMRA and Zimcopy, are not spared criticism by musicians. There are allegations that

they retain high percentages to cover administrative costs that the final benefits to musicians are laughable. ZIMRA collects royalties from entities, enterprises and individuals who use music in their commercial pursuits such as public transporters, restaurants and nightclubs who play music in public. While some artists appreciate the efforts of ZIMRA, many are dissatisfied.⁵⁴ Inflation is partly blamed in ZIMRA's 2006 Report for the meagre disbursements to musicians. Some even threatened to cancel their membership with ZIMRA.⁵⁵ Greenfield Chilongo,⁵⁶ the Chief Executive of Zimcopy, a reprographic collecting society linked to ZIMRA, notes that musicians such as Oliver Mtukudzi and Tendai Mupfurutsa are directors in ZIMRA, hence it is uninformed to say musicians are being fleeced by their own, especially when the directors are respectable high achievers. The Zimbabwean hyper-inflationary environment does, indeed, erode the artist's income from music sales. According to Debbie Metcalfe, Oliver Mtukudzi's former manager, 'musicians get their royalties from record companies after seven months of the CD being released. When the money is finally paid, it will be all worthless because of inflation'.⁵⁷ In Zimbabwe, prices of commodities and services can double, triple, or even quadruple in the space of hours, and it is difficult to catch up in this theatre of the absurd and the grotesque, unless artists are paid through some instantaneous method that registers income straight into artists' accounts right at the point of sale. But cash itself can be in short supply and inaccessible.

The Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Information and Publicity, George Charamba, has aptly noted the weak status of Zimbabwean musicians and their limited education, especially when it comes to negotiating contracts, and how intermediaries of all sorts are the benefactors from the exertions of musicians, who ironically ought to be the core beneficiaries of the fruits of their labour. In an interview with *The Sunday Mail's* entertainment reporter Garikayi Mazara, he notes how musicians lose out at even state galas meant to benefit them:

When we started off, our idea was to reward the artiste, who has been marginalized for long by society, being criminalized for being creative... But what has been worrying me of late is that we are now spending more money on established business than on our artistes. For instance, for the (2006) *Umdala Wethu* gala we spent eight billion dollars on accommodation, two-and-half on stage, three billion on T-shirts and 1.7 billion on artistes' fees.... We are aware of the skewed environment that subsists in the arts industry. The biggest challenge that we have is that we are talking of an industry with one or two graduates⁵⁸... These are people who are dealing with established businesses, which have legal departments, people of modest education who survive on the law of contracts. Chances are they emerge worse off. ...⁵⁹

Musicians have been very vocal in the fight against piracy because they believe they stand to benefit if funds go through accountable channels. This may not be

the case as various studies show; but it remains a fact that most anti-piracy lobby groups quickly absorb and enlist musicians amongst their ranks.

Concluding the Gance of the Grotesque

The contemporary Zimbabwean situation gives the ostensible picture of failed systems, yet the state remains somewhat resolute with many crediting strong-arm tactics and a ruthless military system. Nothing seems to work, and everything seems polarized by politics, including civil society itself, musicians and churches, too. But there remains some pattern and rhythm, however discordant and grotesque. The government and state machinery is blamed by its critics for all types of malaise and corruption, at times overly so by conveniently taking events and developments out of historical context; but it also tenaciously fights back, refusing to take detraction or adverse criticism lying down. It parries criticism, rebuts and counter-attacks, blaming real and imagined foes, and in the process it uses local musicians, rewarding those who show even the slightest acquiescence. Whatever the case may be, the Zimbabwean music industry has many obstacles (real and imagined) to annihilate it; yet its pulse thuds, it steams with incredible vibrancy and vitality, surviving through sheer resilience and resourcefulness where resources are scant and the environment tremendously difficult, and in spite of both disruptive and supportive state interventions. Zimbabwe remains one of the few African states with a recording industry to speak of that has transformed with time using the most convenient technology available. Zimbabwe remains an enigma. Without mystifying its problems and experiences, it certainly is a country of paradoxes, contradictions and ambiguities, and at times it appears as if it is a theatre of the absurd with demented dancers, facing their weaknesses, evading them, postponing them, seeming to spurn chances to heal and rally all its diffuse potential and strengths, but still getting some kind of therapy in the dance of the distressed, the dance of the pained who still smile, the grotesque dance of the burdened who still know that a full consummate and satisfying life entails much more than they currently endure.

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Notes

1. Huge corporations – Columbia/CBS, Warner Communications, RCA Victor, Capitol-EMI, MCA, and United Artists-MGM – accounted for over 80 per cent of record sales in the US in the 1970s.
2. See, Tatenda Chipungudzanye's article 'Record companies after Macheso's new album', *The Herald*, 12 July 2007.

3. See, article by Trust Khoza, 'Somandla Ndebele releases 18th Album', *The Herald*, 31 January 2008.
4. Another example is the buying out of the South African-based Argus Group of Companies' interests in the local press.
5. Popular *Sungura* star Tongai Moyo recently told *The Herald* that he is a beneficiary of the land reform programme. 'I am part of the land reform because I am a beneficiary, I understand my country's history quite well' (*Herald*, 8 December 2007).
6. The Association of Zimbabwe Journalists alleged ZANU PF patronage pervades the country's cultural industry. See article entitled, 'ZANU PF and musicians – artists left licking their wounds after giving all to party', Association of Zimbabwe Journalists, published on 31 December 2005, www.zimbabwejournalists, accessed on 11 June 2007. Elias Musakwa the major shareholder in the Zimbabwean recording and distributing majors, was the ZANU PF parliamentary candidate for Bikita West Constituency in the 2008 elections.
7. Some of the overly restrictive laws have since been amended after inter-party negotiations between ZANU PF and the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). See article in *The Herald*, 20 January 2008 entitled, 'Changes to AIPPA, POSA gazetted'.
8. See article entitled, 'Gramma releases golden oldies in CD form', *The Herald*, 24 January 2008.
9. See article by Maxwell Sibanda, 'Zimbabwe: Music industry dying slowly', 25 October 2005, posted on <http://www.freemuse.org/sw11081.asp>.
10. According to music fan, Daisy Mutiti, top musician Tongai Moyo lost a lot of revenue during this period because his support base of *makorokoza* was dispersed. She says Moyo is based in the small Midlands town Kwekwe because he strategically gains more from the illegal miners he provides with entertainment (Discussion with Daisy Mutiti, 1 January 2008, Gweru).
11. According to the Tibaijuka Report (2005:17) the ILO reported in June 2005 that 3 to 4 million Zimbabweans earned their living through informal sector employment, supporting another 5 million people, while the formal sector employed 1.3 million.
12. See Leonard Zhakata's testimony to Freemuse dated May 2005 on <http://www.freemuse.org/sw9322.asp>. Receiving frequent wide-ranging airplay on Zimbabwean radio and television does not ensure increased royalties from sales. According to musician Steve Makoni quoted in David Kamungeremu's article: 'It is not true (that) getting more air time on radio stations increased a song's sales. In fact, most musicians were disappointed to discover this when they visited their recording companies to receive their cheques,' in 'Story-telling technique makes music unique', *Read On*, May-June 1999.
13. Zimbabwe is one country without an operational official currency and everybody uses for all transactions what are known as 'bearer cheques', which can be monetized or demonetized – to use the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe jargon – at short notice.
14. See article entitled, 'Macheso tour off to a bad start', in *The Herald*, 1 March 2008, in which fans discuss the problems of venue and demographics. It is assumed those who go to Australia are from relatively superior classes unlike the working class majority that have gained entry into South Africa and the UK.

15. Youths who wanted to gain entry to the 2007 Heroes Bash at the posh HICC were denied even though they were prepared to pay for the entertainment. At free and even other paid-for galas it is part of the highlights to see government ministers dancing to local rhythms, and tv cameras often capture these 'highlight' moments.
16. The current Permanent Secretary, George Charamba, is an avowed party member and wears party regalia during national election campaigns.
17. A *pungwe* is an all-night music show, deriving its name from the liberation armed struggle when song and dance was used to raise peasants' morale in the process of mass political conscientization at secret bases in the rural areas.
18. The state is viewed as an instrument of the ruling party; hence it is put to full use in diffusing and circulating the dominant ideologies. Galas are one platform on which such diffusion happens. The state apparatus is used to win the hearts and minds of the people in the looming battle against challenges from a resolute opposition in the form of the Movement for Democratic Change, the European Union countries, the US and Australia. Music fans may or may not choose their popular musicians on the basis of political affiliation or sympathies, hence musicians have been prudent to remain largely apolitical in their lyrical content, especially the best-selling acts such as Alick Macheso and Tongai Moyo.
19. Chimoio is a site of a mass grave of victims of a massacre by Rhodesian soldiers.
20. See *The Herald*, 10 January 2007, E4, 'Organisations lobby Europe to ease visa, work permits for musicians'.
21. Again, this is another very unlikely potential settler since Fungisai has sung at one of Mugabe's birthday parties and is rumoured to be favoured by the First Lady Grace.
22. Journalists from Europe have been invited and their travel and upkeep footed by the state in its public relations endeavour. Similarly, the ZANU PF government is enlisting sympathetic musicians as its ambassadors. Jamaican reggae star, Luciano, and American R & B singer, Joe Thomas, visited after invitations by the national tourism authority. Luciano's visit exacerbated diplomatic hostility as his band members were denied transit visas through the UK from Jamaica. Luciano had travelled ahead, and made a speech in Zimbabwe supporting the land reform programme, which probably irked British authorities. See Lebo Nkato's articles, 'Luciano backs Mugabe's land grab on Zimbabwe visit', [newzimbabwe.com](http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/showbiz32.1), 31 October 2007, <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/showbiz32.1>, and 'sobs as UK denies transit visas to band members', [Newzimbabwe.com](http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/showbiz33.17121.html), 2 November 2007, <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/showbiz33.17121.html>.
23. See article entitled, 'Charambas to visit Bulawayo', *The Chronicle*, 17 October 2007.
24. See article, 'Chimbetu threatens to sue, promoter unrepentant', *NewZimbabwe.com*. or 'Chimbetu stranded in UK, as Gwala, Brickz fume', *NewZimbabwe.com*. 13 December 2006. <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/chimbetu9.15609.html>
25. See article entitled, 'Nyamandi in row with promoter', *The Herald*, 28 September 2006.
26. See article by Tsungirirai Shoriwa, 'Mbandu Promotions withdraws lawsuit', *The Herald*, 26 January 2007.
27. See Godwin Muzari's article, 'Tuku, Macheso snub promoters', *The Sunday Mail*, 8 December 2008.

28. Ibid.
29. Mahendere Brothers' South African promoter, Kobus Van Rensburg, the manager of Spirit Word Music, who produced their latest album, *Mahendere Brothers Live in Stilfontein*, was reported to be forking over R30, 000 towards the production of a promotional DVD for the new album, *The Herald*, 16 January 2008.
30. Mr. Kuture is Chairperson of the Music and Musicology Department at the Midlands State University, Gweru, Zimbabwe. He was interviewed by the author in Gweru on 16 January 2008.
31. Utsiwegota, explained his label's apparent lull in production. He found it pragmatic not to invest in Compact Discs or cassette duplicating machines packaging technologies he foresees soon getting obsolete. Again, the small local market base hinders him from taking huge risks in investing in technology since many people cannot afford CDs (See article by Jonathan Mbiriyamveka entitled, 'Country boy records still alive: Utsiwegota', *The Herald*, 28 February 2008.
32. See, Mthandazo Dube's article, 'Mai Suluma compiles hits collection in China', *The Sunday Mail*, 16 March 2008.
33. Clive Mono of Monolio Studios recorded Mau Mwale and Christine Aka from Zambia and intended to record artistes from Mozambique and Botswana. See Trust Khoza, 'Mono salutes former boss Tuku', *The Herald*, 15 March 2008.
34. Johannes Brusila (2002:38) notes how the 'mediaization' of music includes a deliberate attempt to form the artists' music by engineers and producers in the Zimbabwe music industry, a phenomenon that has also witnessed European expatriate producers infusing their aesthetic tastes especially on 'traditional' *mbira* in order to woo international markets.
35. See Tatenda Chipungudzanye's article, 'We don't condone copycats: Gramma Records', *The Herald*, 23 June 2007.
36. See also article in *The Herald* of 13 September 2006, entitled, 'Chirwa: one of Zim's unsung heroes' in which veteran musician Isaac Chirwa lambasts the UG musicians as copycats.
37. Female urban groover, Edene, sang the theme song at the Miss Tourism Zimbabwe 2007.
38. *The Herald*, 28 December 2007.
39. See article by Tatenda Chipungudzanye, '2007 – The year artistes gained popularity', *The Herald*, 28 December, 2007.
40. UG singer, Tererai Mugwadi, is reportedly about to record with a South African Recording Company. See Sani Makhalima's interview with Charles Mushinga, *The Sunday Mail*, 16 July 2007.
41. See article by Trust Khoza, 'Amai Suluma quits teaching', *The Herald*, 1 March 2008. Musician Oliver Mtukudzi is also a Zimbabwean cultural ambassador with a diplomatic passport, a sign of the rising valorisation of musicians in the industry.
42. Also see articles, 'Open Letter to ZMC, Gramma', in *The Sunday Mail*, 30 July 2006, by Garikai Mazara in which he chides the majors for 'ripping off' musicians, and another 'ZMC, Gramma can do a lot more', *The Sunday Mail*, 5 August 2006, in which he responds to Julian Howard's response.

43. See Julian Howard's response to criticism entitled, 'Recording Companies respond' in the *Sunday Mail*, 5 August 2006. He boasts that Gramma and ZMC have been successful due to effective distribution network that their own competitors in recording have enlisted their services.
44. See Mtandazo Dube and Godwin Muzari's articles, 'Mai Charamba quits Gramma', *The Sunday Mail*, 9 March 2008, and Tatenda Chipungudzanye's, 'Zulu leaves ZMC', *The Herald*, 2007, and Garikai Mazara and Makomborero Mutimukulu's, 'Macheso, Kireni Zulu dump recording studios', *The Sunday Mail*, 29 October 2006.
45. See Graeme Thompson's painful article on the promising band's tragic demise due to exploitation, Aids, suicide, prison and despair, 'Jinxed: The cure of the Bunhu Boys', on <http://music.guardian.co.uk/world/story/0,1927386,00.html>.
46. Cross-border traders are alleged to illegally copy music for sale regionally, hence it may be sensible to let less lucrative inflationary markets such as Zimbabwe engage in piracy while relatively better larger and hard-currency markets access music promptly.
47. The Zimbabwean media is so liberal in conferring the 'star' or 'superstar' adjective to musicians.
48. Older artists cultivate their preferred public personas, with exiled Thomas Mapfumo cherishing being the radical rebel, while Mtukudzi is the conscientious reasonable elder brother.
49. See articles by Trust Khoza, 'I'm not a charity case: Tongai Moyo', *The Herald*, 8 March 2008, and Torby Chimhashu entitled, 'Tongai Moyo fumes over "benefit" concerts', in *NewZimbabwe.com*. <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/tongai5.17872.html>.
50. My own research with entertainment journalists shows that journalists do receive such monies, yet Zimbabwean musicians are generally evasive when confronted with the question or allegation that they pay for publicity.
51. Discussion with Wonder Guchu in Harare on 18 January 2008.
52. Julian Howard has argued as follows on this issue: 'On the important allegation that we are "ripping off" our artistes you cannot be further from the truth. Artistes by their very make-up tend to be super confident as to the music that they produce. If they were not, their chances of making a successful livelihood out of music would be zero. The truth of the matter, regrettably, is that the music industry is particularly hard and relatively few musicians become big success. This is particularly true in Zimbabwe where the number of customers who have the ability to purchase music is limited by both number and the amount to spend available per person. The reality is that 5 percent of the artistes contracted to Gramma and ZMC sell 90 percent of the units those companies sell. These companies are commercial undertakings and common business would be to limit each company to its top 20 artistes and drop the rest. The profits would certainly roll in without the costs incurred in recording, manufacturing and distributing the relatively unproductive artistes. Fortunately, for both artistes and the music-loving public the music industry does not operate on that basis and, notwithstanding criticism to the contrary, endeavours to invest in a cross-section of musicians, many of who will regrettably never "make it"' (see, *The Herald*, 2006).
53. See Garikayi Mazara's article, 'Don't keep music sales figures a secret', *The Sunday Mail*, 13 August 2007.

54. See article by Wonder Guchu and Godwin Muzari, 'Mixed feelings over publishing rights', *The Herald*, 17 March 2006.
55. See, Wonder Guchu and Josphate Matsheza, 'Musicians cry foul over royalties', *The Herald*, 6 June 2006.
56. Greenfield Chilongo was interviewed by the author on 18 January 2008 in Harare.
57. Debbie Metcalfe is quoted in an article by Torby Chimhashu, 'Music is new victim of Zimbabwe's economic crisis,' *Newzimbabwe.com*, 26 June 2007. <http://www.newzimbabwe.com/pages/tuku46.16592.html>.
58. In fact, there are now quite a few tertiary education graduates in the music industry.
59. Interview between George Charamba and journalist Garikai Mazara, 'Are Galas still relevant?', *Sunday Mail*, 6 August 2006.

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