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"You Don't Get To Sing A Song When You Have Nothing To Say"

Oliver Mtukudzi's Music as a vehicle for Socio-political Commentary

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A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Arts.

Johannesburg, 2004

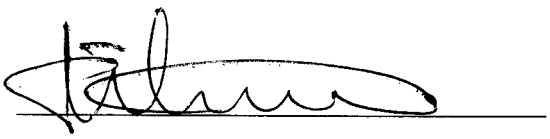
Abstract

This paper analyses the music of Oliver Mtukudzi in order to ascertain how he uses his music as a means of addressing the socio-political issues in Zimbabwe. Mtukudzi's music has, for decades now, been thought to reflect and voice the realities of life in Zimbabwe. Particular emphasis has been placed on the lyrics because they contain the messages of the songs. An evaluation of the music and its addressivity in conjunction with the lyrics is also examined to determine how Mtukudzi uses them both as ways of enhancing the message in the songs.

Using the theory of addressivity the paper looks at the nature of this address within the songs chosen for evaluation within the paper. Similarly the virtual audience, as distinguishable from real audiences, of Mtukudzi's address is taken cognisance of in order to, not only verify the addressivity already discussed, but also to assess how extensive the audience's influence is in determining the songs that the artist writes. Using songs from recordings from the last five years I look specifically at how he deals with themes about women, children, HIV/AIDS and politics in his music and how this is used to address and reflect the social realities of Zimbabwe.

DECLARATION

I declare that this research report is my own unaided work. It is submitted for the degree of Masters of Arts in the University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other university.



(Name of Candidate)

4th day of February 2004

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Chapter One

Introduction

This research report analyses the music of Zimbabwean musician Oliver Mtukudzi in order to assess how he uses his music to address socio-political issues in Zimbabwe. The primary focus of the research is on how Mtukudzi's music addresses itself to its imagined audience. This objective is achieved through a consideration of the lyrics, aspects of his music as well as the informing context of Zimbabwean society.

This approach to Mtukudzi has been formulated in response to the nature of his lyrics which are not always explicit. This is especially true of those songs that deal with political issues. In Shona custom this obscurity in meaning is done for a number of reasons, but mainly for didactic purposes. The belief is that a person learns more when they have to derive conclusions and comprehension for themselves. From his extensive study of Shona Mbira music, Berliner (1978) discovered that;

> Shona singers often express their feelings about personal, social or political issues through allusion rather than through direct statement. According to Shona mores, direct reference to personal feelings or troubles might embarrass the singer. Indirect ways of dealing with social problems seem to be more appropriate (177).

The influence of this traditional style of singing that encourages alluding to things instead of referring to them directly is clearly discernible in Mtukudzi's music. He uses both idioms and riddles to convey the message and meaning of his work.

Mtukudzi uses techniques in his music that are consistent with those used in traditional Shona music and necessitate more than mere superficial engagement to derive the full essence of the text. Berliner found that especially when discussing the political situation in Rhodesia in order to avoid recrimination for their political stance, these singers "used several techniques to make their points indirectly ... [t]hey could incorporate into their lines abstract images that have meaning on more than one level"

(Ibid. 178). The use of high, or what Berliner calls 'deep', Shona[1] is another technique that Mtukudzi shares in common with traditional singers, who use deep Shona to "obscure their meaning by playing with words, exploiting nuances in the Shona language so as to create ambiguity for their audiences" (Ibid. 179).

Berliner also discovered that at times traditional Shona musicians will use deep Shona because by doing so they maintain a link with the past. This preoccupation with the past and the respect for customs and traditions is a resounding feature in Mtukudzi's music to which he refers both through the use of deep Shona and Shona proverbs and idioms. Besides the use of idioms he also sings about customs and traditions. One example of this need for maintaining links with the past and with custom is clearly illustrated in his song *Tsika Dzedu* where he asks where customs, traditions and the food of the past have all gone and asking, for how long people are going to run away denying where we come from.

Background

The impact and influence of colonialism in Zimbabwe is clearly visible in many aspects of society, not least of which is on the people's art. This is especially true of Zimbabwean music throughout the colonial period. But contrary to popular belief the colonial machine did not discourage the customary and traditional forms of musical expression and dance in Zimbabwe, indeed they encouraged them considering them to be "safe recreational activities" for the locals to engage in (Turino; 2000, 63). However in spite of the colonial government actively trying to encourage local music[2] by providing a specific radio station devoted to indigenous music and languages, there

[1] Berliner (1978) defines deep Shona as "ancient words or expressions the rich mystical meaning of which only the old people understand. ... [T]he meaning of some words [are] surrounded with mystery and never fully explained' (161). Although Mtukudzi does use deep Shona it is not quite to the extent that would be used by Mbira musicians that Berliner was studying. However the Shona that he does use is not everyday conversational Shona, it is indeed deep, and like the Shona used by Mbira musicians, it requires more that mere superficial familiarity with the Shona language and the customs of the Shona to understand him fully.

[2] According to Turino (2000), during World War II the African Service Radio was established to broadcast to the African soldiers stationed in Angola. In 1948 it was agreed that Lusaka would be the focal point of indigenous broadcasting, and 10 years later the Central African Broadcasting Service (CABS) was replaced by the Federation Broadcasting Corporation (FBC) which would continue indigenous language and music broadcasting. When the federation, between Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), Northern Rhodesia (Zambia) and Nyasaland (Malawi) broke up in 1963 FBC was replaced, in Zimbabwe, by the Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation.

continued to be a steady decline in the production and performance of local music in Zimbabwe.

It should however be noted that the government was not encouraging these broadcasts for the benefit of the indigenous population. Indeed they hoped to use these broadcasts to reach a wider audience among the locals with the aim of producing a "civilised African people capable of working reasonably well in the development of the territory ... [and] play[ing] a great part in their enlightenment" (Fraenkel; 1959, 17 as quoted in Turino; 2000, 98). Secondly, the government hoped to keep the natives tuned to the safe information that they were broadcasting on the state controlled radio in order to discourage them from tuning into other stations that might be broadcasting revolutionary anti-establishment rhetoric[3].

Yet in spite of these efforts to encourage African music it was still declining. Turino offers a number of reasons for this, especially in the southern part of the country. Primary among the reasons he cites is the work of the missionaries who felt that the use of music during traditional practices and customs encouraged the local population to continue with their heathen and ungodly practices, so instead pushed Christian music as the preferred alternative. The result of the spread of Christianity and the increase in Christian songs[4] being sung by the local populace was the concomitant decline in the singing of traditional songs.

Additional to this was the significant influence of missionary education on a small segment of the local population that had access to it that created a small black petit bourgeoisie working and living in the urban areas. This new black educated petit bourgeoisie began to assimilate white values and perceived anything traditional or local as uncivilised and therefore not worthy. It was this same class of people who would be employed to work at the radio stations broadcasting to the local populace

[3]See J. Frederikse (1982) *None But Ourselves; Masses vs. Media in the Making of Zimbabwe* for an interesting look at the efforts to control the media in Rhodesia, including the extent to which the Rhodesian government went to ensure a control of the air waves and what the black population was listening to.

[4] Despite the missionary's efforts to eradicate local music there is still a discernible local influence in Christian music today, especially with the use of local instruments as accompaniment. Additionally it was not everyone who subscribed to Christianity and in this way some of the traditional music survived the missionary influence.

and therefore dictating the tastes of the music produced in accordance with music played.

The notions of anything traditional being inferior led to the emergence of new types of music developing in the urban centres of Zimbabwe which appeared to be far removed from anything indigenous.

> From the 1930's through the early 1960s, Zimbabweans distinguished the new type of music by its basis in European, South African, American and especially African American models. Locally, the emergent styles were conceptualised as 'modern' and 'progressive' in contrast to the 'old' 'traditional' indigenous traditions performed in the villages and the Mbare[5] market place (Turino; 2000, 124).

But by the late 1960s and early 1970s, with the disintegration of the Central African Federation in 1963 and the Rhodesian Unilateral Declaration of Independence from the British government in 1965, there was escalating dissatisfaction with the minority white government. The two liberation armies Zimbabwe People's Revolutionary Army (ZIPRA) which was the armed wing of the Zimbabwe African People's Union (ZAPU) and Zimbabwe African National Liberation Army (ZANLA) the armed wing of the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU)[6] took to the bush and by the 1970s were engaged in a liberation war against the white minority government of Rhodesia. The emergence of this war brought with it what later come to be known among Zimbabweans as Chimurenga[7] songs, which are considered to have played a significant role in the struggle for independence of the country.

In his book *Songs that Won the Liberation War* Pongweni (1982) looks in detail at the songs that were being sung during the struggle for independence and the role they played in informing, educating, conscientising and mobilising the populace. He argues that these songs led to the revival of traditional music by drawing on

[5] Township in Harare that was the musical hub for the indigenous urban working class population for the better part of the colonial era.
[6] These two liberation movements where created when ZANU split away from ZAPU over strategic and tactical disagreements. Further splits occurred later resulting in the creation of the Zimbabwe African National Unity: Patriotic Front (ZANU PF) to be distinguished from ZANU.

traditional songs and their uses within society. Citing Berliner (1977) he states the two political functions of traditional music, "First, it promotes a feeling of solidarity with the community and reinforces an appreciation for the traditional values of the people's culture. ... Secondly, the texts often contain subtle meanings that are implicitly political" (Pongweni; 1982, viii sighting Berliner; 1977).

In distinguishing between the artists outside the country and those remaining in the country Pongweni identifies Thomas Mapfumo as one of the pioneers of Chimurenga music among those artists who remained in the country. He was one of the first artists in the 1970s to produce songs in Shona, which were protesting against the government. In this he was quickly followed by a number of other artists who also sang the same kind of music in Shona, which marked a move away from the Beatles, Otis Redding, Elvis Presley cover versions which they had, up until that point, been singing.

> As the words were in Shona, Ndebele and other Zimbabwean languages, they were incomprehensible to the majority of whites. They could therefore be sung openly, often in front of district commissioners and other agents of colonial rule. ... [they] spoke out against white minority rule and the hated security forces. With the songs came a new music, a hard Shona sound derived from the country's ancient mbira[8] music (Stapleton and May; 1987, 213).

The sounds of local artists on both the state-owned radio stations and the Patriotic Front choirs on the underground stations was a significant influence on youths such as Mtukudzi. According to an interview conducted by Turino with Mbofana, a presenter on the African Radio Service in the mid 1960s, they used to announce over the radio that they were looking to record traditional musicians to be played on air. This resulted in a large number of artists, especially Mbira players, being recorded and played on the station. Additional to this was the influence of Western bands such as the Beatles who brought home the notions of music as a career leading to fame and

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[7] Chumuranga is the Shona term for the war liberation.

[8] Ancient Shona instrument thought to date back to the original Shona people and considered to be the instrument with which the Shona ancestors can be evoked. It is a wooden board with metal strips that are plucked to make a sound, it can have as few as 8 and as many as 22 of these strips. Sometimes it is contained in a gourd to amplify the sound,

fortune. The knock on effect was huge and Africans started to conceive of taking up music as an income generating activity. Up until that point Africans had never considered a career in music (Turino; 2000).

The Music of Oliver Mtukudzi

Among those to follow in the foot steps of Mapfumo was Oliver Mtukudzi who, influenced and impressed by Mapfumo, not only because he sang in Shona but because of the distinctly traditional influences in his music, also gave up singing cover versions of European and American songs and started writing his own music in Shona. Mtukudzi is considered second only to Mapfumo in the musical contributions of local artists to the Chimurenga songs during the struggle for liberation. However there were numerous other bands who were already playing and making a success of it by the time Mtukudzi got his real break. Bands such as *Jackson Phiri and the Lipopo Jazz Band* (playing Congolese rumba,) *Zexie Manatsa and the Green Arrows,* (with a strong South African Mbaqanga sound) were well established bands in Zimbabwe. Thomas Mapfumo, having left the *Springfields* to form his own *Hallelujah Chicken Run Band*, (concentrating on Mbira influenced traditional sounds) and the *Wagon Wheels* also formed part of the established musicians in whose footsteps Mtukudzi was to follow. Mtukudzi joined the *Wagon Wheels* which was the backing band for Mapfumo until he set up his own band *The Black Spirits* which has been his backing band ever since (Turino; 2000).

One of the most prominent features about Mtukudzi's music is the fact that it is considered quite unlike any other kind of music produced by a Zimbabwean musician. His music exhibits influences from other musical forms but is still considered unique to the point that his fans have dubbed it *Tuku Music.* Tuku is a shortened version of his name and it is after him that his singular musical creation has been named. According to the Sheer Sound site Mtukudzi has been "so innovative in his music that it is now referred to as Tuku Music and quite distinct from any other Zimbabwean style" (Sheer Sound site; 1).

Mtukudzi admits to being influenced by traditional Shona music especially in the use of the mbira which, he does not use extensively in his work, but still influences his

sound and style especially the manner in which the guitar is played[9]. Jit is one of the most prominent styles commonly associated with Zimbabwean music. According to Turino this style of music combines Congolese *rumba*, South African *marabi, tsaba-tsaba* and *jive*, as well as Zimbabwean traditional rhythms. It is a fast-paced dance music. Although many critics, including Mtukudzi himself, are reluctant to place his music in a specific category, his early recordings (1975 – 1981) include a number of what can be described as Mbira-based and jit-based songs (Turino; 2000). His later work grows increasingly more difficult to define and during the interview with Turino he proves quite unable to elaborate on a musical definition of his own style. He merely acknowledges his various influences and the fact that they all contribute to the creation of his own style.

A particularly distinguishing characteristic of Mtukudzi's music is his voice and vocal style. Turino notes that even at the start of his career his voice distinguished him from other singers and especially traditional Shona vocal styles.

> Already on his early recordings, Mtukudzi's mature voice and musical style was evident. Even on the mbira-based pieces, he did not use village vocal techniques such as huro (yodeling), mahon'era (soft, low) singing, and extensive use of vocables. Rather he sang (and sings) his songs in a largely unornamented style with his deep, rich throaty voice, often in a call-and-response with female or, more recently male and female background vocalists. (Turino; 2000, 297).

A common feature in Shona music that has come to form part of the characteristics of Mtukudzi's music is his use of what Frith (1988) calls non-verbal devices such as "emphases, sighs, hesitations, changes in tone" (120). These non-verbal devices are emotional indicators recognisable to the listener either because of the tone he uses when making that sound or because their familiarity with Shona enables them to distinguish between sounds that are typically made to express joy, sadness, surprise, shock, irritation, dismissive, anger etc. Mtukudzi uses these devices to emphasise different emotions within a song. Another interesting feature of Mtukudzi's musical

[9] The transfer of the mbira style of play to the guitar is referred to as *pasichigare.*

style is his extensive use of questions which he uses to draw his audience into a dialogue.

Coupled with his fusion of different styles and his unique voice and vocal style, Turino notes that part of the feature of distinction in Mtukudzi's music is the instrumentation. He notes that his early recordings were strongly guitar based, but by 1981 keyboards (first organ then synthesiser) combined with the guitar (both electric and acoustic) and became the prominent instrument in his music. By the 1990s his band typically consisted of two guitars, keyboards, bass, traps and between two and four backing vocalists both male and female, all of which he combines in a manner that distinguishes him and his sound from any other Zimbabwean musician. The collaborative work he has been doing in the last few years with Steve Dyer and Mahube[10] is also thought to have been an additional influence on his sound, introducing an element of Afro-fusion jazz for which Dyer is famous. It is believe that part of his increased popularity within Southern Africa is due in large part to the influence of Afro-fusion in his work.

However the most prominent feature of Mtukudzi's music is the fact that his songs tend to deal with socio-political issues that affect the majority of Zimbabwe's largely rural population. Although he is not alone in singing about the social realities of the country, this is a feature of his music for which he is best known. He has come to be considered the continuing voice of the rising discontent and socio-political problems in Zimbabwe,

> [m]ost of his songs focus on the social and economic issues that govern people's daily lives. ... His commitment to fighting the AIDS pandemic though his open approach to the topic in his songs has contributed greatly to restoring a sense of care and responsibility within the wider community (World Music Portal Site; 2003, 1).

In addition to the fact that he continues to sing in Shona, a language that enables him to reach the greatest number of people in Zimbabwe, he also continues to perform throughout the country. In spite of the prevailing political climate of fear and

censorship where many artists have either left the country or perform only in the urban centres, Mtukudzi "still plays more than 100 concerts a year in Zimbabwe, many in remote rural areas where people cannot afford to buy his albums" (Rogers; 2002, 1). Eyre (2001, 1) rightly states, that especially, in Zimbabwe artists like Mtukudzi have come to be relied upon by the majority to "voice the suffering, hopes, fears and aspirations of the people" and that Mtukudzi is one of the most successful and persevering of them.

The functions that are attributed to artists, especially in oppressed societies are the very ones that Mtukudzi is recognised as performing. It is indeed the role that he sees himself as fulfilling.

> As a songwriter and popular performer, Mtukudzi feels he has a responsibility to offer moral guidance and to act as a *sahwira* for the society at large. A *sahwira* is a person - an outsider - who has a special role with another family to observe and try to help or mediate in times of crisis ... as an artist he simply responds to what is going on around him (Turino; 2000, 298).

However contrary to many claims about him as a political commentator, especially about issues relating to the current crisis in Zimbabwe, Mtukudzi is adamant that he does not write songs that are political. During an interview with Rogers (2002) he insisted that his songs are not about politics or the political situation in the country but rather about "what I see around me, the happiness and sadness in my country. I don't believe in singing for a particular time. My songs should mean something yesterday, today and tomorrow" (Interview with Rogers 2002).

While the political situation is uppermost in people's concerns, Mtukudzi has managed to draw attention to other social issues that are of importance to the survival of the Zimbabwean population. As stated, he uses his music to address social issues which have a less obvious political dimension, but which are equally relevant. Because of the stigma of HIV and AIDS as well as the sexual associations with the disease, Zimbabwe has failed to adequately address this issue. Little is said about it from any quarters in spite of the fact that an estimated I million people are infected

[10] Mahube is a collaboration between twelve Southern African musicians who periodically come

with the virus (Fox; 2001). In the face of the reality of the epidemic Mtukudzi is one of few artists who is actively addressing himself, through his work, to the issue of AIDS (Eyre; 2001). But the social issues he addresses extend beyond the HIV/AIDS issue[11]. He has written songs about children living on the streets, the abuse and treatment of women in society, child abuse, and the general state of poverty and want among the population, as well as a lamentation of the loss of identity among black people, the loss of traditional practices and culture.

Methodology

"Good song lyrics are not good poems because they do not need to be: poems 'score' the performance or reading of the verse in words themselves, ... lyrics by contrast are scored by the music itself" (Frith; 1996, 181). This distinction drawn by Frith is significant to this study because the lyrics of Mtukudzi's music in this study are not only being analysed for their poeticism, but also for their function of disseminating messages by the singer to his audience, which forms part of his self appointed role as social commentator and educator. This distinction needs to be drawn because the tendency to equate lyrics with poetry results in the same analytical tools being used to scrutinise both, when, indeed, their respective analytical process are separate and distinct. In his book *Performing Rites: Evaluating Popular Music* Frith looks at the various features that distinguish poetry from lyrics, and discusses why, because of these differences, they ought not to be treated similarly.

Citing Rorem, Frith states that the "difference between a poem and a lyric is that whereas both only exist when they are performed, the former can never be fixed by or to a performance. Every reader will perform it differently, and the poet herself cannot determine that her performance will be definitive ... poetry is self contained, while lyrics are made to be sung and don't necessarily lead a life of their own" (Rorem as cited in Frith; 1996, 179). Rorem's point ignores the fact that even though lyrics are meant to be sung they are not always engaged with in the contexts of the music for which they were intended. The fact of their extractability from the music renders them

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together to perform and record.

[11] Mtukudzi is also in the process of recording a cd with some children orphaned by AIDS in the Binga area of Zimbabwe. The proceeds of this recording will go to an aids charity (Chu; 2003).

partially non-fixed. They are only partially not fixed because the music continues to play an overall part. Additional to this is the fact that they can be sung and performed differently every time they are performed. Indeed they can only be said to be fixed in a recording.

Having made the above distinctions, Frith does also acknowledge the relationship that exists between poetry and song that usually results in their being treated in like fashion because there can be crossovers between poetry and lyrics. Drawing from the arguments advanced by Attridge, he states that:

> [t]o treat the distinction between poetry and lyric as a distinction between the written and the spoken word is aesthetically misleading. There is, to put this another way, a continuity between poetry and song, rather than a clear division. (Attridge as cited in Frith; 1996, 178).

In recognition of the differences between poetry and lyrics, Frith suggests that the appropriate methodology for the analysis of lyrics would, therefore, be one that places emphasis on the relationship between the singer and the audience. As suggested by Barber (1997) this relationship is reciprocally influential by way of the text, what Frith calls "the persuasive relationship ... between singer and listener" (166). However it is Frith's contention that "a song doesn't exist to convey the meaning of the words; rather, the words exist to convey the meaning of the song" (ibid.). This contention is refuted by Mtukudzi who insists that in his songs the music is secondary to the words and that, it is indeed the music that serves as a vehicle for conveying the message in the song (Interview on *Under African Skies)* (Turino). If we were to apply the analytical tool proffered by Frith to Mtukudzi's music, then the relationship that is established between Mtukudzi and his audience becomes significant, because as Frith rightly notes "song language is used to say something about both the singer and the implied audience" (Ibid.)[12].

This study will therefore look at Mtukudzi's music and how he uses it to address socio-political issues. The relationship between the author and his audience converges

[12] See also Pratt (1990) *Rhythm and Resistance: Explorations in the Political Uses of Popular Music* for further discussion on the relationship between the artist and the audience via the text within the political context of songs.

on the created text and the message conveyed within that text. The addressivity of Mtukudzi's work and how he realises it through his text will be revealed through the analysis of his lyrics. The socio-political situation of Zimbabwe will be foregrounded to provide insight into the realities faced by the audience of Mtukudzi's address. In this way we will get a clearer sense of how the perceived interests and needs of his audience influences his music. This research will assess Mtukudzi's work to determine whether or not it approximates the stated aim of the singer in writing songs, that of reflecting his society back to itself, while simultaneously informing and educating his society.

The songs chosen are from works released between the years (1997-2002), I have chosen to concentrate on these years because they represent what is possibly the most successful period of his career outside of Zimbabwe, particularly in South Africa. These years also coincide with the rise of the current political crisis in Zimbabwe and I feel that it is interesting to analyse how Mtukudzi addresses himself to the current situation musically. This process will be especially instructive because of the ongoing argument in Zimbabwe between Mtukudzi and his audience: Mtukudzi on the one hand declaring himself non-political and his fans on the other reading an anti-establishment sub-text in his work.

In the analysis of his work I have chosen eight songs that are thematically selected. The themes that have been chosen are women, child abuse, HIV/AIDS and politics. These themes have been chosen because it is my contention that they constitute the most pressing and complex issues in Zimbabwe. It is also felt, that these particular issues, more than most, are marginalised and not adequately addressed within the public arena and yet they have the greatest impact on the population at large. These particular topics have also been selected because they are rather unusual subjects for popular music and it interesting to analyse how Mtukudzi addresses this serious matters using a genre that is not commonly associated with such grave questions of public importance.

In the analysis of the music I have adopted the emotivist approach as espoused by (Berenson; 1993). The emotivist approach argues that music should not only be analysed in accordance with its style and technique as proposed by the formalist

approach, but rather that the emotion that are evoked by the music should be a significant aspect of the analysis of the music. This approach is vastly different from the formalist who argue that emotion has no role to play in the interpretation of music and anything that is not confined to style and form is irrelevant to such an interpretation.

Limitation of the Study

There are some limitations to this undertaking and it is important that they be taken cognisance. The first and possibly the most important is the issue of translation. A third party translated the songs that have been used in this research, as my own comprehension of Shona does not extend to a full and adequate translation of the Shona used by Mtukudzi in his music. As with any translation much of the essence of what is being conveyed is lost during the process of translation. And whilst it is not possible to capture the essence of the songs I have also tried to avoid simply translating directly because whilst it might be linguistically accurate the gist of the song is also lost in the process. The translations are therefore interpretative translations, which means my own reading of what the artist is trying to convey may bias them.

The final limitation of the study is the fact that the chosen sample is relatively small in comparison with the full body of work that Mtukudzi has produced during his career. The smallness of the sample might appear to be an inadequate representation of his overall style and approach musically as well as thematically. However, the approach used here can be liken to a case study where a small scale analysis is undertaken, not with a view to producing generalizable findings, but rather to throw up interesting possibilities and insights that could be investigated in a larger scale study.

Chapter Two

Theoretical Framework

"In our culture, we do not sing a song unless there is something to be said. And I [write] ... song [s] because there is something to be said." This is a statement made by Oliver Mtukudzi at a performance in Cape Town in January 2004. This sentiment encapsulates not only his own attitude towards his music, but the role that he envisions for his music within society. His music is intended as functional purposive utterance, and not merely utterance for its own sake. It is this aspect of his music that this research report seeks to analyse by examining the socio-political commentary within the music of Mtukudzi.

What is it that he is saying through his music? What is he saying about Zimbabwean society through the music that he is producing? In order to gain a fuller understanding of the essence of what Mtukudzi is attempting to say with his music it is important to approach this study from a specific theoretical standpoint. The framework that has been selected for this particular study will enable us to gain a clear appreciation of issues of popular culture, with particular emphasis on popular music. It will also shed light on matters relating to the audience of Mtukudzi's address as well as the addressivity of the work itself.

The study of popular culture has seen an increase within academic circles over the last few decades. Barber (1987) points out that there has been an ever increasing body of work devoted to the study of popular culture. There are several impediments to the study of this phenomenon that many theorists have been at pains to overcome. The primary stumbling block rests with the very definition of the concept, leading to various attempts to encapsulate what is arguably one of the more difficult cultural products to define. Barber (1997 b) points out that part of the problem with the use of the term 'popular' stems from it historical and cultural usage within various Western epochs. Initially the term was used to describe a specific social class, the common people, and the attendant perceptions of them as being of a lower social status, such that popular was used to derogate those encapsulated by this terminology implying that those so defined were inferior to the rest of their society (Middleton; 1990). Over

the centuries the term's use has alternated between reflecting progressive political thinking and being used as a pejorative term of reference to mark class distinction. The commercialisation of art within this last century has led to a mass production of artistic forms that have been dubbed 'popular' culture and thus, especially among cultural purists, these popular forms of creativity have been relegated to a status lower than other aesthetic products.

Within the African context another significant problem has been encountered by exponents of popular culture given that it has very strong Western overtones which are not always so readily applicable within the African context. Primary among these impediments is the fact that pre-colonial African societies were not like Western societies. Within Western society there were, and I would argue, still are, clearly demarcated and rigid class structures that are reflected by among other things cultural products. Whilst hierarchical structures did, and still do, exist within African societies the different classes within these societies consumed the same cultural products unlike those in Western societies. Nketia (1986) points out the extent of the communalism that existed within African societies centring around the shared experiences of music. He goes on to state that while there were different categories of songs, these tended to reflect age, gender and occupational differences and not class. In Western societies there were various types of music and cultural productions that were made with the intention of being consumed by the elite and the peasantry, separately (Middleton).

Whilst it is not my intention to give the impression that either one of these societies, or classes within the societies, were homogenous, or indeed that they are today, I do want to illustrate the significance of what would be missed if one did not register these differences. These differences, concomitant with political, economic and social differences contribute a vital influence in the manifestation of popular cultural products within these societies.

Equally, the contact with Western culture as a result of colonialism has resulted in the production of cultures, both 'popular' and 'elite' that are significantly different from those in the West. Efforts to apply theories of understanding that are imported from the West and superimposed on Africa have proven problematic. The manifestations of what would be defined as popular arts in African are so varied from their Western

counterparts that the use of the same approach in their study is simply inadvisable. What both Barber (1987) and Middleton (1990) agree on is the fact that both Western and African popular culture is defined by what it is not, that is, neither traditional nor elite culture. Those who define it from a traditional starting point see it as a "deviation from traditional conventions, effected by the incorporation of new, usually foreign elements. Popular arts are seen as a hybrid, distinguishable from traditional arts by their syncretism" (Barber; 1987, 10). Those coming from the elite standpoint see it as lacking in the refinement, sophistication and civility that defines elite culture. This three tiered demarcation of art in Africa is well favoured especially by the new ruling elite because "[elite art] is evidence of [their] progress and enlightenment, [while traditional art is] evidence of a rich historical cultural heritage (Barber; 1987, 11).

However despite the fact that many theorists find this definition of popular culture in negative terms problematic, it is useful in that it carves out a space for popular culture so that it can, as I argue, eventually be recognised in its own terms. The increasing dominance of the production and consumption of popular culture is out stripping that of traditional or elite culture. I would suggest that this is primarily because of the manifestations of current African societies. With an ever-growing concentration of the population moving to the urban centres and wanting to be associated with urban culture, popular culture is finding its market. Traditional practices are considered less sophisticated, especially by the younger generations, whose tastes are influenced by contact with foreign cultures, be they Western or other African cultures. By the same token the culture produced by the elite of these societies is inaccessible to the majority of the population both in financial and intellectual terms. Elite culture not only assimilating, but, some would argue, competing with its Western counterpart, does not retain enough of it origins to be recognised, understood or appreciated by the majority of the people[13].

Although many definitions of popular culture have tended to define it in the negative, Barber (1987) does try to define in it the positive by pointing to the various aspects of popular culture that could be described as its key definitional aspects. Elemental

[13] It is suggested that it is for this reason that popular literature has become so prevalent in Africa. The works of canonised African writers suit neither the tastes nor the intellectual capacities of the

features of popular culture are its novelty, syncretism, its unofficial nature and its function in bringing about social change. Its novelty stems from the fact that it offers something new and unknown within these societies in terms of cultural production. However Barber points out that whilst this form of art is indeed new, it is not considered so because it has struck out in an artistic direction that has never been explored before. Indeed its novelty is a direct result of its syncretism, combining aspects of traditional and foreign art forms to derive new forms of cultural production. It is because it conflates the two officially recognised forms and in so doing is seen as unofficial art. But additional to its unrecognised status is its perceived social function in bringing about change that has also rendered it unofficial.

Barber (1987; 7) points out that there is a body of opinion that distinguishes between, on the one hand, 'people's' art, "the spontaneous expression of the ordinary people who have not yet been conscientised... [and] tends to be conservative, escapist or merely vacuous". And on the other hand 'popular' art which "furthers the cause of the people by opening their eyes to their objective situation in society. It 'conscientises' them, thus preparing them to take radical and progressive action." This latter line of argument is consistent with anti-establishment notions that tend to be associated with popular arts. Even in Western societies popular art is usually associated with radical, especially youth, rebellions against the status quo.

Popular Music

There is an extensive body of work on popular culture which argues that one of the primary reasons for the study of popular culture is the fact that it provides us with a privileged insight into popular ways of thinking about and understanding the world (Barber 1997, Lull 1987 a&b, Nketia 1986, Blacking 1995). These popular imaginaries are of great significance in trying to understand broader social processes. However, as many critics have noted (Barber; 1997), it is difficult to define the exact shape and form of popular thinking and imaginaries. Music more than most other forms of popular culture has had the most wide spread and significant impact of all popular cultural forms. The comparative ease with which it is disseminated and received has contributed greatly to the extent to which it has been successful. I would

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consumers of popular literature who are semi-literate low to middle wage earners and high school

however also add that the traditionally important role that music plays in every society is another factor that has led to the efflorescence of popular music in Africa[14].

One of the primary functions of music within African society[15] has always been its use as "an avenue of verbal communication, a medium for creative verbal expressions which can reflect both personal and social experiences" (Nketia; 1986, 189). According to Nketia, the themes of the songs were deliberately chosen to match the event or to focus on the particular issue of interest for the community or a particular social group within the society and thus enabled a discussion. Berliner (1978) also found this function of music to be true of Shona society where the musician used their songs as a vehicle for discussing social issues or making general social comment. It is this particular function of Mtukudzi's music that this study will pay close attention to. Although speaking in relation to Western popular music, Frith (1988; 123) concurs with this assertion of the social function of music, stating that "[i]f music gives lyrics their linguistic vitality, lyrics give songs their social *use.*" In her study of Shona musician Thomas Mapfumo, Kwaramba (1997)[16] also pays close attention to the text of his music emphasising the relevance of the message that is contained within song texts, especially as a form of political resistance and social commentary.

Equally important in the derivation of the full meaning of the textual aspect of songs is an understanding of the cultural and, at times, even historical, context of the song. This point has been much elaborated upon by theorists like Barber (1987), Nketia (1986) and Allen (forthcoming). This contention will becoming increasingly apparent as we analyse the music of Mtukudzi which is informed by not only his culture and that of his initial audience of address, but also the history of his country. A cultural understanding of where music emanates from is a crucial aspect of the process of

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children. For more on this literature see Newell *Readings in African Popular Literature* (2002).

[14] For a detailed look at the role and function of music within African society see Nketia's *The Music of Africa* (1986).

[15] Nketia gives examples of the other uses of songs within African societies citing some as being addressing "individuals, either commoners or kings, dead or alive, personified creatures and objects of nature, or supernatural being and forces" or "educating the young ... for making announcements or proclamations, expressing gratitude or appreciation to a benefactor, serenading lady loves, warning, advising or boasting" (195 and 204 respectively).

[16] In addition to looking at the text of Mapfumo's music Kwaramba adds an interesting and illuminating linguistic dimension. She uses linguistic tools to look at the actual words used in the songs and the meaning to be derived not just from the meaning of the word, but the very choice of those words over and above other words that could have been used in their place.

understanding the music itself and the message it is trying to convey. This point is emphasised by Kwaramba (1997, 19) when she states that;

> The construction of meaning in texts can be at word or sentence level or in larger units where the processing of meaning requires more than just grammatical knowledge. It requires knowledge of both the language itself and the social and cultural contexts in which the texts are produced. This implies that the same texts can mean different things to different people in different contexts. Words in themselves do not carry the same meaning outside of the cultural and social contexts in which they are produced.

Kwaramba's study is of particular interest in this research report because Mapfumo and Mtukudzi are contemporaries and share a common cultural background and political history. Like Mapfumo, Mtukudzi's lyrics are steeped in cultural references which, even with linguistic comprehension, necessitates sufficient familiarity with Shona culture in order to obtain the full meaning and impact thereof. This is especially true in relation to protest songs against the Mugabe regime. In order to avoid prosecution much of the protest is shrouded in idioms and word play which needs to be decoded in order to understanding their significance.

However as many musicologists (Neubauer; 1992, Frith; 1986, Nketia 1986, Allen forthcoming Berenson; 1993) will be quick to point out the music is as important an aspect of a song as are the lyrics. Nketia elaborates on this point and illustrates the functions of both lyrics and music within a song. "While song texts provide the significant changes in thought, mood or feeling, it may be the music that defines or expresses the general character of the occasion or the spirit of the performance" (Nketia; 1986, 205) such that even when the text itself is difficult to understand or decipher the music itself carries the mood of the song. This feature of music which Nketia defines as the 'spirit' of a performance is similar to Berenson's (1993) concept of the emotional content of music. It is his contention that in music "there are expressive conventions ... through which the expressive functions of music can be explained" (65).

Berenson's argument is intended to refute the school of thought that argues that music has no emotional content. The debate is between schools of thought that he defines as

the 'purists' and the 'emotivist', with the former maintaining that music can only be appreciated and explained in terms of the structure and the form of the music, and musicologists need concern themselves with anything else. The emotivists on the other hand argue that music has an emotional aspect to it that an approach as rigid as that of the purists fails to take into account. Berenson does not agree entirely with either of these diametrically opposed approaches to an analysis of music. The approach that he offers as a mediating opinion is one that combines aspects of both approaches using one to temper the rigidity of the other. His rejection of the purists is based on the fact that they ignore the emotion in the music. And his objection to the emotivists is that they give "account of emotive qualities of music on analogy with contagious diseases in claiming that sad music makes one feel sad – the listener catches the sadness from the music and is 'infected' by it" (Berenson; 1993, 62).

For audiences who do not understand Mtukudzi's lyrics the music becomes more important because it is in the music and not in the words that these listeners will glean the emotion of the song. The non-lyrical aspect of Mtukudzi's music therefore demands close attention. The music of his songs in addition to the non-verbal utterance is a significant conveyance of the meaning of his music and works in conjunction with the lyrics to enhance the message therein. These non-verbal devices, a term used by Frith (1988; 120), also add to the emotional element of his music. Frith agrees that musicians use devices such as "emphases, sighs, hesitations changes of tone" to further their point within a song. This is a feature of utterance that Bakhtin (1999, 85) refers to an 'expressive intonation' that enables the addressee[17] to determine the "speaker's emotionally evaluative attitude towards the subject of his speech" [18]. Nketia (1986, 178) also adds that these particular devices are not uncommon within African musical renditions where the musician will use "explosive

[17] It is important to note that the addressee can be "an immediate participant-interlocutor in everyday dialogue, a differentiated collective of specialists in some particular area of cultural communication, a more or less differentiated public, ethnic group, contemporaries, like minded people, opponents and enemies, a subordinate, superior, someone who is lower, higher, familiar, foreign ... [or even] an indefinite, unconcretized other" (Bakhtin; 1999, 95)

[18] It is Bakhtin's contention that this expressiveness which reveals the emotional aspect of an utterance is significant in that there is no utterance that is devoid of this particular feature. Bakhtin contends that there is no utterance that is completely neutral regardless of the subject matter of the utterance itself. In this he is in agreement with Volosinov (1981) who contends that only individual words are truly semiotically neutral. It is the way in which they are used to express differing ideologies or to create and maintain distinctions and boundaries in the form of language or as utterance that they become imbued

sounds or special interjections, vocal grunts" in order to enhance the significance of their performance.

What is of particular interest within this research report is how the music and the non-verbal devices work together with the lyrics to bring out the messages in the songs. It is with this in mind that an emotivist like approach will be adopted, as this will enable an evaluation of the music which is not focused on the form and structure of the music as a purist approach would require. Whilst not disputing the importance of the structure of music, it is the contention of this research report that in order to comprehensively analyse the content of Mtukudzi's music it is essential that the emotive aspect of his music be privileged. The emotions that he seeks to evoke within his work function in conjunction with the lyrics, and indeed by his own admission the music, though important in its own right serves to foreground the lyrics and the message contained therein.

Musicians, more than most other artists in society, with the possible exception of film and television performers, command a very significant and mass following among members of the population. "Popular musicians are loved, even worshipped, not only for their abilities to write songs and perform them publicly, but for their ability to 'speak' to their audiences" (Lull; 1987, 11 a). Indeed it is this ability to 'speak' to their audiences that gives some musicians the impression of being able to transcend all human divides that appear otherwise unbridgeable. Lull (1987 b) argues that the culturally specific interpretation and uses of music notwithstanding, one can state that all cultures would appear to have a role and function for music, and this serves to illustrate the significance of music as a social tool within all human interaction. The predominantly commercial nature of current music production tends to detract from the other roles and functions of music within a society, that of providing social cohesion during times of celebration, commiserating and even to demarcate social and historical events. Indeed the influence of popular music is believed increasingly to supplant literary forms, which arguably reach smaller audiences than music. This is especially true of poor communities where the acquisition of a radio is more likely to occur than the purchase of books, for example.

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with semiotic significance. But the moment words are put together to express any speech form of

Audiences and Addressivity

One suggested means of realising a fuller understanding of the texts themselves is through studying their address and the audience to whom they are addressed. In this way we can begin to understand something of the way in which texts speak to popular audiences and hence the forms of popular understanding that these texts encode. Barber (1997a; 354) for example notes that "performances do not just play to ready-made congregations of spectators which are out there awaiting address; they convene those congregations and their mode of address assign them a certain position from which to receive the address". The artist must therefore convey their text in such a way as to convene these audience who are simply attracted by the text to which they are responding. The connection between the artist and the audience necessitates a study of both elements within the equation, and indeed sets the tone for the nature of the engagement between them. Artists deliberately attempt to lure an audience for their work and this influences and affects their work. This is then the addressivity of the work that Bakhtin speaks of, "the quality of turning to someone (imagined or real) as a constitutive feature of the utterance; without it the utterance does not and *cannot* exist" (Bakhtin; 1986, 99) (own emphasis).

Indeed Bakhtin's theory of addressivity is very instructive in providing not only an understanding of Mtukudzi's work itself, but indeed the relationship between the artist and his/her audience, including the influence exerted by the audience on the artist. Bakhtin premises his theory on the notion of the relationship between the addresser, the addressee and the utterance[19]. The utterance is the significant link between the addresser and the addressee. The addresser's utterance as already noted, is in response to previous utterances, regardless of temporal and spatial frame, and in making this

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communication they immediately lose their neutrality.

[19] Bakhtin (1999; 71) defines utterance as being "the *real unit* of speech communication". What defines an utterance is the fact that it shares common features as a unit of speech communication, but most importantly that it has distinct boundaries. These boundaries are a significant factor in the determination of an utterance and are determine by a change in the speaking subject, such that regardless of the nature or form of utterance when it begins, other utterances will have already preceded it and when it ends others will follow. Even if an utterance is followed by silence, as for example in the case of a letter, the fact that the addressee understands and will act, regardless of when, on that understanding completes the boundary of the utterance. It is important to note that for Bakhtin an utterance need not be verbal nor need it necessarily be more than one word.

utterance the addresser anticipates not only comprehension to their utterance but a response as well. I quote him at length.

> Utterance is a link in the chain of speech communication, and it cannot be broken off from the preceding links that determine it both from within and from without, giving rise within it to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic[20] reverberations. But the utterance is related not only to preceding, but also to subsequent links in the chain of speech communication. ... From the very beginning, the speaker expects a response from [the addressee], an active responsive understanding. The entire utterance is constructed, as it were, in anticipation of encountering this response (94).

Mtukudzi's music is a response to the socio-political realities that are prevalent in Zimbabwe, he is therefore acting in response to social realities and government policies that have brought about the social dynamics that necessitate the kinds of responses that Mtukudzi is providing in his music. That the response is clearly not consistent with that which was anticipated by either his audience or the government does not nullify the fact that it is indeed a response none the less as elaborated by Bakhtin. At the other end of his utterance is his audience that is responding to his own utterance as anticipated, be it in the form of simple understanding or the opposition party adopting one of his songs as their unofficial anthem.

However it does not suffice that the utterance is made and the response is anticipated. Bakhtin goes on to add that one of the elemental features of utterance and the anticipated response is the influence that this anticipated response has on the nature or the form of the utterance. This particular aspect of his theory is of the greatest significance for our understanding of the relationship between the artist and the audience and the influence that the audience exerts on the nature of the artist's utterance. Again I shall quote Bakhtin at length.

> When constructing my utterance, I try actively to determine this response. Moreover, I try to act in accordance with the response I anticipate, so this anticipated response, in turn, exerts an active influence on my utterance (I

[20] The notion of dialogism is a direct reference to Bakthin's theory of Dialogism which is found in novels and is a way to depict the various voices, points of views and perceptions, "the social diversity

> parry objections that I foresee, I make all kinds of provisos, and so forth). When speaking I always take into account the apperceptive background of the addressee's perception of my speech: the extent to which he is familiar with the situation, whether he has special knowledge of the given cultural area of communication, his views and convictions, his prejudices (from my viewpoint), his sympathies and antipathies – because all this will determine his active responsive understanding of my utterance (Bakhtin; 1999, 95-6).

Similarly when the artist is contemplating his utterance, consideration of his audience's response to his work is paramount. In order to attract and maintain an audience the artists needs to take into account various aspects of their audience so as to elicit from them the kind of response they are looking for[21]. It is this influence that the audience has on the artist that is of particular interest in this research report. The extent to which the artist creates in anticipation of the audience's response is a significant factor determining the very nature of the utterance and its subject matter. The influence of the audience is clearly illustrated by the subjects Mtukudzi addresses in his work, the majority of his songs are aimed to fulfil a social function. Mtukudzi aims to inform and conscientise his public and it is with this in mind and the anticipated reception to his work that he writes the kinds of songs that he imagines will realise those aims.

Bakhtin also places emphasis not just on the anticipated response as a determinant of the address, but also the addresser's attitude and perception of the speaker. The more confident the addresser is in a favourable response to their utterance the more familiar and intimate the utterance will be, to a point that Bakhtin describes as the addresser and addressee seeming to merge. But if the addresser is hostile towards the addressee then this too shall be reflected in the address. Bakhtin maintains that the key to understanding the genre and the style of the chosen form of address lies in an understanding of the addresser's attitude towards the other.

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of speech types and the differing individual voices that flourish" within a text (Bakhtin; 1981, 263). See Bakhtin's *Dialogic Imagination*

[21] I'm not sure what Bakhtin's response would be to those artist who claim to be creating for their own pleasure.

In this research it is important to draw a clear distinction between real and virtual publics because the audiences discussed in this study are virtual audiences and not real ones. Warner distinguishes between different types of publics and this is again important in the process of distilling the addressivity in Mtukudzi's text. According to Warner the first kind of public can also be referred to as *the public,* which is a "social totality", this totality includes everyone within the specific field in question, such that members of a church, a club, a community or even a country constitute *the* public. The second kind of public he notes is a "concrete crowd witnessing itself in visible space, as with a theatrical public" (50). This public, like the first one, is bound by the sense of totality derived from the shared experience or merely the shared space.

The final form of public he discusses is the one with the greatest interest for this research report and that is what he refers to as *a public.* This is the kind of public that is "a space of discourse organised by nothing other than discourse itself" (Ibid.). This is the public of text (written, audio or visual) and exists only by virtue of the fact that it is being addressed by the text. The addressivity of the text is what creates this public, "without the idea of texts that can be picked up at different times and in different places by otherwise unrelated people, we would not imagine a public as an entity that embraces all the users of that text whoever they might be" (Ibid. 51). Without the discourse or the texts that address them these publics do not exist. What is significant however about this form of address is the fact that "all discourse or performance addressed to a public must characterise the world in which it attempts to circulate, projecting for that world concrete and liveable shape, and attempting to realise that world through address" (Ibid. 82). If the public of the discourse does not recognise itself as being addressed by the text and their world as that of the text, the text's addressivity fails and results in a cessation of circulation.

The definitional difficulties of what constitutes popular culture not withstanding, there has been a growing interest in the study of popular culture, especially as it seen as vehicle for understanding the way in which the majority of the African populace makes sense of their world and their place in it. Not every cultural product will have any ambitions higher than to provide entertainment for its audience, however there are certain popular artists whose aim is to make a social contribution through their work, a contribution that might bring about some form of meaningful chance. It is within

this latter group of artists that we locate Mtukudzi's music. Using a combination of textual readings which are largely drawn from literary theory, Mtukudzi's lyrics will be reviewed to gain a full picture of the devices he utilises in the creation of the kind of songs whose messages he hopes will change his society. In conjunction with this literary approach will be the musical theory of emotivism which will enable us to analyse the musical aspect of the text. This emotivist theory focuses on the emotional interpretation of music that, in this instance, is vital to a full understanding of Mtukudzi's songs as a whole. It is felt that a strictly structural evaluation would be of little value within this kind of study.

Through an evaluation of the lyrics and the music within his songs we will elucidate the manner in which this aim is achieved. But a clearer understanding of his work will be realised through and understanding of the relationship that exists between the artist and his audience. A clearer sense of this relationship should enable us to assess the level of influence that his audience has on his work. Bakhtin's theory of addressivity has provided us with the tools to be able to tease out this relationship and its influence on the text. Using this theory I shall look at Mtukudzi's utterance, his music and how it is directly related to and influenced by his country's history, socio-political realities and the audience that he is addressing himself to. Because of the limited nature of the study the audience has already been identified as a virtual audience as defined by Warner (2002).

Chapter Three

Women and Children in Zimbabwean Society and Mtukudzi's Songs

As I have discussed in the previous chapter music is a social text that carries within it the ways in which societies can be analysed and understood whilst simultaneously revealing the social imaginaries. This chapter will concentrate on two particular themes that are a prominent feature of Mtukudzi's music, namely the abuse of women and children. This chapter will examine how Mtukudzi presents and deals with these particular issues within his music. An examination of songs that deal with these particular themes will enable us to make certain deductions from the way in which he represents them. This analysis should enable us to determine not only Mtukudzi's own perspectives and notions on the issues that arise, but it will also enable us to make certain inference about the society that he is addressing himself to.

These two themes have been selected because they deal with the most vulnerable members of Zimbabwean, and arguably any other, society. What makes these choices especially interesting is the fact that Mtukudzi is a man and as such his perceptions of what constitutes the issues of abuse for women is especially interesting. The particular marginality of children makes the handling of any issue relating to them a source of interest for any study. Most significant for the purposes of this study, is to analyse what it is that Mtukudzi is saying about these things. As already mention Mtukudzi is very deliberate in infusing his work with social meaning, it therefore becomes all the more interesting to examine the messages and attitudes that he is instilling in his listeners on issues of abuse of women and children.

Marriage and Inheritance[22] in Shona Custom

Zimbabwean women in both traditional and colonial societies have been subjected to discriminatory treatment and practices inherent in both traditional and modern social practices. One of the areas where this discrimination has been most apparent and harmful, and believed to contribute to the various forms of abuse that women are

[22] See Mokobi and Kidd (1995) for an interesting discussion of marriage and inheritance among different societies within Southern African.

forced to endure is the issue of inheritance. Mtukudzi has been especially vocal in his music about the way in which succession laws are manipulated to control and abuse women. I shall briefly outline the Shona laws and culture of succession in order to provide a background to Mtukudzi's songs. Shona custom dictates that when a woman marries a man she is not just marrying him but his family also. She is therefore required to leave her home and join him in his. Mokobi and Kidd (1995) point out that unlike civil marriages, it is very difficult to pinpoint the exact moment when a customary marriage takes place. Because the couple's union is not validated by an outside institution it is left up to the families to determine if and when a marriage has finally taken place. While the handing over of *roora*[23] (lobola) is generally considered adequate for a marriage to be considered valid this is not always the case.

The familial power to declare a marriage valid or otherwise is one of the causes of complications when it comes to inheritance. If for whatever reason the deceased's family declares that the union was never valid the surviving spouse is automatically disinherited. This applies to both men and women (Aphane et al; 1995). Shona tradition also makes allowances for other kinds of marriages. Additional to monogamous unions, there are polygamous marriages, *kuzvarira*[24], *kugarira*[25], as well as *kugara nhaka*[26] which is of the greatest interest since it bears the two songs, by Oliver Mtukudzi, on women that will be looked at.

Kugara nhaka are called levirate[27] unions in English. This is the remarriage of the widow after the death of her husband to one of her husband's relatives, usually a brother. Aphane et al point out that although this form of marriage is usually referred to as inheritance this is an inappropriate description and gives the wrong connotation. The woman is not essentially inherited. She chooses the man she wants to be with for herself. However having said that, if she chooses not to take another husband or

[23] See Janhi (1970) for an interesting look at the different kinds of *roora* and marriage rites and practises.
[24] This form of marriage is referred to in English as pledging. In such a union a young, usually a girl, child is promised in marriage to a specific individual when they grow up. This is usually done by poor families who promise their daughters in marriage even while they are still infants to wealthy families for an advance on her *roora*. See May (1983).
[25] In this kind of marriage the potential groom will work for his father-in-law as full or part payment of *roora*.
[26] This is a marriage that takes places between a widow and her deceased husbands' brother or uncle or similar male family member. This type of marriage will be discussed further below.

choose from outside her deceased husband's family she relinquishes any benefits from the deceased estate and her rights to her children should her husband's family decides to keep them, because they belong to that family. There are however ways in a widow can avoid choosing another husband but still remain within the family. It is possible for the widow to choose her own son or even her sister-in-law, "thus she affirms her desire to remain within the family circle but asserts her own independence at the same time" (Aphane et al; 1995, 43).

Unless a couple is married under a civil marriage or the husband leaves a will, Shona tradition does not recognise the woman's right to inherit, "a widow benefits through her first born who assumes status of family head following his father's death" (Mokopi and Kidd; 1995, 22). This applies even in marriages where both spouses are employed and have contributed equally to the home[28] as usually happens with couples who live in the urban areas. Although the distribution of the deceased estate is not meant to take place until after a year[29] has elapsed since the death of the husband there is now tendency to distribute the wealth much sooner, in some instance immediately after the funeral dispossessing the surviving spouse and the children. This practice, though highly prevalent, is not consistent with Shona customs nor indeed modern day living.

Traditionally the widow was disqualified from inheriting like all other women because it was feared she would carry the family wealth away with her should she marry again. The property was therefore given to the oldest son who inherited not only the property, but also the responsibility of looking after his mother and the rest of the family, nuclear and extended. The practice of *kugara nhaka* was intended to prevent the widow from marrying someone else out of economic need. There was also the fear that a new husband might not look after or care for the children of another man, as he ought to. So by marrying her deceased husband's brother she would ensure that the children stayed within the protective ambit of their family. This is why in the

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[27] The male equivalent is a sororate union where the deceased woman's family will provide a sister or some other female relative to take the place of the deceased.

[28] It should be noted that while women are usually the ones affected by this practice. Relatives of deceased women have been known to take all the marital possessions from the husband. See Bourdillon (1993).

[29] See Mandaza for a detailed description of the various rites and ceremonies that should be undertaken during this year of mourning.

indigenous languages of Zimbabwe children refer to their father's brothers as father, literary 'small father' for a younger brother and 'big father' for an older one, and similarly with their mother's sisters.

Although not allowed to inherit from her husband's estate, according to custom the widow was entitled to some property within the home. The only property that the woman was entitled to after the death of her husband was anything that was realised through her own efforts. This property is referred to as *mavoko* property, meaning literary from her hands. There is also the cow that was given to the mother on the marriage of her daughter and the subsequent cows she was given for each child born to her daughter (Thomas; 1985). Aphane et al (1995) point out that whether or not the widow benefits from the estate is left to the discretion of the husband's family. If they decide not to recognise the marriage the widow will get nothing regardless of how long she was married to the deceased or how many children they had.

Additional to this, if the husband's family feels that the widow did not properly adhere to the requirements for mourning her husband they can again deny her benefits from the estate[30]. Abiding by the demands of these mourning rites is becoming increasingly difficult for many widows who are employed and therefore not able to take the required time from work. Some families will use this against the widow in order to disinherit her. Aphane et al point out that these requirements place the widow in a catch 22 for if she does not comply she might disinherited, but equally many widows have come out of their mourning to find themselves disinherited whereas had they not been confined by their bereavement they might have been able to fight for their right to benefit from the estate

Women in Mtukudzi's Music

The social realities that are faced by women within Zimbabwean society and Shona culture specifically have led to Mtukudzi to address these issues in his music. Issues of customary marriages and inheritance have created not only the greatest confusion due to the dual legal system but they have proved themselves the most useful and

frequently used tools to subjugate women. In *Neria* and *Ndagarwa Nhaka* Mtukudzi looks at the cultural practice of *kugarwa nhaka* from the perspective of two women and how it affects them. However what is interesting is how the perceptions of these two women are so vastly different: both are concerned with marriage, the death of the husband and the aftermath and yet they appear to differ so significantly.

[30] See Aphane et al (1995), Mandaza (1970) and Chabudapasi (1970) for interesting discussions on burial and mourning rites and ceremonies.

Nerai[31]

Neria Neria woo

Asaore mwoyaka Neria
mwari anewe x2
Mwari aneweka Neria
Mwari anewe

Kufiwra nemurume hanzwadzi
Zvinoda mwoyo wekushinga
Usaore mwoyoka Neria mwari anewex2
Shina mwoyo shinga
Mwari anewe

Neria Neria woo
Asaore mwoyaka Neria mwari anewe x2
Mwari aneweka Neria
Mwari anewe

Hupenyu imhindupindu
Ngwarira mhepo dzezviedzo
Usaore mwoyoka Neria Mwari anewex2
Shinga mwoyo shinga
Mwari anewo
Vanhukadzi vanobatwa senhapwa
Kugara senherera
Usaore mwoyo kaNeria mwari anawex2
Shinga mwoyo shinga
Mwari anwew
Rufu rune shanje
Kutsaura vanodanana
Usaore mwoyo hanzvadzi
Mwari anewe
Usaore moyoka Neria
Mwari anewew
Shinga mwoyo shinga
Mwari anewe

Neria Neria woo
Asaore mwoyaka Neria mwari anewe x2
Mwari aneweka Neria
Mwari anewe

Shinga mywoyo shinga
Mwari anewe

Neria Nerai woo

Don't let your heart rot
God is with you x 2
God is with you Neria
God is with you

Your husband dying my sister
Needs a strong heart
Don't let you heart rot Neria

Be strong heart
God is with you

Life has its ups and downs
Watch out for the winds of difficult times
Don't let your heart rot
God is with you
Be strong heart x 2

Women are treated like second class citizens
Living as though they have no parents
Don't let your heart rot Neria
God is with you
Be strong heart, be strong
God is with you

Death is so very jealous
Separating those that love each other
Don't let your heart rot my sister
God is with you
Be strong heart, be strong
God is with you.

[31] All songs were translated by Graham Kusano.

Kufiwra nemurume hanzwadzi
Zvinoda mwoyo wekushinga
Usaore mwoyoka Neria mwari anewex2
Shina mwoyo shinga
Mwari anewe

Neria[32] is a song about a woman who has lost her husband and is part of the sound track written for a movie by the same name in which Mtukudzi himself acts. The song, like the film, looks at the treatment of women within society. Neria's grief is not only caused by the death of her husband as we initially assume, the death of her husband brings with it additional problems. Her brother-in-law assumes ownership of all of Neria and her late husband's assets as would have been the case had she married him - he specifically takes over the ownership of her home, her funds and finally her children as well. As discussed above, Neria is customarily expected to marry her deceased husband's brother but she does not want to do this. However because Neria does not do so there develops an issue around her husband's deceased estate. Even though Neria does not wish to marry her brother-in-law the estate would still remain with him in trust for her son until he is old enough to take over. Mtukudzi uses this situation to discuss not only the distortion of cultural practices, but also the tensions that result from the urbanisation process.

Neria and her husband live in the urban areas and have both been working to contribute to the building of their home and their savings so technically half of the property belongs to Neria, but because tradition dictates that it reverts back to the man's family she is dispossessed. Mtukudzi uses this song to comment on the need to recognise the fact that culture is dynamic, to illustrate that practices that worked previously do not necessarily apply within the current social context. But more importantly this song shows how culture is used expeditiously for personal gain. For all his pretence to cultural adherence the brother does not even wait the requisite year before assuming his brother's property.

[32] The full impact of this song is better realised when heard in conjunction with having seen the movie to fully comprehend the tragedy that is threatening to befallen Nerai.

It is because of these ordeals that the song encourages Neria to strengthen her heart in order to bear up to whatever might be in store for her. Mtukudzi uses this song and this theme to comment on the general treatment of, and regard for, women within Zimbabwean society. Women he says are treated like second class citizens because they do not have the same rights and entitlements as men. He uses the comparison with orphans to illustrate the painful and vulnerable state that women are forced to live under in Zimbabwean society.

By using the image of the woman as an orphan he is also drawing on the perception of women as minors throughout their lives, first as the responsibility of their fathers, and then their husbands. Society continues to relegate women to the status of children requiring the protection of their fathers, husbands or any other male relative able to provide the necessary care. This depiction of women as orphans not only illustrates the continuing minority status of women, but also serves to concretise the vulnerability of women to the abuses that can be brought to bear upon them by men and society as a whole. This is an especially poignant point he is making because a society that establishes customs intended to protect those it disempowers is now using those same traditions against those that they are designed to protect. The customary laws that Neria's brother-in-law attempts to use against her were intended instead to protect widows from the very exploitation that he is responsible for.

Vambe (2000) however states that well intentioned though Mtukudzi might have been in writing this song he falls into the trap of painting women as victims of their society and their circumstances. Vambe rightly feels that the song, quite unlike the film, does not make any mention of how Neria can help herself out of her situation. It merely encourages her to place her faith in God instead of saying something about educating women on the law, their rights and entitlements. This criticism of the song is indeed valid for it is not an accurate portrayal of Neria in the film who, with the help of the other women in her co-operative, learns about her rights and is able to use the law to protect herself and her children. Perhaps the music of Neria might explain why it is that Mtukudzi does not bring in that empowering feature into the song. The music is intended to commiserate with Neria and her plight and it is possible that in the process of conveying this sentiment the didactic facet of the song is lost.

I would argue that the very questioning of a cultural practise and the manner in which men especially, are distorting it to suit their own ends, and in the process furthering the subjugation of women, is the lesson that Mtukudzi is attempting to communicate as opposed to the one that Vambe finds absent in the text. Perhaps Mtukudzi recognises that the battle for the equitable treatment of women in Zimbabwe must be fought on all fronts. Whilst the benefits of informing women on their rights and how to use the law to their advantage are not disputed, equally necessary is a change in the attitudes of men who continue to perpetrate this unequal treatment that leads to women having to seek legal redress. The logic being that if men did not have additional power and privilege women would not need to be informed of special laws designed to protect them from this abuse.

In conjunction with the lyrics Mtukudzi's music must also be read and understood in order to attain a complete sense of the significance of the lyrics which are enhanced by the music in which they are couched. *Neria* opens with a single acoustic guitar playing a soft, gentle and smooth melody that is consistent with the story of the song. The guitar evokes feelings of sympathy and sadness for the situation that Neria finds herself in. After a number of bars the guitar is joined by a flute playing equally softly and smoothly in accompaniment to the guitar as though empathising with the sorrow that is evoked by the guitar.

The song is sung in a weepy voice that serves to further the despairing nature of the song. Mtukudzi starts the song with the calling of Neria's name followed by *woo*, which is a common Shona cry that is given as a sign of lamentation used to express pity or commiseration when words fail. This vocal style is used for the better part of the song, even when additional voices are introduced in harmony with the lead vocalist: they too adopt a similar style of singing. Reflecting its sombre subject matter, the song is texturally thin throughout with only three instruments, the acoustic guitar, the flute and barely discernible drums, accompanying the vocals. It is only when emphasising important points or when encouraging Neria to be strong that additional voices are introduced for emphasis.

This technique serves two functions within the song. Firstly it draws the listeners' attention to what the artist obviously considers to be the important aspects of the

message in the song. Specifically the lines *Asaore mwoyaka Neria mwari anewe* (don't let your heart rot Neria God is with you) and *Shinga mwoyo shinga* (be strong heart) are emphasised using additional voices throughout the song. It is this message of strength and fortification that Mtukudzi wishes to stress Neria and all other women who might find themselves in a similar situation. The effect of this strategy within the song is very powerful because the rest of the song is thin in texture, and these voices, subtle but strong, draw attention to the crux of the song without detracting from the solemnity of the song's mood.

The second function of the additional voices in the song is to infuse it with a feeling of universal solidarity and encouragement. Mtukudzi is not alone in his reassurance, his call for the woman to be strong and place her faith in god is reiterated by the other voices in the song, the other voices being representative of more than just the musicians but the society at large. It is almost as though Mtukudzi, by drawing in the other voices, both male and female, is simultaneously drawing in social acquiescence with his urgings for a differing perception of the status of women and the use of cultural practices as means of continued subjugation of women. The potential power of this reading of the text lies in the fact that within Zimbabwean society, adherence to customary law can be a matter of mere convenience. Therefore to promulgate a differing notion, a stance that speaks against the abuse of customs, and to present it as one not only endorsed by the artist, but by the men and women who sing with him, lends credence to his call and authenticates his support for the equal and fair treatment of women.

In addition to the guitar and the vocals the other significant feature of the song is the notable presence of the flute. Consistent with the maudlin nature of the song, the flute initially provides a mellow but strong support for the guitar. However the style of playing changes during the flute's second solo. Soloing in a jazz style the flute seems to express an opinion, but an opinion quite different from vocals or the guitar. It grows increasingly louder and stronger playing staccato and with frequent high pitch notes that take the song out of the realm of its almost self pitying sadness into a fighting stance. The effect of this playing also seems to stimulate the vocalist to sing stronger and louder, relinquishing the weepy style of singing for a more determined and powerful tone. The flute would seem to play the part in the song that is played by

the women of the co-operative in the film. These women urge Neria to fight back and, with their continual encouragement, Neria engages her brother-in-law in a legal battle to win back her possessions and her children. The guitar on the other hand maintains it rather lackadaisical mode of play perhaps representing the nagging doubts that continue to plague Neria, the fears that she experiences about going against what she believes to be customary practice and offending elders.

The fact that the song ends with a flute solo seems to reflect the triumph of the flute and therefore Neria. Having started on a slow and sorrowful note the song progresses to a victorious end with the flute fading out with the same staccato urgings that it embarked upon during the song. Though strong and determined it is not abrasive and retains an element of empathy with Neria's plight, but carries the song, the singer and Neria to an ending quite different from one that would have been possible in the instruments' absence.

The next song also deals with similar customary practices as are dealt with in the song Neria. What makes this song especially interesting is the fact that although tackling the same traditional practice, his take on this custom is completely opposed to that which is reflected in Neria.

Ndagarwa Nhaka

Ndagarwa nhaka amai	I have been inherited mother
ndagarwa nhaka muningina[33]	I have been inherited sister/brother
ndagarwa nhaka ini	I have been inherited, me
nemoyo chena	with a willing heart
(repeat x4)	(repeat x4)
Ndawana wekuchemera mambo	I have found someone I can cry to, god
ndawana anondi chengeta	I have found someone who will look after me
ndawana wekuturira mambo	I have found someone to respect, god
nekuyebera	to baby me
(repeat x4)	(repeat x4
(repeat verses 1 and 2)	(repeat verses 1 and 2)
Ndawana wekuchemera	I have found someone I can cry to
ndawana anondi chengeta	I have found someone who will look after me

[33] This is how one would address a younger sibling male or female.

ndawana wekuturira	I have found someone to respect
nekuyebera	to baby me

As already discussed above *kugara nhaka* is the custom whereby a window chooses a new husband from among her deceased husband's male relatives. Though no longer widely practised, Aphane et al. (1995) found that there were still communities within Southern Africa that still practised this tradition. They however also found that although still practised there is an increasing resistance to it. They found that many women felt it was outdated and inconsistent with modern life where families did not live together and therefore did not know each other as well as they did before. Therefore the notion of choosing a new life partner you don't really know simply because he is your husband's brother was fast losing favour among women. Additional to this the women explained that many men express a willingness to take on their brother's wife just to get their hands on the inheritance and they do not even use it for the benefit of the widow and her offspring.

It could be argued that in this song Mtukudzi is attempting to give a more positive depiction of a cultural practise that is not only increasingly becoming disreputable but also obsolete. The cultural influences in Mtukudzi's songs clearly reflect a deep-rooted grounding in his culture. Therefore it is possible that this song is an attempt to redeem a practise that is generally considered oppressive of women. I base this argument not only on the fact that it is not only the abuse of this practice but also the process of modernisation that is making it increasingly unpopular among many women, who prefer to choose a partner for love and not requirement. A positive reading of this song would therefore suggest that it overlooks the abuses and concentrates on the woman's joy, from which we read that this practise can not be as bad as they say if one can find such joy in it. From this we infer that it is the practitioners and not the culture itself that is oppressive of women.

I further offer this analysis based on the fact that the woman in the song does not simply say that she has re-married or found a new love, she specifies the manner and custom under which this marriage takes place. She is repetitive and specific about the nature of the marriage. This leads me to interpret Mtukudzi as deliberately privileging *kugara nhaka* and associating it with a positive experience that it is seldom allied

with. Implying that the constant negative associations with this custom overshadow the happy experiences that some people have with it, and it is this happy experience that Mtukudzi would seem to be highlighting. There is even a suggestion within the song that this woman is now complete in this new union, and that this was indeed not so in the previous marriage, one presumably of her own choosing unlike this one with restricted choice.

This argument I base on the way in which the woman expresses her irrefutable satisfaction with her new husband who seems to fulfil all the things one could possibly desire in a relationship. The expressed joy is shared with God and family alike as she calls upon all them and tells them the various qualities that she has found within this new person. The impression the listener is left with is of course that all these things were missing from her previous marriage. The song does not satisfy itself with simply expressing the fact that she has found a new husband. Not only does she go with him willingly, unlike other brides who are forced or coerced into these unions either by their families or by necessity, she goes with gladly *nemoyo chena* (literally, a clean heart).

What I find problematic with this song is the almost about turn that Mtukudzi does in his attitude towards this custom that in Neria he is very quick to condemn. Even if one were to take into account the fact that he is arguing that it is the people and the way they use the custom for their own ends that has led to the perception of the custom as negative, I find it a hard position to defend. For if we accept that the very custom is necessitated by the exclusionary nature of the customary laws of inheritance which leave most widows with little choice but to marry back into the family if they hope to have, not only a life partner again, but also have access to the estate then we are similarly forced to question the continued practice of this custom which continues to disadvantage women. Disabling the woman from inheriting by virtue of her gender condemns her either to a life of virtual penury or a joyless, arguably incestuous union with her husband's brother. For Mtukudzi to attempt to put a positive spin on this practice suggests that he condones it, and sees no problem with the fact that even the woman's contributions to the marital home are swallowed up by her husband's relatives. Thus leaving her little choice but to marry who-ever it is that will secure the bulk of the estate.

Interestingly, the music of the songs is not consistent with the joy that is expressed in the lyrics. I suggest two possible reasons for the muted nature of the music. The first is that it would be inappropriate for the widowed new bride to express her rapture with great shouts of gladness. The ceremony at which the widow chooses a new husband also marks the end of her mourning period so she would not be expected to be anything but sombre on such an occasion. The second suggestion is that Mtukudzi is being ironic and is, indeed, criticising this practice. Reading the lyrics in this light it is possible to interpret her as saying that she anticipates crying, hence the need to have someone to cry to instead of someone to share great happiness with. She anticipates being deprived hence the need to have someone to look after her instead of looking after herself. This woman can be read as saying all the right things that are expected of her on embarking on this undertaking, but if you read the subtext in conjunction with the music the joy itself is not so readily obvious.

The song opens with a very gently plucked and muted acoustic guitar, which is quickly overshadowed by the drums, accompanied by the lead and base guitars. The acoustic guitar almost immediately recedes into the background and maintains a constant high pitch but barely discernible tune almost at variants with the rest of the instrumentation and the vocals, playing in a halting quavering fashion almost too fast for the rest of the melody. It gives the song a lurking haunting air as though there is something important being ignored. The rest of the instruments overpower the acoustic guitar with their own melody which is equally slow and morose, giving the song a sad, mournful quality that is completely at odds with the joy that is being expressed by the lyrics: it gives the song a quality of grief that defies the joy expressed in the lyrics. The rest of the instruments, with the lead guitar at the forefront, give the song a poignant, sultry, moveable essence that practically submerges the lurking grief of the acoustic guitar making it barely noticeable.

The singing opens with the backing vocals singing the entire first stanza in very feminine voices establishing immediately that this is a woman's song. The male vocals, engaging the female vocal in a conversation, also sing in the vocal register of women reiterating the fact that this is not just a women's song but also that it deals an issue that affect women. The two voices carry the same tune without harmony for the

whole verse with the exception of the line *nemoyo chena* (with a clean heart) which they harmonise producing the strange effect of muting the line and making it sound textually thinner that the rest of the stanza. Mtukudzi sings the same stanza on his own but over-dubs himself harmonising on the line *nemoyo chena*. It is important to note that both Mtukudzi and the backing vocals when singing this verse pause slightly before they sing the words *nemoyo chena.* Until the point where this particular line is sung one gets the impression, from the manner of singing, that this is a song about another unwanted *kugara nhaka.* But this perception is dispelled by the lines that follow the pause, *nemoyo chena,* leaving the listener with no doubt that the woman is remarrying of her own free will.

This part of the song *nemoyo chena,* though sung in harmony is soft and more hesitant than the rest of the song. This gives this line the effect of sounding almost like an unconvincing afterthought, something added on after the essence of the message has already been stated. This leads one to question the sincerity of the statement and indeed the willingness of the heart to be inherited. For his part Mtukudzi's voice emboldens the song, giving it a richer texture than that contributed by the backing vocalists on their own. This first verse is repeated in a call-and-response manner, but neither vocalists respond to the other, they merely repeat the stanza that the other has finished. Although Mtukudzi's voice contributes a richness to the music it also gives it a distinctly heart rending quality that is in sharp contrast to the more cheery sonority of the girls' voices. This contrast is all the more striking because the two voice-styles do not quite merge.

In the second verse the melody changes and the backing vocalists sing lower, harmonising with Mtukudzi who pitches his own voice higher and sings a higher melody than the backing vocals. The rapid staggered entry by both the lead and backing vocalists gives the impression that they are singing something different to each other but they are in fact following each other closely. The backing vocals are also muted making the lead vocals more pronounced. This format is repeated but the second time Mtukudzi sings the backing vocals himself in a double harmony. Again the backing vocals enter just slightly after the lead. The slightly higher pitch and faster beat of the lead vocals gives the song an almost hysterical quality, as though Mtukudzi is wailing. This gives the song the feeling of a lament rather than the joyous

song suggested by the lyrics. It is this effect of wailing that lends credence to the notion that Mtukudzi might well be being ironic. The manner in which he sings can be compared with the too loud and too high-pitched laugh that is attempting to conceal sorrow.

The song ends with the backing vocals repeating the second stanza with the acoustic guitar's haunting melody more pronounced than before, but even more prominent are the voices of the girls conspicuous in their isolation and ending the song on the same melancholic note that it started with. I argue that the music, contrary to the lyrics, reveals what is happening beneath the façade of the words. The resurfacing of the acoustic guitar accompanying the almost lone voices of the backing vocalists infuses the vocals with a sense of despondency, an almost resigned sound incongruous with what would be expected of a woman about to marry an ideal partner. The song's gently rocking rhythm though soothing, gives the impression that the woman is trying to reassure and comfort herself with a gentle rocking motions. This lulling rhythm combined with the low pitched vocals singing determinedly, and the lurking guitar at the end, enhances the woeful quality in the song leaving the listener in no doubt about the tragic element that remains unexpressed in words but is unmistakably articulated in the music. The final crash of the drums and the loud plucking of the lead guitar ring forced, resounding with the hollowness of insincere laughter that is inconsistent with the rest of the music.

In the absence of a full understanding of the lyrics, deriving one's interpretation of the meaning of the song based solely on the music and the style of singing, there is nothing in the music that reflects the rapture suggested by the lyrics. Indeed, one would be justified in thinking that the song is about something other than love and resultant happiness. One could argue that the absence of exuberance might be as a result of the circumstances under which this new love is discovered. I suggest, however, that the music speaks of the anguish of the woman facing a union not of her choosing, but forced on her by circumstances. Whereas the lyrics speak what is expected of her under the circumstances, reading the music enables one to register the irony concealed by a reading of the lyrics in the absence of the music. The hesitation and uncertainty of the way in which the song declares the willingness of the heart to undertake this new marriage concretises the notion that indeed Mtukudzi is himself

not convinced of this new proposition. The listeners become aware of this from the music and not the words of the song.

In these two songs that were examined above Mtukudzi has looked at the issue of *kugara nhaka* from the perspectives of two different women both of whom see the custom in two completely different ways. Although his take on this practice differs in both songs, what is important in not necessarily what his particular stance on the matter is but rather how he has used his music in relation to this issue. Has he, with these songs, opened discussion about how these issue impact on women? Especially with these two songs I would argue that Mtukudzi has brought to the fore customary practices that are not usually spoken of and placed them on the public agenda. Through these songs he has questioned traditional approaches to widowhood, and brought into the doubt the infallibility of customs especially those that privilege the males within society. In bringing into question the patriarchal social structure he is facilitating avenues for the differing approaches to the treatment of women and the use of tradition within a changing social order.

Children in Zimbabwe

Similar to the issue of the abuse of women, I believe it will be instructive to have some background to the issues of child abuse within Zimbabwean in order to have a greater comprehension of Mtukudzi's own approach to this issue. Zimbabwe like many other countries is experiencing an ever-increasing number of cases of child abuse[34] and children living on the streets.

Although the numbers are increasing annually it is commonly believed that these figures do not give a true reflection of the scourge of child abuse that is currently engulfing that country. Very few studies have actually been done on the extent of child abuse in Zimbabwe and with the current economic crisis these issues are increasingly sidelined (Stronge; 1999). Because of this lack of research and information on child abuse in Zimbabwe the statistics are usually outdated and drawn from a very small focus groups which are then applied to the rest of the country

(Raath; 1997). According to study undertaken in 1997, three out of 10 children in Zimbabwe could expect to be abused. This study also found that boys were abused as frequently as girls and that by far the largest percentage of perpetrators were people known to the children either family members, family friends or teachers (Raath; 1997). The abuse of children while at school was also found to be on the increase with teachers being the chief perpetrators of this abuse against their pupils (Insights Gender Violence; undated website).

In a study undertaken by Hombarame (1999) for Childline Zimbabwe[35] one of the major factors contributing to the increase in child abuse is the culture of silence around issues relating to sex. Additional to this culture of silence is the disintegration of the extended family unit, members of which were, traditionally, responsible for the education of children around issues pertaining to sex. Most parents in Zimbabwe seem content to leave the sexual education of their children to their peers, the media and the school system (Hombarame; 1999 and Chinyangara et al.; undated website). The result of this attitude to sexual education is that their peers and the media generally misinform children about sex and sexuality.

Whilst there is a better chance of children being more accurately informed by their teachers, the increasing instances of pupils being sexually abused by their teachers necessitates the intervention of the parents in the sexual education of their children. Teachers, like family members and family friends, are authority figures for whom the child has a great deal of respect and will therefore exert a significant influence on the child which they are able to manipulate to their own advantage. Insights' study on reported cases of abuse of pupils by teachers in secondary school found that sexual abuse constituted over 90% of the abuse endured by pupils at the hands of their teachers. Most pupils are not aware of their rights and entitlements when it comes to such incidences. A combination of the teacher's power over the pupil, academically, coupled with ignorance and the fear of parents and the community's reaction to the rape result in most pupils not reporting these cases.

[34] Although the term abuse is used to refer to different forms of abuse, in this research report it shall be used to refer specifically to the sexual abuse of children.

While there is very little research and information about the sexual abuse of children, there is even less available information about those who perpetrate these crimes. It is therefore difficult to posit possible psychological profiles or even fully understand what it is about Zimbabweans that is driving them to commit these crimes. A study conducted by the Child and Law Project looked at convicted perpetrators of sexual abuse with participants ranging significantly in ages. But the study proved inconclusive in providing either a profile or indeed the motivation for this form of crime (cited in Hombarame; 1999).

Another study by the Child and Law Project attempted to identify what makes certain children more vulnerable to abuse than others. Although it was acknowledged that abuse knows no social, economic or racial boundaries the study identified three main causes of child abuse. The first they identified was cultural: certain customary practices, if not encouraging, certainly made it easier to abuse children. Three practices in particular were identified: the giving of children, especially female children, to another family to appease an angry spirit, this is known as *ngozi:* the pledging of young girls in marriage, *kuzvarira:* and, finally, superstition which lead parents to adhere to the dictates of corrupt *n'angas* (traditional healers) including the abuse of their own children. This study also found that economic hardships were a significant contributing factor to the increasing occurrence of child abuse. Many families are driven to prostituting their children in order to supplement the family income, and in these circumstance the practice of *kuzvarira* becomes increasingly more prevalent among poor families. Finally the media, through its depiction of explicit sexual activity, without providing the necessary educational aspect to sexuality for children has contributed significantly to the increase in child sexual activity and with it their abuse as well (cited in Hombarame; 1999).

Chinyangara et al concur with the finding of the Child and Law Project. They also found that poverty leads to families taking lodgers into small family homes, thus exposing children to additional danger. Other studies have found the close proximity of children and adults in their sleeping arrangements, as happens in poor families where adults and children sleep in the same room, exposes children to sex at too

[35] Unless otherwise specified any further reference to Childline in this research report refers

young an age and distorts their perceptions of sex. It was found that this leaves children more susceptible to abusing or being abused. Under such circumstances older siblings tended to force themselves onto younger ones. Chinyangara et al also found that the HIV/AIDS pandemic has also led to an increase in the rate of child abuse because many unscrupulous healers perpetuate the myth that sex with a virgin can cure or prevent HIV/AIDS or other sexually transmitted diseases. This misconception also accounts for the ever-decreasing ages of the victims as men want to ensure the virginity of their victim. This study also found that is not uncommon for some tradition healers to recommend sex with a child to increase one's wealth or good fortune.

Additional to an increase in sexual abuse, Zimbabwe is facing an unprecedented number of children living or working on the streets. Studies conducted on these children have shown that some children, though they spent much of their time on the streets, do not actually live on the streets but return to their homes at the end of the day (Swart-Kruger; 1996, Dube and Kamvura; 1996). The current economic crisis being experienced by Zimbabwe has led to an increase in the number of children forced to work the streets to supplement their family's income. With the country's unemployment levels exceeding 50%, the rate of inflation reaching over 700%, the drought, food shortages and the land reform crisis, it is believed that over 75% of the population is living below the poverty line (Insights Gender Violence Special Report: 2001). Because of the increasing rate of unemployment most families can not afford to keep their children in school or to feed them, hence the increasing number of children to be found on the streets parking cars, vending or begging to feed not only themselves but at times their families as well.

The HIV/AIDS pandemic is also aggravating the situation. With an estimated 30% of the adult population of Zimbabwe HIV positive the number of children orphaned by HIV/AIDS has led to an increased number of children who have to look after themselves and their siblings. Left in the care of grandparents or other equally struggling relatives who have no means of feeding these children, many children are finding it easier to survive on the streets. Even those children who live at home prefer

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specifically to Childline Zimbabwe.

to escape the cramped homes that they live in until it is absolutely necessary to go home. Levy (2000) points out that part of the reason one sees so many children on the streets is the government's policy of "hot-sitting". Because there are not enough schools to accommodate all the children some schools have divided their day in half with some children attending school in the morning while others attend during the afternoon. So many children take to the streets to try and raise a little money while they are on their way to or from school.

Efforts to 'rehabilitate' these children have mostly been unsuccessful. Attempts to place them in group homes has proven to be more difficult that anticipated. In their work with these children Dube and Kamvura (1996) found that most of them did not want to be rescued from the streets and placed in homes. Many of the proposed homes are thought to be quasi prisons, and it is for this reason that many of the children are unwilling to go into them. They prefer to be on the streets were they do not have to contend with adult authority. Alternatives to these homes are the drop-in shelters that have been set up to provide the children with a place to go when they want or need to be off the streets but a place where they are not obliged to stay. Children living on the streets, in addition to the problems they face on the streets, also have to contend with abuse. It is not uncommon for these children to be abused, and many of them engage in sexual activity in order to supplement their income.

Most of the children on the streets are boys and the issue of sexual abuse tends to be gendered with little or no consideration being given to boy children. Zimbabwean law does not specify as an offence sexual activity with a boy under the age of consent. The law protects only girl children who are commonly associated with abuse. The legislation that prohibits homosexuality partially protects boys, this legislation has outlawed sodomy, therefore anyone who engages in sodomy with a child is guilty of an offence. However, any other sexual conduct with a boy child is technically not outlawed in Zimbabwe (Mutimbe; 1999). Despite the number of boys who are known to be abused there is a continued predominance of presenting child abuse as though it is a threat only to the girl child.

Children's Issues in Mtukudzi's Music

A combination of the realities of street children, child abuse and the HIV/AIDS pandemic has led Mtukudzi to not only sing about these issues but also to undertake projects that seek to alleviate some of these problems. This section will examine two songs that deal specifically with child abuse and children living on the streets.

Tapindwa Nei

Ndozviudza aniko	Who do I tell?
Nditaurire aniko	Who do I talk to?
Ndigazvitaure sei ah	How do I say it?
Rega ndirambe ndinyere	Let me not say anything
Zvandityisa, zvaityisa	It has frightened me
Chorus	Chorus
Ndozviudza aniko aniko	Who do I tell?
Nditaurire aniko aniko	Who do I talk to?
Ndigazvitaure sei ahh ah	How do I say it?
Rega ndirambe ndinyere	Let me not say anything
Zvandityisa, haiwaiwa varumewe Zvaityisa	It has frightened
	No no no men it is frightening
Varume tapindwa neiko	
Varume tapindwa neiko isu	Men what has come upon us?
Kubata mwana chiBharo asati akura	Men what has really come upon us?
Kebata mwana chiBharo asati akomba	To rape a young child
	To rape a child before she even
(chorus)	menstruates
Mhirikovo vakamana, mai	Who do I tell? (Men! Mother!)
Mhirikovo asati akura maiwe	Who do I talk to? (before she is grown up!)
Mhirikovo varume mai	How do I say it? (mother!)
Mhirikovo asati akura maiwe	Let me not say anything (men! Mother!)
Deno ari wako wainzwa sei	It has frightened (before she is grown up)
Dai ari wako wainzwa sei	No no no men it is frightening (mother!)
(chorus)	How would you feel if it were your child? X2
Kana riri domba	Chorus
Idomba rudzii vakomana	
Kana iri nzara	
Inzara rudzii warumewe	If this is a ritual, what kind of ritual is this
Kana riri domba	boys?
Idomba rudzii vakomana	If this is hunger, what kind of hunger is this

Kana yaye nzara	men?
Inzara rudzii warumewe	If this is a ritual, what kind of ritual is this boys?
Kubata mwana chibharo asati akura	If this is hunger, what kind of hunger is this men?
Wobata mwana chibharo asati akomba	To rape a young child!
(chorus)	To rape a child before she menstruates!
Mai we!	Oh Mother!

From the opening lines of this songs it is clear that whatever this song is going to be about is horrific. Mtukudzi is unable to actually bring himself to verbalise the horror of what he wants to say until the last two lines of the second verse. Even he is forced to admit that the subject matter of his song terrifies him hence his inability to express himself. In this song Mtukudzi's is expressing dismay at, not only the act of rape, but the fact that the victim is still very young, she has not even begun to menstruate. Here Mtukudzi expresses sentiments that many South Africans can relate to. The prevalence of rape not withstanding, the rape of infants and young children invariably traumatises the national psyche, precipitating outrage and a national outcry. The song, however, does not simply talk about the fact that a child has been raped, but addresses men who are, in the main, responsible for these acts of abuse. But Mtukudzi can also be understood to be addressing society at large, for what kind of society allows this kind of thing to happen? His self inclusive mode of expression, asking what has come over us as a collective, as opposed to saying what has come over people, is an indictment against not just the perpetrators of these crimes but everyone, himself included.

Mtukudzi is clearly familiar with the reasons that are generally proffered by child abusers for their actions which is why in the third stanza he asks what kind of ritual and hunger is this? He is clearly responding to the reasoning that certain rituals call for sex with a virgin, such as those for healing and enrichment[36] and the curing of HIV/AIDS. The excuse that is it a culturally accepted practice for men to engage in sexual activity with young girls is also being questioned by Mtukudzi when he asks

[36] It is important to note that it is not customary for traditional healers to recommend the abuse of children for any reason, but the greed and corruption inherent in fraudulent healers has led to an

what ritual is this? What culture is this? What custom is this? The argument that is sometimes offered by abusers is that they are driven to abusing children because of the absence of their partners, leading them to exorcise their lust on the child. And it is this that Mtukudzi is questioning when he asks what kind of hunger, lust is this that would lead you to abuse a child?

Mtukudzi's bewilderment at these occurrences is clearly illustrated by his asking the abuser how they would feel if it were there own child being abused? But in many instances it is their own child or a child close to them. Clearly, for Mtukudzi the only way to reach the abusers is to appeal to them in the best way to reach people emotionally, through their children, but the fact that many of this abuses is perpetrated by family members highlights the futility of his appeal. The question of how one can rape a child encapsulates the absolute desperation of the situation for, if the love of one's own child can not prevent abuse, where then is hope to be found?

The music that accompanies this song is consistent with the message of the lyrics. It opens with the acoustic guitar playing slowly and quietly joined by gentle beating of African hand-drums, to which is added the lead guitar's own subdued picking. The way in which the introduction is played sets the tone of the song. The opening of the song suggests that the message of the song is sad. The prominence of the two guitars and the way in which they are picked, interlocking with each other is evocative of the heart-rending effect inherent in string instruments. The introduction of the backing vocals at this point rather than giving the music a richer texture makes it thinner because the instruments fade slightly into the background making the voices more pronounced but also more solitary as though they are singing without accompaniment. As the vocals are about to finish the first verse on the exact note that they sing *zvandityisa* (it has frightened me) the drums queue in the second lead guitar and the keyboard and the texture of the music immediately becomes abundant without becoming loud. The effect of this is to give the impression of other people coming to hear and bear witness to the horror that is about to be revealed.

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increase in these kind of recommendation with people believing the more abhorrent the treatment the more potent it is.

In this song the keyboard produces a high-pitched electronic chordal sound sometimes surging in volume which gives the impression of moaning. This type of synthesised sound produces a continual supplication that is suspended just beneath the surface of the song such that it is not intrusive but it is also not lost beneath the rest of the sounds. Whilst all the other instruments are played in manner reminiscent of a lament, the keyboard is played with each chord drawn out in the manner of a deep throated agonised groan. This sound could be said to be representative of the unheard or unheeded low cries of the abused children that the songs sings about. The keyboard plays as if to itself, giving the impression that it is not quite part of what the rest of the band is playing. This underscores the image of children surrounded by other people, their cries going on continually, but remaining ignored by the rest of society.

The vocals are again very cleverly used to bring out the significance of the message of the song. The song opens with the backing vocals asking questions: three questions follow each other without a response to any of them. Who do I tell? Who do I talk to? How do I say it? The next line is not a question but neither is it an answer to any of the above questions. Instead it is a resigned acceptance of the fact that the questions have no answers, so the questioner is going to remain silent and ask no more. But instead of maintaining the silence the vocals proceed to say that whatever it is they were struggling to talk about has frightened them. This is a strategic device to make the listener curious and want to know more.

During the second repetition of the chorus the backing vocals again take the lead singing this part, but this time they are joined by Mtukudzi who adds his voice at the end of the first two lines repeating *aniko?* (with whom?) after the backing vocals. The questions still not having been answered, the level of curiosity is increased significantly, but with the introduction of Mtukudzi's reiteration is simultaneously introduced an element of misgiving. There is a certain desperate note in the way Mtukudzi howls *haiwaiwa varume* (no no no men) in a slightly strangled voice which leaves the listener with no uncertainty that whatever will follow will not be palatable. He infuses his voice with a dirge like quality drenched in sorrow as he gives a plaintive cry reminiscent of Shona funeral cries.

By the time Mtukudzi begins to sing the first verse and reveals what it is that the backing vocals are finding difficult to voice, there is a resigned fatigue in his voice which reflects his incomprehension of what he is asking about. He states his question in a calm, matter of fact way, but it does not conceal the anguish that the questions bring him. This submission to reality is continually reiterated by the "ehhh" sound, which periodically punctuates the song. In Shona speech this sound would be accompanied by a shrug of the shoulders, a sign of resignation or even defeat used when one is almost giving up. The second repetition of the chorus after this verse is sung is much like the first time with the notable exception of the pitch and tone of Mtukudzi's voice when he asks *aniko?* (with whom?). On this occasion he uses a much higher pitch drawing out the words, there is a naked depression in the quality of his voice, like a man whose mind is failing under the weight of incomprehension regarding the rape of children.

The questions that follow the initial ones that form the chorus are the important ones that Mtukudzi is trying to emphasise. These include *What has come upon us*? *How would you feel if it were your child*? And, *what kind of ritual is this*? *What kind of hunger is this*? There questions form the crux of the song, for it is these questions that he seeks answers to, and only those answers will enable him to, perhaps, gain a semblance of understanding of what is transpiring. These questions are emphasised by the slight changes in the tune and in the use of the vocals. As mentioned the first question about what has come over us is sung in a resigned voice. There is even a barely discernible "mmmm" after the question as if an answer were really forthcoming. During the question of what you would do were the child yours, he drops his voice significantly and the backing vocal no longer punctuate each phase with *maiwe.*

Maiwe is a call to one's mother, but a call made only when in desperate trouble. It is not the usual call to one's mother, it differs not only in the way that it is pronounced but also the intonation in which it is uttered. Anyone who knows the language would be able to understand which of the two calls is being used. He asks this question again in a resigned voice that is also fraught with the fatigue and confusion that he is feeling similar to the way he questions about what culture or desire is so rapacious and depraved that it would permit the raping of infants. During these questions the

instruments play softer giving prominence to Mtukudzi's lone voice, even those parts that are double-voiced for emphasis are not sufficiently prominent to be noticeable as is usually the case with aspects of songs that he wants to draw our attention to.

The song ends with Mtukudzi making the same statement over and over again (before she menstruates) phrased as though it were a question. It is addressed to men, repeated several times before being over taken by the backing vocals in one final cry out for the mother, representing the cry of the child when being abused and on this cry the song ends.

Street Kid

1) Will I ever know how it feels to be love?
I have never known how it feels to have a family!
I grew up in the streets,
Never knew my mother
I wasn't told my father
Only strangers all around
Calling me names I don's know

Chorus
Street kid
There are strangers all over
Calling me names I don't like

Chorus x 4

Repeat 1

Chorus

There are strangers all over
Calling me names I don't like

Chorus x 4

2) I remember looking down,
Looking down in dirty dust bins,
Looking for what can be a meal for my day
In these places I call home

Repeat 2

Only strangers all around
Calling me names I don't know

Chorus
There are strangers all over
Calling me names I don't like

Chorus x 14

This song is unusual in that it is sung entirely in English, Mtukudzi has very few songs that are sung in English. It is difficult to speculate why this particular song was done in English. One could guess that the initial audience for who it was intended was not the Zimbabwean audience who would think it unusual for him to address them in English. It is possible that the target market was the donor community that might fund NGOs in Zimbabwe that deal with the problem of homeless children. I would argue that this song more than most of his other songs was deliberately targeting a much bigger audience that simply Zimbabwe. The problem of children living on the streets is not only confined to Zimbabwe, it affects every nation in the world and with this song he perhaps hoped to bring the plight of homeless children to the attention of the world. Whilst it is hard to speculate about why this particular issue and not others was singled out for global attention I would suggest, as I have already done, that issues of child abuse, HIV/AIDS, touch on aspects of sex and sexuality and are therefore considered taboo subjects. It might therefore be easier for an artist to restrict their discussion and reference in their work to as close to home as possible.

This song is sung in the first person as though Mtukudzi were himself the child without a home. By using the first person it becomes easier for the artist to discuss the plight of these children by making specific and particular reference to their experiences as though they were his own. This technique is also clever in that it gives a sense of immediacy to the problems experienced by these children. The audience is not hearing a second hand account of the life of a homeless child, but through Mtukudzi is hearing one of these children singing about their life without a home, or parents and having to find food in dustbins. Because it is in the first person there is a sense that this is the child and this is their life thus rousing far more sympathy from the listener. Consistent with the fact that this is a child's song about a child's life and world, the lyrics are simply written reflective of the thought processes of a child. The primary function of the song is to bring to people's attention not just the fact that these children exist, but what their daily life on the street is like. The song also aims

to illustrate the unkind treatment that these children receive at the hands of the general public who taunt them and call them names that these children neither know nor like.

I believe Mtukudzi is trying to drive home the point that where there should be parents stand only strangers, these strangers that are always around the child should treat these children with the kindness and compassion of parents. Although the stranger does not assume parental responsibility for the child, neither must they torment or ill-treat the child. It is clear from the song that the name 'street kid' is not one that is favoured among children who live on the streets. Although this term is not one that is preferred by the children it does not change the fact that it is now almost universally used to refer to these children. Mtukudzi is therefore not only saying that these children exist and we should be aware of them and acknowledge them, but that we should treat them with respect and due regard for their feelings, and one of the first steps towards that is not referring to them as streets kids.

The song opens on a very upbeat note with a high tempo rhythm that is established by the lead guitar and the marimba joined in by the drums which then maintain this tempo throughout the remainder of the song. Although the song is about children who live on the street, the vibrancy and energy of the music has an element of children playing s'kokotshi[37]. The vocals like the music are sung in the high register of a child, to again reiterate the fact that this is the song of a child. Mtukudzi maintains a constant range and tone throughout the song and only changes his voice on one noticeable instance. His voice changes in the second stanza when he is singing about looking for food in dustbins. During this stanza his voices assumes a wretched quality reflective of his situation in life and what he is reduced to undergo in order to survive. During this entire stanza the music maintains it high tempo while Mtukudzi laments the adverse conditions under which these children live.

The fast paced background music is a representation of the world that continues to rush past these children neither noticing nor caring about they plight. The chorus is another interesting feature of this song, the backing vocals join Mtukudzi in singing the part where they are saying "street kid". This combination of voices singing the

same melody with scant harmonisation and no deviation gives the chorus a taunting attribute. It conjures up images of children jeering at one child who happens to be slightly different from the rest. There is a harsh and cruel facet to the way in which the chorus is sung. It is my contention that Mtukudzi does this deliberately to illustrate the mocking tone this term of reference can assume. By so doing he brings to the realisation of his audience that innocent though the term 'street kid' might seem to them it is potentially hurtful and sounds like the homelessness of these children is being mocked.

Children and their needs tend to be obscured by what always seems to be greater and more pressing issues within most societies. Mtukudzi has, and continues to use his music to privilege those topics that he feels to be most pressing within his society. His music is also a useful mechanism for broaching difficult subjects and opening them up for public discussion. Issues of children in the street are easy enough to talk even if little is done about it, but matters of child abuse tend to be ignored. *Tapindwa Nei?* Not only sings about child abuse but forces all of us to be aware of it by holding us all responsible for its occurrence. Mtukudzi does not just use his music to reflect what is going on within his society but to challenge his society also, to reveal to itself even those things it would rather not see.

These songs reveal not only Mtukudzi's own impressions and opinions about these particular themes within his country. Indeed his music reveals as much about his society as it does about him. The social text within the songs provides us with ample information to draw certain conclusions about these themes within Zimbabwean society. From these songs we can determine that whilst issues of abuse are matters of real concern for the Zimbabwean populace there is not nearly enough being done to curtail this situation. As much as the songs speak of the plight of particular social groups they are in fact indictments against the society that allows this to happen. Mtukudzi uses these songs to address larger social issues that might otherwise go unmentioned and unchallenged.

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[37] A Zimbabwean children's game that involves jumping, dancing and generally huge amounts of energy.

Chapter Four

AIDS and Politics in Zimbabwe

Zimbabwe is currently labouring under a growing dictatorship and an increasing number of HIV/AIDS infections, matters that pertain to politics and sexuality have become central to the national life of the country. Yet even as these crises become more apparent, the means to addressing them are less so. The Zimbabwean government will not tolerate any utterance that they deem to be anti-government and issues of sexuality continue to be taboo. As a result both topics are not spoken of and remain shrouded in silence. In view of his popularity and self-acclaimed social responsibility, it is hardly surprising that Mtukudzi has taken it upon himself to address these issues. He has been consciously bringing into the public arena topics are not usually discussed publicly. But as with many other Shona musicians he is not always explicit in his reference to these topics, this is especially true of the political issues. In this chapter I will examine a number of songs that deal with both these topics: the political situation in Zimbabwe and the HIV/AIDS pandemic. This chapter will concentrate on the strategies that Mtukudzi uses to address these matters in a climate of forced silence.

Whilst Mtukudzi sings about myriad of other issues that are of social relevance and interest for his Zimbabwean audience, there are few concerns that exceed the preoccupation with HIV/AIDS and politics. The political situation is continually deteriorating with ever increasing political repression, matched only by a declining economic situation. Similarly the numbers of HIV/AIDS infections, ailments, deaths and orphans, as well as related social ills have increased drastically and show no signs of abating. These two matters far more than any other, have had, and continue to have, the most pronounced and lasting impact on the nation as a whole. This is one of the reasons why these particular themes have been singled out for discussion here. What makes them of especial interest in this instance is that they provide an opportunity to analyse the manner in which Mtukudzi goes about dealing with issues that are not generally openly discussed.

The possibility of persecution for any anti-government statement is a reality faced by anyone who speaks out against the government. So it is instructive to closely analyse the music of Mtukudzi to determine how he manages to critique the government without enduring the wrath that many before him have faced. Similarly with his discussion of AIDS he is again touching on a taboo subject, for it is not only the stigma of AIDS that must be contended with, but also the fact that it relates to sex. Issues of sex and sexuality are not talked about, as was discussed in the previous chapter. However it is also indisputable that any discussion of AIDS requires venturing into the sexual terrain. This is especially true of a society like Zimbabwe were it has been found that the highest incidences of transmission occur within sexual relationships[38]. This chapter, using Mtukudzi's music, will address itself mainly to understanding why Mtukudzi chooses to speak on issues that appear to be prohibited, firstly. And secondly, how he does so without compromising the content of the music and thus conveying his message, whilst at the same time not alienating his audience or agitating the authorities.

Zimbabwe: A Socio-political Overview

> *No more internal power struggles, we come together to over come our little troubles so soon we will find out who is the real revolutionary cause I don't want my people ... to be tricked by mercenaries. Bob Marley*

These were words written especially for Zimbabwe and sung personally by Bob Marley at Rufazo stadium on that momentous occasion to mark the independence of Zimbabwe in April 1980. The current political situation in Zimbabwe is quite contrary to the one that moved Bob Marley, and indeed innumerable local artists, to celebrate the realisation of independence and the end to internal strife. Indeed the discussion of political issues has assumed the level of a dangerous undertaking since the outbreak of political and land related violence over the last few years. Increasingly fewer Zimbabweans are willing to openly discuss political issues especially if they are critical of the government or its policies (Eyre; 2001).

[38] This assumption is based on the fact that Zimbabwe does not have a strong intravenous drug use culture. Additionally the *HIV/AIDS and Social Assistance in South Africa* study undertaken by Black Sash looked at other countries including Zimbabwe, and found that donated blood is tested for the virus to minimise infection. This, taken in conjunction with the continued practice of polygamy or the

Although it is not possible to pinpoint one particular event that has precipitated the decline in the political and economic situation in the country, a number of events since 2000 have led to a marked deterioration in the state of affairs. In order to understand the significance of Mtukudzi's songs that refer specifically to the political situation in Zimbabwe, an understanding of the prevailing situation is necessary. Many believe that the rejection of proposed changes to the constitution in a referendum in 2000 was the first step towards the political crisis as it was the first real sign of opposition to ZANU PF's leadership. This rejection of the proposed constitution was then followed by a significant loss of seats during the parliamentary elections of the same year. Although having maintained a majority of seats, the ruling party lost 57 of the 120 seats to the newly established Movement for Democratic Change (MDC). The violence[39] that marred the lead up to the elections resulted in at least 31 people, mainly believed to be members of the opposition, being killed, and brought into question the validity and fairness of the electoral process[40] (Chinaka; 2000).

While the nation was still reeling from the referendum results and gearing itself up for the election, the land redistribution policy led to farm invasions by war veterans, bringing with it additional turmoil and violence. More than 1000 farms were taken over and scores of people were killed, injured or left homeless (Greenhill; 2000). The manner in which these farm taker-overs were done, and the unnecessary loss of life that accompanied them, furthered the hostility that the people were already feeling towards the state. These sentiments were exacerbated by the fact that government ministers were benefiting from an undertaking meant to benefit the poor and disposed by acquiring at times several, farms for themselves. In addition the general perception

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modern accepted version of a man having a wife (usually in the rural areas) and a mistress, it is safe to conclude that most infections occur within sexual relationships (Eyre; 2001).

[39] The extent of the fear that prevailed during that time is clearly illustrated by the fact that the editor of *The Financial Gazette* felt it necessary to write an editorial urging people not to allow themselves to be intimidated into not exercising their right to vote. See *The Financial Gazette* 22 June 2000 www.africaonline.com/fingaz

[40] The opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC) rejected these and the subsequent presidential election results declaring that the entire process was rigged and refusing to acknowledge the authority of the president. It is interesting to note also that whilst many countries and independent observers felt the election was neither free nor fair, South Africa come under a lot of criticism for its failure to concur with these findings. Indeed the South African government has come under a lot of criticism, internally and externally, for its failure to take more decisive action against the Zimbabwean government. The MCD is especially vocal against South Africa's quiet diplomacy, which they feel validates the illegitimate government of Zimbabwe.

was that the war veterans were a law unto themselves and that indeed the government was not capable of stopping them once they had embarked upon their part of (re)possessive destruction[41]. The take over of farms concurrently with another drought has led to massive food shortages that continue to plague the country in what is being called a humanitarian disaster. In his address to parliament in 2003 President Mugabe said it was estimated that at least 6.1 million people would be affected by the lack of food (*The Herald;* 2002). This figure has dropped to 5 million this year, but that is just under half the population (Mills; 2003).

The continued lack of political stability has had a devastating impact on the economy of Zimbabwe. Once considered one of the more stable and productive countries in the Southern African region, it is now one of the three developing countries were the standard of living has dropped to below pre-independence levels. The rate of inflation is about 450% making staple foods like bread and mealie meal, when available, virtually unaffordable. There is a shortage of petrol and foreign currency with which to buy more, and this, it is thought, is one of the primary reasons for the government's unpopularity (Mills; 2003). The impact on the country's industrial sector has been equally devastating with over 400 firms and factories closing down in 2000 resulting in over 10 000-job losses in a single year, placing the rate of unemployment at over 50%. The economic crisis and challenges to its political authority has led to increased state repression and intolerance of remonstrations against the government.

This political and economic malaise is compounded by the fact that the current President though having been at the helm for 23 years, is reluctant to relinquish power. The situation that has arisen is that of power centred around a personality and not a government. The result has been an unchallenged autocratic style of rule that tolerates no opposition or censure. Surrounded by kleptocratic, self-aggrandising sycophants many people hold Mugabe personally responsible for the problems that are engulfing Zimbabwe. Calls for his resignation have been rampant, but a successor within his party structure is yet to be identified, suggesting very strongly that the prospects of retirement remain but a vain hope in the hearts of Zimbabweans. It has

[41] There is general speculation that the government introduced the land reforms when it did and encouraged the war veterans to go on a rampage to divert attention from its constitutional defeat and the threats to its power being made by the MDC.

often been suggested that the success of the MDC is largely a reflection of the electorate's desire for change, in showing such unprecedented support for any opposition party Zimbabweans were trying to vote ZANU PF and Mugabe out, as opposed to voting the MDC in. It is within this volatile and dangerous political situation that Mtukudzi writes his music.

Music and Politics in Zimbabwe

The role and function of music within society has already been discussed in chapter 2. The particular relationship of music and politics within a Zimbabwean context and Mtukudzi's own contribution thereto shall be the focus of this section. Music has played a significant role in the shaping of the political fortunes of Zimbabwe. As already mentioned musicians made a significant contribution to the struggle for independence by using music to inform and mobilise the masses around a common cause. Mtukudzi's own contribution to this struggle is well documented (Pongweni (1982), Turino (2000), Jones (1992), Kwaramba (1997) and Zindi (1985). The importance of music in the political arena is reflected in the attention that is paid to it by the government and the uses to which it is put. Vambe[42] (2000) looks at how the state in Zimbabwe has, over the years, not only suppressed the music that it does not approve of, but encourages the production of music that supports its policies and perpetuates a particular view or stand point. Indeed Mutonya (mimeo) concurs with this view with illustrations of how in like fashion the Kenyan state promoted artists and cultural products that presented it in a positive light.

Although Zimbabwe has an official censorship board[43] it is seldom used to censor artistic products that are critical of the state. Indeed, it is more commonly used, and even that is infrequent, for the purposes of vetting obscenities within art than anything else (Eyre; 2000). However despite this seemingly permissive approach to art, many

[42] Vambe looks at how music was used to promote a particular perception of the liberation struggle giving the impression that it was a singularly Shona undertaking and a depiction of the Ndebeles as the enemy during the state sponsored attack on them. But after the signing of the Unity Accord in 1997 songs about the need for unity and patriotism were fore grounded in preference those that were considered divisive.

[43] Although artist productions have themselves not been directly censored, giving the impression that the constitutionally guaranteed right to freedom of expression is still recognised, the much publicised repression of press freedoms in Zimbabwe invalidates claims to these rights continuing to exist.

are quick to point out that censorship, though not overt, still exists in Zimbabwe. It is believed that the censorship that prevails in Zimbabwe stems primarily from the prevalent political climate which infuses artistics with a sense of fear of reprisal leading to a silence that does not necessitate any direct form of censoring action from the state.

Eyre (2001) talks about a climate of self-censorship that exists among artists induced less by any overt actions taken by the government against them, and more by an inherent fear of retribution from the state. There is a general perception that any negative appraisal of the state will result in imprisonment or worse thus, discouraging not just artists but the general populace from expressing their honest opinions about the current political situation. However, despite this climate of fear there are artists who do speak out against the excesses of the government, not least among them being Oliver Mtukudzi. In his study Eyre found that it is generally the lesser-known artists who have experienced intimidation or threats from the government. Eyre asserts that the more popular an artist is the less likely they are to suffer adversely for their music, regardless of how critical they are of the state. It is believed that any action taken against them would lead to a public outcry making them even more popular and increasing the desire by the public to hear the offending song, thus working against the government's intentions.

Vambe adds to this the fact that artists like Mtukudzi and Thomas Mapfumo who have already established themselves need not worry about how they are perceived by the state. Having attained their success before independence they have already established themselves. This success having been realised without state patronage the threat of not being publicised through the state media, or not being recorded, at all is not a concern they share with artists who are not yet established. Most other artists rely either on performing for the state during official functions or they rely on the Zimbabwe Broadcasting Co-operation (ZBC) to publicise them and increase their record sales. Although the recording companies are meant to be independent, their adherence to the dictates of the state ensures that they continue to run their businesses. They are therefore usually unwilling to risk recording an unknown artist criticising the

government who will not generate the kinds of sales that make the risk worthwhile[44]. It is these forms of censorship that contribute to the resounding silence that greets the deteriorating political and economic situation in Zimbabwe.

Sherman (1980; 77) rightly states that "songs are the newspapers for non-literate people". People who do not have access to news, because of literacy issues or otherwise, usually find that there is a song particularly popular at the time that will discuss the political situation, especially if the situation is negative. This is in no way to suggest that music can replace news reporting, but in many instances it is the way that people are informed and and also misinformed. However, throughout the history of Zimbabwe there have been songs sung about every conceivable political occurrence, and in many instances the popularity of the song has more to do with its political message than its musicality. Mtukudzi, like his contemporaries, has kept abreast with current issues through the music he produces, from the songs he sung before the attainment of independence until the present. I shall now turn to two very recent songs that address themselves to the political situation in Zimbabwe.

[44] Both Vambe and Eyre give interesting accounts of the role played by both the media and the recording companies in contributing to the censorship of Zimbabwean musicians.

Magumo

Ma ulemali enengi besuhlupa abantu
Uzotholani ngalokho?
Uzophelelaphi? Wo
Uzophelelaphi?

When you have lots of money then you start to trouble people
What do you hope to gain with that?
Where will you end up? Wo
Where will you end up?

Kuzvirova dinduru
Tozvinzwa kuti ndisu tiri pano
Mugumo acho chii?
Tingazvirova matundundu
Kushambadza kuti apo
Magumo acho chii?

You beat your chest
Feeling all your importance
How will you end up? x 3
You may beat you your chest
Screaming that you are important
But how will you end up?

Todadira vamwe, kutsvinya
Kuvaona sevasi vanhu
Uzotholani ngalokho
Mugumo acho chii?

You look down upon others, despising them
As if they were not human beings

(Repeat above verse)

Chorus x 4

Kusatya Mwari
Mhedzisiro yacho chii?
Magumo acho chii?
Wo uzophelelaphi
Mhedzisiro yacho chii?
Magumo acho chii?

How will you end up?
Where will it all end?

You don't respect god
What will be the end?
How will it all end?

Chorus
Mhedzisiro yacho chii?
Magumo acho chii?

When you have lots of power then you start to trouble people
You may have power, lots of power
And you oppress those who are weak
How will it end?

Ungangodaro une simba,
simba rakawanda
Ukadzanya akaota
Magumo acho chii?
Ma ulamandla amakhulu besuhlupa abantu uzotholani ngalokho?
Magumo acho chii?
Ugodaro une mari mari yakawanda
Ukudzvanya akaota
Magumo acho chii?
Ma ulemali enengi besuhlupa abantu
Uzotholani ngalokho?
Magumo acho chii?

You may have money, lots of money
But you oppress those who are weak
How will it all end?
Do whatever you do in a refined way

Softly, softly, in a dignified way

Kudadira vamwe, kutsvinya

Kuona sevasi vanhu
Uzotholani ngalokho

Magumo acho chii?
Uzotholani ngalokho
Mhedzisiro yacho chii?

Chorus

Famba famba famba zvine tsika (repeat)
Ma ulamandla amakhulu besuhlupa abantu
uzotholani ngalokho?
Nyada nyada zvine hunhu (repeat)
Ma ulemali enengi besuhlupa abantu
Uzotholani ngalokho?

Kudadira vamwe, kutsvinya
Kuona sevasi vanhu
Uzotholani ngalokho

Kusatya Mwari
Mhedzisiro yacho chii?
Magumo acho chii?
Wo uzophelelaphi
Mhedzisiro yacho chii?
Magumo acho chii?

This song is a warning against the corrupting effects of the excesses of power and money. Sung as though directed to a specific individual, Mtukudzi cautions against allowing power and money to turn one into a tyrant. The song speaks to an individual who, having acquired personal wealth and power begins to not only feel that he or she is important, but feels the need to declare their importance. It is this self-importance that leads to the abuse of their power and their wealth resulting in the oppression of those who are weaker and less fortunate than they are. The question throughout the song to this individual is how they envision that this abuse of power will end. What shall, indeed, be the end of that particular individual now that they have forsaken respect for other people and God for the heady pleasures of materiality and domination. The song ends advising the individual to tread gently with care, because a fall is always preceded by pride. The singer also points out that there is no honour in

cruelty and the oppression of the weak and the poor, it is cheap victory attainable to anyone willing to try.

Although this song make no direct mention of the President of Zimbabwe one can infer from the lyrics that this is to whom the song is addressed. Having assumed power, Mugabe has not only amassed a staggering personal fortune, he has also steadily enhanced his power and control through 16 amendments to the constitution since taking over the country in 1980. Most of these changes have been made with the sole purpose of consolidating his control over the state without any threats from contradictory forces. Mugabe's own sense of importance is exemplified by the measures he has taken to retain political control over Zimbabwe. Not only has his authority and fortune increased, but he has used these to oppress the nation which grows steadily poorer and weaker. The brutal oppression of the opposition and the treatment of farmers and farm labourers during the run up to the elections and the land redistribution, respectively, are clear illustrations of the excesses that Mtukudzi sings about and against. The question of how it will all end is a question that haunts the national psyche, with everyone wondering, firstly how the current socio-political crisis can be brought to end, and secondly, how the tyrannical rule of Mugabe shall be brought to an end.

Interestingly, this songs uses a combination of both Ndebele and Shona far more extensively than many of his other songs where he tends to include a line or two of Ndebele but use Shona in the main. By privileging both languages in this song Mtukudzi universalises the indictment against Mugabe, making it a national issue as opposed to an ethnic one. Relations between the Shona and the Ndebele have always been very poor, with political issues largely being decided on ethnic terms. However recent anti-Mugabe sentiment has eroded many of these hostilities, bringing these two hostile ethnic groups together again as they once stood united against colonial forces. Therefore in singing in both languages, Mtukudzi appears to be saying that the nation speaks in a unified voice against your corruption and your excesses. Whereas before it would have been mainly Ndebeles speaking against the government, now the entire nation is speaking in one voice saying the same thing with that voice.

Typical of Mtukudzi's style he makes no direct reference to Mugabe but sings in such a way that one naturally concludes that it is to him that the song is directed. All of Mtukudzi's songs, especially the ones that comment on the powers that be, are couched in innuendo and make no direct mention of the actual person or persons about whom they speak. The first reason for this approach is obviously the concern for security. It is far safer to sing in vague generalities. As Mtukudzi's fans are familiar with his way of treating sensitive issues they will read the sub-text and draw the conclusions he wants them to draw from his songs. Although Eyre (2001) suggests that Mtukudzi's popularity renders him a virtual untouchable, it is safe to assume that if the Zimbabwean government was sufficiently provoked it would mete out swift and possibly permanent punishment.

Additional to the concerns with security, I would suggest that Mtukudzi's style of non-direct criticism stems from his very strong Shona background. While Shona tradition encourages criticism of those in power there is a way in which it is done which I believe has had a strong influence on the manner in which Mtukudzi criticisms those in power in his songs. During an interview with Eyre he confirmed that he does use his music to criticise but that consistent with his custom he does so with respect. Implying therefore that it is not the fact that the government is criticised that would be objectionable but rather the manner in which that criticism is done. Whilst I argue that there is validity to Mtukudzi's position, I do believe there is an element of naivety in his assertion. I argue that because of his chosen manner of expressing his criticism it is far easier for the government to give alternative interpretations of his songs. For it is indeed possible to read the songs superficially and not see in them any of the subtexts that other readings of Mtukudzi bring out.

But the fact that Mtukudzi is not explicit in his criticism is I believe part of the power of his work. Were he to state outright that this song is about Mugabe, and how he is a rapacious and tyrannical ruler I think the level of engagement with his text would be significantly diminished. Frith (1996) argues that studies have found that Euro-American audiences rarely engage with the lyrics of a song even when they know and understand the lyrics. By making the meaning of his work obscure Mtukudzi forces the listener to not only decipher meaning for themselves but also contextualise the subtext thus familiarising themselves with the particular situation about which he

sings, in this case the politics of Zimbabwe. Indeed the differing meanings of his songs have opened up many debates even in the media as differing listeners proffer alternative interpretations of his works.

Magumo opens with an acoustic guitar playing in a style reminiscent of s'manje manje and is joined by the synthesiser playing in a 1980s South African soul mbaqanga mode typical of the Soul Brother's style of playing. Even the voice in which Mtukudzi sings is suggestive of the Soul Brother's[45] vocal quivering style of singing. The lead guitar is introduced in a similar mode and the song assumes a very upbeat, almost frivolous quality that belies the seriousness of the subject matter. This tempo and style is maintained throughout the entire song. The tune is very catchy and danceable, evoking 1980's Zimbabwean townships. The music conjures up memories of swaying terelena skirts, georgette blouses with big prints, snow white takkies in dusty township streets and the beer hall blaring out the latest over synthesised hits, and the children who sell cigarettes and boiled eggs at the beer hall doing the latest dance just to pass the time. Only in the chorus does the music change slightly to talk about the fact that even the respect for God is clearly absent from the actions of the individual that the song is singing about.

The vocals in this song are not especially remarkable when one considers the effects Mtukudzi is able to accomplish vocally. The vocals only alter to ask the questions in the song, but typically of Mtukudzi, the response is never forthcoming. Instead it is left up to the listeners to determine an answer for themselves. The power of this song in my opinion lies with its very 1980's feel which serves to evoke the years immediately after independence when the nation was still brimming over with hope for the future and pride over the newly attained independence[46]. By taking his audience back to this time with music that rouses memories of the 'good old days' and juxtaposing such romanticised recollections with the realities of Zimbabwe today, he is able to not only magnify the current situation, but also reiterate the need for change. The tune also gives the song a poignancy that so aptly captures the

[45] Interestingly Allington et al. (1994) state that the Soul Brothers derived their style of singing from Shona influences describing their singing style as "two part almost quavering vocal harmonies inspired by certain Shona groups popular in Zimbabwe in the early 1970s".

Zimbabwean situation, the melancholy in the lyrics imbedded in such joviality, reflects the tragedy of Zimbabwe, the euphoria over the land redistribution policy over shadowing the destruction that has been wrought by the manner in which it was done.

It is through such juxtaposition that the strength of the song is truly to be found. The tune in evoking the 1980's makes the song appealing especially to those who can remember what Zimbabwe was like in the 1980s. Without speaking directly against the government or inciting people to riotous acts of rebellion through anything he actually says, Mtukudzi is still able to move people to a point where they begin to question the actions of government. This song not only reminds people of the fact that they live under the dictates of an oppressive state, but also of the fact that once they stood together, fought for and won their independence from an even more tyrannical system.

Wasakara

Verse 1
Bvuma, Bvuma iwe
Bvuma Bvuma chege
Bvuma wasakara
Bruma waunyana
Bvuma wasakara
Bvuma waunyana

Chorus
Kuchembera chiva kuchembera x3

Verse 2
Imi mai makwegura hamucharigona machemembera
Makuara ka musazoramba
(Kuchembera chiva kuchembera)
nemi baba garirai mvone
mwana yave mhandara
makura ka musazoramba
(Kuchembera chiva kuchembera)

Verse 3
Agree agree you
Agree you are old
Agree you are wrinkled
Agree you are old
Agree you are wrinkled

Chorus
Ageing, be proud of ageing

Mother you have moved on
You can't do it anymore you are old
You're old don't refuse

Father look at your daughter
She is a young woman now
You are old don't refuse

Chorus

Ageing is a sign of a long time x2
Ageing is a sign of a long life x2

[46] Despite the years of state sponsored attacks on the Ndebele after independence, there continued to exist a sense of hope in the future because it was a future to be determined by the indigenous people for themselves.

Kuchembera mucherechidzo wenguva yakareba x2
Kuchembera ndizo ndizo nenguva yakawanda x2

Chorus
(Repeat verse 2)

Chisvo kuunyana, mweya inhandara
Kudza kusakara, kudasha vakomana

Chorus
Repeat v2
Chorus

Chorus
(Repeat verse 2)

Your face is wrinkled
Your heart still feels young
Be respectful of getting old
It is god's wish that you age

Of all the songs that Mtukudzi has released in recent years this is possibly his most popular and powerful within Zimbabwe. Its significance does not only stem from what the song is interpreted as saying but more significantly its reception throughout the country. This song has been interpreted as telling Mugabe that after 23 years in powers he is too old to continue and must graciously step down. Coming at a time when Zimbabwe is experiencing its worst political crisis since independence it could not have been better timed.

The opposition party MDC adopted this song as its unofficial national anthem, which they feel, captures their political sentiments most aptly. Indeed there have been incidences relating to the song that illustrate its political force without being overtly political. When it was first released in Zimbabwe, the police confiscated copies of the CDs and cassettes from flea markets and record outlets[47]. In addition to the above a lighting technician at one of Mtukudzi's shows was arrested and detained for 4 days for shining the spot light on the picture of Mugabe during the singing of this song. ZANU PF supporters demanding that the song not be sung have disrupted several live performances with threats of violence against the artist and the crowd should the song be sung. Mtukudzi himself has been questioned by the police about the meaning of the song but he has never been formally charged with anything, and his shows are usually closely monitored by the state intelligent unit.

[47] These incidences were later explained as having been undertaken to stop pirated copies from being sold on the streets. The CD was subsequently made readily available.

Because of his reluctance to publicly discuss politics, Mtukudzi refuses to confirm the publicly accepted interpretation of his song. During an interview with Eyre (2001) he points out that this song is a re-release from one of his much early works and the song was written upon the realisation of his own ageing process. Whilst the truth of this claim is not disputed one must question Mtukudzi's motive for releasing this song again at a point in the political history of Zimbabwe when the nation is calling for the resignation of the aged president. I argue that it is a deliberate and well thought out move on Mtukudzi's part expressing through his music the sentiment of the majority of the nation through the subtle and clever manipulation of his music. Even the simple act of changing the title from *Bvuma* (accept it or admit it) which was the title of the original release to *Wasakara* (you are old) is clearly indicative of what is he is trying to put across and it is politically loaded. The change of the title shifts the emphasis of the song from simply urging someone to acceptance the ageing process to a categorical statement declaring the person being address as old and therefore no longer capable of the things of youth.

The songs is presented as though it were addressing an ageing person who refuses to accept that they are old and is therefore not ageing as graciously as they should. The song urges those getting old to accept the ageing process as not only the will of God, but also as a reflection of the fact that they have had a full life. Strong contrasts between young and old are drawn in order to persuade the old person being addressed to relinquish their clinging to youth. The song is also presented as a celebration of the ageing process. Within many African societies the privilege of getting old is marked by benefits and preferential treatment that only the old are privy to. Due to the political situation in Zimbabwe and judging by the timing of the re-release of this particular song it is understandable why its reading has been political in slant.

The song has been interpreted as a call to Mugabe to relinquish his position of power. The length of time in power not withstanding Mugabe is now 80 years old and is therefore considered too old to continue to run the country. The song is less an admonishment and more an encouragement, to the person being addressed to accept that they are old and must not regard it as a negative thing but should rather rejoice the honour and privileges that come with ageing. It is these things that Mtukudzi is attempting to highlight in this song. With particular reference to Mugabe the song is

addressing itself not only to the fact he has held power for such a long time, or indeed the fact that he is old, but his apparent failure to realise these things.

This song opens with the acoustic guitar and the congas playing rather hesitantly and are quickly joined by a harp like instrument with metal strings playing at a high pitch evoking sounds like the kora from west Africa. The kora sounding instruments dominates the introduction but because the pitch is so high it has a isolated tinge to it. There is a hesitation and gentleness in the way in which this instrument is played as though broaching an awkward and difficult subject. This is consistent with what the song is attempting to do. In Shona culture the elderly are treated with the utmost respect and for a younger person to inform their elder that they are old and must act accordingly is not something that would be done lightly. This quality in the song does not last long as the drums and the bass guitar are introduced and they embolden the quality of the sound while slightly increasing the tempo of the song. But the song never assumes the vibrant dance quality that one anticipates on first hearing the drums, instead it maintains a slightly muted and respectful quality throughout.

What is notable about the music is that in its consistence of rhythm and tempo it has an almost coaxing quality to it. One is left with the impression that the singer is trying to lure this elderly person into acknowledging their age and their inability to fulfil the role of the youth any longer. This is especially true of the harp-like instrument, which plays the same high tinkering sound throughout the song as though it bears within its sound all the sweet promise of age. Another interesting aspect of the song is the fact that it has a very acoustic quality to the sound. There is no electronic instrumentation that is discernible. This gives the song an old quality in keeping with the person being address by the song. The music and the quality and sound of the music are all age appropriate and designed to appeal to an elderly person who must be lured into accepting their age. This approach is in accordance with Shona custom where an elderly person no matter how inappropriate their behaviour or how wrong they are is admonished or corrected in the mildest and most respectful of terms.

Vocally the song opens with Mtukudzi singing on his own, saying admit it, accept that you are old and you are wrinkled. These lines are delivered with a muted urging, pleading quality to his voice and this is the same voice that he uses all throughout the

song as he makes various points to illustrate that this person is indeed old and must now relinquish the pretence to youth. This same tone is adopted by the backing vocalists who come in after the chorus and take over where Mtukudzi has left off. They too present their own examples of why this person is now old in support of Mtukudzi's urgings that they admit they are old and no longer able to do the work they once could. Never at any point does the singing style alter significantly, the music and the vocals maintain that persuasive quality intended to entice the aged one to accept the workings of nature and embrace their age. This singing and music style is carried on until the end of the song which closes on the same quiet note that it began with.

The approach that is assumed by the artist in this song can be likened to the quiet diplomacy that some African heads of state have used in their relations with Mugabe. Realising that Mugabe has not responded positively to the threats and the demands of the Western powers many African heads of state have opted for a more diplomatic approach to the crisis is Zimbabwe. Mtukudzi would appear to be adopting a similar stance, informed by not only his awareness of Mugabe's reactions but also his culture which necessitates just such an approach.

What is most effective about this song is that like *Magumo* he is not politically explicit but this song being re-released at this juncture in Zimbabwe's history could only have been interpreted as being a song about the president. But because he does not state as much himself the listener is again forced to listen closely and draw their own conclusion based on what they know and understand of the political situation in Zimbabwe. Mtukudzi's Zimbabwean audience has come to expect this of his work and will invariably look for the sub-text in his work, especially if it is about politics. Although for security reasons Mtukudzi will deny the political interpretation of his music, there is very little doubt that especially with this song it was done with the deliberate intention of being construed by the Zimbabwean listener just as they have done.

HIV/AIDS in Zimbabwe

The prevalence of HIV/AIDS infections is most rife within Southern Africa, and Zimbabwe ranks third highest in the world for infection rates. Part of the reason for

this high rate of infection is because it was not until 1999 that the government of Zimbabwe acknowledged that there was an HIV/AIDS crisis in the country after many years of denial. According to statistics more than 2000 Zimbabweans die from AIDS related infection each month and it is believed that by the year 2005 at least 1.1 million people will have died (Fox; 2001). The result of this rate of infection has been to reduce life expectancy from 57 years to 39 years and it is believed that it will drop further still within the next 10 years (*AIDS Weekly;* 1997). It is believed that at least 60 000 babies are born with the virus annually, catapulting mother to child transmission high in the modes of transmission. Concomitants with HIV/AIDS are the opportunistic infections that plague Zimbabwe most notably TB and malaria, which undermine any real efforts towards the treatment of the disease (*The Herald;* 2002). The increase in the number of AIDS orphans is of particular concern especially when it is combined with the fact that it is the most productive segment of the population that is dying from AIDS. The elderly, relatives or the children themselves, look after the children whose parents have died.

Despite the lateness in their start to treat the disease the government of Zimbabwe has made great strides since 1999 to handle the situation. Additional to the efforts being made by NGOs and international organisation to combat the disease the government has also undertaken a number of programmes and implemented policies to provide the necessary care and treatment for those affected and their families[48]. However despite the fact that measures are being carried out to combat the pandemic there appears to be no improvement in the situation. It is suggested that part of the primary problem is that people continue to be ignorant about matters pertaining to AIDS and its transmission. There is "a lack of information on the benefits to clients, the community and health personnel. The implications of testing positive, cultural and traditional beliefs regarding breast feeding and the lack of participation by male partners" (*The Herald*; 2000) all serve to impede the progress of any undertaking.

As mentioned before beyond the stigma that attends HIV/AIDS, there is the additional problem of a culture of silence around sexual matters. This prevents any treatment or policy making any significant inroads unless people are informed and educated about

the need to change their behavioural patterns. Again as stated the discussion of sexual matters is considered taboo and needs to be introduced gradually if it hopes to have any success. However the urgency of the situation faced by Zimbabwe precludes any gingerly approaches to AIDS issues. The process of education and information has to take place swiftly but without the risk of losing the intended audience by scandalising them into ignoring everything. Creative ways of discussing AIDS have been devised especially with the use of theatre and written materials. However the ability of these media to reach the majority of the country is inhibited by a lack of accessibility. Music stands out as one of the easy and more successful ways of disseminating the information.

The last 10 to 15 years have seen an ever increasing number of medical personnel leaving the country to seek alternative employment were the conditions and remuneration are better. This shortage of qualified medical personnel has meant that people suffering, or thought to be suffering from, HIV/AIDS, are turned away from hospitals to make room for those patients with treatable ailments. The government's policies and programmes not withstanding public hospitals no longer have the capacity to treat the numbers of HIV/AIDS related cases that stream in on a daily basis. The national shortage of medication for even simple ailments has compounded the situation condemning those with even treatable illnesses to death. The poor are the hardest hit by this situation because while the rich can still afford to buy medication where they can find it at exorbitant prices or simply leave the country for treatment elsewhere the same opportunities are not available to the poor. This lack of medication combined with squalid living conditions and poor nutrition has catapulted the epidemic to a veritable plague devouring Zimbabwe.

Additional to these direct impediments to the adequate combating and treatment of HIV/AIDS is now added the political power wrangling that has engulfed the country for the last 4 years. Both the government and the opposition have largely sidelined HIV/AIDS issues as they continue to battle over the control of the nation, which is considered far more important, than dealing with the deaths that are depleting the nation. Neither the government nor the opposition has made any significant mention

[48] See Fox (2001) for a comprehensive look at the AIDS situation in Zimbabwe and the various policies

or efforts to address the issue of AIDS and engage in extensive campaigns to try and stem the tide. Many critics are of the notion that monies spent in the DRC, the election campaigns, and other frivolities that the government frequently dabbles in could be better spent on securing medication, contending with orphans, home based care and AIDS prevention campaigns.

In addressing the AIDS pandemic in his music Mtukudzi has opted for an approach that not only speaks to the horror of the epidemic, but also draws people's attention to the deaths that are occurring all around them as a result. Mtukudzi, opting for the shock approach, makes constant reference to death and the demise of the nation, by so doing he hopes to shock people into changing their behaviour in order to protect themselves against contracting the disease. As has already been acknowledged there is a need in Zimbabwe especially for more direct advocacy for behavioural change and more open and public engagements with issues of sex if any real impact is to be made on this front. Mtukudzi steers clear of any direct mention of sex within his songs about the pandemic[49]. I would argue that this is because customarily it would be inappropriate for a person of his age and statue to make public mention of sex even if it is in a didactic context.

It must, however, be noted that the only mention he makes of any form of sexual engagement is abhorrent behaviour, the abuse of children and rape specifically. These forms of behaviour are considered unnatural and involving an element of violence and it therefore becomes almost a civic duty to speak out against them, and indeed he does even in relation to AIDS. However consensual sex is a far more difficult subject to broach, one would imagine that Mtukudzi's status makes him one of the best placed people to bring this topic into the open. But the potential backlash and the eroding of all other accomplishments is a very real consideration to be factored in[50]. I shall look

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and programmes undertaken by both the government and the non-governmental organisations.

[49] In his song *Tapera,* he comes the closest to directly talking about sex and the fact that it is reckless sexual behaviour that is causing the pandemic. This song is addressed at men who behave like children and get over excited by the prospects of being with young women that they no longer behave like grown men should.

[50] As mentioned before the level of conservativeness in Zimbabwe is such that certain American rap videos will not be aired because of their explicit nature. Even the provocative kwasa kwasa dance introduced by the Congolese has been known to cause uproar when performed in public. See Eyre (2001) for an exploration of the restrictions of what is considered obscenity in art productions in Zimbabwe.

at two songs about AIDS by Mtukudzi to assess how he goes about dealing with the issue of AIDS through his music.

Todii

Chorus
Todii?
Senzeni?
What shall we do?
Tingadii
Siyenzenjan'
What shall we do x3

Zvinozwadza seyi kuzeza rufu mumawoko
Kana uyinawo utachiwana x2
Zvinozwadza seyi kuchengeda lufu mumawoko
Kana uyinawo utachiwana
Dzva pazvadabaka pamboreri pasina zaramo
Kana uyinawo utachiwana
Dzva pazvagumbuka pamureri pasina zaramo

Chorus x6

Zvinorwadza sei kubinywa newawugere naye
Kana uyinawo utachiwawana
Zvinorwadza sei kubinya neakabvisa pfuma
Kana uyinawo utachiwana
Achiziva unahwo utachiwana
Kana uyinawo utachiwana
Ende uchiziva unahwo utachiwana
Kana uyinawo utachiwana

Chorus x3

Kuseri kwegiva hakuna munamago vazume tapererwa
Utachiwana
Kondipayi mazamo
Kana uyinawo utachiwana

Kuseri kwegiva hakuna munamago vazume tapererwa
Utachiwana
Kondipayi mazamo
Kana uyinawo utachiwana

Kuseri kweguva hakuna mutewuzo mambo tapererwa
Utachiwana

Chorus:

What shall we do? x2
What can we do?
What shall we do?

How painful is it to look after death with your own hands
(when you have got the disease x2)
How painful is it to keep death in your hands
(when you have got the disease)
Now that you are holding someone that you are caring for knowing there is no survival
(when you have got the disease)
Now that is has germinated on someone and there is no survival

Chorus x 6

How painful is to be raped by someone that you live with
(when they know they've got the disease)
How painful is to be raped by the person who paid dowry for you
(when they know they've got the disease)
And they also know that you've got the disease x 2
(when you know you've got the disease) x 2

Chorus x 3

Beyond the grave there is no prayer
People we are being finished
(the disease)
Please give us advice
(when you know you've got the disease) x 3

Beyond the grave there is no redemption
People we are being finished
(the disease)
Please give us advice
(when you know you've got the disease)

Kondipayi mazano
Kana uyinawo utachiwana

Kuseri kweguva hakuna mutewuzo mambo
tapererwa
Utachiwana
Kondipayi mazano
Kana uyinawo utachiwana

Kuseri kwegiva hakuna munamago vazume
tapererwa
Utachiwana
Kondipayi mazamo
Kana uyinawo utachiwana

Kuseri kweguva hakuna mutewuzo mambo
tapererwa
Utachiwana
Kondipayi mazano
Kana uyinawo utachiwana

Chorus x6

In this song Mtukudzi is not simply addressing 'the disease', but the impact it has on all those directly affected, but especially the caregivers of those infected. By referring to those infected as death he is illustrating the futility and devastation of the situation, the caregivers are no longer looking after a person but death itself, which has already taken over that person. So the caregivers do not hold a person but rather they "hold death in their hands". This is not intended, as it might appear, to dehumanise those suffering from the disease, but rather, by personifying death he forces on the listener a different perspective and in this way forces an acknowledgement and recognition of the seriousness of the situation.

Again the issue of the treatment of woman is the focal point in the second stanza. The compounding tragedy of being raped, and it being done by your husband, when both of you are aware that he is infected with the virus is a reality faced by many women. Mtukudzi therefore uses the issue of HIV/AIDS to address himself to multiple issues. Marital rape is not something many women actually believe happens, most women continue to live under the belief that their husbands are entitled to sex as and when

they please. In this way he attempts to inform women of their rights to say no to sex even with their husbands and condemns the notion of entitlement in men. Being male himself, Mtukudzi's message has more resonance for both men and women.

The irony of the situation is illustrated by his choice to depict the disease as "germinating", the process of realising life, but the result is the opposite. The disease is a parasite living off the dying bodies of those it infects that it may live. And we nurture it enabling it to live, not, as one imagines, by looking after those it infects, but rather by not changing our behavioural modes. So what is being looked after and held in hand in the first stanza is not simply those who are ill, but the disease itself.

Todii opens with the acoustic guitar being plucked in a slow and gentle style to establish the mood of the song. But this is quickly accompanied by strong vocals that almost drown out the guitar asking the same question over and over again in Shona, Ndebele and English "Oh Todii? senzeni? What shall we do? Tingadii? Senzenjani? (pause) What shall we do?" The significance of this question is emphasised by the fact that it not only opens the song, but is repeated twice in three languages. The last time the question is asked in the opening of the song its importance is reiterated a very the dramatic pause before asking again "what shall we do?" and again a pause follows. Such complete silence is very unusual in recorded music and it is quite surprising. The slight stretching of the beat disturbing the underlying rhythm of the song enhances the drama of the pause. But Mtukudzi does not simply want to shock for its own sake, the intention is to capture the attention of the listener from the very start of the song.

Consistent with the questioning nature of the song, Mtukudzi uses a call-and-response style, as he asks the question of what is to be done about HIV/AIDS. In his own voice layered into a two-part harmony, he asks the question and the backing vocalists respond with the same question in a different language giving the impression of speaking almost at cross purposes. This repeated question not only serves to illustrate the difficulty of the situation, but the fact that the same question is asked repeatedly with no answer then throws the question to the audience. The collective 'we' that is used from the start draws the audience into the question and therefore the problem that necessitates the question.

This call-and-response format is used throughout the remainder of the song and again Mtukudzi uses multiple voices to emphasise those aspects of the song that he considers important. His own voice is layered in a two part harmony when he is singing those aspects of the song that are important, and their significance is further enhanced by the fact that he calls and the backing vocals respond. Additional to the opening of the chorus of the song, there are two other parts within the song where he uses this particular style of layering in conjunction with call-and-response.

Mtukudzi: "Bva zvamabata pamuviri *pasina raramo*" (Now that you are holding someone that you are caring for knowing *there is no survival)*
Backing Vocals: "Kana uinawo utachiwana" (when you know you've got the disease)

Mtukudzi: "Bva zvapatumbuka pamuviri *pasina raramo* (Now that is has germinated in someone and you know *there is no survival*
Backing Vocals: "Kana uinawo utachiwana" (when you know you've got the disease)

And again this format is used in the final verse
Mtukudzi: Kuseri kwegiva hakuna *munamago vazume tapererwa* x 2 (Beyond the grave there is *no prayer, people we are being finished)*
Backing vocals: Utachiwana x 2 (the disease)

Mtukudzi: Kuseri kweguva hakuna *mutewuzo mambo tapererwa* x 2 (Beyond the grave there is *no redemption, people we are being finished)*
Backing vocals: Utachiwana x 2 (the disease)

As it clearly illustrated, the layered parts of the songs are those that convey the most important aspects of the song, that there is no hope of surviving this disease once you have it and the fact that we are dying out because of this disease. It is vital to also note the fact that in addition to the layering in the last verse, the entire verse is itself sung to a different melody from the rest of the song. Although the backing instruments maintain the original melody and rhythm the vocals go on a different tangent and sing a new melody, constituting a bridge into the final chorus. This verse is the final reiteration of the futility of the situation, it changes because, unlike the two preceding

verses, it is not describing the various instances of HIV/AIDS and its transmission, this verse is stating that the end is upon us because of this disease.

Contrary to the opening bars the song thereafter become textually rich, thick and deep with a wide array of instruments and voices contributing to the viscous sound. Using a 4/4 beat the melody develops a definite beat consistent with much pop music and it maintains this beat throughout the song. The subject matter is almost obscured by the catchy tune and the popularity the song has attained, especially in countries where Shona is not spoken. Indeed, the song's popularity bears testimony to the 'catchy' pop character of its sound. I posit several reasons for this choice of music to accompany such a grave topic; a juxtaposition that is almost macabre in its joviality.

I argue that in order to attract a wide audience the artist needed to make the tune catchy. The morbid and depressing nature of the subject matter of the song would not have attracted as many people as its musical characteristics do. In order for the message of the song to be spread wide the music itself needed to have a stronger allure than the lyrics. The message of the song is eventually absorbed because of the continued listening to the song for its music. In addition to wanting to appeal to as wide an audience as possible, the artist had to contend with the social realities of Zimbabwe where topics of a sexual nature are not subject to public debate and discussion. In order to bring a taboo issue into the hearts and homes of Zimbabwe it had to be done with music under the guise of frivolity and trivia, thus opening up spaces for discussions that are not always easy to broach.

But beyond opening spaces and attracting an audience it is my contention that Mtukudzi uses the music as a reflection and representation of people's attitudes to HIV/AIDS iteslf and the kind of lifestyle that continues to dominate our society. As in life, the message of HIV/AIDS in the song is almost obscured by the music, and although we are all aware of the existence of HIV/AIDS we continue, like the music, to be carefree and oblivious to the obvious. The presence of the pandemic is overshadowed by hedonistic pursuits. However, in spite of is populist musical form one can hear within the music the reminder of the severity of the situation through the bass guitar, which plays the reality that is life. The bass guitar is constantly in the background playing an ominous beat reminiscent of a death knell as a reminder of the

persistent presence of death, even as it is shrouded in the sounds of jocular dance music. Like the disease in the song that runs the risk of being lost in the music, the bass like death lurks between the surface of every expression of life.

The song ends in an almost identical fashion to the way it started. It closes with the same question asked in the call-response style, the last "what shall be do?" ending on the sharp and abrupt suggestion of the pause in the beginning, and with this question hanging, the song ends.

Mabasa

Chorus:
Haiwaiwa hoiwaiwaiwa
Ndozviudza aniko
Kuti paota mabasa pano
Tumirai mhere kuvakuru kuno kwaita mabasa
Ndozviudza aniko, kwafukudzika vakuruweeeeee
kwaita mabasa kuno
Haiwaiwa
kwaita mabasa

Chorus:
No no no no no
Who do I tell that there is work here?
Send word to the elders that there is work here
Who shall I tell that we are covering an elder?
There is work here no no no no the work

Misodzi yapera hapana achachema
Zvakurwadzira mumoyo chinyararire (chinyararire)
Iko kubata maokohakuchina chiremerera
Kwafumuka uko zvichabatsirei (kwafumuka)
Hausi huchenjeri kusara takararama varume
Kana kuri kungwara uko tichavigwa naniko nani

The tears have dried up there is no-one crying anymore
It is only painful in the heart, quietly
Passing condolences has lost all meaning
It is out in the open it does not help anymore
It is not wise to be to be ones left alive, people
If it is wise then who going bury us?

(chorus)

(Chorus)

Achachema mumwe ndiyani
Achanyaradza mumwe ndiyani
Achabata maoko mumwe ndiyani
Iwe wafiwra ini ndafirwa
Zvino achachema mumwe ndiyaniko vakuruwe
Firo yavako makore ano
Kana ndiyo medzisiro yenyika

Who is going to cry for another?
Who is going to comfort another?
Who is going to pass condolences to another?
There is death in your family
There is death in my family
Who is going to cry for the other?

(plea to the elders)

Achachema mumwe ndiyani
Achanyaradza mumwe ndiyani
Achabata maoko mumwe ndiyani

The kind of death that this is these days?
Maybe it is end of the nation
Who is going to cry for another?
Who is going to comfort another?
Who is going to pass condolences to another?
(chant to elders or god)
there is work here
(chorus)

Nhai vakuru vevakuruwe
Hooo vakuru vevakuruwe
Inga paita mabasa pano

(Chorus)

Pwere dzotungamira
Mushandi votungamira
Sare chembere neharahwa
Zvino acharinda mumwe ndiyani

The children are leading
The workers are leading
We only have elderly people left

Achabata maoko mumwe ndiyani
Achachema mumwe ndiyani
Iwe wafiwra ini ndafirwa
Zvino achachema mumwe ndiyaniko

Nhai vakuru vevakuruwe
Hooo vakuru vevakuruwe
Nhai vakuru vevakuruwe
Inga paita mabasa pano

(Chorus)

Misodzi yapera hapana achachema
Zvakurwadzira mumoyo chinyararire
(chinyararire)
Iko kubata maokohakuchina chiremerera
Kwafumuka uko zvichabatsirei
(kwafumuka)
Hausi huchenjeri kusara takararama
varume
Kana kuri kungwara isu tichavigwa naniko
nani

Haaaa n haaaaa
Ndozviudza aniko
Kuti paita mabasa pano
Tumirai mhere kuvakuru kuti kuno kwaita
mabasa
Kwafukudzika vakuruweee
Kwaita mabasa kuno
Kwaita mabasa
Kwaita mabasa
Kwaita mabasa
Kwaita mabasa

Chorus

Who is going to comfort another?
Who is going to pass condolences?
Who is going to cry for another?
You have death in your family
I have death in my family
Who is going to cry for another please
(chant to elders or god)
there is work here

(chorus)

Repeat verse 1

Who do I tell that there is work here?
Send word to the elders that there is work
here
We are covering an elder
There is work here
There is work
There is work
There is work
There is work

Unlike *Todii* this particular song does not make direct reference to AIDS but discusses the disease through the repeated mention of those who are dying. In Shona custom[51] when a family is bereaved they simply say there is work at home. So audiences who understand Shona know from the first line that there has been a death in the family. The listener might initially be puzzled as to why it is that he does not know who to tell about the death because customarily one tells the family, friends and

[51] This is true of other cultural groups within Southern Africa.

neighbours all of whom gather around the bereaved to comfort them and help with the preparations for the funeral. As the song progresses it becomes apparent that it is not grief that is causing the bewilderment about who to tell about the work. Death has become such a common occurrence that the telling of it no longer has the same impact it had before. People have cried to a point where there are no tears left to weep for those who are dead, numbed by the regularity of death, they now suffer silently within their hearts. All rituals pertaining to death have lost meaning or ability to give comfort because they are done with such regularity, even the passing of condolences loses all substance when it is uttered too frequently.

By the third stanza it becomes increasingly clear that not only is death now so common place that is does not illicit the community responses it once did, but that the entire community is experiencing the same bereavements. And it has reached a point where there is no one left in the community who can cry, comfort and console another family because everyone is suffering the same fate of innumerable deaths. The frequency of these deaths leads Mtukudzi to question the wisdom of being the ones left alive, for who will bury the last remaining ones when all else are dead? At this point it becomes clearer that the deaths are AIDS-related. There has been such a significant increase in the number of AIDS related deaths that people attend funerals almost every week and very rarely is the death a result anything not related to AIDS[52].

By the fourth and fifth stanzas it is no longer in question that this death that Mtukudzi refuses to mention by name is death by AIDS that looks to kill off the entire nation, hence the suggestion that "maybe it is the end of the nation". With the prevalence of AIDS-related deaths now compounded by the political ills that make treatment and care virtually impossible, it is the young and the productive that are dying. It is estimated that nearly 70% of AIDS deaths in Zimbabwe occur among those aged between 17 and 40 years old. This encompasses the youth of the country and the most productive segment of the work force, leaving behind the very young and the old to look after each other. But these remaining groups are not productive and this further contributes to the demise of the nation.

[52] Information derived from conversations with Zimbabwe during my last visit in December 2003.

One has to question why in a song about AIDS designed to inform people about the perils of the disease he chooses not to mention AIDS directly and declare it the cause of these frequent deaths that he is lamenting. This refusal to mention AIDS by name in the song is made all the more puzzling by the fact that he has already mentioned it in *Todii.* There are those who argue that excessive mention of AIDS numbs people to it and renders ineffective any efforts to campaign around it. This line of argument contends that the horror of the realities of AIDS and the concomitant fears relating to it diminish people's ability and willingness to hear about it. Whilst I do not doubt the real possibilities of this being part of Mtukudzi's strategy I rather argue that he is behaving in his song the way people in the community behave, and uses that behaviour to further his educative process.

As I have already mentioned there is a social stigma to having HIV/AIDS. People are reluctant to admit to having the disease, even when family members die, very rarely will the bereaved admit that the death was HIV/AIDS related. Many HIV/AIDS activists feel that this refusal to mention the real cause of death not only impedes efforts to inform people about the disease, but also perpetuates and encourages the continued stigmatisation of those who have it. In *Mabasa* Mtukudzi's approach, it seems to me, is reflective of people's approach and attitude to HIV/AIDS. One gets the impression that he is saying this is our attitude when it comes to HIV/AIDS, we refuse to admit or acknowledge the real cause of what is killing the nation and simply say there is death in the family. But we all know what causes these deaths whether or not we are willing to verbalise it, even as we pretend that we don't know. The remaining fact is that we are dying by the multitudes and refusing to mention HIV/AIDS by name does not change the fact that we are all suffering the same fate. By not naming the disease Mtukudzi is also illustrating the synonymy between death and HIV/AIDS. Death has become HIV/AIDS and HIV/AIDS has become death such that by simply saying death in Zimbabwe these days it is synonymous with saying HIV/AIDS.

Mtukudzi again uses the question format in this song riddling the song with numerous questions to draw his audience into a dialogue about what he is singing about. Instead of telling the audience what he thinks they need to hear, Mtukudzi forces us to think about what he is singing if only in relation to finding answers to his questions. But

because they are questions for which the only answers are behavioural change to combat HIV/AIDS, they are recurring questions that will keep coming up until something is actually done. Although musicians have a didactic function they can at times, through the exercise of their role, seem distant and separated from their society and the problems about which they sing. In this song, as in *Todii,* Mtukudzi avoids the danger of sounding preachy and untouched by the HIV/AIDS epidemic by singing in the first person and including himself not only among the bereaved but those trying to find a solution to problem. In this way he draws the entire community in to the sharing of their common problem for which they must work together to find a solution.

The music of this song is consistent with the melancholic subject matter of the song. Opening with a single acoustic guitar which is then joined by a trickle of other instruments, lead guitar and ride-cymbal like mourners in a procession all of which adds to the gloom of the song and is very much in keeping with its subject matter. Beneath these instruments is the keyboard producing the sound of classical strings, contributing that quality of pathos that only a string section can evoke. Although the song is sad it is textually rich with instruments and voices giving it a full-bodied quality, but without being loud or abrasive. The lead guitar is the most constantly pronounced sound through out the song. At times playing an almost taunting repetition of the same cords in staccato fashion, before turning to a style of playing reminiscent of blues guitar: this is especially notable in the chorus and those stanzas starting *misodzi yapera.* During a solo after the fourth chorus, this jazzy blues wails out above the constant taunt of the repeated chords in a high-pitched lament representative of the near breaking point that this grief has wrought on the nation. The taunting sound that lingers through the song is like the constant gibe of death, reminding the listener that it is ever there and no matter how the other guitar and the vocals may wail and bemoan the loss of life death will not relent. It is interesting to note that this jeering in the song is the only sound that has any semblance of merriment to it, as though only death can derive any pleasure from the situation.

At the point when the vocals are introduced Mtukudzi opens the song with a string of "no's" which, because they are strung together, sound like a wail. But this wail is uttered in a voice riddled with grief and fatigue, as though this cry has been made

once too often so it is done softly. The cry is followed by a question sung in an equally tired voice whose solitude is enhance because the voice is accompanied only by the acoustic guitar with the keyboard, infusing pathos by evoking the strings again far off in the background towards the end of the third line. This song, like *Todii,* also starts with a question that is never answered, but is repeated throughout the entire song. This question, followed by the announcement that there has been a death, is sung by Mtukudzi on his own, accompanied by the acoustic guitar and the keyboard, as they do with the initial cry continuing to evoke the woe of A dirge. From that point the song assumes a call-response format between Mtukudzi and the backing vocals, giving instructions on what should be done now that death has befallen them.

The second stanza and subsequent repetitions thereof are sung by Mtukudzi on his own using a double voiced harmony with his own voice, which enhances the melancholic nature of the song. Not only does he sing in a weepy style, but the harmony creates within the sound a hollow distant quality which is enhanced by the thin instrumental accompaniment. The only time additional voices are introduced is to again draw attention to particular words within the song: words such as 'quietly' when singing about suffering in silence which the backing vocals repeat after him. He harmonises together with the backing vocals to ask the question 'who is going to bury the few that remain alive?' in order to draw out the numbers that are dying because of this disease.

This style of singing is highly favoured by Mtukudzi, who constantly changes his style of playing and singing in order to emphasise whatever point he feels is crucial and requires particular attention. This can be seen in stanzas 3 and 4 where he is again trying reiterate the fact that there is no one left who is not bereaved, and therefore able to console the other. The perplexity that is being experienced by Mtukudzi can be heard in, not just the question about the nature of this death and if it intends to decimate the entire nation, but also in the near hysterical effect that creeps into his voice when asking these questions. His subsequent repeated calls, in a similar voice, to the elders is part of the element of despair that is a key feature of the song, reflecting the devastation that has been brought about by the pandemic. Reducing grown men to cry out for the aid of the elders because they are powerless to confront

the crisis that is obliterating the nation, Mtukudzi demonstrates the full impact of the disease.

The song ends as it began, with wailing and a question about who to tell about the fact that there is the work of death to be undertaken. With this pronouncement the lead vocals cease and the backing vocalists repeat the line that there is a death in the family until theY fade out. The acoustic guitar ends the song on the same solitary dispirited sound that it opened with. It would seem to represent the last person left standing when everyone else is dead, the one who has buried everyone else and now remains alone with no one to comfort them and no one to bury them. The music of this song, unlike that of *Todii,* is consistently sombre, symbolising the grief of death regardless of what its cause is. By singing about the heartrending misery of death Mtukudzi seeks to appeal to people's fear of death, both their own and that of people close to them. By reminding people of the reality of death and its attendant sorrow, he is trying to show that no matter how extensive and common place death might be, and regardless of the cause thereof, each death is a source of trauma and anguish for the families and friends of the deceased.

The significance of music in every society is a matter that has been documented extensively. In this chapter I have examined some of the way in which Mtukudzi uses his music to address issues that affect his society. Mtukudzi is especially committed to using his music for the benefit of his society and, whilst much still remains to be done in terms of addressing issues like sexual behaviour in relation to the transmission of AIDS, what he has already achieved through, not only his music, is to be commended. What remains to be seen is whether or not the message is received by his audience and if, indeed, they act upon that message and change their behaviour to bring down the number of infections in the country. It is my contention that someone of Mtukudzi's stature would be well placed to break the silence around sex in Zimbabwe. Having already sung about other issues that are considered taboo, like the questioning of the traditional role of women and marital rape, I suggest that he not only has the stature but the influence to be listened to without being considered smutty and inappropriate.

Mtukudzi's political commentary manifests more though the work of interpretative listening than his own utterance and has contributed significantly to the debates and discussions around the political situation in Zimbabwe. More than most other areas of public discourse, politics is frequently associated with music, and the function of music in the shaping of the political fortunes of many nations is highly documented. In the case of Zimbabwe I think one of the greatest testaments to the impact of music on the nation is the fact that the Zimbabwean Minister of Information Jonathan Moyo also released an album in 2001 entitled *Third Chimurenga*. Many of the songs on the album were reworkings of old Chimurenga songs with some original ones urging patriotism from the nation. The album is intended not only to recall by gone days of war and glory but more importantly to undermine the work of artists like Mtukudzi, who are questioning the actions of the state and indeed its very authenticity.

Pratt (1990) argues that music, regardless of the kind of music it is, can be used to serve a political function. But it is not all music that can be defined as emancipatory, that is serving to liberate and inform people of the truth. Mtukudzi's music would fall under Pratt's definition of emancipatory music, even if it does not in the end bring about a new political dispensation a revolution: the fact that it is aimed at contributing to positive change makes it emancipatory. However the work of the minister, which aims to deceive and further subjugate people by encouraging them to adhere to an oppressive form of government, would be categorised as music that is put to a political use as a propaganda tools in the hands of an oppressor.

Chapter Five

Conclusion

Music has been, and continues to be an integral part of every society wherein it serves a particular function. Whether it is being used in a didactic capacity or it is simply providing entertainment, the place of music is every culture is without question. Although the commercial nature of the music industry in contemporary society tends to depict music as purely entertainment and while its other uses are increasingly obscured by this commercialisation, there still remain artists for whom the role of music within a social contexts is not limited to amusement. Whilst some theorists like Frith (1996) are finding that Western audiences are increasingly less interested in the lyrics of the songs that they listen to, it asserted by other theorists that African audiences are very demanding of their artists and expect not only music, but music with meaning.

The demands of these new audiences are being met by the increasingly popular, though poorly defined popular music on the continent. Theorist like Barber (1997) and Middleton (1990) have found that within the African context popular music has an especially important role to play in not just elucidating social realities, but in the creation and depiction of a particular world view and an understanding thereof. Whilst it is not possible for popular music to adequately or exhaustively depict or reflect an entire society, a close study of the music does provide a greater understanding of some aspects of the society. Because popular music is at times a reflection of its society, it also functions as the vehicle through which social and political issues are addressed within a public forum. It is this particular aspect of the addressivity of the music of Mtukudzi that this research report set out to analyse.

This research report has analysed how Mtukudzi uses his music to address public issues in Zimbabwe through his music. Selecting four different topics from within his music this research report examined how Mtukudzi uses his songs to address himself to pressing social problems within Zimbabwe. The topics that were chosen were issues relating to women, children, HIV/AIDS and politics, these were felt to not only be pertinent to Zimbabwe, but are also unusual subject matter for popular music.

During the process of the analysis this research report found that beyond merely describing the situation of his address, Mtukudzi also opens up spaces for the public discussion of issues that are generally not openly spoken of in Zimbabwe. Matters pertaining to women and inheritance within customary law are not openly discussed and they are not questioned or criticised as they are by Mtukudzi in the songs *Neria* and *Ndagara Nhaka.*

It was however the conclusion of the research report that when dealing with sexual issues Mtukudzi errs on the side of caution. In Zimbabwe concerns that relate to sex and sexuality are not spoken of, and certainly not sung about. Although Mtukudzi's efforts in this aspect are noted the HIV/AIDS crisis that is engulfing the country leaves little room for prudishness about sex when it can save life. Similarly with child abuse, although Mtukudzi again sings about it, he skirts the issues and does not come right out and make the connection between the abuse of children and the sexual aspect of it which needs to be confronted if it is to be resolved.

Although this research report found the extent to which the artist was willing to discuss taboo subjects to be greater than most other artists in Zimbabwe, it still felt it was significantly limited. However it must be conceded that limited though these efforts might be there is willingness on the part of Mtukudzi to put on the agenda topics would never be discussed otherwise. This research report found that Mtukudzi's music does not only function as a means of commenting about Zimbabwean society, nor does it merely reflect that society, but also informs and educates his society.

During the analysis of the political songs it became apparent that part of Mtukudzi's style is to be obscure, and not state directly the message of the song, thus leaving much of the interpretative licence to the audience. It was concluded that part of the reason for this approach was security especially now that the political situation in Zimbabwe is so volatile. I also concluded that it is part of the Shona tradition to shroud things in innuendo and to use word play to convey a message that might only be deciphered by those with a sufficient command of Shona to be able to comprehend the riddles and the idioms. This is especially true of the political songs, which a listener unfamiliar with Mtukudzi's work and the political situation in Zimbabwe would not recognise as being political at all.

Although Mtukudzi has gained a significant international following and it is no longer possible to speak of his audience as though it were exclusively Zimbabwean. And whilst his popularity and the changing styles and influences that can be heard in his music within the last five years would suggest that he is targeting a much wider audience. I would suggest that while he might indeed be writing his music with his mind on an international audience, there is an aspect of his music that will always be targeted at the Zimbabwean Shona speaking audience. Mtukudzi has, on many occasions, reiterated his commitment to using his music for the benefit of his society, his music continues to address issues that are pertinent to Zimbabweans, be it socially or politically. There remains within the lyrics of his music messages that are intended for the audience that understands him.

The songs that were analysed in this research report were about the equitable treatment of women in Zimbabwean society; the abuse of children, as well as children living on streets; the scourge of the HIV/AIDS pandemic and its impact on society and finally songs calling for a new political dispensation. Each category of songs was an illustration of the manner in which these complex issues are being dealt with in Mtukudzi's music. But the songs do not merely discuss these matters, they also reveal a great deal about the society that he is addressing himself to. From the his approach is it possible to determine what his perception of his audience is and what he understands to be their needs from a song and provides it.

The songs about women are a reminder to his audience that certain practises still exist that are oppressive and entail the unjust treatment of women. The songs about children reveal a sordid aspect of society that many would rather leave untouched, but Mtukudzi opens this can of worms forcing people to deal with the demons within. Assuming a more informative and educative function about the spread and impact of HIV/AIDS, Mtukudzi uses these songs to continue to inform his audience about something they already know but tend to ignore. The political songs are more of a reflection of his society and its worldview than the other songs. His audience and society need someone to voice their political frustrations and desires for Mugabe to resign, someone who can point a finger and say the things that they all long to say but are too afraid to say them.

Another interesting facet of Mtukudzi's work is how he manages to sing such serious social issues without losing his audience, but at the same time without trivialise the subject matter in order to secure his audience. This research report also looked at the way in which Mtukudzi uses the music within his songs to enhance the message within the songs. Instead of looking at the technical aspects of music, this research report assessed the musical content from a largely emotional response. Appreciating the fact that music will contain things that can not be captured in words, part of this analysis was to verbalise those musical elements in relation to how they contributed or indeed detracted from the verbal message which is far easier to decode. However not all the songs evoked an emotional response that corresponded with the lyrics.

Although the social role of music is increasingly overshadowed by other things not least of which is the commercialisation of music, there still remains with every society a need for music to do more than entertain the crowds. The social imaginaries that are contained within music and the various insights that can be gleaned from a greater understanding and appreciation of people's music is quite significant. Mtukudzi's music contains within it whole facets of his society, the social and political realitiesss of his country can be realised through listening to his music. Not only does he use his music to reveal and reflect his society, but also uses it to educate, inform and even chastise. This research report has looked at a mere sample of his musical offering and what they reveal about his society. A abundance of untapped information and understanding still remains to be unfolded from his and other popular artists' work.

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