

Victors, Victims & Villains

Victors, Victims & Villains

Women & Musical Arts in Zimbabwe – Past & Present

Edited by

Bridget Chinouriri

Ushehwedu Kufakurirani
Munyaradzi Nyakudya



B. Chinouriri, U. Kufakurirani & M. Nyakudya

ally sophisticated collection examines gender dynamics in historical and popular Zimbabwe that have been manifested in a rich array of musical, dance and theatre performances. In *Victors, Victims and Villains*, a multidisciplinary and diverse set of essays, both in Zimbabwe and the diaspora, discuss varied performances, ranging from traditional courtship dances, urban pole dancing and Mbira to "Zimdancehall". This book demonstrates the vitality of modern Zimbabwean Scholarship, and is an essential read for those interested in gender, performance, history and popular culture on the African continent.

Terri Barnes (Centre for African Studies, Gender and Women's Studies, LAS Global Studies, University of Illinois Urbana - Champaign)

Victors and Villains: Women and Musical Arts in Zimbabwe - Past & Present is essential reading for classrooms and public education sites in Africa, and indeed globally. It will help to challenge and overturn those structures that recklessly pursue mundane glories, thereby celebrating the sublime, common humanity interactions in all sites of existential as well as life affirmations, creativities and activities.

Dr Meki Nzewi (Department of Music, University of Pretoria)

Victors and Villains has created structures that would prepare women to be victors and villains, and have overturned those structures by using musical arts and have emerged victors, celebrating society and making its members the villains instead. The book brings this out in an academic and humorous way.

Jenje-Makwenda (Author and Artist)

This is a highly informative volume that provides key insights into women's roles in the musical arts as "victors, victims and villains". Among other things, the book opens up to the volume have come up with fresh and creative interpretations of the role of women in Zimbabwe exercise their agency in the musical arts.

Professor Ezra Chitando (Department of Religion, Classics & Philosophy, University of Zimbabwe)



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Victims and Villains:
Victors in Musical Arts in
Work — Past and Present
Zimbabwe

UNIVERSITY OF ZIMBABWE
AFRICAN LANGUAGES
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Edited by

Bridget Chinouriri

Ushewedu Kufakurinani

Munyaradzi Nyakudya

*Directed by
Foreign Editors
for the African
Language*



University of Zimbabwe

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Publications

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Dedication

Dedicated to the sung and unsung heroines who have contributed in so many ways to the performance and promotion of musical arts.

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Foreword

Victims and Villains: Women and Musical Arts in Zimbabwe – Past and Present, is a timely volume in which contributors variously reflect on gender perspectives and neo-cultural factors responsible for the reduced visibility of women in the musical arts arena from the past to the present in Zimbabwe, and indeed Africa. Most of the chapters probe and interrogate the socio-cultural and political reasons for the scarcity, marginalisation, victimisation, villainy and triumph of women artists in the male-dominated modern musical arts genre. The authors posit that the musical arts scene is primarily promoted as a patriarchal sphere, which resists women asserting commanding performative presence. The book profiles successful women in the musical arts entrepreneurship field in Zimbabwe. These include the three women who courageously excelled in *mbira*, a functional male dominated/performative category in indigenous Zimbabwean culture.

One chapter features a representation of women in contemporary protest drama. It highlights how the modernist patriarchal mindset arrogantly strives to suppress women who assert womanhood's innate societal management integrity and responsibility (albeit humble but commanding). This was the significance of women musical artists in indigenous cultures, albeit in the modern, imposed political governance arena in Africa where colonialism and religious dogmas succeeded in contradicting the divinely stipulated and biologically equipped gender roles.

Generally, the modern African mind has been indoctrinated to accept that ultimate social and political governance authority is the preserve of manhood by virtue of foreign religions and the effects of colonialism. In indigenous cultures, womanhood capably exercised ultimate disciplinary authority over manhood's overt visibility in the political affairs of an autonomous group. Women exercised ultimate responsibility to ensure stability in indigenous socio-political ordering of society. It was a way of life where men would only threaten; and women would resolve overwhelming crisis situations, by deploying public, musical arts as incontestable intangible correctional agency. Lingering consciousness of the centrality of the feminine gender in the African indigenous concept of the performative arts as societal management agency is portrayed in a few of the articles such as the one by Perminus Maturu.

The chapters have primarily posited Northern feminist theories in arguing the gender contestations, and sample performative displays, song lyrics, literature sources, and public (media) opinions. Various depicted are the lives and notable attributes of the key women musical artists who effectively defied colonial and post-colonial womanhood stereotyping, prejudices as well as intimidations to succeed in blazing creative performance in Zimbabwe. Ethnic contestations generated in the performative arena are also observed such as the women artists in Matebeleland who feel 'lesser' artists because of their political geographical space in comparison to those in the capital city in Harare.

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Nevertheless, the women artists and the performative devices which they adopted to stage their unique creative-artistic autonomy often confront and subvert colonial and post-colonial male chauvinism that misperceive, disregard and assault original African womanhood's sense and dignity. It must be noted that Creation's womanly attributes equipped them to adopt distinguished but sober public behaviour and dogged spirit in ensuring the sustainability of human existence and moral virtues in their societal enclaves. Hence, women were highly valued in pre-colonial Africa's indigenous cultural constructions and transactions. But with the ascendance of modernity macho-mentality, men have forcibly usurped women's God-ascribed gender role, which they mismanage by using crass force and control in modernity governance and religious constructs. Hence, the universe is increasingly plunging into chaos, and threatening man-engineered explosion.

This book is dedicated to exposing men's exclusionist dispositions that violate women's freedom to participate in functional musical arts that oversees societal governance wellness. These studies could begin to re-conscientise humanity values and virtues in modernity mindsets. The arguments consensually affirm that foreign acquired male chauvinism adopted in modern African minds by colonial hegemony, in collaboration with foreign religious indoctrinations, still causes challenges.

The manifestations of modern patriarchal attitudes and governance regulations, which compromise and intimidate women's visibility and agency as proactive force in societal living, can be contested by the contemporary popular music scene in Zimbabwe, and indeed all Africa. This is lucidly illustrated in some chapters. The womanly resolve of the artistes (original African womanhood attitude) enabled them to persevere and overcome persisting patriarchal prejudices, controls, and exploitative schemes. Their courage and perseverance rewarded them local and international recognitions as unique creative personalities. The scholarly discourses in the book, although applying Northern feminism theories mentioned earlier, provide critical studies of the enterprising and entrepreneurial spirit of the sampled popular and neo-traditional women musical arts artists in Zimbabwe. They resolutely challenged and subverted male dominance forces in the contemporary musical arts genres. Performatively asserting with consistent resilience, the power of original African womanhood is a beneficial force essential for instilling humanity consciousness and containing the escalating madness embattling the political, social, religious, economic, and relational experiencing of the unstable post-colonial African nationhood equations.

The analyses of the creative genius and presentational strategies of the women artists demonstrate that a resurgence of authentic African performative feminism theory and force, sublimely unobtrusive but flaring at moments of humanity/societal crises, is possible. Recapping: African womanhood theory, within and outside musical arts spaces, could be strategised to domesticate the overwhelming governance and societal iniquities and inequities bedevilling practically all modern African nations. This ideal will entail Africa-inspired women mobilising and collaborating with respectful men, to deploy advanced functional musical arts at home, school and public spaces, as in indigenous African socialization. The benefits will include instilling basic morality dispositions from

childhood to adulthood, thereby informing fellow beings in all societal affairs, irrespective of gender, ethnicity and race. Women's overt expression of gender specialities would, of course, perturb and threaten the presumptuous superiority being defensively fronted by men who are insecure in positions of public or private/domestic power. Hence, insecure men resort to pre-emptive physical force and vulgar/uncouth language to intimidate or silence women's visibility in governance and arts social sites.

The chapters in the book, as already indicated, illustrate that subtle, irresistible but functional (not flippant entertainment) modern popular music artistry can be conceived as a powerful corrective agency. As in indigenous Africa, such beneficial agency needs women who can ignite their insurmountable natural potencies. Utilitarian music, even as a business venture, can be designed to serve as intangible, non-traumatising but redeeming force aimed at taming the destructive mainly world of conscienceless impunities and immoralities in public and personal domains within Africa and globally. Humanity principled education that strategises the musical arts is then of essence, and of the moment, to restrain the technology and economic syndromes which demoralise Hi-modern mindsets, thus disabling sustainable humanity.

Victims, Victims and Villains: Women and Musical Arts in Zimbabwe - Past and Present is essential reading in classrooms and public education sites in Africa, and indeed globally. It will help to reprove overt and covert masochism that recklessly pursues mundane glories, thereby subverting sublime, common humanity interactions in all sites of existential as well as life education theorisations, creativities and activities.

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Introduction

Women and Musical Arts in Zimbabwe: Past and Present

MUNYARADZI NYAKUDYA, USHEHWEDE KUFAKURINANI AND
BRIDGET CHINOURIRI

The issue of women and musical arts¹ in Zimbabwe is an emotive one due to age old perceptions about the role of women in society in general and their participation in musical and performance arts in particular. There is quite a substantive historiography on Zimbabwean musical arts in general to which scholars such as Alec J. Pongweni, Alice D. Kwaramba, Thomas Turino, Fred Zindi, Ezra Chitando, Mhoze Chikowero, Maurice Vambe and Joyce Jenje-Makwenda,² among others, contributed immensely. Much of this literature concentrates mainly on the socio-political and economic environment as portrayed through the musical arts. Meanwhile, the historiography on women and the musical arts in Zimbabwe in particular has been rather thin, until most recently. However, scholars who have contributed to the historiography of women and musical arts include, among others, Chitando and Pauline Mateveke, Tendai Chari, Moreblessing Chitauro, Caleb Dube and Elizabeth Gunner; Jenje-Makwenda and Bridget Chinouriri.³ However,

¹ The term 'musical arts' is reflective of the holistic indigenous African conceptualisations of the creative and performance arts fields that should mark musical arts education practice in contemporary Africa. The musical arts also refer to a creative synthesis of independently distinctive, but component parts of music, dance, and other arts components. Thus, the musical art is perceived as a singular, composite term that conveys the African sensibility, unless it becomes necessary for academic purposes to isolate the sonic, dance, theatre for discrete discussion and analysis. The generic term, 'musical arts', was adopted at the second conference of Pan African Society for Musical Arts Educators (PASME) in Lusaka, Zambia 2001. See M. Nzewi, *A Contemporary Study of Musical Arts Informed by African Indigenous Knowledge System Vol 4: Illuminations, Reflections and Explorations*. Pretoria: Clinda, 2007.

² A. J. C. Pongweni, *Songs that Won the Liberation*, Harare, College Press, 1982; A. D. Kwaramba, "Popular Music and Society: The Language of Protest in Chimurenga Music: The Case of Thomas Mapfumo in Zimbabwe", Straberg og Nilsen: Department of Media and Communication, 1997; T. Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*, Chicago, Chicago University Press, 2000; F. Zindi, *Music yeZimbabwe: Zimbabwe Versus the World*, Harare, Mambo press 1997; E. Chitando, "Music in Zimbabwe". *Review of Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*, by T. Turino, *Zambezia: The Journal of Humanities of the University of Zimbabwe*, Vol 29, No. 1, 2001, pp 812-91; M. Chikowero, *African Music, Power, and Being in Colonial Zimbabwe*, Indiana University Press, 2015; M. T. Vambe, "Versions and Sub-Versions: Trends in Chimurenga Musical Discourses of Post-independence Zimbabwe", *African Study Monographs*, Vol. 25, No. 4, 2004, pp. 167-193; and J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Zimbabwe Township music*, Harare: Storytime, 2005.

³ E Chitando and P Mateveke, "Challenging Patriarchy and Exercising Women's Agency in Zimbabwean Music: Analysing the Careers of Chivoniso Matarire and Olivia Charamba", *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa*, Vol. 9, No. 2, 2012, p. 43; T. Chari, "Representation of Women in Male-produced 'Urban Grooves' Music in Zimbabwe", *Muziki: Journal of Music Research in Africa*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2008, pp. 92-110; M. Chitauro, C. Dube and L. Gunner, "Song, Story and Nation: Women as Singers and Actresses in Zimbabwe"

most of the early works on women and the musical arts in Zimbabwe are coloured by colonial perspectives which viewed the woman artist as an appendage of the man, and as only worth the 'rib of a man'.⁴ Sadly, this has persisted even after independence. This tragic scenario is aptly captured by Chitando and Mateveke, who observe that, in post-colonial Zimbabwe, the public space continues to be dominated and controlled by men. They assert that:

Due to patriarchy, public space in rural, but especially in urban areas, was constructed in masculine terms. Entertainment was the preserve of men. Women were supposed to be home-makers, while men went out to 'win bread'. Although this was predominantly a colonial construct, it fed into pre-existing patriarchal ideologies and became widely accepted.⁵

Indeed, it is clear that colonisation disfigured and disoriented the African people and the propagation of their musical arts. Laurent Aubert posits that the proliferation of modern Western civilisation and its ideals all over the world provoked deep and irreversible distresses with consequences that have affected each and every domain of culture.⁶

By and large, until recently, there has been a yawning gap on understanding women and musical arts in Zimbabwe in general. This only succeeds in silently reinforcing and perpetuating stereotypes of women artists. Lately, however, scholars such as Chari, Chitando and Chitando and Mateveke have particularly researched about the representation of women in selected music genres.⁷ Chari has shown how music propels the objectification of women and sustains negative stereotypes about women. Popular musical arts in many African cultural contexts have been viewed as sites of social deviance.⁸ This ideology characterises the popular musical arts industry to date with some of its practitioners actively living up to these stereotypes. Women tend to suffer more than their male counterparts because, as Mwenda Ntarangwi states, the urban spaces where mostly musical arts were historically patronised have been marked as

in L. Gunner (ed.), *Politics and Performance: Theatre, Poetry and Song in Southern Africa*, Johannesburg, Witwatersrand University Press, 1994; J. Jenje-Makwenda, *Women Musicians of Zimbabwe, 1930s-2013*, Harare, SP Design and Print, 2013; B. Chinouriri, "Is a woman only worth the rib of a man? The place of women in Zimbabwean musical arts, past and present", in Kwasi Ampene, Akosou Adomako Ampofo, Godwin K. Adjei and Albert K. Awedoba (eds.), J. H. Kwabena Nketia *Festschrift: Discourses in African Musicology*, USA, Michigan Publishing, 2015.

4. Chinouriri, "Is a woman only worth the rib of a man?"

5. Chitando and Mateveke, "Challenging Patriarchy and Exercising Women's Agency", p. 43.

6. L. Aubert, *The Music of The Other: New Challenges for Ethnomusicology in a Global Age*, England, Ashgate Publishing, 2007, p. 3.

7. T. Chari, "Representation of women in male-produced 'urban grooves' music in Zimbabwe", *Muziki, Journal of Music Research in Africa*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 2008, pp. 92-110; E. Chitando, *Singing Culture: A Study of Gospel Music in Zimbabwe*, Research Report No. 121, Uppsala, Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2002; Chitando and Mateveke, "Challenging Patriarchy and Exercising Women's Agency".

8. M. Ntarangwi, "Musical Practise as a Gender Experience: Examples from Kenya and Zimbabwe", in Patricia McFadden (ed.) *Reflections on Gender Issues in Africa*, Sapes Books, Harare, 1999.

male territories and spheres of influence.⁹ In patriarchal societies, women have largely been confined to the domestic space while the public space has been reserved for men. Such negative stereotypes are disempowering to the girl child and encourage the continued subordination of women.

The success or failure of women musical artists in African cultures also seems to be intimately tied to marriage, a quintessential arena where male control is dominant. The assertive woman, who is distinguished as a "victor" in this book, lives and survives against all odds. This success, however, mostly comes with a price tag as this may compromise marriage and family. For most women who have made it in this industry, a large percentage of them are either single, single mothers or divorcees. Hope Masike, for example, an accomplished *mbira* player and songstress in Zimbabwe, has described how she has disastrously tried relationships and failed due to time demands and a fledgling career that requires her attention.¹⁰

Some of the researches have, however, only paid attention to the accentuation of women's looks and body parts, without placing much stress on women's musical intellect, again perpetuating the colonialist perceptions of women as toys for the amusement of men. Music continues to be produced in Zimbabwe with new genres gaining more popularity than others. Zimdancehall, for example, has taken the airwaves by storm in recent years, and with it has marked both departure and continuity on trends such as the participation of women and their portrayal in musical arts. *Victors, Victims and Villains: Women and Musical Arts in Zimbabwe's — Past and Present*, presents a refreshing departure from this thrust by placing the woman artist right at the centre of musical arts in Zimbabwe. The book accommodates the emerging genres and dances that have become popular in recent years. It explores the controversial, conventional and unconventional from a scholarly perspective.

This book is a volume of sustained examination of women and musical arts going beyond traditional examination of women and their participation in the formal musical industry. It demonstrates how women are also part of everyday musical projects in family traditional functions. The book also looks at a whole spectrum of issues on women and the musical arts in Zimbabwe, spanning from age-old musical experiences as portrayed in texts set in the pre-colonial milieu such as Bernard Chidzero's *Nzveigamutsvairo* and Ndebele and Beverly Sibanda, among others. It is deliberately 'recuperative', if we can borrow the term from Jane Haggis.¹¹ The book thus re-inserts and elevates women in the discourse of musical arts. While Simon Dagut, for example, is particularly critical of such an approach as he believes it presents women "as though they were people of

9. *Ibid.*

10. Chinouriri, "Is a woman only worth the rib of a man?"

11. J. Haggis, "White Women and Colonialism: Towards a Non-Recuperative History", in Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (eds.), *Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader*, New York, Routledge, 2003. Recuperative writing is described as the writing of history where women's experiences are deliberately treated to

gender", enclosed within a "separate sphere" created by patriarchy,¹² we strongly feel that given the patriarchal hegemony and gender biases that pervade contemporary Africa and Zimbabwe in particular, the best objective representation of women is to deliberately make them a point of focus. We sincerely hope that this can force society to face the mirror and deal with the ugly spots that taint it in this regard.

The general observation is that the modern women in the musical arts in Zimbabwe continue to be denigrated, vilified and marginalised as victims and villains, and portrayed as sex objects for the amusement and lustful satiation of male audiences¹³ in virtually all genres of music. The authors in this book, however, go to some great lengths to debunk this myth that women's representation in musical arts has tended to perpetuate rather than solve gender discrepancies in society. The chapters in this book have one common theme that runs through them; women are also *victors* fighting for their emancipation and freedom. The chapters reveal this by examining the roles of women as artists, consumers and subjects. It analyses what musical arts exude about women and their status in society and the functional role they play to promote or hinder gender discrepancies. The book thus unpacks women's contribution to their transformative and emancipation endeavours as they struggle to defy stereotypes against them. This line of thought is substantiated by Stella Chiweshe's sentiments. Chiweshe is a great mbira maestro both in Zimbabwe and abroad, and she has attributed her success to a sense of self-worth and self-confidence. Her remark is quite telling: "I counted the number of fingers on a man's hand and saw five and I counted the fingers on my hand they also came to five, so I said to myself what the hell, if a man can play mbira, I can too".¹⁴

We also acknowledge that the adjectives "victors", "victims" and "villains" are themselves loaded and open to various interpretations. From moral lenses, a woman stripper, for example, may be viewed as a villain while some academics may see her as a victim, and yet others would see her as a victor. It is these fluid interpretations that chapters in this book engage with, helping to change perceptions and interpretations. As a multi-disciplinary project, the book comprises of academic contributions by both established and upcoming scholars on various aspects of the musical arts, consciously inscribing women in this nexus. In *Chapter One*, Munyaradzi Nyakudya *et al.* pursue a historical trajectory of women's participation in music, demonstrating changing trends that offered both limitations and opportunities for women's participation in musical arts. They draw from experiences in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial eras and note that over

time and space, women were both victors and victims. In the colonial era, European patriarchy and the Victorian domestic ideology, for example, relegated women to private spaces and restricted their presence in the cities. Notwithstanding this, the authors argue, women made breakthroughs into musical arts in both the urban and rural settings. These achievements were not mean and they expanded in the post-colonial period when women participation in the musical arts witnessed a boom, with many women now breaking the barriers of patriarchy and male chauvinism to emancipate themselves.

In *Chapter Two*, Perminus Maitire continues with the broader analysis begun in chapter one, exploring the role played by women in the performance of music in mostly Shona traditional societies. Deploying ethnographic evidence largely from Chikomba District in Mashonaland East, Maitire argues that Shona women play a very pivotal role in the singing and performance of traditional music during various ceremonies. He observes that women contribute meaningfully to the production and sustenance of music in Shona society. The roles of the women in traditional music included singing, playing instruments, incantations, ululation and dancing. Maitire thus concludes that women occupied a very crucial role in the performance of traditional music. The exceptionally talented women in musical arts were accommodated and celebrated by their society. Maitire's stance is authenticated by Meki Nzewi who describes this rationalisation as "individuality within conformity" of societal norms.¹⁵ It was the society which regulated the public performance and remained the ultimate custodian of quality and decent performances.

The same theme is taken up in *Chapter Three* by Excellent Chireshe who analyses some purposefully selected lyrics by Paul Matavire, a visually impaired Zimbabwean musician who passed away in 2005. Through content analysis, the chapter examines the lyrics with the purpose of unveiling what they exude about women. From a selection of six songs about women (as they interact with men), it is clear that Matavire's songs convey mixed messages about women. Serving as social commentaries, the songs portray women as occupying diverse social locations from being victims and villains to victors. The songs critique cultural practices such as *chiramu* (the lax relationship between a husband and his wife's sisters, and vice versa) and hegemonic patriarchies that seek to take advantage of women. Chireshe concludes that women are portrayed in Matavire's songs as victors, victims and villains.

In *Chapter Four*, Jairos Gonye examines the portrayal of women through their depiction of artistic performances in Shona texts. He analyses two literary works which depict female dancers, with special focus on the nexus between dance and gender performance in Zimbabwe. The texts examined here are Bernard Chidzero's *Nzvegumutsvairo* (Literally, He who dodges the broom, but metaphorically refers to a male of marriageable age who is, however, still single and spends much of his time at home),¹⁶ and Solomon Mutsvairo's

12. S. Dagut, "Gender, Colonial 'Women's History' and the Construction of Social Distance: Middle Class Women in Later Nineteenth-century South Africa", *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 26, No. 3 (2000), p. 555.

13. See also F. Mangena, E. Chitando and I. Muwati, (eds.) *Sounds of Life: Music, Identity and Politics in Zimbabwe*, Cambridge, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2016.

14. A. Viriri, "Female Participation in the Post-Independence Zimbabwean Popular Music Industry: A Case Study of Edith Katiji (Weutonga) and Sandra Ndebele", MA Dissertation, University of the Witwatersrand,

15. M. Nzewi, "Musical Arts Education and the Cultivation of Humane Disposition in Children" in M. A. Masoga, M. Nzewi and O. Nzewi, (ed.) *African Indigenous Knowledge-Sensitized Musical Arts Education: Policy Consideration*, Somerset West, African Minds, 2009, p. 59.

16. B. Chidzero, *Nzvegumutsvairo*, Harare, Longman, 1981.

Chaminuka: The Prophet of Zimbabwe.¹⁷ Chidzero's *Nzwengamutsvairo* illustrates the female dancers' seemingly successful performance of *pfonda*, a traditional courtship dance. As further noted by Asante, this courtship dance is examined to determine its role in the construction of gender roles in a rural colonial society mapped by dominant colonial discourses that stereotype such a traditional dance as licentious.¹⁸ It is viewed as an example of African female sexual permissiveness and a barrier to progress.¹⁹ Through an analysis of the song *Chaminuka*, Gonye argues that Mutsvairo's representation of Shona female dances exposes his sexist voyeurism. This counter-balances his ideological use of dance to dramatise the so-called cultural differences between the Shona polity presented as more organised and peaceful, and the Ndebele who are portrayed as 'warmongers'.

Gonye posits that Chidzero and Mutsvairo, as male writers, portray female dancers who willfully perform dance to fulfill their expected appendage roles as patriarchal sexual 'toys'. Such performances should, however, be seen in the light of Butler's assertion that society punishes individuals who act outside their expected gender roles.²⁰ Critiquing the sexually objectifying images of women in Zimbabwean media, especially dance videos emphasising female body parts, Chari opines that women are still under-represented and objectified as second class citizens. This theme is also addressed by Tanaka Chidora in Chapter 6, as we will show. Gonye draws from Laura Mulvey's "gaze theory" to theorise how dance reproduces and illuminates gender stereotypes,²¹ and appreciates how Zimbabwean representations of female dancers in both earlier Shona and English literary works anticipate contemporary perceptions of female Zimbabwean performance artistes and dancers such as Beverly Sibanda and Zoey Siphelani, emerging pole dancers in post-2000 Zimbabwe's socio-cultural scene, who are themselves the subject of examination in later chapters.

In the past decade and a half, a 'new' genre of music took the limelight in Zimbabwe's music terrain. This genre became known as Zimdancehall, a type of music that borrows a lot from the dancehall reggae that is largely produced in Jamaica. This genre appeals mostly to the young and adults as well, and it unravels various themes that range from social to political commentaries. Given the popularity that this genre has gained amongst the Zimbabwean youth, its potential to shape and influence perceptions is relatively high. In many ways, the music has also acted as a mirror of various sections of the

contemporary Zimbabwean society. It is within this context that Chapters Five and Six specifically deal with relevant issues related to Zimdancehall music and women. In Chapter Five, Ushelwedu Kufakurirani, Munyaradzi Nyakudya and Bridget Chinouriri examine how women have been portrayed in selected Zimdancehall songs. The lyrics captured in the title of the chapter, *wakachipa kunge bhoro* (you are as cheap as second hand clothes), instructively speak to the denigration of women liberally exhibited in Zimdancehall music. The authors argue that such portrayal sustains certain stereotypes about women and reflect the patriarchal hegemony that is pervasive in the contemporary Zimbabwean society. The authors analyse how music and the representation of women, gender roles and relations correspond with the wider societal norms, values, stereotypes and practices. They argue that the music industry is the microcosm of the macrocosm, that is, it represents the larger contemporary Zimbabwean patriarchal society. In this society, women are often misrepresented, confined to homes and material comforts thereof. Men, on the other hand, are the superior figures and violence is sometimes normalised and justified. Kufakurirani et. al. select and analyse relevant songs from various popular Zimdancehall songs to reflect the images that are portrayed of women and how these reinforce existing social norms and stereotypes which perpetuate gender discrepancies and the subordination and disempowerment of women. While presenting this victimhood image, Kufakurirani et. al. also acknowledge the emancipatory role that the Zimdancehall music genre has also brought and the expanded space it has given to women.

The same genre of Zimdancehall is analysed in Chapter Six by Tanaka Chidora, who examines the objectification of women. His analysis juxtaposes this genre to the *Chimurenga* music sung by the Chimurenga Choir which has been appropriated by the ZANU PF government. Chidora notes that, on television, the female body is appropriated by the male musician to give visual appeal to the musical video. Thus, women are featured on musical videos as gyrating dancers, thrusting their torsos to and fro, and they are mere objects of desire, both for the male actor in the video and the male audience. The woman who visits geographies of musical shows is stereotypically a prostitute, or a loose single woman looking for male companionship, sexually speaking. With Zimbabwe's sometimes hypocritical morality, such women are not 'perfect' candidates for a stable marriage. Their bodies are not considered as the ideal bodies of Zimbabwean women nurtured in the ways of *ubuntu/vuhunhu*. Women are thus portrayed as villains.

Chidora, however, sees Zimdancehall music as giving women agency and the freedom to transcend the "hypocritical morality"²² of society and men in particular, that of denigrating women performing in the musical arts. He argues that the coming of Zimdancehall as a musical genre and movement, with its own identity paradigms and geographical spaces which include youth bodies, has turned the tables over on female objectification. He opines that the resultant transcript is that of rebellion that legitimises delinquency and creativity on the margins of Zimbabwe's sometimes hypocritically

17. S. Mutsvairo's *Chaminuka: The Prophet of Zimbabwe*, Three Contents Press, 1983.

18. K. W. Asante, *Dance: Rhythmic Forces, Ancestral-Ain Aesthetic Analysis*, Asmara, Africa World Press, Inc, 2000.

19. H. Wels, "A Critical Reflection on Cultural Tourism in Africa: The Power of European Imagery", in J. Akama and P. Sterry (eds.), *Cultural Tourism in Africa: Strategies for the New Millennium*, Proceedings of ATLAS Africa International Conference, Mombasa Kenya, Arnhem: ATLAS, December 2000, p. 55.

20. J. Butler, "Subversive Bodily Acts", in S. During (ed.), *The Cultural Studies Reader*, 3rd edn. London, Routledge, 2007, p. 381.

21. L. Mulvey, "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema", in R. R. Warhol and D. P. Hermil (eds.), *Feminisms: An*

22. According to Chidora, this hypocrisy in moral code is seen when society accepts certain 'sexual' dances because they serve political ends and condemn the same when they are not politicised.

morally-coded society. This has enabled both male and female actors in this movement to construct identities and imaginaries that transgress the social order and/or the so called government-set ideological, moral and cultural borders for controlling the national social and political imaginary. Zimdancehall music has thus offered women opportunities to be victors as they emancipate themselves from the constraints and shackles of patriarchal attitudes against women musicians.

In Chapter Seven, Kelvin Chikongo and Portia Chifamba also address controversies pertaining to the perceived commercialisation of the feminine body through another relatively new phenomenon in the Zimbabwe music terrain, pole dancing. To date, there are only two well-known groups, Beverly Sibanda and the Sexy Angels, on the one hand, and Zoey Sifelani and the Red Angels, on the other. The authors argue that, despite its novelty, pole dancing has already generated a lot of debate and controversy in Zimbabwe. They unpack how and why the genre has created so much controversy, explaining how society has reacted to 'the shock of the new'. Chikongo and Chifamba note that pole dancing is not the first dance of its kind to celebrate and commercialise the feminine body. In any case, the marriage between the sex idiom and dance dates back to pre-colonial days. In this vein, the authors demonstrate how and why pole dancing has generated so much controversy. Echoing Chidora's argument on the emancipatory nature of Zimdancehall music, Chikongo and Chifamba also argue that pole dancing has ushered in new power dynamics in Zimbabwe's performance industry. In short, women in the musical arts are scoring victories against stereotyping by males.

Reggemore Marongedze and Enock Machanja pursue the theme of the dehumanisation of women in the musical arts from a different perspective in Chapter Eight. Through a sociological critique of the performances of two female dancers, Sandra Ndebele and Beverly Sibanda, the authors analyse the exhibition of erotic body manoeuvres, particularly the manner in which it generates what the authors term "an artistic bazaar" as a survival response to the dynamics of life, particularly in the post-2000 era. It is an era marked by severe socio-economic hardships which had dwindling audiences and decreasing revenue. To survive in this environment, the artists resorted to live shows which they innovatively engineered to attract crowds. For some, the technique employed is erotic body exhibition which generates "an artistic bazaar". Physical beauty has been considered an important aspect of women artists' attraction. As Chari contends, the accentuation of a woman's looks and body parts such as thighs, legs, breasts, and backside against their personalities suggests that they are valued more for their physical appearance than their intellect, attitude or behaviour.²³ This creation of "an artistic bazaar" as a survival strategy becomes a case of women musical artists striving to be victors. The argument by Marongedze and Machanja exposes the irony that, it is in fact the women themselves who turn themselves into villains by willfully engaging in the erotic body manoeuvres. However, by the same stroke, they become victors as they are able to eke out a living and attain some modicum of independent economic survival, thus emancipating themselves in the process. The authors' position is thus in sync with

Chidora's contention that the dances are actually a form and source of empowerment and emancipation for the women artists.

An interesting dimension to the marginalisation of female music artists is presented by Gibson Ncube and Gugulethu Siziba in Chapter Nine. They lament the failure by Zimbabwean scholars of the musical arts to acknowledge the discourse of the marginalisation of female singers from the Matabeleland region. Through an analysis of female artists from the region, such as Busi Ncube, Sandra Ndebele and Dudu Manhenga, Ncube and Siziba argue that these female musicians, like other female artists in the country in general, are marginalised by patriarchal perceptions which relegate women to domestic spaces. In addition, however, these female musicians from Matabeleland also have to deal with the hegemony of the Shona language and culture which has arguably marginalised other ethnicities in Zimbabwe. Drawing on Nick Stevenson's theoretical framework on "cultural citizenship", as well as Antonio Gramsci's notion of hegemony, the authors argue that although relatively small, the voices of the marginalised female singers from Matabeleland have the potential of (re)defining forms of 'inclusive' public spaces.²⁴ By analysing the lives and musical corpus of the above-mentioned female singers, Ncube and Siziba observe that, whilst these singers are able to transcend the hegemonic dominance of patriarchy, they are still confronted by the cultural and linguistic supremacy of Shona. In fact, these singers are only able to become mainstream artists when they agentively (re)present themselves and their products, notably, singing in Shona and relocating to Harare.

In Chapter Ten, the focus shifts slightly to an assessment of gender dynamics in protest theatre. In the chapter, Dorich Mhako-Mutonhodza articulates how Zimbabwean protest theatre, in a bid to undermine the repressive government, unwittingly promotes gender insensitivity, creating women as victims and villains. The numerous events that have characterised the decade 2000 to 2010 have been important milestones in reconfiguring Zimbabwean society, especially in gender terms. Mhako-Mutonhodzi thus examines how women's struggles are represented in theatre that deals with issues of governance and socio-economic problems of the nation. She analyses the implications of direct performance on the aesthetic integrity of theatre.

The dominant agenda of the liberation ideology imbricates with the Zimbabwean social and political patriarchal hegemony that limits the participation and representation of women as equals and agents of socio-political transformation in Zimbabwe. Such identities are constructed in the mainstream media, such as newspapers and television which create a macho-library ideology of Zimbabwean nationhood, masking the contributions of women in national affairs since the liberation struggle days. Due to such marginalisation and lack of self-representation and articulation, female artists have been subjected to all kinds of abuses, from physical, mental to sexual abuse. The author also examines the extent to which the structures put in place by Zimbabwean protest

²³ Chari "Representation of Women in Male-produced 'Urban grooves'", p. 98.

²⁴ N. Stevenson, *Cultural Citizenship: Cosmopolitan Questions*, Berkshire, Open University Press, 2003, p. 333.

theatre have gone in confronting the country's socio-economic and governance issues in respect to women. This is in keeping with the agenda of protest theatre to disapprove against the unequal power dynamics and total liberation of all people, and in this case, women in particular.

Chapter Eleven pursues further the issue of the repression of protest art, but from a legalistic perspective. Pedzai Maida meditates on the law, censorship and policing of the female dancing body on the contemporary Zimbabwe stage. The chapter foregrounds some of the social and legal responses and discourses that seek to discipline and monitor the presence and practice of female dance and dancers on the stage. Maida posits that the formulation and application of particular law statutes reveals moralist patriarchal anxieties. Such laws seek to govern and define the conduct of female bodies. In doing so, they reveal elements of hegemonic discomfort with the agency that the female body assumes and commands in the public realm, particularly through dance. Maida focuses this meditation on the female body in motion by engaging with controversial cases of some women dancers in the Zimbabwe musical arts. He also draws parallels with other international artists and makes a comparison of how societies respond to 'public erotic/sexual displays'.

The political dynamics of repression and expression in the musical arts is further taken up in Chapter Twelve by Innocent Mutero. Mutero brings to the fore the subtle political connotations in the music of the late Chiwoniso Maraire, who was affectionately known as "the Rebel Woman". The connotations have largely eluded critical attention in an environment characterised by repressive laws which curtail citizens' rights and freedoms. Mutero argues that while the laws have tried to instill fear in many dissenters, they have nevertheless failed to mute the voices of dissent. Regardless of the continued repression by the government in its quest to curtail public criticism, Chiwoniso managed to manipulate *mbira* music to propagate messages of dissent. Ironically, she received overwhelming ovation from both the government and the general public. Mutero argues that attention on Chiwoniso's music transcended the beauty of her craft; she has rarely been avowed for her mastery of the *mbira* and vocal prowess. However, true to female artists' endeavour to free themselves from the shackles of patriarchy, Chiwoniso managed to move away from just playing traditional songs or renditions of such, to playing her own compositions which spoke of the prevailing socio-political situation of her time. In her music and performances, Chiwoniso practically re-enacted social and political structures in the contemporary context, a true victor indeed.

Chiwoniso, together with Hope Masike and Stella Chiveshe, are also at the centre of the analysis on patriarchy in the playing of the traditional *mbira* instrument in Chapter Thirteen. In the chapter, Margaret Chipara and Gibson Ncube examine the lives and musical oeuvre of these three female virtuoso *mbira* players. The authors argue that these three women have not only been able to challenge patriarchy through their extraordinary handling of the *mbira*, but they have been able to show that monolithic conceptions of gender and gender roles cannot continue to be used to undermine and marginalise women, especially in the field of arts and performance.

By deploying Sylvia Tamale's conceptualisation of male hegemony in Africa,²⁵ and Patricia McFadden's African feminist reading of power and how it is experienced by "those who are excluded from it",²⁶ Chipara and Ncube contend that by venturing into a largely male-dominated field, these female *mbira* practitioners are involved in effecting two overarching objectives. Firstly, they are involved in gendered resistance to the hegemony of patriarchy. This resistance is expressed both by their lives and the themes they broach in their music. An example would be the themes treated by the late Chiwoniso in her aptly titled album, "Rebel Woman". Secondly, these *mbira* players are enmeshed in offering an "other" perspective into the experiences of female Zimbabweans. They argue that if music plays an important role in archiving a people's past and present experiences, then this archive has been dominated by the male gaze and perspective in Zimbabwe. More than just being emancipatory narratives, the songs of these female *mbira* players possess an "illocutionary force" which has the potential to lead to a reformulation of "values, beliefs, self-images, boundaries and frontiers, thus rendering them victors."

The thirteen chapters in this book have addressed the marginalisation of female music artists in Zimbabwe from the pre-colonial past to the present. The marginalisation and dehumanisation are tantamount to victimisation. Women are portrayed as villains both at societal and government levels. Society looks down upon women dancers and musicians, particularly when they flaunt their bodies during performances. They are easily labelled as undesirable characters of loose morals, yet it is the same males who derive sexual gratification from watching the said sexually explicit performances. The strength of this academic intervention is the effort to give agency to these female music artists by unpacking the emancipatory role of their actions and performances. Instead of the stereotyping that society has been given to in responding to female music artists' performances, the contributors to this book have appreciated the efforts of women musicians to chart their own paths and untangle themselves from the shackles of both modern patriarchy and repressive governance. Yes, the women in the musical arts in Zimbabwe may be victims and villains in some instances, or they may be presented as such by some artists, but they have certainly proved their mettle as victors as they now openly express themselves in spaces previously dominated by males.

The book does not claim to make a final word on women and the musical arts. At best, it highlights some of the fascinating developments in musical arts which shape, or are shaped by women as agents, protagonists, victors, victims and villains. It demonstrates how these tags are ever changing, negotiated and at times deliberately appropriated to achieve various ends. The chapters in this book are, in many ways, intended at triggering further research interests and debate. Authors in this book come from different academic disciplines and backgrounds, making their analyses complex and quite refreshing.

²⁵ S. Tamale, "Gender Trauma in Africa: Enhancing Women's Links to Resources", *Journal of African Law*, Vol. 48, 2004.

²⁶ P. McFadden, "Cultural Practice as Gendered Exclusion: Experiences from Southern Africa", *Sida Studies*, Vol. 3, 2001, p. 59.