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Rwandans negotiating shared cultural identities after genocide:

The case of *Orchestre Impala*

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Abstract

In the cultural landscape of post-genocide Rwanda, this research considers the recent revival of *Orchestre Impala*, one of the major bands of the Habyarimana era. We suggest that this may signal an interesting new set of developments in Rwanda's national cultural politics, and the start of a "normalisation" of cultural practices in the country. By starting to come to terms with Rwanda's pre-genocide musical history, some of the key actors, the musicians in the band, their funders, supporters and others who formed part of *Orchestre Impala's* revival, are considered as music producers. Their recovery of past musical forms is done so as to ensure resonance in the present, and shared identification free of direct attachment to a tainted past of ethnic divisions. This exploratory study, based on interviews with musicians and others involved, and the analysis of song texts translated from the Kinyarwanda, reflects on the potential role of music in constructing a shared social imaginary among Rwandans. The aim is to contribute to wider debates about the potential role of music in peace and reconciliation efforts. Perhaps optimistically, we propose that the revival of *Orchestre Impala* may signify the start of a certain normalisation of Rwandan social and cultural life.

"...music is constitutive of social agency in the sense of appropriating wider social, cultural and political conditions to the individual – the process of reconnecting personal and social change" (Sutherland and De Nora, 2011: 83).

Keywords

popular music, Rwanda, culture, identity, normalisation, Orchestre Impala

1. Introduction

Although there have been some selective studies on the role of music, especially the music of Simon Bikindi, during the Rwanda genocide, in promoting violence, the "social healing" potential of music in Rwanda has so far received relatively little scholarly attention (McCoy, 2009; Swanson, 2014). There have been some studies around music's potential as a means for conflict resolution elsewhere in East Africa (see, for example, Nannyonga-Tamusuza, 2002). In this study, we propose that in Rwanda, musical events can become part of: "the interface between the spiritual real, the individual and the group," and forms of ritual healing "embedded in a pervasive socio-centric worldview that focuses on persons not as individuals per se, but as integral parts of communities" (Monteiro and Wall, 2011: 239; 238).

In peace studies, it is proposed that expression through the arts is mainly about "value creation," which refers to "the capacity to find meaning, to enhance one's own existence and contribute to the well-being of others, under any circumstance" (Ikeda, 2001: 100, cited in Urbain, 2016: 3). Music thus enables interactions which do not rely on speech. The importance of musical expression and rituals for the identity formation of Rwandans is suggested by this study, which confirms that public performance of popular or other music needs to be sensitive to "the embodiment of certain values and ideas," including ideas of "national belonging, leadership and the contemporary political *zeitgeist*" (Berthomé and Houseman, 2010: 62).

More specifically, this study aims to show how the revival of a popular musical group, *Orchestre Impala,* popular during the Habyarimana era between 1973 and 1994, was negotiated almost 20 years after the genocide. *Orchestre Impala,* once Rwanda's most popular band, somehow re-emerged in 2012 as a creative force through careful acts of cultural reinvention. It once again forms part of the social and cultural imaginary of Rwanda, and of Rwandans' musical and cultural identities. How was this potentially daunting task of reinvention negotiated, given the negative associations of the Habyarimana era with preparation for genocide and Hutu power ideology? Can the band's revival and acceptance in Rwanda be viewed as an indicator of a gradual "normalisation" of shared cultural identities in post-genocide Rwanda?

Supported by a small *Aegis Trust*[1] grant, we were able to conduct interviews with some of those most closely involved with the band in the past, and more recently. How those relaunching *Orchestre Impala* avoided being tainted with past associations of the pre-genocide era, was itself an intriguing puzzle for us to examine. The study also aims to contribute in a modest way to the burgeoning literature on how music and musicians, and cultural production in general, can promote peace-building and avert violence and social polarisation (see, for example, Urbain, 2016 and various chapters in Urbain ed., 2008).

2. Why *Orchestre Impala*?

The creation of *Orchestre Impala* roughly coincided with the coup of 1973 that brought Juvenal Habyarimana to power and the creation of Habyarimana's single party MRND (*Mouvement Révolutionnaire National pour le Développement*) in 1974. By 2012, when the band's revival took place, the RPF (Rwandese Patriotic Front) was consolidating its influence as the ruling party, having been in power since the end of genocide in July 1994. Prior to the 1990s, *Orchestre Impala* was popular and commercially successful, with a dance music

style influenced by Rwandan rhythms and lyrics, combined with Congolese *zouk* and highlife elements. Given its past popularity and recent revival, the case of *Orchestre Impala* provides an opportunity to explore the role of music in the negotiation of shared cultural identities in post-genocide Rwanda.

According to one doctoral study, by the 1980s, *Orchestre Impala* was one of the most popular bands in Rwanda (Swanson, 2014: 95). Audiences were attracted by the band's "unique and eclectic style [combining]… elements of traditional Rwandan music…a bit of [Zairean] Rumba and other genres of African music" (*New Times*, November 14, 2012). This hybrid of folk music, Kinyarwanda poetry, Congolese rhythms and lyrics was well adapted to specific ceremonial occasions and the everyday rituals of most Rwandans. The band's music was played at New Year, at state ceremonial gatherings, at family events, and on the radio. At home and abroad, all Rwandans knew much of *Orchestre Impala's* musical repertoire. The band performed at regular concerts around the country and overseas; *Orchestre Impala* was also one of a handful of Rwandan bands to consistently record albums.

Since Simon Bikindi's songs embodied Hutu power ideology in the run-up to the genocide, music in Rwanda has lost its innocence (Snyder, 2006). Bikindi was sentenced at the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda in Arusha, not for his songs, but for a speech made during the genocide. Even so, his fame as a musician was what led to his being tried in Arusha (McCoy, 2009; Urbain, 2016). For some Rwandans, pre-1994 music is associated with a threatening and hostile past. Those returning to Rwanda from the diaspora after decades in exile did not necessarily associate such music with something positive (Saarikallio, 2012: 482). For Rwandans living in Rwanda before 1994, however, much popular music from the pre-genocide era – Bikindi's political songs excepted – recalls earlier, happier times, a time before war, and before Hutu power ideology got established. For these Rwandans, *igisope* music creates "experiences of ease, relaxation, a heightened sense of awareness and feelings of unity" with others, as well as a shared sense of having a common culture with its own history (Saarikallio, 2012: 482). Yet not all Rwandans will necessarily derive from this music a "feeling of being included" in "broader unities, including sub-culture, nationality," and Rwandan-ness (Saarikallio, 2012: 482). *Igisope* is explained later in more detail.

As a set of hybrid musical forms, *igisope* music can be more or less equated with popular folk, and equated with the appeal of "oldies" on the radio. This style of music is mostly transmitted through recordings online, especially on YouTube, as well as through radio, and live in bars and hotels. When played live, *igisope* music often involves improvisation for specific settings and audiences (Ighile, 2012: 104). Whereas "oldies" may appeal more to an older generation, the live audiences of *Orchestre Impala* are relatively young, suggesting that the band's hybrid aesthetics appeal beyond those who could be considered old-timers. Such music – whilst unavoidably politicised – is also potentially a significant means of linking the past to the present generations. Following violent reorganisation of Rwandan society through war and genocide, recuperating the cultural sphere and musical forms without nostalgic regret is a matter of importance, given the need to root out traces of genocide ideology within popular culture.

3. Methodologies for approaching meaning: lyrics and narratives

As well as being academic researchers, we are also practicing artists, one of us a songwriter and poet, the

other a visual artist. With backgrounds in genocide studies and peace studies, our positions are not impartial. Each of us is also an "active participant in the research process, influencing and being influenced by the expanding horizons of musical understanding" (O'Connell, 2011: 113). Furthermore, "[i]n such an investigative context, understanding becomes a form of self-understanding" too (ibid.).

Gaining insights from those most closely involved in the revival of *Orchestre Impala*, we sought out people willing to take part in open-ended interviews. We were able to conduct five in-depth, open-ended interviews, between 2014 and 2015. In total, we spoke with nine individuals in Brussels, Kigali and London. All nine were either closely involved with the band in the 1970s and 1980s, or with its recent relaunch. Two of the nine were surviving members of the original band, still in the current line-up. One interviewee helped relaunch the band around 2012, and helped steer two older, original band members through this process. Most interviews were recorded in Kinyarwanda, before being transcribed and translated. This allowed for better understandings of how band members explained their own musical production, and the possible wider social and cultural meanings of the band's revival.

The interviews proved an important step in gathering data on the hybrid cultural identities being negotiated in Rwanda today. Musicians' own accounts, combined with analysis of song lyrics associated with choices made in selecting musical repertoires, combined to provide some clues as to the significance of *Orchestre Impala*'s negotiated revival. Additional primary material was gathered from the comments sections of websites and weblogs hosting *Orchestre Impala* songs. One concert that took place in May 2015 was recorded for some insights into this. As Begbie reminds us:

> Music is enacted, practiced, usually in tandem with other actions whose range is virtually limitless: entertainment, healing, courtship, identifying a group, celebrating a victory, and so on. The two most basic practices we might call simply "music-making" …and "music hearing" (2017: 14).

This study does not claim to provide original data about how Rwandan audiences responded to *Orchestre Impala*'s revival. Instead, the main concern is with music production. Through dialogue with Rwandan musicians closely involved – and with those who knew the band in the past, as well as today – we are able to reconstruct choices made by the music-makers and identify some of the consequences.

The question we ask is first, why the band stopped playing together during the late 1980s and why the band got together again around 2012. Second, we ask how the relaunch of the band came about and was negotiated. To be able to answer these questions, the study explores three key phases in *Orchestre Impala*'s recent history: its birth and cultural production under the MRND[2] to the late 1980s; its eclipse in the 1990s prior to genocide, deaths and dispersal; and its recent and carefully crafted revival, since 2012.

In addition, the band's song lyrics are examined to show how they have been adapted to the new political dispensation in Rwanda. Some content analysis of song texts from the pre-genocide and contemporary *Orchestre Impala* repertoires helps us identify specific cultural elements and themes retained from the past, those elements transformed for present audiences, and elements discarded as irreconcilable with – or irrelevant to – the values of Rwandan identity in the present era. We also show that *Orchestre Impala*'s songs fall into three broad categories:

(i) those that can no longer be played in concerts or on the radio, because they are dealing with an "unacceptable past," or now appear irrelevant;

(ii) those that remain popular, having become part of a shared Rwandan popular culture, fully integrated into shared Rwandan identities; and,

(iii) songs composed around and associated with the revival of *Orchestre Impala* from 2012 onwards, including commissioned praise songs, which share some features with praise songs of the Habyarimana era.

The political sensitivity of dealing with shared cultural identities of Rwandans today needs to be acknowledged, as do negative associations of everything that dates from the Habyarimana era. Yet more than 20 years after the genocide against Tutsis, it may be time to re-evaluate the past musical heritage of Rwandans, also from the 1980s (Rieder and Elbert, 2013). We believe that daring to take on this task may tell us a great deal about how shared cultural identities of Rwandans are being "normalised" today, including across generations, class, gender and other social divides.

4. The context of *igisope:* Invention of a musical idiom

Before we examine lyrics and explore interviews, we consider the term *igisope*, which has been used by Rwandans to refer to people and music from the pre-genocide era, especially the 1970s and early 1980s. The term derives from the acronym SOPECYA (*Société de Petrole de Cyangugu*), a company that used to trade petroleum and related products inside Rwanda before, during and after the genocide. This company formerly operated in Cyangugu, in South West Rwanda, and expanded to Kigali in the early 1990s, after war had begun. The owner bought a "strategic" plot, near a major bend in the road leading to the city centre, known as *le Plateau*. Viateur Ruvunabagabo was a primary school pupil at the time, and remembers living next to the plot sold to SOPECYA. A petrol station was opened, and later, a car repair garage. A bar was later added and then a bus stop was placed next to the garage. Soon the venue became so well-known as a convenient meeting point, that the expression: *"Duhurire kuri Sopecya"* ("Let's meet at SOPECYA") became a catchphrase for Rwandans in the capital and beyond (Skype interview with Viateur Ruvunabagabo, former resident neighbour of SOPECYA/SOPETRAD, August 3, 2014).

This garage and petrol station stayed open throughout the war, and during the entire course of the genocide, as well as for a while thereafter. As people returned to Kigali in the aftermath of genocide, to find relatives and others from their past, they would arrange to meet, using the old expression: "Let's meet at SOPECYA." Here they would meet, amidst the devastation, and from there decide where to go next. Returning from exile, Rwandans who came to Kigali became curious about the significance of SOPECYA, and how it had become a meeting place. This visible marker divided those who had lived in Rwanda before the genocide, and those who returned only afterwards, from exile. For Rwandans familiar with the Habyarimana era, the address "at SOPECYA" meant a fragile sense of continuity with the past, and a constant reference point in a world turned upside-down.

Again, according to Viateur, a spontaneous nickname arose after 1994 for those Rwandans who had either remained in the country throughout the genocide or returned soon afterwards. They were *igisope* (the people

of SOPECYA, i.e. those who met there). The petrol station changed its name to SOPETRAD, but the label *igisope* stuck, both for specific kinds of people, and for the kind of music those people played and appreciated. *Igisope* indicates cultural values and musical identities that endured from the pre-genocide era (Skype interview with Viateur Ruvunabagabo, August 3, 2014). This is just one account of how *igisope* came to be a label to define the eclectic mix of old-time songs played in bars, at SOPETRAD, at pubs and hotels across Kigali, and on the radio.

In the immediate aftermath of the genocide, as Rwandans tried to re-establish their lives, so too did singers, guitarists and other musicians find one another at SOPECYA. After some time, they started live performances, to earn money, and to feel again a sense of belonging as Rwandans that transcended time and political identity categories. The earliest post-genocide venue for *igisope* musicians was the Hotel Panafrique, in the city centre. Concerts there in the late 1990s started to attract people from all walks of life. Bahizi, a cultural critic and musical expert in Rwanda, states that a few years after the genocide, *igisope* concerts started to become very popular. The Panafrique became too small for the growing audiences.

> It was a nostalgic endeavour. Most of those who had danced and known pre-genocide bands were confused, as new genres and music from the rest of Africa and the world were making inroads on the Rwandan music industry and public. The Kinyarwanda language and music were being eroded as Rwanda became a meeting point of many cultures. Those singers who were still alive, especially those who used to belong to bands such as [*Orchestre*] *Impala* and *Nyampinga* got together and started playing again. In 1999, they started at Hotel Panafrique, and re-introduced what we used to call *sakanyonsa*[3] (Skype interview with Olivier Bahizi, July 2014).

Later, the musicians moved to Hotel Chez Lando in downtown Kigali, a larger venue. Music known as *igisope* also spread to other venues, such as Hotel Alpha Palace, and many smaller bars, mainly in Kigali, where "old-timer" music soon became played after the genocide.

As the music industry in Rwanda started to re-emerge, these *igisope* players continued to play in local pubs and hotels in different parts of the city, but not usually under their old names. Bahizi notes that their music also started to reach outside Rwanda, and was especially popular with Rwandans in the Great Lakes region diaspora and in Belgium, home to the most active Rwandan diaspora in Western Europe. The main achievement of *igisope* was to help Rwandan musicians, including some who had returned from exile, to recover ways of sharing memories, recovering moments of joyfulness, and to find forms of entertainment that could be widely enjoyed by Rwandan and international audiences after the genocide. Ideally such performances could express a sense of continuity with the past, without resorting to divisiveness (Skype Interview with Olivier Bahizi, July 2014). During this period, as Brent Swanson argues, *Orchestre Impala* was:

> [the most] popular Rwandan group who combined Rwandan rhythms (mostly triple meter with accents on one in the first measure and one and two of the second measure) found in throughout [sic] Rwanda with Congolese rumba […] The consensus among most musicians I have spoken with is that *Orchestre Impala* was one of the first bands to mix traditional rhythms with popular music (Swanson, 2014: 95).

These new influences introduced a new dance form, *sakanyonsa*, heavily influenced by rhythms *Impala* and other bands had taken over from Congolese rumba and fused with Rwandan traditional dance rhythms of the "music that would accompany the *ukurambagiza* [couples courting dance] and *umushayayo* and *umushagiriro* dances," which are "usually performed by women, with an emphasis on the elegance of gestures and movements and showing off the body" in "a slow tempo and danced with sliding steps" (Gansemans, quoted in Swanson, 2014: 236-237). Often the movement of the arms in slower Rwandan dances is intended to imitate the beauty of long-horn cattle.

As for *Congolese rumba*, this involves quick movements of the belly and hips, and is more up-tempo. *Sakanyonsa* combined traditional Rwandan dance styles with Congolese rumba to produce a dance where the entire body moved, but with grace. In modernising these songs, *Orchestre Impala* does not only put a modern music instrument to an old melody, it also, as previously mentioned, fuses the old with foreign influences, to create a new type of dance, and therefore new bodily expressions in the Rwandan culture.

Munyanshoza provides a much broader definition of *igisope* than Viateur, defining it simply as "songs that were played on Radio Rwanda before [the genocide]" (Interview with Munyanshoza, March 18, 2015). According to Bahizi, *igisope* is not an established musical genre, but more a mode of musical expression, or a style (Skype Interview with Olivier Bahizi, August 3, 2014). Starting from the aftermath of the genocide, this musical expression sought to fill a cultural void brought about by the destruction of Rwandan society by war and genocide.

In this broader sense, *igisope* music is like "oldies," which form the basis for much nostalgia in other country's musical cultures. Yet *igisope* should not be reduced to a mere catch-all concept for all old Rwandan songs, though it does refer to classic songs played in Rwanda on the radio before the genocide. The *igisope* phenomenon is quite fluid and difficult to define, since it plays in the relationship, complex and ambiguous, between past and present musical forms in Rwanda. It is a post-genocide cultural expression that refers to distance in time and space of songs familiar to *igisope* musicians. Thus, it is also a musical set of spaces where pre-genocide and post-genocide musical and cultural values meet and interact, influencing one another. Rwandans who grew up in exile listening to these songs from afar were thus also able to reconnect to a Rwanda they had never been able to live in before the war and genocide brought them home from exile. For those who lived in Rwanda before the genocide, newly created spaces for hybrid folk-based forms of popular music allowed them to recover a sense of how such songs were listened to and enjoyed by those who had passed on, and by those who had survived.

5. *Orchestre Impala*: From its origins to *igisope*

One of the two co-founders of *Orchestre Impala*, Sebigeri, also known as Mimi La Rose, originally moved to Rwanda from Lubumbashi in today's DRC in 1974 (Interview with Sebigeri, Kigali, July 5, 2015). He started to look for young people like himself, interested in playing music, and soon met Andre Sebanani in Kigali. Sebanani welcomed Sebigeri into his home, and they played guitar together. Shortly afterwards, other band members joined, including Jean Felix Gasasira (aka Soso Mado), and Jean Pierre Kalimunda (aka Kali wa Njenje). All four started playing for fun. Their original name was *Vox Pop*. When the band took part in a

song writing competition organised by the Habyarimana/MRND Government, things changed. They won with a song about land consolidation – a theme still being pursued in agriculture today! Sebigeri recalls that time:

> We became popular overnight and we were surprised. But the reason people liked us is because we introduced a new style. The Rwandan styles are usually calm and slow. But now we introduced new styles, warming up the Rwandan styles a bit, using the Zairian rhythms. I had come to Rwanda from Lubumbashi. Soso Mado, Kali wa Njenje, and Maitre Rubangi lived in Lubumbashi [before coming back home to Rwanda]. Only Sebanani, Gasigwa, Abdulatif aka Tubi Lando and Semu Jean Berchmas lived in Rwanda and had never left the country (Interview with Sebigeri, Sainte Famille, Kigali, July 5, 2015).

Vox Pop did not resonate with their new audiences. A more Kinyarwandan name, *Impala,* was found in 1975, when the band started to record songs at Radio Rwanda. Once the band came to be known as, *Orchestre Impala*, the full line-up "was originally composed of seven members: Sebanani Andre (Pepe La Rose), Gasasira Jean Felix (Soso Mado), Sebigeri Paul (Mimi La Rose), Gasigwa Abdallatif (Toubi Lando), Rubangura Francois (Maitre Rubangi), Kalimunda Jean Pierre (Kali wa Njenje), and Ngenzi Fidele (Fidele le Jacard)." Later, the band recruited an eighth member called Semu Jean Berechimas (Semu wa Semu), who died a few years later" (*New Times*, February 21, 2013).

By 1976, the band had made enough money for band members to buy themselves houses in Kigali and a minibus for travelling around the country when on tour. During the 1980s, *Orchestre Impala* became an established and popular band with a growing international reputation, and one of the most popular bands in Rwanda. Their musical outputs were also widely shared among Rwandans in the diaspora (Ighile, 2012: 104). The band recorded over 13 albums, and eventually in the 1980s travelled across the globe, giving concerts in other African countries, and in Canada, Germany, France and Belgium.

It is widely believed the band split when the war of October 1990 started, but in an interview, Mimi La Rose dates their split to a year or two earlier, in 1988 or 1989. At this time, Soso Mado, Kali wa Njenje and Maitre Rubangi went on to start another band, which they called *Inyana ni iya mweru (Good manners are a result of good parenting)*. Sebigeri stayed with Sebanani and the rest of the team, and kept the original name *Orchestre Impala*. According to Mimi La Rose, they continued to play the established repertoire. The same divisions that were then cutting Rwandan society along "race" and ideological lines, were also dividing the band. As Mimi La Rose expressed it:

> From that time on, we hated each other, and the authorities tried to reconcile us but it could not work. Semu had died from illness way before. And Soso Mado died later**.** We started to have more problems in 1992 when some of us, such as Sebanani, were suspected to be *ibyitso* [the term given to Tutsi and pro-democracy Hutu arrested by the Habyarimana Government and accused of being accomplices of the RPF]. Sebanani was killed during the genocide and others including me [Mimi La Rose] went into exile. What led the band to restart is that the ICTR [the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, where Sebigeri worked as a chauffeur after the genocide] closed its doors. This coincided with the fact that Munyanshoza, who happens to have a voice similar to Soso's, had come to see me with a suggestion to restart the band. Since we had nothing else to do, and with the encouragement of Munyanshoza, we made a start to the band again (Interview with Sebigeri, Sainte Famille, Kigali, July 5, 2015).

Munyanshoza agrees, stating: "I am the one who brought the idea to relaunch *Orchestre Impala*" (Interview with Munyanshoza, Hotel Lemigo, Kigali, March 18, 2015). He continues at some length to explain the steps in this process of re-establishing the band:

> I went to see Sebigeri, one among the two of the seven founding members still alive. Five of the members are dead and two are still alive. I shared the idea. When I was young, I liked the band. And many Rwandans who lived in the country at the time liked the band. Also, the band's songs are still played today on the radio and the songs have aged well…We play at different pubs, at weddings, and some concerts organised up-country. The district of Rwamagana recently invited us to play there. There are songs we can no longer play. Those songs that praised Habyarimana and the MRND have lost value. One is, for example, a song that goes like "Let me praise President Habyarimana…." Such a song cannot be played anymore. Many of those who were members of the MRND have betrayed the country (Interview with Munyanshoza, Hotel Lemigo, Kigali, March 18, 2015).

After the genocide, as people returned to Rwanda and to Kigali, they sought ways to gather in the evenings and wanted to feel happy once again after all they had experienced. Some of the Kinyarwanda songs popular in Rwanda and the wider region in the past provided some sense of relief for many. Most of the songs did not specifically belong to any one band or group, but could be played by several groups of musicians. Nor did they refer to painful aspects of the past, such as the divisions sowed prior to the genocide, by more divisive Hutu power singers like Bikindi (McCoy, 2009). Instead, they were individual songs from various different bands' repertoires, or from individual musicians who had been popular in Rwanda prior to the genocide. Many songs by *Orchestre Impala* were among these recoverable *igisope*-style songs.

6. Negotiating musical narratives for the Rwandan present

In Rwanda, the musical past had become "guilty by association," and tended to be viewed as a constant reminder of divisiveness and the highly traumatic events that followed. As Urbain puts it, reviewing the work of McCoy on Simon Bikindi's songs:

> Creativity was used extensively to compose songs, record them and broadcast them, but only to divide people, to strengthen and unite members of one group against all others. Musicking was not used to bring out the best in oneself and others, but to galvanize one group to the detriment and for the destruction of another group of human beings (2016: 16).

With this particular history in mind, forgetfulness can seem preferable to remembering and recuperating cultural elements from the past. However painful and potentially divisive, the process of creatively and selectively recovering cultural elements from the past is essential for Rwandans to be able to move forward as a single society. The challenge in relation to popular music is to recover "positive parts" from Rwandan cultural history for the present, and to negotiate a sense of normalisation of Rwandan cultural identities (Uvin and Mironko, 2003: 229; Gasanabo, Interview, Kigali, March 10, 2015).

The potential for healing and recovery through musical expression and appreciation, including through dancing, singing and listening to music, is widely acknowledged: "[t]hrough the vista of music," scholars in the social sciences have been seeking to understand relations between cultures and sub-cultures for decades (see, for instance, Shonekan, 2015: 4). At the very least, the potential of popular musical forms is to transcend social boundaries, as well as to reinforce them. Thus "if music does contribute to peace-building, this may be due to its ability to exploit features of our biological constitution … which transcend socio-cultural particularities" (Begbie, 2017: 17) and thus can help consolidate new forms of identification and solidarity.

In general, several studies confirm that if "used appropriately and with care, music … has the power to heal by helping people to understand and rationalize emotions" (Swallow, 2002: 50; O'Connell, 2011). Something similar may have happened in post-genocide Rwanda, where the music from the Habyarimana era could be viewed by some as music of a genocidal era, to be replaced by more purely Rwandan "national music" that combined more traditional rhythms and more sophisticated production techniques. Though his view may be contentious, it is interesting that O'Connell notes something similar in Northern Ireland, when he suggests that Irish music had been played by musicians from across the Catholic-Protestant divide before the peace agreement. Afterwards, process came to be viewed as solely representing the Catholic population, and not the Protestants (O'Connell, 2011).

In the next section of the paper, we first present songs that managed to straddle two eras: the pre-genocide past of Habyarimana's regime and the post-genocide launch of a new *Orchestre Impala*. This small but significant group of songs appear to have enough "timelessness" in their narratives to have remained part of the cultural landscape not only of Rwandans in the diaspora, but also of Rwandans at home inside Rwanda. A second set of songs is then considered which have had to be abandoned completely. This is explained and some reasons for this proposed. Finally, there are new songs, of which an example, the Liberation Song, is discussed. There is some resemblance to earlier forms of *Orchestre Impala* narratives, written to support specific developmental goals of government. Negotiating musical narratives depends on careful adjustment, and on a willingness to abandon songs considered unrecoverable in the present era. This flexibility is a mark of *Orchestre Impala*'s embeddedness in Rwandan social norms, across both those living inside Rwanda and in the diaspora.

7. Songs borrowed, songs new and songs left behind

Recovering "positive" cultural elements from the repertoire and associations of *Orchestre Impala*'s music is possible, in part because the band was never directly associated with Hutu power ideology or violent targeting of Tutsi Rwandans. By reviving *Orchestre Impala*, some Rwandans decided to recover elements of Rwandan musical history from the pre-genocide era. That they were able to achieve this feat of cultural reinvention suggests that cultural expression and popular music have started to recuperate the best of pre-genocide musical culture. This suggests that, in some ways, cultural production reflects the normalisation of social relations among Rwandans.

7.1 Songs that stood the test of time to become igisope

The most enduring legacy of *Orchestre Impala* lies in its songs related to love, social relations, the beauty of Rwanda, and festive seasons and national holidays. These are songs that led Rwandans to coin a saying that *"ntibyabuza Impala gucuranga"* [nothing will ever prevent *Impala* from playing music]. This popular saying is used in Rwanda when people are faced with what seem to be insurmountable challenges, and seek to overcome them. The expression can be used when trying to convince someone they will succeed eventually, and this is as inevitable as *Orchestre Impala* playing their music!

Bonane [*Bonne Année,* i.e. Happy New Year] is one *Orchestre Impala* song that has rallied and still rallies Rwandans and other peoples in the Great Lakes Region as they celebrate the New Year. Composed during the Habyarimana era, this song is still sung today as much as it was then, at family parties, or in public places to celebrate the arrival of the new year and the passing of the old. The lyrics are celebratory, with some relatively innocuous praise of an unnamed regime's policies. The careful choice of wording helped ensure this particular song would remain popular long after the old republic had disappeared, and *Bonane* is a fully integrated part of contemporary Rwandan *igisope.* The lyrics show the inclusive appeal of the song:

Song Title: Bonane (Happy New Year)

This year is coming to its end and the next is ushering in. Let us be happy and celebrate. Let's thank God Almighty for keeping us alive to this day. We are privileged to be enjoying life. As for those who have not been lucky [and have passed on], it is not their mistake. No one refuses to keep his/her life. For those of us that God still keeps alive, let's move on and celebrate.

Old men and old women, take your sticks for support and dance, and wish long life to the young generations. Happy New Year eh eh eh. Happy New Year to all people in Rwanda. Let all of us young people sing. May this New Year bring us all we wish for, in happiness. Happy New Year!

To all people of Rwanda, may this New Year give us the resolve to keep going forward; Happy New Year. To all people of Rwanda, Happy New Year. Stay the course as you modernise your living conditions so that we develop. Happy New Year! [4]

The narrative invokes a shared celebration that cut across the religious, political and identities, and even the divide between young and old, the dead and the living. Another song that became a national common "cultural good" is *Genda Rwanda Uri Nziza* (You are Beautiful, Rwanda). The lyrics are largely depoliticised and thus manage to be timeless, mainly through a poetic description of Rwanda's physical beauty and charm, as if Rwanda were a woman. The video of this song has been produced in a new style, since the 2012 revival of *Orchestre Impala*, and as if to ensure that the song is not too closely associated with other videos which one assumes were made by *Impala* fans in exile. The lyrics that follow show how suited the song was to become part of the new repertoire of *Impala,* and be brought into the new millennium:

Song Title: Genda Rwanda Uri Nziza (You are Beautiful, Rwanda)

(Chorus) Oh, Rwanda you are beautiful. Oh, you breathe peace. The wonders that decorate you, Rwanda, are too numerous to count.

You have hills that I look at and conclude that it is your beauty that attracts tourists…Your volcanoes, eh, eh, Gahinga, Sabyinyo, and Muhabura. Kalisimbi is the greatest, and many others, are the culmination of your wonders, Rwanda. Lake Kivu comes first; it contains the beautiful waters you share with sailors to tame their thirst. (Chorus refrain)

You also have a beautiful Park of Akagera that amazes visitors. Oh, Rwanda, The Creator decorated you. We, your children will always work to develop you so that your visitors find you smiling, Rwanda. (Chorus refrain)[5]

The kind of timeless and impersonal themes of the *Bonane* New Year song and of *Genda Rwanda Uri Nziza*, You are Beautiful, Rwanda, ensure they are both very likely to remain popular, in terms of narrative content and thus also in their musical associations for most Rwandans. These songs are the relatively strong core of *Orchestre Impala*'s revival and repertoire.

7.2 Songs left behind

Quite a number of songs written for special competitions, or high-level diplomatic visits and other similar public events have been abandoned by the revived *Orchestre Impala*. Some songs written by *Impala* were commissioned for political occasions and high-level visitors; and served as praise songs. Among the many examples of this, three are briefly considered in this sub-section. The first is about the then President of Burundi; the second about President Mobutu Seso Seko, then President of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo – DRC). The third is about Rwanda's strong diplomatic ties of friendship with North Korea. Extracts from the songs' lyrics are presented briefly and discussed, before reflecting on the common features that led them to be left out of the *Orchestre Impala* repertoire after the band was revived in 2012.

Song Title: Perezida Bagaza Jean Baptiste (Praise song to former President Jean Baptiste Bagaza of Burundi)

Bagaza, you are the president [of the republic] of Burundi and you are the source of the development your country has achieved. [We wish you] to stay the course so that the friendly relationship between our two countries can last. Your visit to Rwanda shows [us] that this relationship is without a stain. This relationship should prosper and we support it. As a [Kinyarwanda] saying goes, "The basket travels to those who will return it" [i.e. generosity is best practiced when reciprocated]. Please feel at home during your visit. It is true that [another Kinyarwanda saying] "She/he who goes home is always welcome." And when you go back to Burundi, please extend our warmest greetings to our Burundian brothers.[6]

At the time this was written, the praise song to Jean Baptiste Bagaza soon became very popular. Burundi is Rwanda's closest neighbour, and at that time was hosting a considerable number of Rwandan refugees who could neither return to Rwanda, nor obtain Burundian citizenship. What is perhaps surprising is that the song, under the circumstances, failed to make any mention of the growing presence of Rwandan refugees at that time, and their predicament in Burundi. However, in the interests of friendship between the two countries, no mention at all is made of their situation, even in passing. Nor is any mention made of Burundian refugees who sought safety inside Rwanda at that time and had at some periods numbered several tens of thousands. This absence of any reference to the plight of refugees from the two countries in their neighbouring countries means that it has become almost impossible to play this particular song today, in the setting of post-1994 Rwanda, acutely influenced by the return migration of Rwandans from Burundi, Uganda and elsewhere in the region, to their home country, Rwanda. This particular song seems to have played right into the hands of those who persecuted Tutsi inside Rwanda, and playing this particular praise song today inside Rwanda would revive conflicting and painful memories among those who had been in exile in Burundi (or elsewhere) during the 1980s era. There would also be complaints that the song praises someone who many considered a dictator, a president who ignored the plight of innocent refugees.

For those in post-genocide Rwanda and the diasporas who still favourably remember the Habyarimana era, of course, this song can still bring positive associations today, since it praises the Bagaza regime for good relations with neighbouring Rwanda and other countries in the region, and for avoiding war at a turbulent time. The song may therefore remind some Rwandans of a more peaceful past in the Great Lakes, a period when war was in abeyance, and would be willing also to overlook the painful situation of Rwandan Tutsi exiles in Burundi at the time. In this way, the elements of musical production are selected with the boundary in mind of what forms of cultural expression are acceptable and unacceptable in today's Rwanda.

It is interesting how a song that looks relatively innocent and innocuous cannot be played today, because to do so would inevitably polarise Rwandans along identity and regional lines. Very different sets of interpretative lenses would make this song divisive today. As Bushnell suggests, "The musical concept of modulation allows us to conceive the borderline as a constellation of identities and cultures, each not losing its individuality in hybridity, but maintaining its uniqueness to function in varying environments" (Bushnell, 2007: 184). This borderline explains why the song has been left out of *Orchestre Impala*'s renewed musical repertoire. Various *Orchestre Impala* audiences, including those of younger Rwandans, who have grown up since the genocide, are diversely aware of the kinds of narratives they want to hear and those they prefer to ignore.

Two more praise songs will be considered in this section, as further examples of songs that *Orchestre Impala* was obliged to leave behind.

Song Title: Mobutu Sese Seko (Praise song for President Mobutu Sese Seko)

Mobutu Sese Seko, the Father of Zaire; you are welcome to our Rwanda. We wish you to enjoy your stay among us. The relationship between Rwanda and Zaire is an old one. The entire world knows that we have a good relationship. May peace prosper. *Mbote nayo,*[7] *Mbote nayo nayo.*[8]

Song Title: Umubano na Korea (Praise song for President Habyarimana, Kim Il Sung of North Korea, and close diplomatic ties of Rwanda and North Korea)

Rwanda's international relations are getting stronger. Such relations have crossed the oceans to reach far-away shores. Our relations are very good all over Asia and even stronger in Korea. Korea, the country of Beloved [Bien Aimé] Comrade Kim Il Sung. It is a relationship that we have, thanks to our beloved Militant[9] Habyarimana Juvenal and his assistants. The two leaders [of our respective countries, Rwanda and North Korea] thought it was necessary to support the youth in Rwanda towards development. Korea committed to build this beautiful building. The youth will gather here to acquire knowledge that will help them develop. Go forward [our youth] and do all you can so that this building is not another beautiful but useless building.[10]

Praise and celebration, even for Mobutu, are registers of emotion that *Orchestre Impala* always spanned during its heyday in the 1980s. Their praise songs laud the positive relationships that Rwanda had with Burundi, or in these cases, with Zaire, and, more remotely, with North Korea. The lyrics now seem almost absurdly dated, especially given that both Mobutu and Kim Il Sung have become anti-heroes of the recent past, "bad guys" of the international scene. They seem like relics of an era much more distant than that of Bagaza, a period of the Cold War, beyond the 1980s when these songs were written and sung. Airing such songs in the post-1994 period would, however, not generate conflict within Rwanda – rather, it would be seen as comical, almost, to sing the praises of two leaders who have so clearly almost been forgotten. The comical side of such kinds of propagandistic songs can even appeal as a sign of an era with very different values.

Both songs are also a reminder of a period in the recent past when the band's musicians somehow had to raise funds from powerful political actors in the national setting, so that they could afford to continue to play their music in general. For this reason, these two songs have dated rapidly, and cannot be played as if either Mobutu or Kim Il Sung were relevant references in the present. Yet, with the internet and YouTube, it becomes difficult, if not impossible, to hide and/or distance the new *Orchestre Impala* from this past musical legacy of almost absurdly partisan praise songs. The present members of the band can neither erase this history, nor easily police videos placed on YouTube by others. Such songs are no longer played in Rwanda today, or aired publicly on the radio, for the simple reason that characters praised in such songs have mostly become irrelevant. Such songs do not polarise; they simply have no resonance or relevance in the public mind of most Rwandans today.

7.3 New and old songs compared

As mentioned earlier, musicians need to earn a living, and this may account for their willingness to write and sing praise songs for various political masters, causes and special occasions. An entirely new song which is interesting in this respect is the *Kwibohora* or Liberation Song of the new *Orchestre Impala*. We will now present that song's lyrics in full, since the song is intended to mark the new *Orchestre Impala*, and set it off from the old, illustrating its dedication to a vision of Rwandan identity as something widely shared between all Rwandans. This song is on YouTube and is a good example of a completely new set of lyrics, wrapped in a

relatively familiar musical style by the band. The song is quite widely known and is a popular one at *Orchestre Impala* concerts. Despite this, compared with some of the older songs, the Liberation Song has been viewed by relatively few people, and does not rank highly in searches within YouTube. It is very much overshadowed by older and better known songs such as several of those already mentioned – the New Year song and the Beautiful Rwanda song, for example.

In the Liberation Song video, one sees images of the band playing in front of a live audience, and passing over Lake Kivu, and in zebra suits. In this way, associations with the "diasporic" *Orchestre Impala* songs and videos tend to be broken. Those videos that hark back to that time, portraying the old red, black and green flag with the "R" in the middle, the flag of the pre-genocide period, are now very much discredited inside Rwanda. In the video of *Genda Rwanda Uri Nziza*, also, the new images are a mix of tourism-promoting shots of nature and animals, with images of people and of the progress made in Rwanda, especially in terms of infrastructure.[11] The president appears, and tourists visit gorillas, but the video looks very like a classic music video, with several scenes spliced to show the band singing and relaxing in different settings in Rwanda.

When checked, there was more or less even distribution of thumbs down and thumbs up for the Liberation Song on YouTube, suggesting that audiences are not clear as to whether or not the song is too close to being a celebratory or a politicised piece of singing. The music is eminently danceable, however, and the song is popular at *Orchestre Impala* concerts in Rwanda today. This is one of the band's songs with a completely new narrative, music and theme. In this new era, where the call is for musicians to be positive and forward-looking, the song fits that demand.

Despite this newness, there remain a few uncomfortable parallels with one or two developmental-oriented songs from the Habyarimana era. The role of technology in the new generation of songs is interesting, for example, as is an emphasis on material gain as central to national development. In sponsored songs, themes are not the timeless ones of family, celebration, love and the power of beauty. Instead, specific achievements are highlighted and attributed to specific causes, especially to political leaders with vision and wisdom. The words suggest a treatise, an essay, rather than a poem, and the style is prose more than poetry, and praise above personal joy. Often there is a specific set of recommended ideas that are sung about in the lyrics, rather than a theme of timeless beauty or love, for example. Such praise songs tend to age quite rapidly, and are less popular with the general public, compared with songs of love and renewal. Yet musicians the world over still make music for political leaders, or allow their songs to be used for political purposes, and nothing is likely to change that.

Song Title: Kwibohora (The Liberation of Rwanda)[12]

My Rwandan brothers, young and adults, let us be proud of our nation; it is capable of the greatest victories. Let's praise the prowess of our courageous liberators who fought to end the genocide. They rescued Rwanda from darkness and brought it back to light. Let's be proud of our achievements during the liberation struggle; it's proof we have a clear vision of the future.

We regained unity among all Rwandans through the eradication of all forms of discrimination. That is true liberation: strengthening good governance, national security and good diplomatic and international relations, increasing tourism. That is true liberation: the development of public and private infrastructure in the different parts of the country, education for all, equal access to health care services, access to clean water, electricity and road infrastructure, the end of thatched housing. That is true liberation!

Let us be proud of our achievements during the liberation struggle; it is proof that we have a clear vision of the future.
The values of self-worth and self-reliance taught us to work for our own well-being. That is true liberation! [Our achievements in the sectors of] justice, the fight against injustice, and the active participation of women in national life, all that is true liberation!
The Policy of *Gira inka munyarwanda, Gira amata*[13] means milk in the family, and kwashiorkor has almost been eradicated among children.
Let us be proud of our achievements during the liberation struggle; it is proof that we have a clear vision of the future.
Let us keep facing the challenges to develop our country, [keeping in mind that] we have overcome the most difficult [times]. Let us stay the course and defend *Ndi Umunyarwanda.*[14]

Eeeeh… we have liberated ourselves!!! (x3)
And [we are using] modern technology [to keep developing]!

It is interesting to compare these lyrics with another, earlier commissioned song. The Liberation Song is written with the Rwandan Government in mind, and is mainly an account of the regime's various developmental achievements in the context of the new Rwanda. By comparing this with another earlier commissioned song that has now become taboo, we are led to reflect on the price bands pay for political praise songs. *Orchestre Impala* is still expected to heap praises on the achievements of the government in power. Times have changed, yet musicians must still eat, and politicians still seek praise.

On the occasion of the tenth anniversary of MRND's existence, the following song was composed by *Orchestre Impala* in praise of the party and the President Juvenal Habyarimana:

Song Title: Imyaka Icumi (Praise song to MRND and President Habyarimana for 10th Anniversary of MRND)

Ten years of peace and development. Those are years during which His Excellence Habyarimana Juvenal [founded] and led the Second Republic. This Supreme Commander is God sent. He saved us on July 5, 1973. He rejected infighting among Rwandans and rescued Rwanda, he resuscitated Rwanda from hell and brought it back to life. He thought long and hard and gave us a vision. Ever since then, until today, he has not failed us.

He named 1974 the year of agriculture and urged us to practice sustainable farming in order to satisfy our families' needs and sell to the market our surplus production.

In 1975, he encouraged us again to increase agricultural production. Also, during this same year, he created the MRND.

1976 was the renewal of the MRND, the change in culture and attitudes. Farming regained value and dignity, and the practice of *Umuganda* was revived and prioritised. Manual labour regained its importance and we understood that our own development depends on our [hard] work.

1977, he urged us to work harder and eradicate thatched housing in order to embrace modern housing. The use of modern tiling became popular and many other developmental projects became a reality, thanks to roads we constructed by ourselves.

1978 became the year of animal husbandry. We increased the production of meat and milk in order to advance our wellbeing. It is also during this year we adopted a new constitution and went to presidential elections to reaffirm the foundations of our democracy.

In 1979 we modernised the school system to allow our children to access the knowledge much needed to meet modernity. 7th grade and 8th grade were added to the existing system to allow young people to acquire vocational training.

In 1980 we fought against soil erosion. We started to practise land consolidation by introducing terracing. We planted trees and other plants to help consolidate soil. We improved fertilisation techniques in order to increase food production.

[19]81 was the year of clean water. We needed to protect our health against diseases and infections occasioned by dirty water. At the end of this year, we elected members of our parliament. Now they are busy making laws.

[19]82 Once again, we focused on fighting soil erosion and we consolidated our achievements in early campaigns to take care of our land.

In [19]83 we planted more trees so that our forests can allow us to harvest without engaging in deforestation.

Let us thank our father [of the nation] who has worked to bring peace and good relations during these ten years and now Rwanda is shining, and its sons and daughters are now confident they will achieve sustainable development while carrying on working with him [Habyarimana].[15]

Whilst less subtle and more overtly propagandistic than the *Kwibohora* or Liberation Song, there are some surprising parallels between the two. Both celebrate the developmental and material goals and achievements of the regimes, often in surprisingly similar ways. Both are hymns in praise of certain kinds of modernity – with an emphasis on goals and achievements in health, education, clean water and infrastructure. Even the campaign against thatched housing features in both songs. These striking parallels also suggest that over time, similar pressures can be exercised both on musicians and on citizens, by diametrically opposed sets of political elites.

The public prefers celebratory songs for parties and weddings and other kinds of public events. Yet political praise songs are likely to continue as part of the stock-in-trade of *Orchestre Impala* so long as the band's popularity ensures that politicians will be tempted to ask for music in honour of their (the politicians') supposed achievements in office. The range of emotions in such music is fairly narrow, and fits in with the generally celebratory and upbeat repertoire of *Orchestre Impala*, typical of much *igisope* music.

Something interesting to note in the songs of *Orchestre Impala* is how rarely mourning or grief arise as themes in the band's own *igisope* musical forms. As Sandoval notes more generally: "The ability of songs to protest for reparations or to promote the end of conflict is similarly problematised by studies of music in violence. As Sugarman's, McCoy's, and others' works demonstrate, songs are just as easily manipulated as propaganda through state and media control" (Sandoval, 2016: 10). Both the songs reviewed above were written at key turning points for each regime: the former republic and the present one. In each case, the commissioned song focuses uniquely on celebrating their sponsors' political influence and authority, their great achievements and the gratitude the Rwandan citizenry (and presumably the band) should feel for these great achievements. Between 1994 and 2012, during many years of April commemorations, the focus of some popular music in

Rwanda shifted to include the trope of mourning and irrevocable loss. This featured as a theme alongside love, beauty and feats of political heroism, which appear less remarkable in this mood of melancholy. In contemporary Rwandan musical production, therefore, pain is acknowledged as an essential feature of popular music in the post-genocide era. This results in a "complexity [that] … mediates and underlies the distinctive, shared experience it affords: a collective, situated enactment of the poignant uncertainties and social challenges of irretrievable interpersonal loss" (Berthomé and Houseman, 2010: 60).

The almost permanently happy, perhaps rather naïve and trusting tone, and the predominantly optimistic lyrics of *Orchestre Impala*, appear a little out of time; perhaps in some ways they have been left behind by a more open acknowledgement of suffering in much Rwandan contemporary popular music. Now banned, the work of Kizito Mihigo is of this type, and was for some time officially adopted and commissioned by the post-genocide government for the purposes of genocide commemoration, acknowledgement of the diaspora and so forth. The only song of mourning was composed for one of the band members, Semu, who died of illness before the genocide. Current band members are aware that *Orchestre Impala* has not so far dealt in its musical output or lyrics with the losses of 1994, and, when interviewed, Sebigeri indicated that the relaunched band had a plan to compose and produce songs in memory of the band members who perished during the genocide (Interview with Sebigeri, Hotel Lemigo, Kigali, March 18, 2015).

8. Conclusion

By setting up the band once more, and reviving its past musical forms, it appears that *Orchestre Impala*'s musical oeuvre can be adapted for present-day Rwandan audiences, whilst leaving some elements behind. This study has analysed how surviving and new members of *Orchestre Impala* have managed to selectively revive and renew some past Rwandan musical forms into what is now popularly known as *igisope,* in spite of the challenges posed by the genocide of Tutsi in 1994. A shattered sense of cohesion around cultural forms such as popular music has meant much of the band's previous repertoire has been officially discredited.

How *Orchestre Impala* members and associates have brought past cultural elements back into present musical practices, and in an acceptable way, from 2012 shows the celebration of past creativity and the vivacity of a past musical heritage that started when the band was first created in 1974. The band was subject to the same dislocation and politicisation that beset Rwandan society during the late 1980s and early 1990s. At the same time, something we can mention, but which could not here be considered in depth, is how musicians and the music industry are increasingly commercialised, and viewed through the lens of business, mainly as a means to create jobs and boost income in Rwanda's creative sector. Revival of *Orchestre Impala* may have been partly from commercial goals. To genuinely work for peace, as Phillips suggests, "artworks cannot just ardently 'demonstrate' for peace, but must also resist the subversive force of contemporary ideologies centred in commodification, control, and power" (Phillips, 2004: 66). Today the "creative industries," of which popular music forms an essential part, are increasingly viewed as potential investment opportunities, contributing to rapid economic growth in Rwanda, and feeding the tourist industry, a growing urban middle class of consumers, and accompanying film, dance, the arts and media.

Orchestre Impala's revival may be of cultural significance beyond its simply commercial potential. Perhaps it is a sign Rwandans are coming to term with the country's painful past through their cultural reinventions. In

"everyday" interactions between Rwandans, selective *igisope* revivals may offer the promise of recovery from past polarisation. For those living in a haunted present, the revival of *Orchestre Impala* had to be cautiously negotiated, so that the daunting task of dealing with the pre-genocidal past could be managed. And, largely, it was.

This study has told a story about a particular kind of music, and how it has been selectively revived, negotiating the reintegration of past cultural elements into the very different cultural landscape of today's Rwandan society. To get closer to the meaning of this negotiated musical revival, we considered the place of *igisope*, a form of music with wide appeal to those familiar with pre-genocide Rwanda's popular musical scene. By focussing on *Orchestre Impala*'s revival and how this has been managed, how new and old members of the band present themselves as Rwandans, and the details of the negotiated process of cultural revival, we have tried to shed light on what we suggest is a gradual normalisation of Rwandan cultural values post-genocide. When some forms of cultural expression from the past are more or less taboo, this normalisation involves careful negotiation of the parameters of the acceptable in cultural and musical terms. And, as Urbain suggests, the aim of this study is also a practical peace-building one, namely, to "find out what can be done here and now, in our own communities; musicking can then be used as one of the many ways to engage and connect with our neighbors, and with people far and near, across all fault-lines" (Urbain, 2016: 17).

Departing somewhat from much current theorising around the capacity of music to elicit powerful collective emotional responses of identification from audiences, this study suggests that a more nuanced interpretation of the politics of musical expression is needed in contemporary Rwanda. To assess the potential contribution to a shared Rwandan cultural identity, more studies are needed of the rich and continuously evolving musical landscape in the country. In some modest way, this study has highlighted how the cultural heritage of the past need not be abandoned in order to move forward. Despite being dangerous, Rwandan cultural history can be selectively revisited and partially recovered for Rwandans today, and can help to reinforce shared values based on peace, courage and sensitivity to others: the values of peace.

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Notes

(Endnotes)

1 https://www.aegistrust.org/

2 *Mouvement Révolutionaire National pour le Développement*, the national ruling party under President Juvénal Habyarimana from 1975.

3 *Sakanyonsa* is a nonsense word coined by *Orchestre Impala*, to refer to a new dancing style. The word mimics the sound of Lingala as used in Congolese rumba.

4 Original Kinyarwanda lyrics of New Year song:

Nanone dore umwaka urashize kandi n'undi uratashye. Twongere twishime tunezerwe. Dushimire Imana Nyagasani ikiduhagaritse tukaba tugejeje aya magingo. Nta cyo twatanze ngo dukunde turame. Abataragize ayo mahirwe nabo si ku bwabo, kuko nta wanga kuramuka. Twe turenzeho twidagadure, twebwe Rugira igitije ubu buzima. Waba umusaza cyangwa umukecuru wishingikiriza akabando ucinye akadiho wifurize abakiri bato kugera aho ugeze. Bonne Année eeee Baturarwanda mwese Bonane, natwe rubyiruko turirmbe twese. Uyu mwaka mushyashya uzatubere muhire. Mu byishimo, Bonne Année. Baturarwanda mwese Bonane, uyu mwaka mushyashya utuzanire amatwara yo kujya mbere, Bonane. Baturarwanda mwese, Bonane. Mukomeze umurego mu byo gutura heza tujye mbere, Bonane.

5 Genda Rwanda uri nziza: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oy-BnaLK6jY Original Kinyarwanda lyrics of Genda Rwanda uri Nziza:

Genda Rwanda uri nziza, oh oh, uhumeka amahoro, ibyiza bigutatse Rwanda, ni byinshi cyane sinabivuga ngo mbirangize. Ufite imisozi ndeba ngasanga ubwiza bwawe aribwo buhuruza abagenzi. Genda Rwanda uri nziza, oh oh, uhumeka amahoro, ibyiza bigutatse Rwanda, ni byinshi cyane sinabivuga ngo mbirangize. Ibirunga byawe, eh eh Gahinga Sabyinyo na Muhabura, Kalisimbi ibisumba byose n'ibindi ntavuze ni umusozo w'ibyiza bigutatse Rwanda. Genda Rwanda uri nziza, oh oh, uhumeka amahoro, ibyiza bigutatse Rwanda, ni byinshi cyane sinabivuga ngo mbirangize. Ibyo birunga bitangiriwe ku ntango n'Ikivu kibitse umusango usamiza umusare ku mazi ntasitare wee. Genda Rwanda uri nziza, oh oh, uhumeka amahoro, ibyiza bigutatse Rwanda, ni byinshi cyane sinabivuga ngo mbirangize. Ufite na Parikenziza y'Akagera gakerereza abagasuye. Genda Rwanda watatswe na Rurema. Twebwe aban bawe tuzagukorera tuguteze imbere. Maze abaje kugusura basange ukeye Rwanda. Genda Rwanda uri nziza, oh oh, uhumeka amahoro, ibyiza bigutatse Rwanda, ni byinshi cyane sinabivuga ngo mbirangize

6 Original Kinyarwanda text of Song for President Bagaza of Burundi:

Perezida w'U Burundi ari wowe Bagaza, kandi ukaba ari wowe mukesha intambwe mumaze gutera mugana amajyambere. Uragahora uganza kuko ushaka ko umubano w'u Rwanda n'u Burundi wakomeza mu mateka y'ibihugu byombi. Kuba uri hano mu Rwanda bitweretse umubano uzira amakemwe. Uwo mugenderano nusagambe natwe turawifuza. Kuko akebo kajya iwa mugarura. Waje kudusura ngwimo urisanga. N'ubundi ugiye iwabo agenda yisanga. N'ubwo uzadutangayo turangije tugusaba kuzadutahiriza abarundi bose. Abo bavandimwe, abo bavandimwe dukunda.

7 *Nayo* is "Hello" in *Lingala*, the language of Zaire.

8 Original Kinyrwanda lyrics of Mobutu praise song:

Mobutu Sese Seko Mubyeyi wa Zaire, Kaze neza mu Rwanda rwacu yewe Mobutu. Tukwifurije kugubwa neza igihe cyose uzaba uri kumwe natwe. Umubano w'u Rwanda na Zaire si uwa none. Amahanga yose azi ko tubanye neza Amahoro nasagambe. Mote na yo mbote na yo.

9 All Rwandans were members of the MRND, and they used the French word "militant" or "militante" to address each other formally during public functions and/or in public space.

10 Original Kinyarwanda of praise song for Korean leader:

Umubano w'u Rwanda n'andi mahanga uragenda ukomera. Ubu warenze amazi magari ugera iyo giterwa inkingi. Wazengurutse Aziya yose ushinga imizi muri Korea. Korea kwa Camarande Bien Aimé, Kim Il Sung.

Uwo mubano tuwukesha militant dukunda, habyarimana Yuvenali n'abafasha be. Abo bakuru b'ibyo bihugu byombi basanze bakwiye gutera inkunga urubyiruko rw'uRwanda rw'ubu n'urw'ejo mu majyambere. Korea yiyemeje kutwubakira iyi nzu itagira uko isa, aho urubyirujo ruzajya ruhurira rukahungukira ubwenge muri byinshi. Rubyiruko rw'u Rwanda hagurukira amajyambere utere intambwe ndende. Iyi nzu ntizakubere umtako. Ayayaya, Ayayaya Korea n'u Rwanda umubano ni wose.

11 Video is available on YouTube here: : https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wgufcoJUhTg

12 Original Kinyarwanda lyrics of Kwibohora:

Bavandimwe banyarwanda, abakuru n'abatoya murakagira uRwanda ruhora rwesa imihigo. Dushimire intwari banyakuvugwa bahakotanye uko bikwiye bahagarika jenoside oh oh , bakura u rwanda mu icuraburindi rurnamuka. Mucyo twishimire ibyiza twagezeho mu kwibohora, ishusho y'icyerekezo. Bagaruye ubumwe mu banyarwanda anmacakubiri ntagihabwa intebe, uko niko kwibohora. Imiyoborere myiza n'umutekano, umubano n'amahanga n'ubukerarugendo, uko niko kwibohora. Ibikorwa remezo hirya no hino, reba amashuri n'amavuriro hose, uko niko kwibohora. Amazi n'amashanyarazi n'imihanda, imiturire myiza nta nyakatsi ikirangwa, nta nyakatsi ikirangwa. Mucyo twishimire ibyiza twagezeho mu kwibohora, ishusho y'icyerekezo. Mucyo twishimire ibyiza twagezeho mu kwibohora, ishusho y'icyerekezo. Mu kwigira no kwihesha agaciro byadutoje gukora tukibeshaho, uko niko kwibohora. Mu butabera no kurwanya akarengane, mu bwuzuzanye n'umugore yahawe ijambo, uko niko kwibohora. Gira inka munyarwanda, Gira amata, gahunda ya gira inka turorozanya nta bwaki ikiri mu bana, igenda ikendera. Mucyo twishimire ibyiza twagezeho mu kwibohora, ishusho y'icyerekezo. Mucyo twishimire ibyiza twagezeho mu kwibohora, ishusho y'icyerekezo. Dushire amanga twiyubakire u Rwanda, turabishoboye, aho tuvuye nihgo kure. Duhamye intambwe twimike Ndi Umunyarwanda, turenge inzitizi, duhore twibuhora. Mucyo twishimire ibyiza twagezeho mu kwibohora, ishusho y'icyerekezo. Mucyo twishimire ibyiza. Itwagezeho mu kwibohora, ishusho y'icyerekezo. Heee, Twaribohoye. Heee, Twaribohoye. Heee, Twaribohoye. Heee, Twaribohoye. Ikoranabuhanga rirakataje.

This can be found at the following link: (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MeX2HdyoNQo)

13 The "one cow per family" policy, which taps into the traditional cultural symbols associated with cattle.

14 The policy of "Rwandan-ness," as opposed to the politics of ethnic divisions.

15 Original Kinyarwanda lyrics of song for Habyarimana:

Imyaka icumi y'amahoro n'amajyambere. Imyaka repubulika ya kabiri imaze iyobowe na Nyakubahwa Yuvenali Habyarimana. Uwo mugaba w'ingabo twagabiwe na Rugaba yararugobotse tariki 5 Nyakanga 1973. Ko yangaga umwiryane mu bana b'u Rwanda, akarukura ibuzimu maze akarushyira ibuzima. Yaratuje aratekereza arutorera intambwe, na n'ubu ntarateba. [19]74 ati umwaka w'ubuhinzi. Duhinge ingandurarugo n'ingengabukungu. [19]75 ati umusaruro wiyongere twihatira kubona ibidutunga biduhagije. Muri uwo mwaka kandi aruhangira Muvoma. [19]76 uba umwaka wa Muvoma; ivugurura imico n'imyitwarire. Igarurira isuka agaciro kayo maze umuganda uhabwa intebe, imirimo y'amaboko itezwa imbere. Twumva ko amajyambere yacu ari twebwe abazwa. [19]77 arongera ati nimwikubite agashyi mwiyubakire amazu meza ya kijyambere. Murwanye nyakatsi mwiturire heza.. Amategura n'amabati henshi arahanikwa, twegera imihanda twiharuriye ngo ibyo dukeneye byose bitugereho vuba, [19]78 iba ubworozi bwa kijyambere. Twongera umuysaruro w'amatungo kugira ngo tubone inyama n'amata kuko umubiri wacu ubikeneye. Uwo mwaka kandi twitoreye itegeko nshinga na Perezida wa Repubulika twemeza n'amatwara ya demukarasi. [19]79 amashuri aravugururwa kugira ngo abana b'u Rwanda bahabwe ubwenge bubashoboza gukorera igihugu cyabo ku buryo buhuje n'igihe tugezemo. Uwa karindwi n'uwa munani wiyongeraho ngo abana b'u Rwanda biyigire n'imyuga. Muri [19]80 duhugukira ubutaka tubufata neza, ducukura imiringoti ngo duhagarike icyago cy'isuri. Dutera amashyamba ndetse n'ibyatsi bibufata. Dufumbira neza ngo tubashe gufora itama. [19]81 twashatse amazi meza kugira ngo ubuzima bwacu burindwe indwara zikomoka ku mwanda wi'ibyo tunywa. Mu mpera z'uwo mwaka twitoreye abadepite, ubu bariga amategeko bashishikaye. [1982] umwaka wakurikiyeho twarwanyije isuri twunganira ibyakozwemu gufata ubutaka neza.[19]83 ubu turatera amashyamba ngo tubone ibikoresho dukesha ibiti tutibagiwe ko birengera ubutaka. Nimucyo dushimire umubyeyi wacu wadushakiye amahoro n'umubano none mu myaka icumi u Rwanda rukaba rukenkemuye nabana barwo tukaba twizeye amajyamebere tumufite.