

## Post-task: Different strokes for different folks

From playing with and learning from giants – the likes of Winston Mankunku, Sibongile Khumalo and Zakes Nkosi, Prince has noticed one common characteristic. And that is their humility and their connectedness to the people. Prince tells the story of Winston Mankunku. He loved his mum. He came to Joburg for a gig. They rehearsed on Tuesday and by Thursday he missed his Mum so much he went back to Cape Town and dropped the gig. That is the depth of love he had for his mum. Mankunku had many opportunities to go into exile. He was internationally known. But, he loved his Mum and only left for a few gigs and came back, always making sure Mum was ok. So, he is one of the people who stayed behind to make sure South African music remained strong at home.

One of Prince's most famous recordings, *Live at the Market Theatre*, was done with singer Sibongile Khumalo. It is one of the most listened to and studied albums on South African music. The album featuring all South African compositions was not only a musical break-out point for Sibongile Khumalo but it put all South African music on a pedestal and showed South Africa that we can stand head and shoulders with people from other parts of the world. This is the blessing of authentic South African music – it opens doors for one and all. Even though Sibongile passed away in 2021, Prince is at the forefront of keeping the spirit moving and keeping the music alive.

Prince was the musical arranger for a tribute orchestra to bassist, composer, arranger, singer Victor Ntoni, called Mzansi Music Ensemble. This ensemble was a fulfilment of the dream of Victor Ntoni. Victor wanted an ensemble that would be like a school, where the younger generation would learn from the older generation. Victor was one of the most beautiful, prolific composers and arrangers we have ever had in South Africa. One of his most famous compositions from the album *Heritage* is *Thetha*, sung in an enigmatic and deep baritone style.

One of Bra Hugh's favourite composers was Ntate Caiphus Semanya, one of South Africa's most prolific composers. But South Africa is best known around the world because of the voice. As Prince says, "If you think about it - South Africans are the voice people with groups like Ladysmith Black Mambazo and the Manhattan Brothers making an international impact.

### Jazz needs better marketing

However, despite the great contributions by so many musicians, there is an unknown kind of lethargy in terms of selling South African jazz to the music industry. The music industry prefers pop music, or what they called bubble gum back in the 80s. This is because the music industry is about making money quickly. Music executives, like with any other business, want to see the "ching-ching." But jazz music doesn't really go "ching-chinging." It is more like a "plonk plonk" because jazz actually sells – but it does not sell quickly – it sells over time.

Although jazz does not sell in the same volumes and as quickly as pop, kwaito, house, and amapiano, it still sells.

To this day, people still buy *Yakhal' Nkomo*. Why? Because of the quality of that music. You can't touch it. Sibongile Khumalo's famous *Live at the Market Theatre* sold more albums than US trumpet ace, Wynton Marsalis, did at the time.

### The lost South African songbook

The most important thing for any South African musician is to know our South African music. As Prince has pointed out – there are a lot of places where you can find a music score book by Charlie Parker and John Coltrane, but how often can you find in a shop or school the music of Kippie Moeketsi, Jonas Gwangwa and

Hugh Masekela, Winston Mankunku or Zakes Nkosi?

This is a huge gap in the South African music industry, and an initiative that can stand the test of time for hundreds of years to come. In South Africa, people are working on creating this sheet music all the time. It is therefore just a matter of time until all the different initiatives in creating the South African songbook are united and all the work in South African composition transcription and scoring is shared like a great big meal nourishing the whole South African jazz family.

### **Now, answer the following Post-Task Questions**

1. Prince has guided us to some of the great compositions of South Africa such as the iconic jazz standard, *Yakhali Nkomo* by Winston Mankunku, *Nomali* by Caiphus Semenya, the compositions of Jonas Gwangwa and his own composition, *Umbongo*. What South African Jazz standards do you like to play? What is on your hit list?
2. Prince refers to Bra Hugh as having broadened his music knowledge by introducing a Pan Africanist sound. There is no better example of this than his collaborative album *Introducing Hedzoleh Soundz*. Prince calls South African music 'music of the voice' and West African music 'music of the drum'. How would you fuse South African and West African music – voice and drum?
3. The lost South African songbook is the story of our age. Can you think of one South African composition that you would like to add to the evolving South African songbook? Can you listen, transcribe and annotate it, into a music score? Please share the score with your music friends and with us.
4. The power of collaboration is one of the virtues of our great South African jazz sound. In your experience, how has collaborations improved your playing and your music? Share with us the best that has come out.
5. The reason that it may seem like jazz music does not sell, is because it is not promoted like the other music is. So, there needs to be a shift in better marketing jazz. How would you go about creating a shift in promotion for jazz music?