

Article

Jerusalem, a Heritage Day Song of the COVID-19 Pandemic

Julia Mantsali Modise

Research Entity: MASARA, Faculty of Humanities, North-West University, Potchefstroom 2531, South Africa; mantsaliju@gmail.com

Abstract: Musical activities, religious or spiritual, share much in common. They tend to evoke powerful emotional responses in participating individuals and have great significance at the personal, social and communal levels. Music and dance have always been strongly connected in South Africa. The songs of South Africa were prominent for the social and political role they played in the struggle against apartheid rule. Post-apartheid era songs were used to reconcile a nation that was deeply divided. *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (God Bless Africa), became the national anthem of a democratic South Africa. *Jerusalem* music and dance was unofficially adopted as the Heritage Day song when President Cyril Ramaphosa encouraged the people to participate in the Jerusalem dance challenge “to remember the loved ones lost to the COVID-19 disease and to quietly rejoice in the diverse heritage of our nation”. A qualitative study was conducted using webnography to find the meaning ascribed to *Jerusalem* music by the viewers of the video during the COVID-19 pandemic. While several themes emerged after the qualitative content analysis was performed, the focus of this article was on one of the themes that led the viewers of this music video to believe that *Jerusalem* brought the world together through music and dance during the COVID-19 hard lockdown. South Africans embraced it as the Heritage Day song.

Keywords: musical rituals; *Jerusalem* dance; music; spirituality; wellbeing; religion; society



Citation: Modise, Julia Mantsali. 2023. Jerusalem, a Heritage Day Song of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Religions* 14: 45. <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel14010045>

Academic Editors:
June Boyce-Tillman and
Stephen Roberts

Received: 30 June 2022
Revised: 6 December 2022
Accepted: 21 December 2022
Published: 28 December 2022



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1. Background

South Africa emerged in 1994 from many years of apartheid rule. Negotiations, discussions, compromises and prayers accompanied the development of the new constitution, hailed as the best in the world (Kende 2003). The new South African government was challenged to reconcile a nation that remained divided. Initiatives introduced to reconcile the nation included, amongst others, introducing a Day of Reconciliation, finding the truth behind atrocities committed in the past through the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) and reconciliation songs. Religion played a pivotal role, as an example, the inauguration of the first president of the democratic government, Nelson Mandela, was opened with prayers by leaders from the Hindu, Muslim, Jewish, and Christian faiths (Battersby 1994).

Music played an important role during COVID-19 lockdown. Previous research conducted on music during the pandemic included the influence of music therapy as a support intervention to reduce stress and improve the well-being of clinical staff working with COVID-19 patients (Giordano et al. 2020). This article reflects on the role played by *Jerusalem* music and dance during the COVID-19 lockdown as well as the importance of music rituals, religion and spirituality in the context of reconciliation and nation-building in South African society.

2. Music Rituals, Reconciliation, Religion and Spirituality in the Context of the South African Society

2.1. Day of Reconciliation

In 1995, 16 December was celebrated in South Africa as the Day of Reconciliation to commemorate the end of apartheid, heal the division that existed between South Africans of diverse cultural backgrounds and usher peace to a nation still reeling from decades of social

injustice. The significance of this date was an attempt to create racial harmony for both the African and Afrikaner cultures by marking two historical events that took place in different decades. The Day of the Covenant, celebrated on 16 December, was a religious holiday for the Afrikaners on which the Voortrekkers marked a victory over the Zulus in 1838 at the Battle of Blood River ([South African History Online n.d.](#); [Day of Reconciliation n.d.](#)).

The Africans, on the other hand, had two occasions to mark: firstly, it was the day of one of the important protests in 1910 against racial discrimination. Secondly, it was the day on which Umkhonto we Sizwe (MK), the “Spear of the Nation”, the military wing of the present ruling party, the African National Congress (ANC), was launched to wage an armed struggle against the apartheid government. This day has been commemorated every year in South Africa since 1961 with annual themed festivities that include amongst others, song, dance and panegyric. Some of the previous themes include The Year of Nelson Mandela and Albertina Sisulu: Liberators for Reconciliation, Bridging the Divide towards a Non-Racist Society, and Bridging the Divide: Building a Common South African Nationhood towards a national development state. However, not all South Africans commemorate the Day of Reconciliation ([South African History Online n.d.](#); [Day of Reconciliation n.d.](#)).

2.2. The Role of Religion in Reconciliation

The Dutch Reformed Church, which was the largest Christian denomination, dominated by the Afrikaners supported apartheid until the 1996 census ([Nelson 2003](#)). Black South Africans formed the majority in all major Christian churches in South Africa except the Dutch Reformed churches. The Dutch Reformed Church leaders were, in the main, more committed to apartheid than many of their followers, and the church became a hindrance to political reform. A few priests, including Reverend Beyers Naude, left the church to follow their convictions and lead the fight against apartheid ([Nelson 2003](#)). While the Dutch Reformed Church’s highest authorities, who controlled parish finances, supported apartheid, all the large churches such as the Roman Catholic Church, the Anglican Church and the Methodist Church, where black South Africans formed a majority, became involved in efforts to reverse the effects of apartheid policies, but with varying degrees of militancy. The South African Council of Churches (SACC) was the most active anti-apartheid umbrella organization that offered amongst other things encouragement to those who contravened race laws ([Nelson 2003](#)).

[Lange \(2018\)](#) acknowledges that churches and religious bodies served as both a major source of support for the anti-apartheid movement and opposition to apartheid regimes and continued to play a significant role in the reconciliation agenda. The TRC of South Africa was one such body that was led by religious leaders.

The process of the TRC in South Africa, unlike others such as that in Chile, was conducted in public, with the intention of granting amnesty to individuals who provided “full disclosure” of politically motivated crime ([Graham 2003](#)). Thus, amnesty was used as a vehicle for unearthing the truth about the past. The TRC’s mandate was, “to establish as complete a picture as possible of the causes, nature and extent of the gross violations of human rights” committed from 1960 to 1994 and to compile a report of the Commission’s findings and conclusions ([Graham 2003](#)).

The TRC was meant to lay the groundwork for reconciliation between the former apartheid regime agents and supporters and the anti-apartheid proponents. Not everyone embraced the work of the TRC. The TRC report highlighted that while some of the criticism levelled against the Commission had been legitimate, some started long before the Commission had begun its work, to discredit it by portraying the Commission as a smear campaign, especially against the Afrikaners; purporting that the TRC was biased in favour of the ANC ([Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report of South Africa 1998](#)).

2.3. The Role of Music in Liberating South Africans

Musical activities are often inspired by an ‘empowered’ individual or individuals, but are exceedingly communal, social and integrative activities. According to [Morley \(2009\)](#),

both musical and religious behaviours can thus be profoundly personal and, at the same time, initiators of communality through shared experience. Music events represent a special occasion and an opportunity to connect with others (Vandenberg et al. 2020). According to Ravinder (2009), it is hard to find any festival without song and dance in Eritrea. The songs of Eritrea touch all the feelings of the Eritreans and inspire them to reconstruct and develop their nation.

The songs of South Africa were prominent for the earnest social and political role they played in the struggle against apartheid rule. In anti-apartheid South Africa, music was found far and wide, in protests, social events, as well as in religious ceremonies (Makky 2007). The most powerful was the music that surfaced from within the black South African communities, which was characterized by its uniqueness and sophisticated musical styles that allowed the people to mobilize society on a deep and poetic level. The communal act of singing fueled the anti-apartheid movement, healing emotional wounds, shedding light on the injustices of apartheid, and keeping people's spirits high (Periphery Center 2015).

The white South African population had a different battle to wage through which they used music. However, not all the music used was in protest of the elephant in the room, the apartheid regime. In 1967, military conscription for all South African white men over the age of 16 became mandatory (Van der Merwe 2017). The so-called "Border War" on the Namibian/Angolan border was predominantly fought between the South African Defense Force (SADF) and the South West African People's Organization (Swapo). The next two decades were marked by the white population's resistance to conscription. Performances carried out under the End Conscription Campaign lobby group were hugely politicized and held a considerable element of risk for the artists. Some sectors of the white population demonstrated support for the war through propaganda music, film and literature in both English and Afrikaans. Van der Merwe (2017) noted that, while some English bands were openly opposed to the army, the war and apartheid, Afrikaans music remained almost completely compliant. Protests among Afrikaners were still rare, although there were some exceptions (Van der Merwe 2017).

The importance of music in South African culture is evident in cultural lifecycle events such as weddings and coming-of-age ceremonies, which are accompanied by musical traditions. Music is a strength, bringing hope and love at funerals. Music delivers empathy, love and hope which unifies people. While instrumental music often offers comfort, love and strength, vocal instrumental music can also be filled with inflammatory messages and charged with rhythms that propel people to rise and fight. The Periphery Center (2015) labels music as dangerous. Some exiled South African artists, related well to anti-apartheid songs internationally, others were played in secret among the rebellious, youthful white communities.

2.4. Song and Reconciliation in South Africa

When South Africa emerged from a period of deep racial, social, economic, and political divides, songs were used to reconcile a deeply divided nation (Chapman 2003). According to McAllister (2017), "the theme of reconciliation deals with bringing people from an emotional point—instead of anger and frustration—to music". *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrika* (God Bless Africa), a hymn composed by Enoch Sontonga in 1897, was later adopted by the liberation movement and became the national anthem of a democratic South Africa. While in the beginning, it sounded like the song was going to be embraced by the whole nation in the name of reconciliation and nation-building, it was only a matter of time before it became evident that not everybody accepted the song proposed to unite the nation.

The Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), one of the opposition political parties in South Africa, has been calling for the removal of "*Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*" from the national anthem. The lyrics of the national anthem include five out of the eleven official languages of South Africa: isiXhosa, isiZulu, Sotho, Afrikaans and English. "*Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*" (The Call of South Africa), the Afrikaans part, was the country's national anthem during the apartheid era (Moore 2019).

Ndlozi of the EFF regards “Die Stem as a heritage of oppression and indignity” (Nkosi 2015) following incidents in which the old South African flag was displayed by a small group of white Afrikaners, provoking strong opinions from the public, resulting in the Equality Court concluding that “the display of the apartheid flag does harm and should be considered hate speech, unfair discrimination and harassment” (Nkosi 2015). The inclusion of “*Die Stem van Suid-Afrika*” in the national anthem, which was part of the apartheid national anthem, was the result of the negotiated settlement.

Other songs continued to be used under different circumstances in the name of nation-building and reconciliation. The song *Shosholoz*a which, for lack of an appropriate English translation, can roughly be explained as “go forward”, is sung in Fanagalo, a language which is a mix of ethnic languages spoken in the mining industry (Lange 2018). In the mining environment, *Shosholoz*a was used as a source of encouragement, hope and solidarity by the mine workers to lift their spirits when digging for gold under dangerous conditions. It was also sung by prisoners during the apartheid era. The former president Nelson Mandela once alluded to how they sang *Shosholoz*a as they worked during his imprisonment on Robben Island (Lange 2018).

*Shosholoz*a was later adopted as an unofficial symbol for national reconciliation and peace at national sporting events when South Africans of all backgrounds joined together in cheering on their team during the Rugby World Cup in 1995, even though not everyone embraced the song (Lange 2018). The song became popular again at the 2010 FIFA World Cup hosted by South Africa and has been featured in the Clint Eastwood-directed movie *Invictus*. Several internationally acclaimed and local artists recorded the song, including Belgian tenor Helmut Lotti, the Ladysmith Black Mambazo and singer PJ Powers (Lange 2018).

Recently, *Jerusalem*a music and dance was also unofficially adopted as the Heritage Day song under different circumstances. The song was composed in December 2019 by Kgaogelo Moagi, known professionally as Master KG, a South African musician and record producer, sung by the vocalist Noncebo Zikode, and was linked to a line dance by an Angolan group. In February 2020, *Jerusalem*a jumped borders and was performed by many nations, assisting communities to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic that was ravaging the world.

President Cyril Ramaphosa of South Africa asked the people to participate in the *Jerusalem*a dance challenge on Heritage Day, “to reflect on the difficult journey we have all travelled, to remember those who have lost their lives to the COVID-19 disease, and to quietly rejoice in the remarkable and diverse heritage of our nation” (Janwalkar 2020). Heritage Day, a public holiday in South Africa, is commemorated annually on 24 September, by recognizing and celebrating the cultural wealth of the nation through the staging of various events. According to Bunge (2021), Heritage Day presents a great opportunity for all South Africans to put differing politics, perspectives and opinions aside, come together and unite in a single shared purpose and objective. It, therefore, became evident that *Jerusalem*a music and dance took center stage as the main Heritage Day activity in the 2020 COVID-19 year.

2.5. *Jerusalem*a Dance and Spirituality

Master KG described the mood and feelings created by the song and dance as “spiritual” (Brown 2020). The *Jerusalem*a dance gave a transformational meaning to the song, assisting communities cope with the negative effects brought by the COVID-19 pandemic. When faced with negative life demands, individuals seek support from formal or informal sources of support (Snyder and Ford 1987). The song brought emotional and spiritual upliftment to communities during the lockdown, while other countries experienced a second wave. Palmer (2010) regards spirituality as an open invitation to an extraordinary experience. *Jerusalem*a dance became a source of entertainment, bringing happiness and attracting viewership on various social media platforms <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsb3HWiqpkl> (accessed on 6 December 2022).

According to Moss (2019), spirituality is concerned with a connection to the essential wholeness of people, a sense of being, a connection to a higher purpose and the essential meaning of people's lives. When the participants of the study conducted by Tsiris (2017) offered their interpretation of spirituality, their perceptions were organized into five themes: spirituality as part of human life and existence and as a way of living; spirituality as something beyond the individual; spirituality as a greater reality beyond the material world; spirituality as belief and meaning making; and spirituality as a sense of connection or relationship. Boyce-Tillman (2016) asserts that spirituality can be related to religion or can be 'religionless', highlighting an individual's beliefs and values rather than, or in addition to, religious conviction.

Jerusalema music and dance unintentionally brought societies together during Heritage Day in South Africa at the time when people were separated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

3. Purpose of Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the meaning viewers of the video ascribed to *Jerusalema* music by during the COVID-19 pandemic

4. Materials and Methods

A qualitative study was performed using webnography to gather the comments of the *Jerusalema* YouTube viewers. Webnography or web ethnography looks at the web as an object of study and searches for, amongst others, insights into the "natural conversations" that occur on various web forums (Puri 2007, 2009). An Internet search of the original *Jerusalema* music videos posted during the initial hard lockdown from March until the end of July 2020 was performed. The search was limited to the original music video of Master KG, which resulted in two videos, both posted by Sua Música. Sua Música is an entertainment platform focused on regional music in Brazil, where independent artists make their content available to fans free of charge (Organization Sua Música 2021).

All comments made by the viewers of the *Jerusalema* music video posted by Sua Música were collected manually, through copying and pasting on a Word document. A qualitative content analysis was performed on the ($n = 1037$) comments of the music video, which was posted on 3 July 2020, after some of them were translated into English using Google Translate. In the study conducted by Schultes et al. (2013), 20% of all posts were via discussion threads—"a thread is a string (or collection) of posts". A post is each person's comment within the thread (Using English, 2016). In this study, 112 threads emanated from people replying to comments made by others. A qualitative content analysis of the comments section accompanying the *Jerusalema* music video was performed. Similar to Vandenberg et al. (2020) and Ditchfield and Meredith (2018), a thematic content analysis used an iterative process to categorize comments into broader themes. Comments were coded and broad categories emerged.

5. Findings

Several themes emerged after the qualitative content analysis. The focus of this article will be on one of the themes that led the viewers of this music video to believe that *Jerusalema* had brought the world together through music and dance during the COVID-19 hard lockdown.

The viewers of the *Jerusalema* music video ascribed various feelings evoked by the music as a prayer and to some a divine intervention, a wake-up call. Most importantly, the music united the people of diverse races, languages and cultures and was hailed as a Heritage Day song by some South Africans.

Jerusalema Music United the World

One viewer wrote, "This is the perfect example of what music can do, completely unstoppable, you guys have unified the world". *Jerusalema* was regarded as an example of good music being a universal language, as one person commented "I do not know how to

speak the language, but I understood it to be speaking of peace of soul, bringing calm and harmony to Jerusalem, and that the universe covers the people with much health, peace and blessings and achievements of rains of prosperities”.

It was further described as a song that knew no borders, origin, physical appearance, or colour that united black, white, yellow, and albino people. Viewers sent greetings from Italy, Texas (USA), Romania, Argentina, Serbia, Spain, Chile, France, Jamaica, and Australia, among other countries. Some acknowledged that the song originated in South Africa, as one viewer noted,

a beautiful nation and they have a different rhythm to the contrary of North Africa. Latinos, please educate yourselves, teaching is the most powerful weapon to grow in life. However, some viewers were not certain where the song originated from and enquired whether it was from Swaziland or Lesotho. Some invited citizens of Jerusalem to come together. I challenge Muslims, Christians and Jews, this is a message from God through Master KG that God is with us.

It was regarded as a call for the people of the earth to wake up, “I can hear this music uniting the whole world in prayer, it brings pure energy, little joy and happiness in a rather sad world and touched the heart and soul of the world. The only song that brought the whole world into something common, love, peace, joy and patience. It is spiritually challenging music to unite all of humanity to be a brand-new world. We pray to the Lord to spread his blessings throughout the world, we will see you in Jerusalem. God bless you, Mr Master KG for making this humble song”. It was regarded as marking an important milestone in the history of humanity, for bringing everyone together by singing save our souls angels of the world, as one viewer wrote, “this is what humanity needs right now in 2020. This song is a message for our world. This world tried to hide us, lie to us, murder us, enslave us, yet in 2020 we [are] still surviving, one love family worldwide”.

Praises also went to Master KG, “*Jerusalema* is God-given; it is like bush fire spreading worldwide, uniting human races of all colours with love. This song has wiped humankind off their tears during the COVID-19 pandemic. It has brought peace to the world, the whole world is dancing to this tune. The best song in decades and for musical history. This music unites us from above, all over the world. God is only one in the world and reaches all of us”.

Lastly, some viewers prayed for the world, “Powerful holy spirit, I ask you for the whole world to forgive us and allow us to be and continue your way to reach the kingdom of God, the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Bless this song that has been transmitted throughout the world to create joy, leaving an inner peace just listening”.

Despite the unsavoury comments about Africa by some viewers, *Jerusalema* made South Africans feel proudly South African, and view it as a South African heritage song, as one viewer commented, “This is the kind of freedom that we fought for as a country, unity in our diversity”. This music went viral within a short period as one viewer observed, “I have never seen music released in a short time and bring so much happiness globally, especially to the African children”.

6. Discussion

Many more cultures are coming into contact with each other daily through music (Joseph 2012). The song *Jerusalema* brought nations together during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Jerusalema*’s music video significantly went viral in February 2020, connecting and building communities, bringing hope through South African vocalist, Noncebo’s, call “Zuhambe nami” (join me), with the Angolan group dancing to the music while eating cachupa, a typical Cape Verdean dish, frequently used as a symbol for creolization <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=613A9d6Doac> (accessed on 6 December 2022) (Kabir 2020). Creolization is a process whereby elements of diverse cultures are blended into a new culture (Webster 2016).

The dawn of democracy in South Africa raised hopes for a better life. The lyrics of the song struck a chord with many South Africans, some of whom were still trapped under

spiralling unemployment, poverty, increasing violence against women and children and sweeping corruption. For many, the hope of a better life was dwindling. According to [Le Cordeur \(2020\)](#), the lyrics of *Jerusalem* point to the longing for a better life and a new future.

According to [Joseph \(2012\)](#), music in South Africa as a form of multicultural practice can establish home ground and challenge cultural and communal borderlines. Some of the viewers of the music video believed that *Jerusalem* music and dance brought people together after they had been separated by the hard lockdown. While the situation was tragic, *Jerusalem* music and dance became a source of entertainment, bringing happiness and subjective well-being during the COVID-19 crisis. [Diener \(2009\)](#) defines subjective well-being (SWB) as “a person feeling and thinking his or her life is desirable regardless of how others see it”. This is after South Africans watched in despair, uncertain of what to expect as countries such as Italy, the USA, Spain, Germany, France and Iran grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic. By November 2020, COVID-19 had spread to 218 countries, infected 61.6 million people, caused 1.44 million deaths across the world, and been declared a global pandemic ([Shaukat et al. 2020](#)).

The rise in COVID-19 infections and deaths was a concern. The pandemic and the measures to control it impacted the financial well-being of individuals, families and the country. The crisis had a strong impact on daily lives and led to strong negative emotions ([Martínez-Castilla et al. 2021](#)). People looked for strategies to cope with the realities of the day. Some found solace in music listening and music-making, corroborating the contention by [MacDonald et al. \(2012\)](#) that when music is utilized in knowledgeable ways, it can alter behaviours in beneficial ways. Some of the viewers of the *Jerusalem* video posted on 3 July 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKAHLGaVn4A>, (accessed on 3 July 2020) believed that the music brought them relief from the stresses accompanying the lockdown, thereby promoting their sense of well-being.

[Chikaonda \(2020\)](#) alluded to the joy that seemed to effervesce from each *Jerusalem* video and the overwhelming universality of that joy when the videos are considered as a collective. In South Africa, music and dance was used to mobilize resistance against apartheid, and song and dance are still used in reconciliation and nation-building. Song and dance move people in different musical rituals and at events such as Heritage Day.

The rich diversity of people and languages contributes to the wide spectrum of music and culture. Democratic South Africa is an infusion of diverse cultures and beliefs. In post-apartheid South Africa, music has become a uniting platform to achieve nation-building ([Joseph 2012](#)). However, though *Jerusalem* was heralded as the heritage song of 2020 by some South African video viewers, similar to other songs such as *Nkosi Sikelele iAfrica* and *Shosholoz* that came before to unite the nation, it was not well-embraced by all in a diverse developing country such as South Africa with such a politically divided past ([Gumede 2010](#)).

The name Jerusalem has a biblical interpretation, and it was not surprising to see the dance also attracting the participation of people of the cloth. One viewer even suggested that “this song will make the world dance of all faiths”. However, for those troubled by the ongoing conflict in the Middle East, *Jerusalem*, the religious city of the Jews, Muslims and Christians, is “decidedly *not* a place, whether geographically, spiritually or politically, that people can always easily agree upon” ([Chikaonda 2020](#)).

Jerusalem reportedly hit the Holy City itself with the release of the YouTube video on the 6 December 2020 when the Jerusalem Mayor Moshe Lion, along with the holocaust survivors, elementary school students, youth from both the east and west of Jerusalem, university students, and municipality workers were seen dancing together, <https://www.mysraelimusic.com/the-jerusalem-challenge-finally-arrives-in-jerusalem/> (accessed on 5 December 2022) ([Chemla 2020](#)). While the Jerusalem mayor performed the dance in acknowledgement of the phenomenon that celebrated their city, for the Palestinians *Jerusalem* has been described as a global anthem, “the opening lines of the song are a deeply personal rallying call for displaced Palestinians”, says [Dadoo \(2020\)](#). Furthermore, according to

[Dadoo \(2020\)](#), although the word ‘Jerusalem’ roughly translates to “city of peace”, the city has a long, turbulent and violent history, having been conquered many times.

Similarly, the people in the Middle-East have been yearning for peace and an end to the unending conflict, like the South Africans who have been hoping for a better life, a promise not fulfilled by the dawn of democracy. This yearning and hope seem to be dwindling. *Jerusalem* dance ushered a different type of hope to South Africans on Heritage Day. President Ramaphosa explained that the dance symbolized what South Africa managed to achieve in combating the COVID-19 pandemic and said that, “We have overcome doubt and cynicism to confront the worst public health threat in living memory. We have shown what South Africans are capable of when we join forces” ([Grobler 2020](#)).

Master KG, described his music as “spiritual”, contrary to some viewers’ feelings who attached religious meaning to the *Jerusalem* song ([Kabir 2020](#)). However, some viewers gave the *Jerusalem* song religious and spiritual connotations. [De Souza \(2009\)](#) explained that for some people, spirituality and religion overlap. Spirituality is an essential element of the human condition in which the individual experiences different levels of connectivity to self and to the social, communal and physical other in the world to a superior other. Such connectivity promotes a sense of self and place in one’s community, which in turn provides a sense of meaning and purpose for the individual, whereas religious frameworks provide avenues to nurture and give expression to human spirituality, and this is where religion and spirituality connect ([De Souza 2009](#)).

As observed by [Chingono \(2020\)](#), emotional Jerusalem dance Challenge videos of healthcare workers in South Africa circulated as nuns, construction workers, police officers, waiters and fuel attendants felt the need to belong, especially during the difficult times of the coronavirus pandemic. One viewer seemed to be appealing to all watching the video by saying, “Let us all bring out the ‘*Jerusalem*’ in our lives and make this world a beautiful place for all. Thanks, Master KG and team, for this healing song. God bless you”.

7. Conclusions

Jerusalem, hailed by some South African music video viewers as the heritage song of 2020, was not embraced by all. Similar, whether accepted or not, some songs used to reconcile the South African nation are still played at important commemorative events. The national anthem, *Nkosi Sikelel’ iAfrika*, even though EFF, one of the opposition parties, does not align itself with the Afrikaans part of the anthem, it is still recognized as the official national anthem. While a song such as *Shosholoza* was not officially adopted as an official reconciliation song, it is still performed at sporting activities for the enjoyment of the participants. Sporadically, situations arise calling for South Africans to join in concert to the singing of *Shosholoza*, a song that does not seem to age.

Jerusalem song for its part, traversed the world, brought nations together and inspired people to dance in jubilation. While the song piqued people’s interest in whether it would help bring the much-needed peace in the Middle East, as some of the listeners of the *Jerusalem* music video commented, it elicited some mixed reactions to the residents in the Middle East. The song will be remembered as the song of 2020 COVID-19 that brought hope and subjective well-being during the dark days of the COVID-19 lockdown. In South Africa, it will go down in history as one of the previous themes during Heritage Day.

Funding: This work is based on the research supported wholly/in part by the National Research Foundation of South Africa (Grant Numbers: 118579) to MASARA (Musical Arts in South Africa: Resources and Applications) at North-West University (South Africa).

Institutional Review Board Statement: The study was conducted in accordance with the Declaration of Helsinki, and approved by the Basic and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee (BaSSREC) of North-West University on 14/04/2021 with the ethics number NWU-00628-21-S7.

Informed Consent Statement: The researcher worked with data available on a public space, comments from the viewers were anonymized and pseudo names used where necessary.

Data Availability Statement: Not applicable.

Conflicts of Interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

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