

‘PIANO AROUND THE GLOBE

An Exploration Of South African Music

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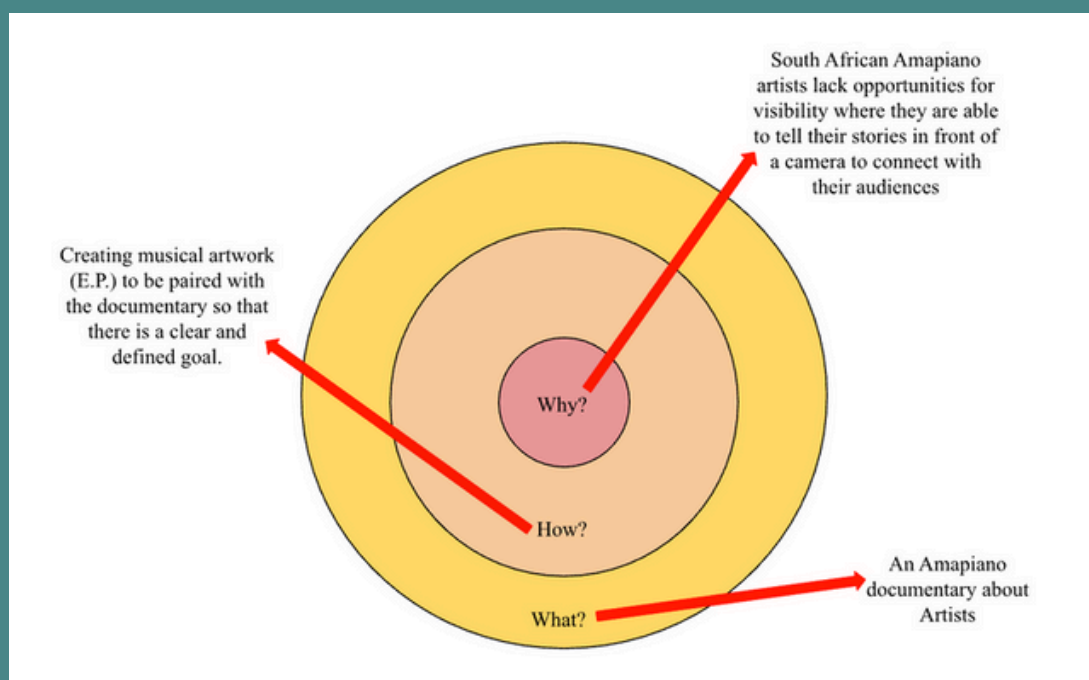
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Piano Around The Globe is a musical exploration dedicated to showcasing the talents of South African artists through a four song Amapiano Extended Play [E.P.]. Since the inception of Amapiano in the past decade the genre has continued to grow and even “Clocked in 1.4 billion streams [in 2023 alone] ... That represents a growth rate of 5,668% since 2018, said Spotify” (Tencer, 2024). However creating an E.P. alone makes it harder to understand what Amapiano has done for the South African population; What makes *'Piano Around the Globe* different than other Amapiano projects out right now? What makes this project stand out in this genre of music?

Whilst Amapiano has experienced exponential growth over the last ten years, the aspects of visual record keeping has hardly been tapped into by artists themselves. As a result of this, pairing the E.P with a visualiser in the form of a documentary will provide fans the opportunity to get to know the upcoming artists behind their favourite genre. In conjunction with recording the process, another factor is the cross country creation of this piece. With a genre that is heavily electronic based and technology being advanced enough for the album to be created across borders this E.P. represents the chance at providing viewers with an experience rather than just a listen. The true nature of Amapiano is a one that lies in community, culture and opportunity and this can be done outside the walls of South Africa.

Along with the E.P. and upcoming documentary, this document serves as an chance to dissect and understand the importance of representation within the creative industry. Having music and creatives works from different backgrounds and cultures has always been integral to the function of the industry as a whole and I will answer why that is.

GOLDEN CIRCLE



EXECUTION PLAN

Considering Amapiano is one of the most volatile music genres, there needs to be a sense of flexibility and accessibility amongst artists within this project. Taking this into consideration, the plan for Piano Around The Globe involved a strategy to feature three upcoming South African artists that are seeking to contribute to the genre. With the two main goals of creating a collaborative extended play and creating a documentary centred around the making of this project.

Each artist also had the opportunity to partake in two sets of interviews [refer to Appendix A for interview questions], geared towards understanding their musical upbringings, understanding how Amapiano affects their life, and the process of creating Amapiano projects with multiple people. By limiting the E.P. to a total of four songs and also making sure to create one song a week this method becomes ideal for collaborative processes, similar to the Scrum Framework which was first coined by Jeff Sutherland and Ken Schwaber in 1995. By creating attainable goals of making sure to complete one song a week, as collaborators we were able to compartmentalise the bigger vision of making a whole listening and viewing experience. Furthermore, because all footage was recorded on BlackMagic Camera, which is a free video recording app that shoots in 4K footage, artists were able to capture the necessary recordings in a cost effective manner that did not require high end equipment. This aspect also permitted for mobility amongst artists who were traveling for shows during the process, or artists who were recording music outside of their normal environment.

Ultimately, once all footage is collected and edited, the short film documentary will be eligible for submissions to institutions such as the British Film Institute [BFI] where they host the yearly London Film Festival [LFF] at the South Bank. Ideally by May 2026, the whole documentary will be finished. Moreover, for short films that are 25 minutes or less, submissions cost vary from £18, early bird submission in late March, to £24, final submission by the end of May, (BFI, 2025). This is effectively the only expenditure throughout the whole process because the recording equipment was free. If chosen for the LFF, the BFI allows for free viewings for all short films throughout the film festival week. However the documentary will also be posted in parts to social media platforms such as Instagram, TikTok and video platforms such as YouTube to allow for full accessibility to all audiences. Finally, although the release for the film is slated for May 2026, this document will provide insight into the full documentary by giving access to the first official trailer of '*Piano Around The Globe*.

WHY IS THIS SPECIAL?

What makes this project different than anything that's been done before?

EMOTIONAL SELLING POINT

Many Amapiano artists, and South African artists, encounter issues with regards to receiving recognition for their work. By offering a platform for artists to showcase their work and talent as well as placing faces to the names of the artist, this documentary provides artists with the opportunity to be championed for the dedication they have to their craft. Additionally, by using cost effective measures to produce this documentary, artists do not need to worry about the capital they invest to be seen; which can often be challenging, especially for smaller artists. This authentic approach to creating the documentary will allow viewers to sense the raw perspective of different artists to produce the sound of “the world’s fastest growing music genre” (DJ Edu, 2022 cited in BBC, 2022). Through coupling music creation with the camera, this documentary bridges the gap created by globalisation and creates opportunity for connection which extends the idea of community.

UNIQUE SELLING POINT

Unlike the BBC Africa Documentary *This Is Amapiano*, which is currently the **only** short form documentary about Amapiano, *Piano Around the Globe* focuses on giving a voice to the artists rather than an exploration of the genre as a new sound. By allowing viewers to see the faces behind the music being created for this specific project it creates a sense of community amongst the audience which is the essence of Amapiano. Rather than venturing into what used to be an unfamiliar sound, the landscape is now set in a way in which we are able to expand and explore the vast environment of the Amapiano scene and how it has affected the lives of South African artists.

UNDERSTANDING THE RELTIONSHIP BETWEEN FILM AND MUSIC

Why Pair Music With Film?

The music industry and the film industry have had a symbiotic relationship since the beginning of the film industry. So much so that before “viable sound technology, silent films were accompanied by live music” (The Museum of Modern Art, 2025) and that relationship has only continued to grow. However, recently artists have begun to recognize the power in being able to connect with their audiences through longer format types of filming. More specifically Black musicians have started capitalising on recording their process, performance and struggles in order to generate viewership. For instance, Travis Scott released a documentary on Netflix titled, *Look Mom I Can Fly*, dedicated to the creation of his Astroworld album and the hard Grammy loss that followed. Although, he is not the only artist that went the Netflix ‘route’. In 2022 Kanye West released also released a three-part docu-series on Netflix, titled *Jeen-Yuhs*, that boasts an 82% rating on rotten tomatoes (Rotten Tomatoes, 2025).

Over and above that, despite the access and availability to streaming services “half of consumers [in the UK] still prefer to go to the cinema” (Shergill, 2024) and artists such as Beyoncé are aware of the fact that fans enjoy the cinema experience. Knowing this, Beyoncé created a full length movie to release in cinemas titled *Renaissance: A Film By Beyoncé* that was dedicated to the process of the tour for her *Renaissance* album which earned her “more than \$36 million globally” (McIntyre, 2023). The tour itself “brought in more \$579 million” (Faguy, 2023) meaning that with the addition of the movie she grossed over \$600 million. Furthermore in 2022 *Summer Of Soul*, a film by Questlove about a three day Black Music Festival in 1969, won the second ever Oscar for a music film in the Best Documentary Feature category for the Academy Awards (Light, 2022). Suggesting this trend of musicians leaning into film will continue to grow.



Fig 1. Look Mom I Can Fly (2019)



Fig 2. Renaissance a film by Beyoncé (2023)

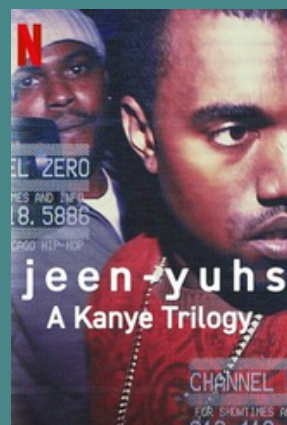


Fig 3. Jeen-Yuhs (2022)



Fig 4. Summer Of Soul (2022)

CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS

Who are the artists that will help bring this project to life?

HAVOCTHEPOET:

Havoc is a 21 year old South African born [Johannesburg] artist who grew up in Johannesburg but also partly in the UK, although he has now been London based for the four years. He has been making music, starting with rap, since the age of 15, however he has always been heavily involved with instruments such as the guitar, bass guitar and the trumpet since the age of 8. As an artist Havoc has not released any music over the last four years whilst completing his Bachelors degree in Music Management, but also due to the fact that he is searching to create musical impact in other genres besides rap music; more specifically afrosoul, afrofunk and Amapiano. Additionally, as a music creator and the leader of this project, Havoc hopes to become someone who produces albums through the art of connecting likeminded artists with common goals in sight.



Fig 5. HavocThePoet Artist Photo



Fig 6. Eazy Musiq Artist Photo

EAZY MUSIQ:

Eazy is a 22 year old South African born [Cape Town] artist who grew up in Johannesburg. He has been DJing at Amapiano events throughout South Africa for the last three years whilst also producing his own bi-monthly Amapiano mix titled Grootman Effect which is in its second season on SoundCloud and YouTube. However, his interest in creating his own Amapiano tracks and sound spiked over the last six months with the hopes of pushing himself to his musical limit by adding to his discography and dabbling in other genres such as Deephouse. Having grown up being surrounded by the sound of Amapiano, Eazy seeks to be a trail blazer and a go-to in the industry on a multifaceted level beyond just DJing.

47OCCASIONS:

47Occasions is a 21 year old music producer who has been making music for the last 8 years. What drew him to the music space was being introduced to elements of trap music by an artists called Trapafonic, and shortly into his music career he realised he had a talent for being able to name the key of any song. Originally a rapper and a trap beat producer, 47 has found himself in different genres of music such as R&B. However recently, over the span of the last two years, he has found his calling in making Amapiano music, more specifically a type of Amapiano music referred to as 'Private School Piano'. Initially having started making music with the goal of creating value to his own name, 47 has found a way to make Amapiano his main source of income by also DJing and hosting mixing sessions titled 'Too Private' on Youtube. Over the last year he has built a name for himself to the point where at his most recent even in Pretoria he was one of the opening acts of Musa Keys, who is arguably one of the biggest male South African artists.



Fig 7. 47Occasion Artist Photo

THE EXTENDED PLAY

The chosen songs and the E.P. cover artwork

Fig 8. 'Piano Around The Globe Cover Art (Joe Fernandez, 2025)



Link to Access The Music:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1b91OmaEhpVABO3M7src1ktnonKW4RZ9?usp=drive_link

THE DOCUMENTARY TRAILER

A trailer to give a glimpse into the documentary.



Link to Access The Trailer:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/18ugpgiA5PPqItOqUddEfoihm-ilf_9dC?usp=drive_link

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BACKGROUND INFORMATION: LOCAL MARKET OVERVIEW

What is the Market Share of South African Music in the Local Market?

As a genre Amapiano has become one of, arguably the biggest, genre's of music to come out of Africa. This is because South Africa has held the largest percentage of the market share in Sub-Saharan Africa since the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry [IFPI] started calculating those numbers. Additionally, in 2023 the Sub-Saharan music market was the fastest growing region in the world with 24.7% growth whilst the next closest region, Latin American music, only experienced 19.4% growth (IFPI, 2024).

However this number has slowed within the last year, yet the region is still amongst the top two fastest growing with a 22.6% growth experienced in 2024, with Middle East and North Africa [MENA] only surpassing by 2% (IFPI, 2025).

Although the growth has slightly slowed, South Africa's music revenue surpassed the \$100m for the first time in December 2024, after experiencing a 14.4% growth (IFPI, 2025). As a result of this South Africa continues to remain the largest market in the region, accounting for 74.6% of the region's total revenue. Moreover Amapiano, which is considered a form of dance/electronic music, jumped from being the 6th most preferred [32%] audio content amongst South Africans to the 3rd most preferred audio [36%] continent (Statista, 2025), suggesting that the genre is now considered a preferred means of listening amongst the average household.

There could be a numerous factors contributing to this starrk jump, however one of the more likely reasons is the popularity of Amapiano amongst South Africans on Social Media.

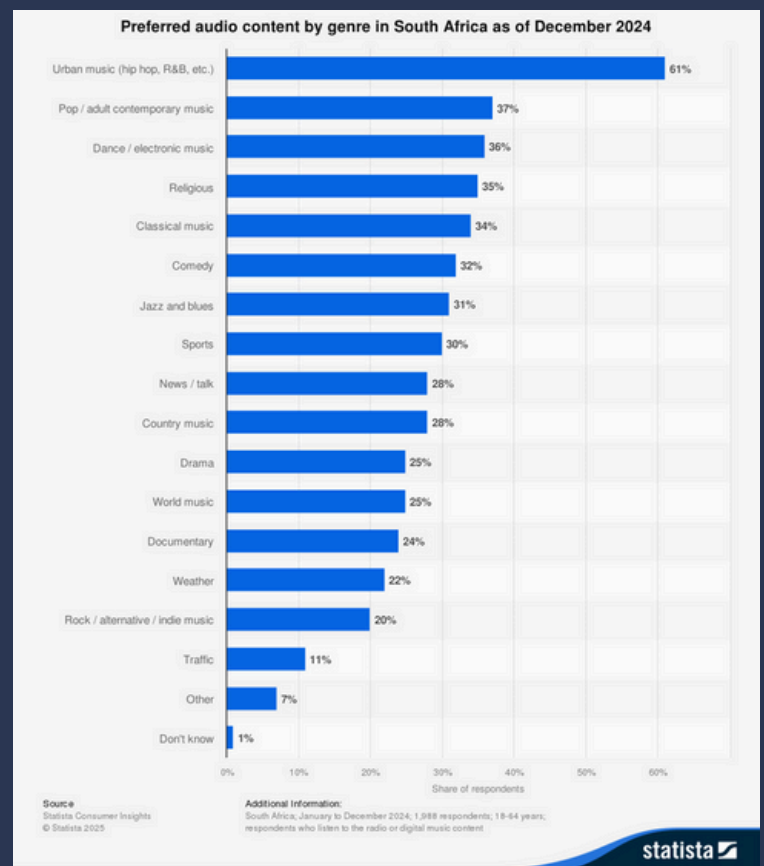


Fig 9. Preferred audio content by Genre in South Africa (Statista, 2025)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: AFRICAN MUSIC MARKET SWOT

What are some of the Strengths, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats in the African Music Market?

Strengths:

- **Multicultural with deeply rooted heritage**
- **The music business earnings in South Africa have doubled since 2017 (Davis, 2024):**
 - Streaming numbers grew from 34 million in 2019 to 300 million in 2021 (Davis, 2024).
 - Sub-Saharan Africa's most rapidly developing music market
 - Saw a 32% increase in revenue in 2022 (Davis, 2024).
 - Saw a 20% increase in revenue in 2023 (Davis, 2024).
 - For the first time in history South Africa surpassed \$100 million in December 2024 (IFPI, 2025).
- **Emerging independent record labels are coming up every day within the South Africa Developmental Community [SADC].**

Weaknesses:

- **There is a low purchasing capacity**, and this is a problem the whole continent faces.
- The full potential of the sales per capita has not been reached since **the methods of production, circulation and distribution are still in the early stages.**
- **Lack of technology and connectivity** to exponentially boost strength of the market.
- There is a **lack of affordable resources for up-and-coming artist.**
- **Lack of intellectual property protection**
- The IFPI only opened their first offices in sub-Saharan Africa in 2020 (Hatton, 2020).
- There is a **lack of visibility for artists with regards to having their face in content outside of their music.**

Opportunities:

- **Sub-Saharan Africa market is considerably new and growing every day**, the potential return on investments when providing funding is immense
- In the 1990's South Africa represented 94% of the SADC music sales (de Villiers, 2006).
- Increased Sales from 14 million units to 21 million units from 1992-1996 (de Villiers, 2006).
- **Only recently has majority of the continent had access to connectivity.**
- **There is yet to be a music film or documentary produced on a major scale by an African native** oriented towards investigating the roots and origins of the music coming from the continent.
- **Sub-Saharan Africa and MENA are the fastest growing regions** in terms of music (IFPI, 2025).

Threats:

- There is not enough **qualitative and qualitative information on the recording industry** to be able to grasp where real improvements can be made
- There are **not enough opportunities for artists to be recognized past their music.** People need to connect with Artist beyond just the sound in order to create community.
- **Artists not being informed on music business practices** because of there are not enough teaching resources and opportunities being provided.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: AUDIENCE EVALUATION

What are some insights into the Amapiano audience?

Demographic	Behavioral	Geographical	Psychographic
<p>Age: This E.P. will be catered towards Gen Z listeners, considering in 2023 40% of Amapiano streams came from ages 18-24 (Stacy, 2024).</p> <p>Gender: The audience is supposed to be diverse, there are no clear insights on the percentage split between male and female listeners. However “young South African men are mostly listening to Amapiano” (Geqiwe, 2022), and in 2023 female Amapiano artists saw an 87% growth in streams compared to 2022 (Stacy, 2024).</p> <p>Income: This E.P. and documentary will be accessible to all income levels, however most will fall within the middle-income or lower-income.</p>	<p>Music and Film Preferences: People who are more inclined to listening to dance/electronic music will be absorbing the E.P. as well as people who enjoy watching informative documentaries.</p> <p>Online Behavior: User of digital streaming platforms [DSPs] such as Spotify, Apple Music, Soundcloud. As well as social media users mainly people on Tiktok which is the biggest driver of the sound.</p> <p>Engagement Level: Amapiano listeners are often engaging with Tiktok dances and trends, which is why the genre saw a huge boost during COVID 19. Including the likes of Jason Derulo who “often engages in various Amapiano dance challenges” (SAMRO, 2024).</p>	<p>Cultural Hotspots: The goal is to have the short form documentary submitted to the London Film Festival which is Southbank Centre where they offer “free short films from all walks of life” (BFI, 2025)</p> <p>Global Reach: This documentary will have the opportunity to be viewed globally through other film festivals such as The South African Independent Film Festival as well as an eventual Youtube release to be more accessible.</p>	<p>Lifestyle: Being able to welcome a different form of music culture that stems from the South African population</p> <p>Attitudes: Having an open-minded perspective towards emerging artists that have not had the opportunity to have intimate moments with a camera and explaining who they are and why they make the music they make.</p> <p>Values: Viewers and listeners who appreciate the sense of community that comes with listening to Amapiano and learning more about the people who are part of the genre</p>

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: MARKET TRENDS

What are the trends currently guiding the industry?

MACRO TRENDS

- **Music streaming** being the highest paying sector in the music industry. In 2024 music streaming accounted for 69% of all revenue in the music industry (IFPI, 2025).
 - 2024 was the highest ever revenue recorded for the global music industry with \$20.4 billion USD (Statista, 2025).
- A huge **shift away from western music**. Mainly western Pop being the dominating force in music. The two markets experiencing the most growth were MENA and Sub-saharan Africa (IFPI, 2025).
- **Democratisation of music creation** through the use of AI as a tool (Pastukhov, 2022).
- **Catalogue music making a humongous comeback** within the music industry, “with catalog music securing 72.6% of the U.S. market share—overshadowing the mere 27% held by newly released music [in 2023]” (Grant, 2024).
- **Live music being the largest source of revenue** in the live events category, valued at \$42.6B (Gough, 2024). Outperforming sports, comedy and theatre.

MICRO TRENDS

- **Streaming services continuously expand** into new markets. “In 2021 spotify expanded to 80+ new markets which represent more than 1 billion people” (Stacy, 2021).
 - They now have more than 180 individual markets worldwide (Shepard, 2024).
 - “Research predicts that Africa’s annual music streaming revenues will grow (from \$92.9 million in 2021) to \$314.6 million by 2026” (Retief, 2023).
- **Emerging markets are continuing to seep their way into the largest markets**. 2/10 of the top 10 music markets in 2024 were Latin countries; Brazil and Mexico, who took over Australia (IFPI, 2025).
- **Artists are seeking more authentic connections** with their fans where they get to experience them outside of music for instance streaming on websites such as twitch or creative full length feature films:
 - Renaissance: A Film By Beyonce
 - Travis Scott: Look Mom I Can Fly
 - Jeen-Yuhs: A Kanye Trilogy
- **A large amount of artists were incentivized to sell their catalogs** during COVID-19 to create other income streams, with some artists “catalogues being purchased for 10 times and upwards of their expected royalty revenue” (Okewale, 2023).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

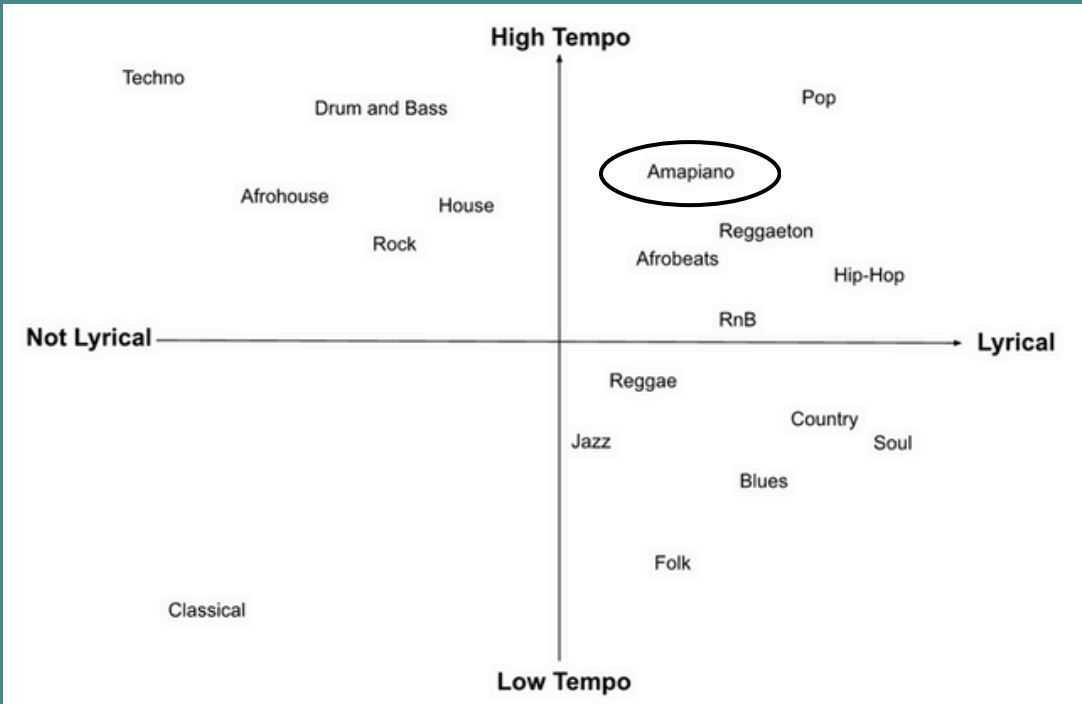
How does Amapiano succeed in other markets?

Amapiano has seen unprecedented growth in some of the world's biggest music markets. Regardless of just South Africa and Africa as a whole, the genre has made stepping stones like no other to achieve global recognition, especially within Western markets. Due to the fact that Amapiano is highly technology oriented and less lyrically orientated, it creates accessibility by subduing language barriers. As a result of this, Amapiano has been aided by the rise of social media because the genre has “emerged in an era where the world is connected through social media” (VML South Africa, 2024).

In 2022 the operations manager of TikTok South Africa, Yuvir Pillay, stated “we noticed a lot of our youths at the end of 2019 starting to use Amapiano music to create their food videos, their dance videos, their fashion videos, memes. And we really saw people embracing the genre and wanting to engage with it” (Pillay, 2021 cited in Brown, 2022). However this transcended the local South African Tiktok community and “In 2021, videos using the hashtag #Amapiano flexed their muscles on the popular app with more than 1.6 billion global views” (Brown, 2022).

Notably, the US and European markets have been absorbing the genre at the quickest rates. The Senior Music and Talent Manager at VEVO, Jodeci Rampsard, stated “in the last five years, we’ve seen a 223% growth in Afrobeats and Amapiano views in the US and a 113% increase in the UK” (Rampsard, 2023 cited in Hansen 2024). Which is reflected by the fact that playlists such as ‘Amapiano Grooves’ on Spotify “had more than 50 million streams” in 2021 alone (Brown, 2022). This newfound interest from Western markets could be highly linked to the fact that Amapiano is quite unique with regards to what is already present in the music market.

MUSIC GENRE COMPETITOR MATRIX



BACKGROUND INFORMATION: INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

How does Amapiano fare in its biggest markets outside of South Africa?

UNITED STATES



Fig 10. US Flag

- The US is the **third biggest market** for global Amapiano streams (Stacy, 2023).
 - “After South Africa, Great Britain, the US and Nigeria are the top markets for Amapiano streaming” (Stacy, 2023).
- “**The Recording Academy has added three new Categories:** Best African Music Performance, Best Alternative Jazz Album and Best Pop Dance Recording”(Enos, 2023).
- “**DJs DBN Gogo and Uncle Waffles both played Coachella**” (Mazaza, 2024).
- In 2023, **AfroNation hosted an event in Miami** where the official South African Tourism body held a panel with artists, producers and industry experts dedicated to “spotlighting genre origins and burgeoning popularity”(Sangweni, 2023).
- All year round there are clubbing events that take place all throughout the US, however **recently there has been a massive uptick of Amapiano dedicated festivals.**

UNITED KINGDOM



Fig 11. UK Flag

- The UK is the **second biggest market** for Amapiano streaming on Spotify
- Contrary to the rest of the world, **the UK saw a large spike in Amapiano streams, events, and festivals prior to COVID.** The first Amapiano tour by an artist was 2019 (Osazuwa, 2023).
 - After the release of the “3x South African platinum EP, Piano Hub with DJ Maphorisa, the UK witnessed the arrival of one of Amapiano's leading pioneers, Kabza De Small. Embarking on a major UK tour, Kabza De Small performed at various events, including shows in Glasgow and Manchester” (Osazuwa, 2023).
- “According to Spotify, **the UK ranks only second to South Africa** for listens to its Amapiano Grooves playlists” (Hunt, 2024)
- “**Piano people sold out London’s Drumsheds** venue, one of the biggest clubs in the world [15,000 people capacity]” (Mazaza, 2024)
- In 2022, BBC Radio 1X quoted Amapiano to be the “**The Worlds fastest growing music genre**” (DJ Edu, 2022 cited in BBC, 2022)

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: INTERNATIONAL MARKETS

What are some Amapiano events that are currently being held in 2025?

UNITED STATES

- Amapiano Day Fest:
 - Date: May 10th, 2025.
 - Location: Washington DC (Afropolitan Cities, 2025).
 - Venue: Citizens and Culture DC.
 - Capacity: 800 people (Eventective, 2025).



Fig 12. Amapiano Day Fest Poster (2025)

- Amapiano Day Fest:
 - Date: May 31st, 2025
 - Location: New York City (Afropolitan Cities, 2025).
 - Venue: The Delancey.
 - Capacity: 700 (Eventective, 2025).



Fig 14. Amapiano Day Fest Poster (2025)

- Amapiano Festival South African Music:
 - Date: November 1st, 2025.
 - Location: New York.
 - Venue: Madison Square Garden.
 - Capacity: 19,500 (Unation, 2025).

UNITED KINGDOM

- AMA Fest UK:
 - Date: 19th July, 2025
 - Location: Newham (AMA Fest UK, 2025).
 - Venue: Bygrave Woods.
 - Capacity: 14,900 (Security and Event Solutions, 2025).



Fig 13. AMAFest UK Poster (2025)

- Piano People In the Park [multiple events a year]:
 - Date: 25th August, 2025.
 - Location: Southwark Park (Piano People, 2025).
 - Venue: Southwark Park.
 - Capacity: 15,000 to 23,000 (Southwark Council, 2025).



Fig 15. Piano People In The Park (2025)

PRIMARY INSIGHTS:

A survey was conducted to investigate *The Importance of Representation and Growth in Music with Regards to Amapiano*

This survey was geared towards collecting primary research from audiences of all different backgrounds and nationalities. With a total of 93 responses, 58.1% being women, 40.9% being men and 1% being non-binary (Fig 16). This is significant because as aforementioned Amapiano is genderless compared to most genres. As well as representation from 5 different ethnicities spanning over 5 different continents (see Appendix E), the intended goal of the survey was to showcase the presence of Amapiano on a global scale.

As aforementioned in 2023 40% of Amapiano streams came from ages 18-24 (Stacy, 2024) which was also the largest age group of participants in this survey at 40.9% (see Appendix E), although, the majority of respondents fell into higher age groups. One might assume that this suggests a majority of the respondents do not listen to Amapiano in their free time, whether that be regularly or not, however, only 10.8% of the total responded “no” to listening to the genre in their free time (Fig 17). Furthermore, this number shrank to 4.3% with regards to hearing Amapiano being played in spaces where there is music playing such as clubs, bars and restaurants (Fig 19). This is essential because despite 79.3% of the respondents having lived in South Africa, an inference can be made that the remaining 20.7%, of whom 16.3% have never even visited the country, still experience Amapiano through other channels (Fig 18). Finally, in terms of the documentary, when asked about the necessity for African content in the creative industry, 97.8% (see Appendix E) of respondents agreed that there is a necessity for African content on a global stage. Indicating why only 3.2% of respondents answered “no” to whether or not they would watch a short documentary about upcoming Amapiano artists in the industry (Fig 20).

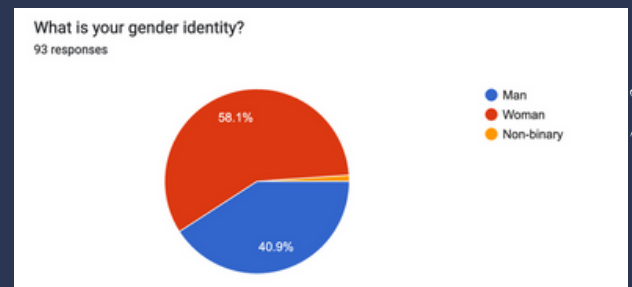


Fig 16: Question 3

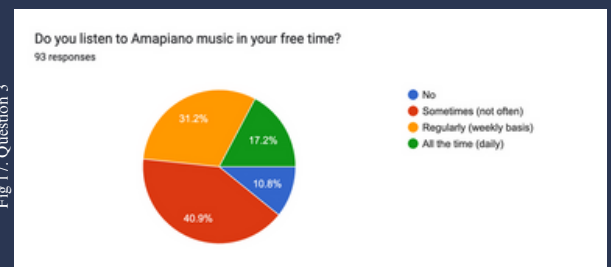


Fig 17: Question 3

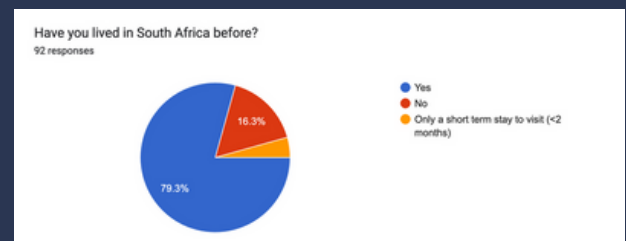


Fig 18: Question 3

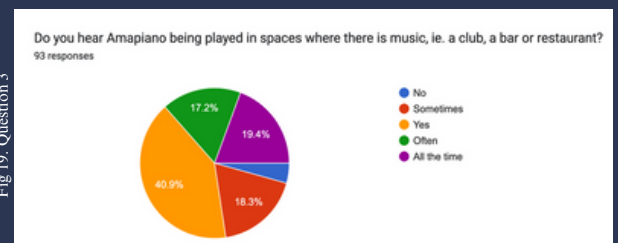


Fig 19: Question 3

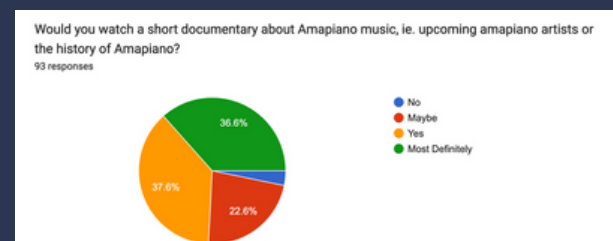


Fig 20: Question 3

AMAPIANO THROUGH A CRITICAL LENSE:

A compendium of literature relating to critical race theory in the context of the Black experience in today's world

WHAT IS CRITICAL RACE THEORY?:

Critical Race Theory [CRT] as defined by Britannica is “**framework of legal analysis** based on the premise that race is not a natural, biologically grounded feature of physically distinct subgroups of human beings but a socially constructed (culturally invented) category that is used to oppress and exploit people of colour” (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica, 2025).

According to *Critical Race Theory: An Introduction* by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic, the **basic tenets of critical race theory** argue that:

1. “**Racism is difficult to address or cure** because it is not acknowledged” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012).
2. “Because racism advances the interests of both white elites [materially] and working-class whites [psychically] **large segments of society have little incentive to eradicate it**” (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012).
3. “‘*The Social Construction*’ thesis, holds that **race and races are a product of social thought and relations**. Not Objective, inherent or fixed they correspond to no biological or genetic reality; rather races are categories that society invents, manipulated or retires when convenient’ (Delgado and Stefancic, 2012).

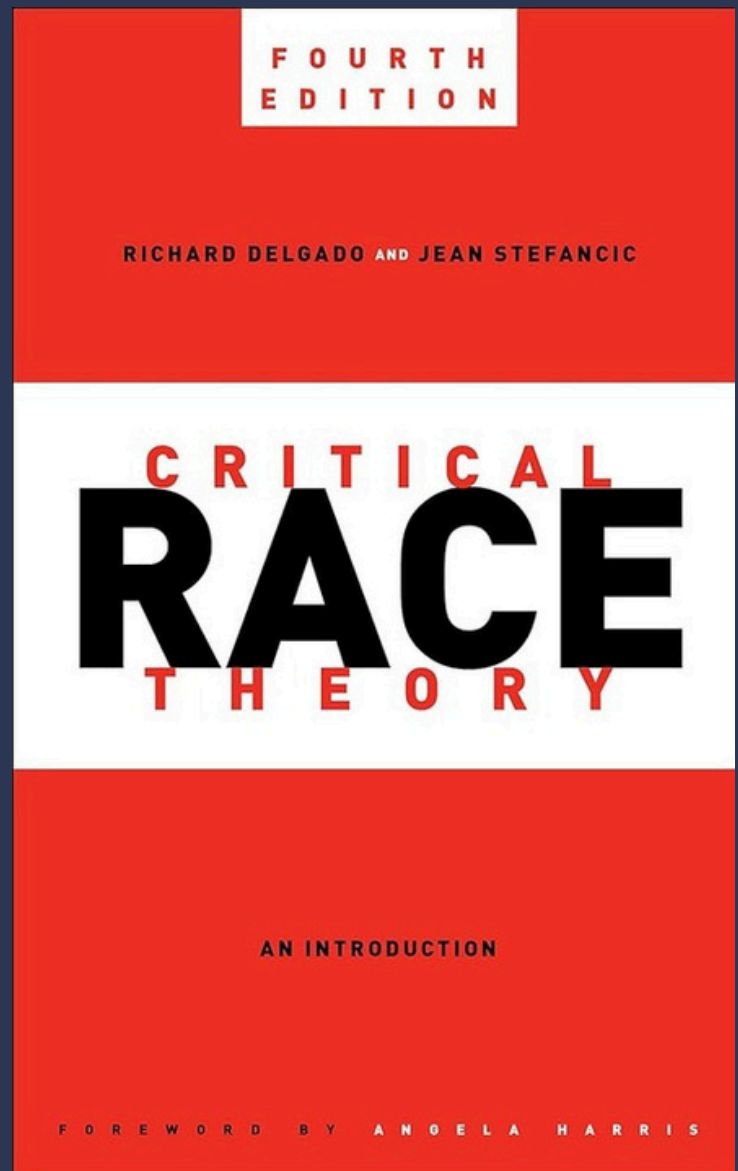


Fig 21. *Critical Race Theory an Introduction* (2001)

AMAPIANO THROUGH A CRITICAL LENSE:

Critical Race Theory in *This is Not America: Why Black Lives In Britain Matter*:

- As the **British population continues to grow** there has been a **paradigm shift** over the past thirty years where “there are now twice as many black Africans in the country as black Caribbean people” (Owolade, 2024).
- “The black British Population only reached 1% of the general British population for the first time in around 1980. [Although] **Black people now constitute around 4% of the the British population**. Since America's founding, however, the black American population has been between 12 and 19% of the general American population” (Owolade, 2024).
- CRT has been brewing through politics and sociology over the last seventy years. However, in understanding that race is only one simple aspect of the social climate, **concepts such as intersectionality have been used to describe how different socio-economic issues coincide** with one another. “The term ‘intersectionality’ was coined by the American legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989 to describe how various forms of oppression overlap with one another” (Owolade, 2024).
- Other **terms such as White Fragility**, which is also a book by Robin DiAngelo, address how amongst white people the discussion of the colonial impacts of race make white people unable to discuss race and racism without feeling anxious or defensive. However, DiAngelo also states that this term is “not a benign or neutral force” and rather “a powerful means of white racial control and the protection of the white advantage” (DiAngelo, 2001 cited in Owolade, 2024).

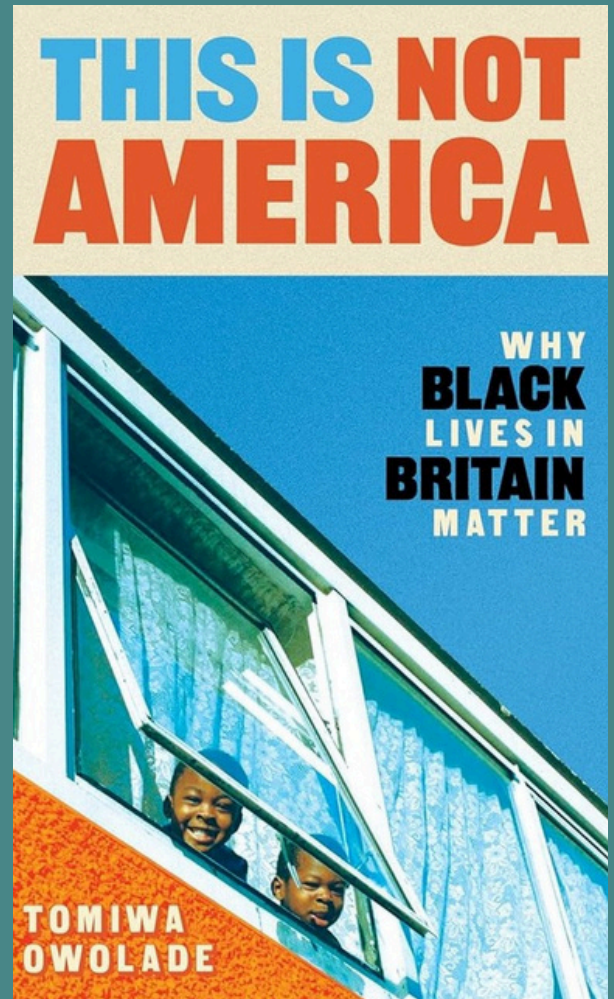


Fig 22. *This Is Not America: Why Black Lives in Britain Matter* (2023)

AMAPIANO THROUGH A CRITICAL LENSE:

“TO UNDERSTAND HOW CRITICAL RACE THEORY OFFERS A KIT OF INTELLECTUAL TOOLS FOR ANALYSING THE DIFFICULT SUBJECT OF RACE, IT IS ESSENTIAL TO RECOGNIZE THE HUMANIST FIELDS OF LEGAL THEORY, CRITICAL THEORY, PHILOSOPHY, SOCIOLOGY, HISTORY, ANTHROPOLOGY AS WELL AS THE AESTHETIC {EXPERIENTIAL} PRACTICES OF POVERTY, STORYTELLING, AND MEMOIR WRITING, ARE ALL FACETS OF CRITICAL RACE THEORY” (WYNTER, 2022).

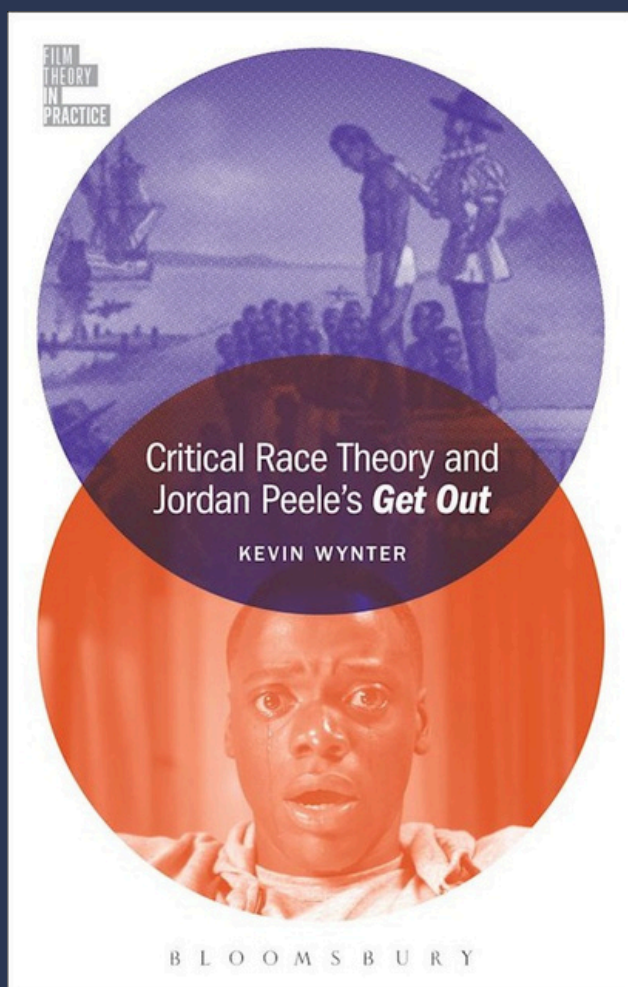


Fig 23. Critical Race Theory and Jordan Peele's *Get Out* (2022)

Critical Race Theory and Jordan Peele's Get Out:

- More often than not, **depictions of Black characters in movies and television lack the necessary depth** to understand the everyday struggles Black people face on many levels. Although a consistent theme throughout all non-fictional visual media; particularly in horror, black characters “tend only to appear in the genre in support of its white protagonists, as comic relief in the form of ‘cooning and buffooning’” (Wynter, 2022). Which is why Wynter argues that “critical race theorists seek to identify and reveal how present day institutional arrangements are generally designed to perpetuate anti-black racism and codify its operations so that they appear ordinary rather than aberrant.”
- Wynter’s book offers an insight into one most critically acclaimed films of the the 21st century, *Get Out* by Jordan Peele, by “**drawing connections between critical race theory and film studies** [which] also allows for the modification of theoretical concepts in ways that would not be possible were they not brought to bear on one another” (Wynter, 2022).

All in all, Wynter identifies the main issue revolving around Hollywood and film with regards to Black characters, and the portrayal of Black, people is the **lack of championing stories that do not relate to issues revolving directly around race**. Although CRT argues that you cannot separate race from any aspects of life, forcing stories that advocate for the learning of black culture are incidentally an indirect response to the problems that CRT encompasses.

AMAPIANO THROUGH A CRITICAL LENSE:

How does Critical Race Theory affect music creation and why is it important in the context of Amapiano?

“RACISM IS A STRUCTURAL PROBLEM, NOT AN INDIVIDUAL ONE, AND THE ONLY WAY TO UNDO IT IS THROUGH STRUCTURAL MEMES RATHER THAN INDIVIDUAL ONES” (DIANGELO; OWOLADE, 2024).

In spite of the fact that music has been around for the whole of human existence many wonder why, compared to Western countries, music from more economically disadvantaged countries such as South Africa experience less exposure. Yet, those who pose this question forget about the fact that history has always favoured music from Western countries similar to how “Western classical music came to dominate conservatories and university music programs across the globe” (Liu, 2021). CRT argues that in order to alter the effects of colonial rule and racism; stories, music and culture from those affected cultures [in this case: Black South African culture] needs to be elevated in order to reach larger audiences and experience just as much exposure as Western counterparts. Whilst elevating forms of music that are generally less well known than Western genres “the aim here is not to reinforce stereotypes but to serve as alternative epistemology so as to acknowledge the diverse music cultures in the world” (Liu, 2021). Ethnomusicologist, the study of music in different cultures, paired with a deep understanding of how CRT affects music consumption will inevitably allow for more varied forms of music, such as Amapiano, to be heard on a global stage. Similar to how the industry saw Rap and R&B grow to unforeseen amounts in the late twentieth century. For example, in 2021 Jorja Smith released a track titled *All of This* where she described the track as an effort to “bring Piano to the world” (Smith, cited in Laketu, 2021), however, leading Amapiano artist such as DJ Maphorisa were quick to realise this was track was created by a ghanaiian producer and did not resemble Amapiano at all. Maphorisa commented on the matter by saying “If you don't involve us, it's not Amapiano. Then trust me you can't eat alone on Amapiano, it's a community movement but we don't mind sharing though” (DJ Maphorisa, 2021 cited in Laketu, 2021). Suggesting that in order to be successful in the Amapiano genre you need to be educated on its origins.

THE FINALÉ

How to do I conclude this chapter and what are some future steps?

CONCLUSION

As South Africa continues to break borders, boundaries and records within the music industry, it will become paramount to capture the essence of this cultural phenomena, especially through the age of globalisation. South African culture has not been given the chance to thrive in the way it has over the last decade due to the impact of colonial rule and Apartheid. Nevertheless, we are witnessing a key turning point where artists of different magnitudes are able to shine through Amapiano. As aforementioned, this documentary will be the second ever documentary about Amapiano, but it will be the first documentary that centers the Amapiano artists and not the genre. Moreover, although BBC Africa does claim the title of the first ever Amapiano documentary, this documentary will be the first Amapiano documentary about South African artists, by South Africans, and meant for the rest of the world. There is a gap in the market with regards to longer form video content for smaller South African artists which this documentary will play a pivotal role in closing that gap by inspiring other South African artists to ‘follow suit’ and find more ways to connect with their fans. By creating opportunities to pair artist names to faces, we will only be solidifying more that Amapiano is a community based genre, much like the country of South Africa which prides itself on aspects of community.

ALTERNATE IDEAS EXPLORED

Although this documentary will function as a stepping stone for upcoming Amapiano artists, the Interview Protocol (see Appendix B) provides foundational elements for this to be applicable in many different aspects besides upcoming Artists. For instance, in understanding that there are now countless, probably thousands, of Amapiano events that happen globally every year in different countries, someone could take the same format being used for the ‘Piano Around the Globe E.P./documentary and apply that to a global tour of all the Amapiano events happening around the world. Or, follow a team that represents larger Amapiano artists such as Kabza De Small or DJ Maphorisa and go with them as they travel the world to different performing venues. Amapiano as a genre has built, and will continue to build, a vast landscape of creativity, opportunity and success. The chance to seize this moment will not ‘slip away far from reach’ for anyone who is willing to bet on the success of music being paired with film.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

A full list of all the illustrations used throughout the project



Fig 1. [Poster] Tyler, W.T. (2019) Look Mom I Can Fly. USA: Released on Netflix. Produced By: Travis Scott, Kylie Jenner, David Stromberg and Angus Wall and starring Scott. Available at: <https://www.netflix.com/watch/81046796?trackId=268410292&tctx=0%2C0%2C44b6de1c-6ff1-42a5-8ea1-8eb9241d0c11-121093279%2C44b6de1c-6ff1-42a5-8ea1-8eb9241d0c11-121093279%7C2%2C%2C%2C%2C%2C%2CVideo%3A81046796%2CdetailsPagePlayButton>.



Fig 2. [Poster] Beyoncé, Ritchie, M. and Burke, E. (2023) Renaissance: A Film by Beyoncé. United States.



Fig 3. [Poster] 'Jeen-yuhs: A Kanye trilogy: Miniseries | rotten tomatoes' (2022). Netflix. Available at: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/tv/jeen_yuhs/s01 (Accessed: 22 January 2025).



Fig 4. [Poster] Questlove (2021) Summer of soul (...Or, when the revolution could not be televised). United States.



Fig 5. [Artist Photo] Mixo Mbungela (2024) Shot on iPhone. United Kingdom



Fig 6. [Artist Photo] Sandile Ngidi (2024) Shot on iPhone. South Africa



Fig 7. [Artist Photo] Akani Maluks (2024) Shot On iPhone. South Africa



Fig 8. [Hand Drawn Cover Art] Joe Fernandez (2025). United Kingdom



Fig 9. [Graph] Preferred audio content by genre in South Africa 2024 (2025) Statista. Available at: <https://www.statista.com/forecasts/1371215/preferred-audio-content-by-genre-in-south-africa> (Accessed: 7 April 2025).



Fig 10. [Official Flag] UK Canva Generated Flag (2025)



Fig 11. [Official Flag] US Canva Generated Flag (2025)



Fig 12. [Event Poster] AfropolitanCities (2025) NYC Amapiano Day Fest, Afropolitan Cities. Available at: <https://www.afropolitancities.com/events-data/2b478048-36b9-44ee-a838-3a6ce7531eec> (Accessed: 24 April 2025).



Fig 13. [Event Poster] AMAFEST 2025 (2025) AMA FEST. Available at: <https://www.amafest.com/> (Accessed: 30 April 2025).



Fig 14. [Event Poster] AfropolitanCities (2025) NYC Amapiano Day Fest, Afropolitan Cities. Available at: <https://www.afropolitancities.com/events-data/2b478048-36b9-44ee-a838-3a6ce7531eec> (Accessed: 24 April 2025).



Fig 15. [Event Poster] Commerce, E.E. (2025) Book ticket - Piano People in the park, Pianopeople.club. Available at: <https://www.pianopeople.club/book-tickets-PPINTPLDN?date=2025-08-22> (Accessed: 9 May 2025).



Fig 21. [Book] Delgado, R. and Stefancic, J. (2012) Critical race theory: An introduction, second edition. 2nd edn. New York, NY, USA: New York University Press.



Fig 22. [Book] Owolade, T. (2023) This is not America: Why black lives in Britain matter. London: Atlantic Books.



Fig 23. [Book] Wynter, K. (2022) Critical race theory and Jordan pee's get out. New York, NY, USA: Bloomsbury Academic.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocol

Link to access the word document:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1k7VL6Izc_YDBlocB0HT0bfQ8iTCaNepv?usp=sharing

PIANO AROUND THE GLOBE E.P. Artist Interview Protocol and Question

Artist Interview Protocol:

For the interviews you can either have someone record and ask the questions while you answer the questions or simply just answer the questions yourself and video with BlackMagic Camera app and a tripod.

Please make sure that the audio being recorded is clear meaning you are either recording audio separately or in a quiet environment where the audio can be picked up perfectly by the device being used to record.

You are only required to show the upper half of your body so please shoot in landscape instead of portrait. Also please be no more than 3 meters in front of the camera and preferably seated.

Additionally, because we will be creating 4 full length songs in the span of 4 weeks, you are required to video yourself in parts either creating the track or adding to it. Please do not record a whole studio session but rather small parts amounting to no more than 4 minutes.

- For instance: A 1-minute video of you finding either a sample or creating the melody, followed by a 2-minute video of you changing things around with the track. Then a 1-minute video towards the end where you feel as though you have the song is coming together on your part, either beat production or mastering or vocals. (Feel free to speak to the camera but not too much, you can also just ignore it completely while working on the music)

Lastly, the goal is to complete one track every week. To make sure that the workload of editing the documentary as well as completing the songs doesn't pile up, I ask that you send me the documentary clips of you working on the song at the end of every week on Sunday.

- Week 1 I will receive the interviews of you as the artists. The mastered track 1 and videos of you working on the track.
- Week 2 will be track 2 accompanied with videos taken for the track.
- Week 3 will be track 3 accompanied with videos taken for the track.
- Week 4 will be track 4 accompanied with videos taken for the track and the final interview

Interview #1 Pre-E.P. (Approx 5 Minutes or Less): April 1st - April 7th

- Questions For Interview:
 1. Who are you? (Artist Name)
 2. Where are you from? (Birthplace and city)
 3. How long have you been making music?
 4. Why did you decide to start making Music?
 5. What type of music do you normally make?
 6. Why did you decide to contribute to this E.P.?
 7. Would you consider 'piano to be important to you
 8. Why do you think 'piano is so important to South Africa?
 9. Do you think 'piano is globally important?

Interview #2 Post-E.P. (Approx 5 Minutes or less): April 28– May 4th

- Questions For Interview:
 1. What was your favourite track to contribute to and why?
 2. Did you enjoy the international collaboration?
 3. What was it like to be filmed during this process?
 4. Did you learn anything about yourself while making the E.P.?
 5. What was the hardest part about creating this E.P. in a month?
 6. Do you see yourself working with the other artists in the future?
 7. Where do you aspire to be in the future of your music career?
 8. Do you think 'piano will always be a part of your life?

If you have any questions about the filming, please do not hesitate to ask me. I will also be conducting my own interviews which I will be able to share with you as an exemplar.

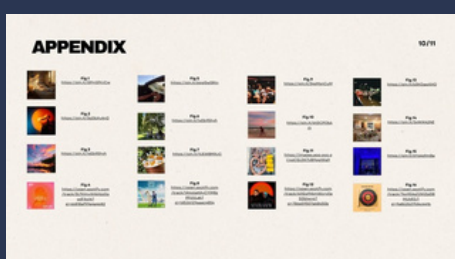
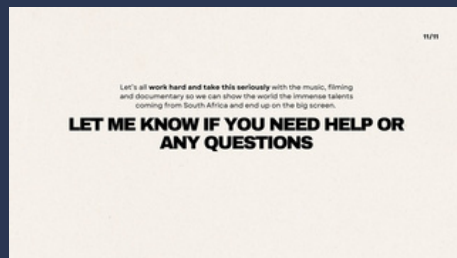
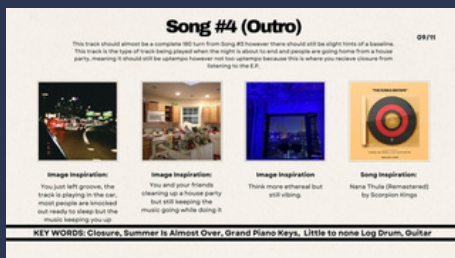
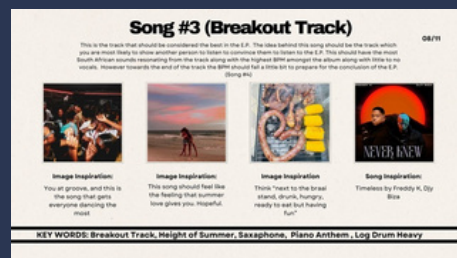
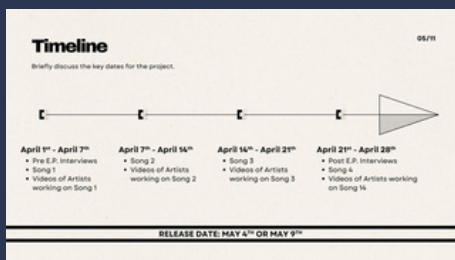
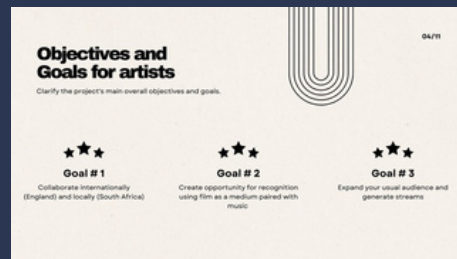
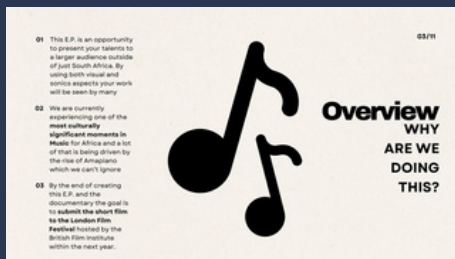
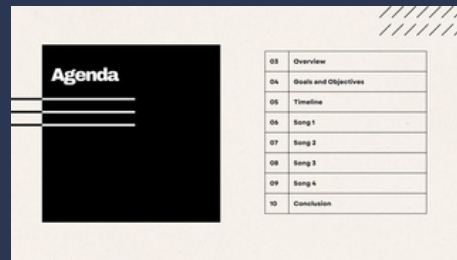
To transfer all videos please use <https://wettransfer.com/> and send to mixombungela18@gmail.com

This is a detailed description of the interview questions, process, and protocol that artists followed throughout the creation of the E.P./documentary.

APPENDICES

Appendix B: Piano Around The Globe Pitch Deck for the Songs

The Link: https://www.canva.com/design/DAGjTn3U2o/dCHGWrIFeOY3aB6-Vz9XGvw/edit?utm_content=DAGjTn3U2o&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton



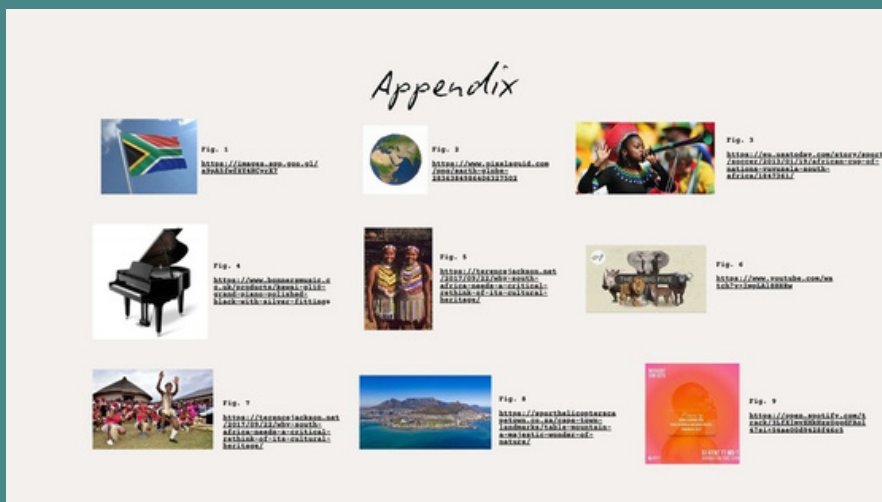
This is a Pitch Deck of the what the vibe for every given song was supposed to 'feel' like sonically. Including a timeline of the creation of all the songs.

APPENDICES

Appendix C: Moodboard for what the E.P. cover art should look like

This was the moodboard I provided to Joe Fernandez to create the album cover artwork.

The Link: https://www.canva.com/design/DAGjaObSMDw/UHzwBy3OQw1K4uuf5nb3tQ/edit?utm_content=DAGjaObSMDw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton

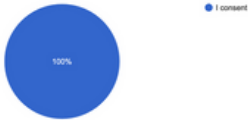


Additionally here is a detailed insight provided by Joe about the process of creation: 'The 'Piano Around The Globe cover is made up of 110 squares (not including the title) representing the 110 beats per minute that make up Amapiano music traditionally. Using this as a framework, an Amapiano track is made through the cover. the 9 brown background tracks are separated into melody (green curved bars) percussion (red triangles) and bass (blue circles) the circles are a visual representation of the log drum bass, designed to look like the center of a wooden log. The triangles representing the percussion point up or down depending on pitch as do the curved green shapes that describe the tone, pitch and duration depending on whether they come from above or below, how tall they are and how wide they are. the abstract columns in the centre are inspired by the exuberant exciting energy which is the heart and soul of Amapiano. centered within piano keys the soul of the music is made up of different elements and actions that showcase the detail, skill and energy that is showcased in the Amapiano genre, using the colours of the south african flag to represent this. A springbok sits over the top of the track, as to me it epitomises the fast paced tempo and the feeling of having an energy and spring in your step from listening to the music. The design of the cover was heavily inspired by John De Casere, who created his own way of translating music into art by using different motifs to act as a symbol for a musical element. His work was a key inspiration for this piece alongside trying to replicate the digital production of Amapiano music in a physical way.'

APPENDICES

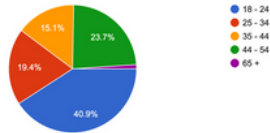
Appendix D: The complete survey results provided for *The Importance of Representation and Growth in Music with Regards to Amapiano*.

In choosing to complete the survey, you are consenting to your responses being used for research purposes only. If you do not wish to consent to your results being used then do not fill out this survey.
88 responses



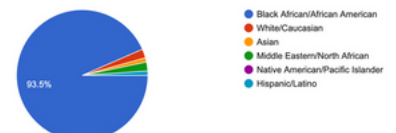
Question 1.

What is your age group?
93 responses



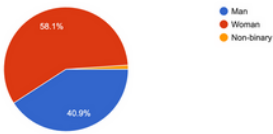
Question 2.

What is your ethnicity?
92 responses



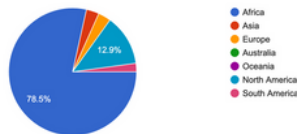
Question 3.

What is your gender identity?
93 responses



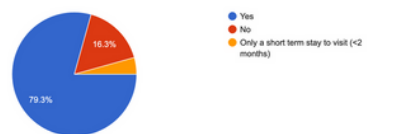
Question 4.

What continent were you born in?
93 responses



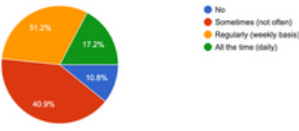
Question 5.

Have you lived in South Africa before?
92 responses



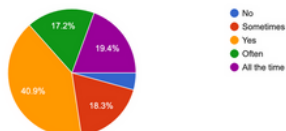
Question 6.

Do you listen to Amapiano music in your free time?
93 responses



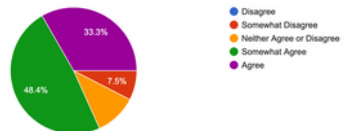
Question 7.

Do you hear Amapiano being played in spaces where there is music, ie. a club, a bar or restaurant?
93 responses



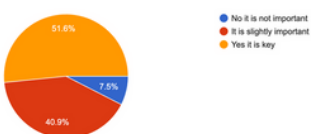
Question 8.

Do you feel as though Amapiano has become mainstream?
93 responses



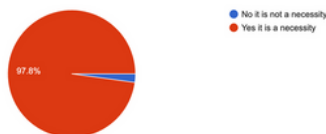
Question 9.

Would you consider Amapiano to be key to the growth of South Africa culture?
93 responses



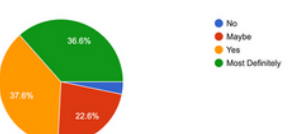
Question 10.

Would you consider the need for African content in the creative industries a necessity?
93 responses



Question 11.

Would you watch a short documentary about Amapiano music, ie. upcoming amapiano artists or the history of Amapiano?
93 responses



Question 12.

An in depth look at all the questions asked as well as the percentages per question.

Research And Development Log

Summary of Approach:

Pre-submission of the Degree Project proposal, I was able to have a conversation with two of my uncles [Leroy and Kombelani Khoza] who fortunately enough are leaders in the South African Music industry. They both have their own labels and agencies. Where my uncle Leroy Khoza founded Raplyf Records and Inkabi Records as well as managed artists like Kwesta in the past along with Big Zulu currently, his brother [my other uncle] Kombelani Khoza manages MFR Soul [arguably two of the Amapiano founders] and Bassie, who just won a Metro FM award for best music video in South Africa. These sets of interviews which lasted a total of almost 3 hours over the Christmas holiday enabled me to get a scope of the improvements that needed to be made within the South African music industry as well as how they found their own success. Knowing that there was room for a lot of improvements to be made, my mind started flooding with possible ideas as to where I could place myself in this space to make the biggest difference possible.

The easiest way for me to approach this was by creating a journal that was specifically tailored to be a space that made it easy for me to conceptualise my ideas. Creating the journal allowed me to be as freely thinking in my thoughts as possible without the fear of being judged before I shared my ideas. This is where I figured out how I was going to incorporate film as one of my passions with music. However, the first major question I asked myself on February 18th was “Why Should Business Care About Culture?”. Knowing that I had the opportunity to represent myself through and with South African culture, I knew that the first step I had to take was asking myself why people who are not South African should care about the culture that we have begun to share with the world. After this thought, I found myself visiting Paris on the 22nd of February where there was an exhibition, titled *House of Bondage*, by the South African photographer Ernest Cole. In this exhibition he showcased photos of South Africa during Apartheid, and this is where I started investigating Critical Race Theory.

In terms of music creation, I then looked at current inspirations in my life, namely DoeChii and the format that she used to accomplish her Grammy winning album, which was creating a project in 30 days using maximum output. I soon came to realise that this is something I would be able to emulate. Although at first my idea entailed creating a short feature film that had nothing to do with an artists and was more storyline oriented with poems and music about “A Boy Who Fell In Love With his Speaker”, in the midsts of creating this idea I recognized that I would not be able to represent my country in an all-encompassing way. I then proceeded to have a conversation with Matt Gooderson, who is now the MBA Music Management year lead at London City University, where we had a detailed and in-depth conversation about how music and film now have a symbiotic relationship where artists can make money through leveraging the fact that their audiences are seeking more personal experiences with the artists.

This led me to start, listing artists who could help me create a vision where we all collaborate as artists in a manner that benefited all of us. From artists that lived in Berlin such as JoseyRadios, to artists like SNTI, who has produced tracks for Loski, but then I really narrowed in and chose the most reliable artists who are also friends of mine back home that could help me accomplish my vision. **A project for South Africans by South Africans, for the rest of the world.** This was when I began formatting what the interview process would look like as well as conceptualising the making of the songs. This is where I began conceptualising a survey and I was able to get close to 100 respondents through sharing with family and friends, to see if this idea would be received well. I then shared all the documents such as the Pitch Deck and Interview protocol with the artists. Shortly after then, every week I was receiving songs and videos from the individual artists once a week whilst also recording my own interviews and contributing to the E.P.

Whilst this was going on the conversations with industry leaders did not end there, I realised I had a golden opportunity to continue chatting to industry leaders and I had the support of my dad [Matimba Mbungela], who really pushed for me to connect to industry leaders by also reaching out to them on LinkedIn. From there he connected me with Pule Ndlovu, who is the Senior Growth Manager (subscriptions) of Spotify for Sub-Saharan Africa, and he has now also decided to be my mentor. Additionally, I had the opportunity to network with Stan Roche who owns Blacklight, a music publisher that manages the catalogue of artists such as Nirvana, as well as Yoel Kenan who owns Africori, which is the biggest independent music publisher for African music. These conversations whilst my project was on going, led me to a point where I was becoming more and more confident that the project I was doing was not only for a good cause, but I truly chose a way to represent my culture in a way that could last for a long time.

In conclusion, throughout the whole process from the Degree Project proposal to the final Degree Project Part 2 submission, I was able to find a solution to a problem that would not only be beneficial for me, but also the artists that come from my home country. This solution of Piano Around the Globe, although the name of the documentary and E.P, is a transferable concept that can be used in multiple ways to benefit the South African music industry.

Google Drive Link to Access All Information Referred To:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IEHcjHx7ufrUPoIWKgP8JSdCj8Q_VTaG?usp=drive_1ink

Degree Project Critical Reflection:

As I reflect on the making of my final degree project, I have been thinking significantly about the last four years of my degree. The whole of my university experience has felt like one giant roller coaster. However, this project feels like that rollercoaster ride has come to the calmest end after doing a million loops, although not without its own challenges.

Prior to the completion of this project, I never even thought about “what it was that I was trying to achieve” (Rolfe, 2001). I never thought about what problems the music industry faced in my home country, that I could contribute to fixing. I never even thought I had the capability to apply myself in way which would benefit a community rather than an individual. Yet, for the first time in my life I found myself asking those questions to myself. I knew that the best way to address these questions I had, was to begin opening conversations with industry leaders who could hopefully guide me in the right direction without forcing their own ideas onto me. Which is why the action of making sure to continuously converse with industry leaders such as Leroy Khoza, Kombelani Khoza, Pule Ndhlovu, Stan Roche and Yoel Kenan really helped open my vision to the endless possibilities of change I could make. I realised shortly that I used to internally fight the idea of becoming an industry leader, in one way or another, so much so that I would self-sabotage my learning by not applying myself in the ways that mattered to me the most. Nevertheless, upon coming to terms with the fact that I have a golden opportunity as one of the few young Black South Africans studying overseas, I began internally changing my attitudes to the way I approached this degree project. **This project was no longer about me**, just as much as my whole learning experience was, but more about learning to become a stepping stone to the improving status of the whole South African Music Business. In asking myself “So what do I base my actions on?” (Rolfe, 2001) I concluded that I am to base my actions on the prospects of improving my community which would inevitably help me improve myself.

As my future in the music industry continues at the University of The Arts London [UAL] next year for a Masters in Music Management, and I continue asking myself the question of “now what do I need to do in order to make things better/improve my teachings”, I now know that the first place I will look for answers is my community back home.

“A fundamental concern for others in our individual and community lives would go a long way in making the world the better place we so passionately dreamt of.” –
Nelson Mandela

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McKenna and Amy (2018) '15 Nelson Mandela quotes', *Encyclopedia Britannica*.