



LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO



Timeline

1964	1970	1973	1981	1986	1991	1991	1994
Ladysmith Black Mambazo is formed by Joseph Shabalala	First radio broadcast of a Ladysmith Black Mambazo song	Release of the called 'Amabutho' which sells over 25,000 copies	During apartheid, they are allowed to travel to Germany and play many shows	The group travel to London and record songs for the world-famous album 'Graceland' with Paul Simon	Joseph Shabalala's brother and band bass player shot by white off-duty security guard	Apartheid in South Africa ends	They perform at Nelson Mandela's inauguration and birthday

Key Songs

Nomathemba	1973 - This means 'Mother of Hope' and was their first hit single.
Wazithwal'izono Jesu	1976 - Many of their songs became Christian after Joseph became Christian himself
uJesu Wami	1977 - This song means 'My Jesus' and was from an album made up of Zulu Christian hymns
Nansi Imali	1981 - The song means 'Here is the Money' and was
Homeless	1986 - From the 'Graceland' album recorded with Paul Simon.
Diamonds on the Soles of her Shoes	1986 - Another song from the 'Graceland' album recorded with Paul Simon.
Liph' Iqiniso.	1993 - This is the title song from an album celebrating Nelson Mandela's release after 27 years of imprisonment.
Inkanyezi Nezaz	1997 - Written in 1992 but became famous after featuring on a Heinz Beans advert. It got to number 2 in the UK charts.
I Shall be There	1999 - A pop collaboration with Irish group B*Witched.
Selingelethu Sonke	2003 - The first song written by the group all about fair trade in Africa.
Long Walk to Freedom	2006 - A song about the struggles of apartheid.

DID YOU KNOW?

Ladysmith Black Mambazo have made over 50 albums and are South Africa's best-selling musicians. Group founder Joseph Shabalala retired from performing in 2014 and sadly died in February 2020 at the age of 78. Four of his sons still sing and perform with the group and they continue to perform shows around the world.

The Importance of Ladysmith Black Mambazo

Music Style

The group sing without musical instruments (a cappella) and they have a performance style which is a mixture of traditional South African Zulu songs and South African isicathamiya dance moves (a soft, shuffling style of dance with choral part-singing).

Name Meaning

They were originally called Ezimnyama, which means 'The Black Ones', but changed their name to Ladysmith Black Mambazo. Ladysmith was the name of the farming village Joseph Shabalala came from. The word black was used because of the black oxen in the village, known as the strongest animal. The word 'Mambazo' means 'axe' and was used to show how they 'cut down' all other musical competition. They often entered singing competitions in the early days but were banned because they kept winning them all.

Apartheid in South Africa

Apartheid was a system in place in South Africa, which started in 1948, that separated people based on their race and skin colour. There were laws that forced white people and black people to live and work apart from each other. Even though there were less white people than black people, apartheid laws allowed white people to rule the country and enforce the laws which were unfair on black people. Apartheid finally ended in 1991 shortly after the release of Nelson Mandela from prison.

Famous Events

Graceland

Famous American singer and songwriter Paul Simon travelled to the capital of South Africa (Johannesburg) to play and record music with African musicians. It was very difficult due to apartheid. He invited Ladysmith Black Mambazo to record with him in London. The album they produced, called Graceland, is seen by many as one of the best modern albums of all time. It won a Grammy Award in 1987 and has sold over 14 million copies!

Nelson Mandela Inauguration

Nelson Mandela felt that everyone deserved to be treated the same, regardless of their skin colour. He wanted people to protest against the unfair laws which eventually led him to be arrested and placed in prison in 1963. He became a famous prisoner and many around the world wanted him to be free. He was not freed until 1990 and so spent 27 years in prison. When he was released, apartheid ended and, in 1994, he became the first black president of South Africa. Ladysmith Black Mambazo were invited to perform at his inauguration (a ceremony where someone is announced as president).