

The vocation might seem like a grand undertaking for a music group, but considering that they come from a country that legalized their third-class citizenship up until no more than 15 years ago, they might be just the group to do it. The group had a fun, carefree, almost comedic nature about them. At one point all of the singers but Shabalala left the stage as he jokingly remembered that he had forgotten to pay them and that they were on strike. However, many of the songs seemed-again, my Zulu is a little rusty-to have political undertones. Considering two-thirds of the South African band's career was under apartheid, this would, understandably, be a hard topic to ignore.

While incredibly unique, the music was entirely accessible, and it's hard to imagine someone leaving the show with a bad taste in his or her mouth. What stood out about Ladysmith Black Mambazo more than anything was their honesty. Their sincerity in all aspects of the performance was evident, from their clear joy of being able to perform for such an appreciative group to their pride in representing their country so far from home. They made the audience feel welcomed, rather than maintaining a separation between artist and listener.

The show was a family affair, in the audience-where ages ranged from diapers to walkers-and especially onstage. Shabalala introduced his four sons in the group and announced that he was "planting seeds of tradition," implying that Ladysmith's future would extend far beyond his. Here's to 48 years more.

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