



# MUSIC BUSINESS

I N N A M I B I A R E A D E R

A compilation of perspectives in navigating the music  
business for emerging artists in Namibia.

NATIONAL THEATRE OF NAMIBIA



# MUSIC BUSINESS IN NAMIBIA READER 2021

A compilation of perspectives in navigating  
the music business for emerging artists in Namibia.



**National Theatre of Namibia (NTN)**  
**www.ntn.org.na**  
**info@ntn.org.na**  
**PO Box 3794**  
**Windhoek**  
**Namibia**

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Edited by Van Wyk Editing  
Cover photography by Opas Onucheyo  
Design and layout by Beso Media

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## ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

<b>AVOD</b>	Advertising-based video on demand
<b>BIPA</b>	Business and Intellectual Property Authority
<b>CD</b>	Compact Disc
<b>CISAC</b>	Confédération Internationale des Sociétés d'Auteurs et Compositeurs (English: International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers)
<b>CMO</b>	Collective Management Organisations
<b>COTA</b>	College of the Arts
<b>CV</b>	Curriculum Vitae
<b>DI</b>	Direct Input
<b>DJ</b>	Disc Jockey
<b>DPO</b>	Direct Pay Online
<b>DSP</b>	Digital Service Provider
<b>DStv</b>	Digital Satellite Television
<b>ED</b>	Emily Dangwa
<b>EP</b>	Extended Play
<b>FM</b>	Frequency Modulation
<b>FNCC</b>	Franco Namibian Cultural Centre
<b>FOH</b>	Front of House
<b>GDP</b>	Gross Domestic Product
<b>GMP</b>	Gazza Music Productions
<b>IP</b>	Intellectual Property
<b>LLB</b>	Bachelor of Laws (Latin: Legum Baccalaureus)
<b>LLM</b>	Master of Laws (Latin: Latin Legum Magister)
<b>LR Stereo</b>	Stereo Left and Right
<b>MA</b>	Master of Arts
<b>MTC</b>	Mobile Telecommunications Company
<b>MTV</b>	Music Television
<b>MUA</b>	Make-up Artist
<b>NAMAs</b>	Namibia Annual Music Awards
<b>NACN</b>	National Arts Council of Namibia
<b>NASCAM</b>	Namibian Society of Composer and Authors of Music
<b>NAGN</b>	National Art Gallery of Namibia
<b>NAMFISA</b>	Namibia Financial Institutions Supervisory Authority
<b>NBC</b>	Namibia Broadcasting Corporation
<b>NTN</b>	National Theatre of Namibia
<b>O&amp;L</b>	Ohlthaver & List Group
<b>R&amp;B</b>	Rhythm and blues
<b>PCM</b>	Pulse-Code Modulation
<b>PA</b>	Public Address [system]
<b>PR</b>	Public relations
<b>PwC</b>	PricewaterhouseCoopers
<b>RMB</b>	Rand Merchant Bank
<b>RFI</b>	Radio France Internationale
<b>ROI</b>	Return on Investment
<b>SA</b>	South Africa
<b>SADC</b>	Southern African Development Community
<b>SMS</b>	Short Message Service
<b>SPCA</b>	Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
<b>SVOD</b>	Subscription Video on demand
<b>SWABC</b>	South West Africa Broadcasting Corporation
<b>TRIPS</b>	Trade-related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights
<b>TV</b>	Television
<b>UCT</b>	University of Cape Town
<b>UK</b>	United Kingdom
<b>UNAM</b>	University of Namibia
<b>US</b>	United States
<b>USA</b>	United States of Namibia
<b>USB</b>	Universal Serial Bus
<b>WMP</b>	Welwitschia Music Productions
<b>WOMAD</b>	World of Music, Arts and Dance

# • INTRODUCTION

The *Music Business in Namibia Reader* is a compilation of reflections, perspectives and recommendations by expert musicians and contributors on how to navigate music careers sustainably in Namibia. Primarily targeted at new talents and emerging musicians, the reader echoes the realities, challenges and opportunities that lie within the sector. Sonic and musical expressions are inherent practices across societies and function to not only entertain, but also transmit a people's heritage. These expressions maintain the heartbeat of a people. This task demands much input from artists and, in turn, requires equitable reward and recognition. Through interviews and written segments, this reader presents an array of lived experiences and guidelines on developing careers and sustainable processes in the Namibian music sector.

The historical trajectory of Namibian sonic works and musical creations and their future potential has motivated this reader. Namibia holds a rich foundation of sounds from our pre-colonial traditional spaces which functioned as communing and healing mediums. These acoustic materials served to preserve and transmit our values and continue to inform our contemporary times. Our musical heritage is also rooted in icons such as ou Pyp, Meme Nanghili Nashima, Tate Kwela, Lexington, Boeti Simon, Kaxumba Kandola, Oom Jacobus ||Hoëb, ou #Kharixurob, Oom Warmgat, Mitakanue Tjihange, Ujeuetu Tjhange, Godo Milomo, Sikandango, John Kasu, Agrey Musiyiwa, and Benny Mwanamwali, to name a few.

Throughout the 50s to the 80s, kwela and township jazz emanated from South Africa to Namibian urban towns, with prominent musicians like Paul Kumundu, Otto Kampari, and Leyden Naftali, and bands like the Old Jazz Masters, The Dead Wood, The Rocking Kwela Boys, Children of Pluto, The Dakotas, and Ugly Creatures. Bands like the Silverstars and M Connections followed suit and blended indigenous sounds as well. Politically inclined music has always existed, and became amplified during the country's liberation struggle through empowering melodic protests by youth, political and social activists, workers and liberation fighters. The footprints of artists like Papa Francois Tsoubaloko, Banana Shekupe and Kangwe Keenyala can be linked with others who transferred resilience and critical consciousness through music in classrooms, church halls, beer halls, fields, neighbourhoods, nursing tents, barracks, refugee camps and meetings in and around the country as well as in exile. The work of these and many unnamed - but not less important - artists, both exported and absorbed sounds into Namibia. Pan African sounds particularly shaped the 80s and early 90s, such as in works by Willie Mbuende and Jackson Kaujeua, and in later artists like Ras Sheehama, Petu, and Ngatu. This era had gone on to influence the emergence of prestigious instrumentalists who have collaborated with diverse singers. These

artists embraced and absorbed various genres, such as reggae, which can be traced in Steve Hanana, Boli Mootseng, Omidid'Afrique, and bands like We Culture, Shem Yetu, Formula Band, Setson & The Mighty Dreads, Organised Crime and 40Thieves. These artists have continued to maintain the popularity of reggae in the Namibian music scene.

Further, kwasa kwasa and sungura stretched across the country and could be heard both in rural and urban business establishments. At the same time, kizomba had become a prominent sound from the late 1990s, through soloists like Tyson and the band Impactus Four. Gospel and a cappella musical forms emanated through well-known ensembles such as Cantare Audire, National Youth Choir, College of the Arts Choir, St. Joseph's Maranatha Choir, Vocal Motion Six (VMSix, also known as VM6), Soli Deo Gloria, Big K's, Salvation Choir, Voice of God, Mascato Coastal Youth Choir, Windhoek Youth Choir, and Hare Hoado who all went on to represent Namibia internationally. Notable gospel soloists include Robert Matemwa, Jakko Kangayi, Peter Nganga, Beata Ngondo, Pastor Petrus Kim, Elize Dentlinger, Yvonne Hangara, Ousie Kamwanga, Ludwig Gawanab, Idah Mungunda, Stoney Mubiana, Gift, Phillipine Netope and D-Naff. Composers such as Hendrik Witbooi Jr., W/M Jodt, Axali Doëseb, Paul Kisting, Alex Kamburute, Nicro //Hoabeb, Marcellinus Swartbooi, Roger Nautoro, amongst others have contributed to the formation of rich Namibian sounds. Meanwhile, jazz set its precedence with the voices of Sharon van Rooi, Ermelinda Thataone and repertoires by FuJazz. Traditional melodies can be traced in works by Axue, who influenced a generation of Afro-fusion musicians. Hishishi Papa is another who explored traditional sounds that have been well received by local and international audiences. Afro-fusion music-making approaches have been embraced by artists like Elemotho, Patricia Ochurus, Big Ben and Erna Chimu, amongst others, who remain revered singers in the country.

The impetus of South African sounds like bubblegum also expanded into Namibia, through artists across the times such as People's Choice, Uncle Warren, Erick Mahua and Rirua Murangi. From 2003, the music business particularly shaped itself through kwaito by capturing the local landscape with sounds by Matongo Family, Gazza, The Dogg (now King Tee Dee) and Legg-Ghetto. Other key figures in this popular genre across the decade include Sunny Boy, Omzoo, Zanele, Qonja (now Samuel Ngodji), Bone Chuck, Kavax, Tre Van Die Kasie, Exit, Mushe and Dollar 6. The same can be said for reggae, which can be traced across the times in works by Ras Petu, Buju Bantuan, The Kalaharians, Kamasutra, La Chox and in the early works of Gazza as well. Additionally, hip-hop took the scene with artists such as Shikololo, Fidel O'del, Dore and Jericho, and further artists like Snazzy, Rizzy, OmPuff, D-Jay, Catty Cat and Kanibal. R&B, on the



**Nelago Shilongoh**  
**ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

*National Theatre  
of Namibia (NTN).*



THE HISTORICAL TRAJECTORY OF NAMIBIAN SONIC WORKS AND MUSICAL CREATIONS - AND THEIR FUTURE POTENTIAL - HAS MOTIVATED THIS READER. NAMIBIA HOLDS A RICH FOUNDATION OF SOUNDS FROM OUR PRE-COLONIAL TRADITIONAL SPACES WHICH FUNCTIONED AS COMMUNING AND HEALING MEDIUMS. THESE ACOUSTIC MATERIALS HAVE TRANSMITTED OUR VALUES AND CONTINUE TO INFORM OUR CONTEMPORARY TIMES.



other hand, was popularised locally through Christi Warner, Tequila (now Tekla), Lady May (now Lady May Africa), Rudolf Dantago Schimming (previously African Boy), Roger, Berthold and Lil D (now Desmond). Afropop, at the same time, became widespread on radio and television screens through artists like Capitol K, Stella, Killa B, Jossy Joss, Faizel MC, Gal Level and PDK. Additionally, bands such as Bedrock (The Band in the Sand), Penilane and Famaz Attack contributed to setting an appreciation of local rock music in the country.

For about the past 20 years, musicians and artists have captured approaches that have significantly shaped the Namibian contemporary sound. These include kwiku, which was popularised by the likes of Janice and Tate Buti, under the production of Pedrito. Shambo became distinct through the sounds of Setson & The Mighty Dreads, Castro, Tunakie, Pezzico, YT de Wet, Mbulukutu ya Shikuma and Nakale. Langaram extended from southern Namibia and was popularised by bands such as Reho Combo, which was co-founded by multi-instrumentalist Gonny Klazen. The sounds of ma/gaisa have been epitomised by Stanley, Aubasen, Phura, Raphael & Pele, Pule, Ruby and Riio, all under the production of Swakopmund-based producer Steven /Naruseb. Oviritje, another defining contemporary sound, thrilled the country through works by Kareke Henguva, Roma Murangere Kaaronda, Tjitjekura Tjerijama, Wild Dogs, Bullet ya Kaoko, and Ongoro Nomundu. Earlier pioneers of oviritje include Natuarari Kaakunga and Bella Kazongominja. These artists - amongst many others - all contributed to shaping the Namibian music sector and sound.

Creativity and healthy competitiveness were institutionally driven through platforms that hosted live music across stadiums, parks, studios and on television. The Namibian Broadcasting Corporation (NBC), for one, has been key in creating platforms to drive the appetite for local music amongst the general public. Projects like the SWABC Music Makers Competition, Namibia Music Makers Competition, Penduka, Kalanami, and later programmes such as Afro Connection, Soul Makosa, Beats Per Minute, Whatagwan and Wizeni were instrumental in bridging the gap between music makers and consumers, a combination that stimulated the scene to eventually shape itself into a sector. Furthermore, the work and efforts of artists cannot be referenced without mentioning music managers, event organisers, researchers, technicians, engineers, promoters, distributors, journalists, radio stations, labels, studios and producers like Ralph Geiseb, Pedrito, Collin Kaangundue, Elvo, Junior Citizen, Arafath Muhuure, DJ KBoz, Christian Poloni, Dennis Eiseb, Ponti Dikuua, Julius 'Eclipse' Spiegel and Sam-E Lee Jones, to name a few. These role players and artistic contributors motivated a rise in investment from corporate Namibia and cultural institutions like the NTN, amongst others, which played a critical role in the showcasing of choral works and live bands through projects such as the Sidadi Music Making Project, the Last Band Standing and High School Choir competitions. The Franco-Namibian Cultural Centre (FNCC) has also been prominent in affording local artists collaborative, staging and touring

opportunities, while the National Arts Council of Namibia (NACN) has supported the production of albums and international travelling opportunities for musicians, bands and ensembles. Additionally, performing arts centers across the regions and agencies like RMB Song Night have contributed to the development and exposure of local talents, towards professionalising their careers. Award ceremonies like the Sanlam-NBC Music Awards and Namibian Music Awards (NAMAs) validated a growing and competitive music scene. Institutional interventions and efforts presented artists with both opportunities and introspection concerning the value of their products and overall relevance. This introspection includes questions on how to produce sustainable models in music making and consumption. This reader reflects on this concern and offers recommendations on how emerging talents can address the challenges of pursuing viable music careers in Namibia. Though the sector remains entangled in many developmental issues, there is no doubt that it has much to offer and export. Besides its recognised sociocultural value, the music sector is an important component of the Namibian economy and offers much potential in national development and economic return. An invigorated Namibian music sector has the potential to build a resilient industry comprising innovation and job creation. For this to become a reality, more research, interventions and investment need to take place, while artists need to attend to critical considerations, approaches and models towards their practices. To make meaningful contributions in this regard, the artists require relevant insight. It is for these reasons that this reader has been developed through conversations with and reflections by experts in the sector.

The reader offers insights by:

- Shedding light on lived experiences from some musicians, contributors and key players;
- Demystifying the processes of the music business;
- Recommending ways to sustainably practice and apply services within the cultural and creative sector, and beyond.

The reader is not developed as an in-depth research or study, and does not offer industry classifications, economical indices and statistical scopes. Rather, it seeks to offer a backdrop on the realities and opportunities for artists within the sector and general economic context. Most importantly, the reader aims to leave readers with critical considerations for their professional development.

The expert contributors - through interviews and written perspectives - cover varied areas such as copyright matters, branding and marketing, networking, sales approaches, digital mechanisms, wellness, collaborative work, management, entrepreneurial approaches and partnership building. Though not all areas concerning the music business are covered in this edition, we hope that the recommendations are relevant to current circumstances. Acting on the recommendations from the contributors calls for further consideration and for issues to be realistically tackled.



THE READER REFLECTS  
ON THIS AND OFFERS  
RECOMMENDATIONS  
ON HOW EMERGING  
TALENTS CAN ADDRESS  
THE CHALLENGES OF  
PURSUING VIABLE  
MUSIC CAREERS IN  
NAMIBIA.

# NOTE

BY THE NATIONAL ARTS COUNCIL  
OF NAMIBIA



**Patrick Sam,  
CHAIRPERSON**

The NACN is pleased to have provided funding for the development of the reader: Music Business in Namibia 2021. The NACN, through its mandate, has the duty to lead advocacy for the case of the arts, to establish the arts as a viable career and to build an effective creative industry in order to bring prosperity to the nation and alleviate poverty. Through various engagements, the council has been working towards implementing a knowledge-based creative and cultural sector to identify and articulate the various careers and economic orientations that inherently contribute to the country's gross domestic product (GDP). This includes developing research projects that can better inform the general public and stakeholders on the gaps and sectoral opportunities that can be explored. Though the reader is a collection of reflections of individual experiences and guidelines, the recommendations cannot be overlooked as they draw from the lived experiences of experts in the music business. Thus, it sheds light for students and emerging musicians and sound artists to partake in the sector effectively. We thank the NTN and the contributors for this initiative that is contributing to conversations driving sustainable creative practices in Namibia. Our next step as the council is to support research initiatives that can enhance and guide our sector to bring various recommendations to life. Finally, I have to add that if we want things we have never had, we must do things we have never done.


This reader manifests that vision.





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TIMES HAVE CHANGED. WE HAVE  
TO UNDERSTAND THAT NOTHING  
STAYS THE SAME. I WOULD SAY THAT  
A GOOD ARTIST ADAPTS, AND  
A GOOD ARTIST LEARNS AND  
ACKNOWLEDGES THE TIMES.

-ELEMOTHO



# CONTRIBUTIONS

*Photo by Opas Onucheyo*





*Photo contributed*

# ELEMOTHO

**EXPLORING THE  
AFRICAN LIVE MUSIC  
MARKET: NETWORKS,  
INTERNATIONAL  
PLATFORMS AND  
FESTIVALS**

## MUSICIAN

Elemotho R.G. Mosimane is a Namibian-born, well-established musician who composes, records and performs his own music. He is the only Namibian musician to win an RFI-France 24 Discoveries Award (2012), among a list of more than 500 African, Indian and Pacific artists. Elemotho has represented Namibia in many countries and received multiple awards and titles. The musician has produced four albums, toured internationally and headlined at various international festivals such as the Harare International Festival of the Arts, WOMAD Caceres (Spain), Cape Town World Music Festival (SA), Kgalagadi Jazz Festival (SA) and the Afro-Pfingsten World Music Festival (Switzerland).

*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**You are the only Namibian musician to win the prestigious RFI-France 24 Discoveries Award from your participation in the music contest. How did this 2012 award impact and transform your career?**

The RFI-France 24 Discoveries Award was a big deal for me as I was the only African artist selected at the time and it got me a publishing deal with a UK company. It made me aware of what I had to offer and this boosted my confidence. To be honest, nothing stands alone because, before this award, I had done a lot of work in my career. It was profound to have Angelique Kidjo as the head of the judging panel, and she saw my potential and thought I was the one to be awarded the prize. She was impressed with my voice, message and sound. For the first time in the competition's history, the judges all agreed on one winner; they all felt I should win. Usually they have different perspectives on contestants. I am very grateful to the judges and Namibia for standing behind me. I am all about representing Africa, so that was the biggest treat, that I got to see the continent I love so much. That is what I always wanted, and that award made that dream possible. It offered a lot of career opportunities, funds for touring and recording my album. I received a cash award of 10 000 euros, a promotion package, a concert in Paris and a tour in Africa, all sponsored by the Institut Français. It was great that I not only got an award, but funds I could use to invest in my career. I would not have had the chance to travel the continent in any other way. For that, I am eternally grateful.

**What motivated you to partake in this contest and how did you go about it?**

It was actually accidental. My manager saw the advert about the contest and we had forgotten about it after applying. I didn't think I stood a chance, because the contest is usually focused on participants from former French colonies. I applied and was informed that I made it to the second level, though again I thought wouldn't make it any further, because there are a lot of great artists in West Africa and the surrounding islands such as Martinique and Madagascar, and North African countries. I thought about that, and I was really surprised that I had won in the end. I was informed that there were amazing winners in the past such as Tiken Jah Fakoly (Ivory Coast), Rokia Traoré (Mali), Didier Awadi (Senegal), Amadou and Mariam (Mali) and Maurice Kirya (Uganda). I was the only Namibian, and one of the very few southern African artists who had won to this date. It was a big deal.

**Applications for opportunities can be tedious, but it is very important to put yourself out there because**

**one cannot always wait to be contracted and booked. Would you agree?**

Yes, because that is not going to happen on a global scale. There are too many musicians to compete with if you are going to rely on being booked for gigs. You have to have a repertoire in the industry. In my case, before the prestigious RFI-France award, I had already toured Europe, southern Africa and parts of Africa such as Uganda and Zanzibar. I already had the albums and had done the work, so the award only added to it. You are not going to get acknowledgement just coming along with the talent or a sweet-sounding voice. It doesn't work like that. You have to do the work; you have to lay the foundation and you have to make yourself known. Before the 2012 award, I performed in Johannesburg at the Bassline and other prestigious performing houses. I played at the Bushfire Festival in Eswatini, the Bayimba International Festival in Uganda, and Namibia. I had already laid my foundation. We have to understand that nothing stands alone. Developing a music career is a process; it is not developed from a single event - that's an illusionary thing. I had to leave home and work hard on an international audience base while maintaining a local audience base. My process has always been to perform at home and perform outside. This became a tradition. Before I left the country, I would always perform at the Warehouse Theatre or at FNCC. I perform not only in Europe but also on the African continent. That was important to me. I did not want to be known in the world and not at home, because that can cost you a lot. Young musicians must understand the importance of laying the groundwork and putting themselves out there. I gave away many CDs for free; for festivals and platforms. I applied for many things but did not get through but that did not stop me.

I spent a lot of money on DHL to get my CDs out there and did not get many responses. That is how it works. You assume that you will get out there and get it, but that is an illusion. That is the game of life, not only in music.

**You have been described as an 'artist who divorces himself from the usual commercial and easily consumable sounds by using experimental ideas where reality is amplified through his vision of music'. How have you pursued authenticity in your artistry, and how do you remain commercially sustainable at the same time?**

I come from a farm in eastern Namibia in the Kalahari; growing up around stories. I grew up with the sounds of my ancestors; traditional sounds, music and storytelling. I have also had the opportunity to travel and see the world and explore. All this has influenced my sound. I have invested in learning and exploring a lot. Around 1998/99, I remember from my days at the University of Namibia (UNAM) with the band, we decided







## YOU HAVE TO DO THE WORK; YOU HAVE TO LAY THE FOUNDATION AND YOU HAVE TO MAKE YOURSELF KNOWN.

that we wanted to build the sound of the new Namibia, after doing a lot of cover versions. The group included the late Ralph Geisep (he was a big mentor to me), Elton Witbooi and Brian Gonteb, to name a few. We needed to lay the foundation for ourselves and we intentionally looked for traditional sounds and rhythms from spaces we came from.

I think it is important that we have informed and dedicated artists. When I say dedicated, I am referring to the culture of reading and studying. Study your elders and the world you come from, so you do it justice. I like to think my artistry comes from embracing my cultural background and investing knowledge in various artistic expressions. The element of stories is very important in my work, drawing from my grandmother's storytelling sessions, who always asked what I had learnt from the stories she told me. I incorporated this into my work. I am not just an entertaining musician; I also want to leave you with something introspective. So, what makes me who I am today is a combination of hard work, support systems, management, originality, luck, universal providence, so many things. There are so many who have tried but didn't see the growth in their career. It is not as easy as a recipe. But certainly, my keen interest in learning and transforming has always kept me going. I write my own work. I learnt my guitar skills with time, and patience has taught me many lessons. I waited and acted when it was the right time. I took my time to build my first album, I didn't want to rush it as I wanted to become an artist who lasts. The artists I like are singer-songwriters who remain relevant across the years, such as John Legend, Bob Marley, Oliver Mtukudzi and Hugh Masekela. They took time to grow their careers, and until today their work is impactful.

### **So, sustainability in your career is centred on strategic growth?**

I would say so, yes. I planned what I wanted to become and I think as artists, you should know where you want to be in 10 years. You have to see yourself in the future. I knew I had to bank on the system, as I do not record every year, I record every five years or so. I am a conceptual artist, planning and preparing with time in the hopes that the work I offer makes an impact in the way that I want it to.

I am a fan of many artists, but by the time some of them release a fifth album, I found myself not wanting to listen to them any more. They sort of outplayed themselves and didn't have much to say. I do not want that for me. So, I think it is important to think critically about commercial viability and sustainability, as they do not mean the same thing necessarily.

### **In 2013, your song Kgala! Namib was chosen as the theme song for**

### **the Namibia Adventure Tourism Summit. How significant was this for you?**

The reason why Namibia got to host the summit was due to the song the committee submitted at the time. Firstly, the first album was supposed to be called Kgala! Namib. I travelled Namibia extensively. I went to the Namib Desert one day and I fell in love and that is how the song was developed. I have a deep love for this country, irrespective of the problems, as it has a lot to offer from the big, wide, open spaces to the animals and the people. So, for the song to be featured as the theme of the summit was an honour. It is important that your house (country) acknowledges you and the work you do. That acknowledgement was a big deal for me. I have always promoted my country, and I was grateful. It felt very good.

### **In 2016, you received a Namibian Tourism Personality of the Year award from the Hospitality Association of Namibia, shining a light on your commitment to Namibian tourism. What feature of your career did this award reflect?**

I am not an awards person, but awards like these tend to mark milestones in one's career. I had been representing Namibia for a long time, and I felt like I was being represented in return. It was also something I could attach to my resume; it is a useful feature. These awards encourage me and help me network in the hospitality industry and in conservation work. It is the law of attraction and due to this work, I get interest and investment in return. I was lucky to be acknowledged. In this regard, I would say keep doing the work and do not let the awards and recognition seem like arrival points. They are stepping stones, of course, but one has to keep doing the work.

### **Do you think there remain unexplored opportunities for emerging Namibian musicians to participate in the business of cultural tourism? What does it take for musicians to extend into this field? Apart from expressing Namibia's rich cultural diversity, what are the benefits of this for one's career?**

I think one should always explore new avenues, there is more room for cultural tourism and Namibian artists to collaborate. I have had the privilege to play at festivals where the audiences were diverse, even featuring bankers. I have also played on a cruise ship for special audiences, for delegates, and so forth. But to answer your

question, I would say artists have to explore all avenues. Not just cultural tourism, but various sectoral streams. The idea is also to diversify and not plant all your seeds in the same field, and that is why I worked outside the country as well. It is not sustainable to limit yourself to one avenue, as it can dry up, leaving you without other options.

### **Apart from the stage and entertainment platforms, where else have you applied your artistry and how did it contribute sustainably to your career?**

My plan was to diversify and to explore myself artistically and sharpen my swords, such as in theatre, open-air festivals, diplomatic spaces, and so on. It is important to expand your platforms, you never know the possibilities until you have been there. Collaborations are also important with different practitioners; link up with theatre-makers and various practitioners so that you can sharpen your skills and expose yourself to other avenues. I worked for three months in Germany for a theatre co-production between Namibia and Germany; writing music for the production and in turn expanding my networks. My advice would be: Apply your skills dynamically and do not limit yourself to being a mere entertainer. There are various platforms you can apply yourself to as a musician. Be informed and study different movements. My university background is in psychology and philosophy and this developed my career and general life approach. You have to study and develop new ideas.

It is important to be an informed artist. You can't just be a talented artist to do the work on stage. You have to be informed in every avenue, such as financial management, where many artists struggle. You need to know how to deal with your money. Many artists went to the grave poor, despite having great albums. Unfortunately, they were not paying attention when contracts were being signed. You have to be informed, because it is your creativity and work. If need be, enrol for a short business management course, so that you can be better informed. You also need writing and communication etiquette to better articulate and present yourself. Presentation is everything in our industry. Study your cultural background. When you study your history and background, it allows you to figure out who you want to be and where you want to be. Arm yourself with the right kind of information for any situation.

### **What are some significant lessons from your 2013 Africa tour?**

The 2013 Africa tour made me a strong artist. It was a three-month tour, which would usually be divided into halves, but with our band, we



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Photo contributed



did it for the full three months. It taught me a lot about being ready for whatever life throws at me, and made me a better performer. I got to exercise my performance muscle in expanding my skills in tight schedules across various spaces. I learnt a lot about other African musicians and it amplified my social skills and networking capabilities, meeting fellow musicians and future friends. The tour was essential to making me a better artist. I was able to understand what I could do and what needed to be sharpened. I got to perform on the continent, the surrounding islands, and at my final performance in Paris. I had never travelled so much in my life. I travelled to about 30 African countries, and in some countries, I was able to perform twice. Sometimes we would only spend 24 hours in a country. Not only was I able to study my craft but I was able to study myself while reflecting on where I wanted to be. The tour definitely gave me more leverage and taught me how to endure. When I was done, I was ready to keep making my music. I grew creatively, spiritually and culturally, and was inspired by so much.

**Why is it important for live musicians to tour as much as possible? You mentioned diversifying, but what other reasons are there?**

A lot has changed in the past 10 years, and performance platforms do not pay as much that one can depend solely on them. CD sales have been on a constant decline. Touring is a way to make a living, to spread your music, sharpen your performance skills and get people to hear you and see you in real time. People get to experience your work and know who you are. Touring is an important way of getting out there, and growing audiences

who are not necessarily based online or on easily accessible platforms. If people do not know you, then they do not consume your work. Creating audience traction through live performances also increases your album sales. Live music is not just a feature of the past; it is still relevant in the business because it sells. Hopefully, this will improve again. When I speak of live music, I speak of live instrumental playing. Artists need to find ways to package themselves for live performances. Sell your sound in such a way that it is entertaining, engaging and dynamic. You need to be able to fill the stage and audiences with energy. Touring for me has always been important. Even before I started touring internationally, I had done so at home.

**Touring is not easy and can be quite costly. What resources does this generally require and how can musicians approach this economically?**

I would say be ready to invest money and to lose money that you may not get back immediately. Be ready to put yourself out there and not receive anything. These are the circumstances of any kind of business. Many artists only start to make real money much later in their careers. It takes time; it is not a fly-by-night process. Be ready to invest and endure in your craft. If you want to reap immediately, then you are in the wrong sector.

You are going to have to spend time and speak to agents and event producers who may not be interested in your work. It helps to have a support system such as management, but it depends. The fact that you have management does not mean

you will make it in terms of international touring. This is a misconception. There are different approaches. Perhaps you have the capacity to work as both artist and manager on tour. In my case, I have management support but still do a lot of logistical work in the background. In 2019, the last tour I did before the pandemic, there were 10 of us and I had to manage the tour, logistics, finances, and everything that had to be taken care of. That is how it goes sometimes, and can be demanding. You have to be a leader, be kind, friendly and make quick decisions. There are many lessons to be learnt along the way. You also have to work hard, be patient, humble and listen to expert advice. Link up and network. There are some networks I only benefitted from 10 years later. It takes time. So, in nutshell, it is useful to exercise your administrative, bookkeeping and project management skills as it will come in handy and be economical for circumstances such as tours.

**Live events are at the very core of the music business. However, one has to strategically associate their sound/artistry to the right platforms. Would you agree?**

Of course, which goes back to being informed, knowing who you are and what kind of artist you want to be. That will also inform who you are going to approach. It is important to know what it is you desire and where you want to go because that solves half of your problems. This informs the kind of curators, event organisers and festival producers you will approach. It means that you will be going straight where you need to be. Going to the wrong platforms can be detrimental, and lead you to lose money that could have been invested elsewhere.

**What do event producers, organisers, curators look at when considering to book an artist to headline at a festival?**

I can never stress hard work enough and investing in your career. Working smartly is also important so that you take yourself seriously and others will do so as well. It took me many years to headline. Emerging artists must understand that you are not going to headline on your first booked concert or festival. Headliners are those who have done their time. The resume speaks for itself. You are not going to be paid more than someone who has been in the business for more than 25 years while you are in your first year. That is just not how it works. You have to work at it, and it takes perseverance and time. No emerging artist will headline immediately nor should they assume that they are going to be in a position of privilege immediately. Like everything in life, it all takes time. It requires you to study your environment and craft. By craft, I do not just mean instrumental playing or voice work, I mean you need to know when, where and how you apply yourself as a performer. Ask yourself, how do I start a set? How do I fill in a set? You have to read your audience and environment. Read the times you are living in. All of this consideration shows that you are a maturing artist who is humble enough to study themselves and take advice from others. I take advice from other artists I have surpassed in my career but I still respect them. This includes valuable advice such as: Do not spend your money freely; invest in your art; don't go for the quick fix; the journey is long, and so forth. I would say the same to emerging artists. Exercise your skills and take yourself seriously. This is important. You can't perform when your body is ill-equipped, such as drinking and partying irresponsibly before performances. Many artists have harmed their craft this way. It is your craft, respect it. One day when you are chosen, you will understand why they [curators and event producers] chose you as a headliner, the same way you will understand why you were not chosen as a headliner. Learn from all the opportunities and rejections you will be offered.

**As a recipient of the lifetime achievement award from the 2017 NAMAs, what is your hope for emerging live musicians in Namibia?**

Times have changed. We have to understand that nothing stays the same. I would say that a good artist adapts, and a good artist learns and acknowledges the times. Live music never dies. The live music scene has changed, and it will always go through transitions. I had to face all of this, and I had to mourn the death of some of the spots and platforms that invigorated live music in Windhoek. But I kept performing, and that is why I keep saying you have to diversify yourself and get yourself out there so that when everyone else is fighting over the breadcrumbs, you planted seeds elsewhere.

It is important to see the changing times and embrace what they have to offer. For example, when I started performing, back in my UNAM days, some things were not there that later came, such as recording spaces and the availability of good sound systems. That is a big deal. My perspective is that things are not always on a decline, some things do get better. Yes, we lost some things with the decline of live music as the electronic scene came up, but I do not think that in itself is a problem. That is culture changing. Culture changes, culture shifts. It is the cycle of things.

It is also important to have an open discussion and acknowledge the various reasons for the live music decline, and there is a certain level of accountability on artists for this as well – some artists did not meet opportunities to the best of their abilities. This created some ripple effects. With the emergence of electronic artists, it is also important to learn from them and see what they do well, such as in the areas of online distribution, marketing and promotion, social media marketing, engagement, and so forth. We do not always have to do things the same way. In fact, I would encourage younger artists to incorporate different approaches to their artistic works and performances. Study how times are continuously changing. This came as a big surprise to many older artists. If we had studied the times, then we would not have been surprised with new developments and shifts. Now it is time to know what to do. It goes back to the necessity of being an informed artist.

For the live music scene, keep working on your skills and instruments. Commitment is an important thing. You have to stay committed, even when you experience dry spells. Because if you jump ship all the time, then people will think you are not loyal, and that they can't trust your artistry. You have to be loyal to the craft and audience. The reason why my audiences (both Namibian and globally) trust me is because they have witnessed me throughout my performances, concerts, music and messages. I have grown with them and yet stayed consistent. Stick to being yourself, stick to your path, and know what exactly it is that you are doing. Be patient. When your day comes, embrace it and do it well. You are not always going to be performing, and you are not always going to have opportunities. This is not just a music business fact; it is just how life is. Finally, be humble and maintain a respectable presence throughout.

**So, you are looking forward to a generation of committed, informed, studying, patient artists who are loyal to their artistry and audiences?**

Exactly, because you have to love the craft. Because if you love the stage, awards, fame, and all that more than you love the craft, you will pay the price. I am here because I love and respect the craft, and that is what kept me going.



Photo contributed

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*Photo contributed*

# ERNA CHIMU

**DEVELOPING  
EXCELLENT  
STANDARDS IN LIVE  
PERFORMANCES:**  
VALUE SERVICES FOR  
THE MUSIC BUSINESS

SINGER, SONGWRITER.

Award-winning musician Erna Chimu was born on Ondekaremba Farm in Namibia. Her love for music is attributed to her upbringing and Shemyetu, an influential Namibian reggae artist. She has shared stages with some of Africa's great musicians and represented the country at festivals in Sweden and the UK. In 2009, the artist released her debut album, 'Imamakunguwe', which earned her several of awards, including best Khoe-jazz at the 2009 Ma/Gaisa Awards and best traditional song at the 2010 NAMAs. In 2014, she released 'Hai Serute', which earned her awards for best instrumental (jazz), best traditional song and female artist of the year at the NAMAs. Her latest offering is the 2019 album 'Uprising', which is a compilation of traditional jazz and township mbaqanga. As a bandleader, she prides herself on making authentic music by fusing traditional elements into her sound to carry Namibia's rich cultural heritage forward.



*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**What influenced your artistic interests during your early career? How has this informed the kind of artist you have become today?**

I come from a household where people played music all the time. I have a choir background and my mother's family had a choir. Growing up, I would constantly hear Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, but I must say the most profound music I heard growing up was by Meriam Makeba. I was intrigued by how she could touch people, make them feel intensely and also make them dance. Something about her struck me, in a way that I didn't really understand. I just knew that I was connected to her music and from then on I thought that that is what I wanted to do; to sing in my mother tongue and still have fun. It is interesting how music is a universal language that doesn't need translation. I believed that then and I believe that still. That is what I thought music was all about, to be able to be your greatest self and touch many people across many places, and this is the kind of thinking that informed the kind of artist I am today. Music has a way of taking you places, and only music can do that. That's what I wanted to do.

**Growing up and listening to Meriam Makeba, did you see her on TV, study her?**

I only saw her much later on in my life. I didn't know what she looked like. I only heard her on radio. And so the next influential artist for me was Salif Keita and Angelique Kidjo, and the list goes on. Language in music for me was an important thing that I understood very early on in life. Growing up, I also listened to Splash, Dalom Kids, Brenda Fassie, and the likes, and they created music with impact in their mother tongue, and so I consistently reflected that we can also do that on stage. It motivated me. What motivated me further was my interest in transmitting the beautiful Khoekhoegowab language through music across generations. It did not sit well with me when I would witness Khoekhoegowab speakers engage in Afrikaans or English, and so this is how my music matured across the years, infused with my mother tongue as a way of celebrating the rich language and doing my part in ensuring the continuation of this heritage. I love traditional music, and this is how I identify with the genre that is now called Afro-jazz or fusion – it's a blend of contemporary and traditional sounds.



*Photo contributed*

## **What does it mean to produce an authentic experience as a live musician?**

With my sound, I relate authenticity to where my music comes from, the traditional space. This informs my performance style. I wanted to bring my ancestral forms to today's world where they can still be relevant and where people can still connect. This is what makes my live performances authentic as they are a unique offering in the Namibian musical scene. I think this is what all live musicians need to challenge themselves with: 'What makes you unique, and why should people invest to see you live? You can only appreciate something if you have come a long way with it and have a connection with it, and this is what my audiences have witnessed. From their life experiences and memories, I was able to bring that across for them and offer a unique and significant experience that is not easily accessible on any other stage. Apart from being a spiritual experience, it is a transaction in the music business. You offer a great experience that people are paying for. I would say live musical authenticity also has to do with the process and history of the artist. If the artist has fully invested to bring across where they come from, then it becomes an authentic transference as well. The fact that I invested time and learnt to perform the way I do today carries across into my performances and the depth and richness also come across.

## **How do you plan your sets and performances when booked?**

Planning a live music set differs with each event and client. An artist should always think of this when preparing their live set and think about the target audience and purpose of the event itself. For example, the set and performance style would be different if I were performing for the president and associates, at a jazz festival or for a general audience at a stadium. My performances would differ based on what the client is looking for, and this is the information I have to seek so that I can meet the requirements of the event. For example, when I performed at the Old Mutual Jazz Festival, I had to prepare for a memorable and rich performance, but also create Namibian representation because I was on a set along with big African jazz artists. So, the repertoire and vibrancy of the performance had to bring that across. But if it were for a mellow corporate event, then together with my band I would create a mellow repertoire, still rich in performance, but just smoother on the vibrancy and stage rawness. These are all the things I consider when I'm booked, and I make sure to ask the right questions.

## **What is the link between the production of valuable experiences (for clients and audiences) and the business of live music?**

At first, I used to think it was just for the love of music. The much younger me would ask: How can people pay me for enjoying myself? But years into my career, after creating revenue out of my performances, I saw this as a business, to make an income and employ my band members, who would, in turn, make an income as well. I would encourage young musicians going into the industry to think of their talent as a commodity for income and a sustainable livelihood. In turn, the fact that people are willing to pay for your work means that you need to work hard, prepare and offer valuable services. Apart from developing your talent, you need to focus on growing your professionalism and work etiquette. The link between live performances and business is the value of the service you offer as an artist. The fact that people are willing to invest in you frequently because of your well-prepared, well-developed performances creates a value return in a sustainable life. I would also link to music sales, the fact that people are willing to buy your music means that you should put out products that are of value and deliver what you said you would. This is the same for booked live performances, as I mentioned earlier, asking the right questions from the client - what kind of event you are booked for and informing your band members on the expectations as well. This goes to all the small details, such as maintaining a professional look for your band by briefing them on how to arrive and where to settle at a venue before a performance. It is the small things that matter, and it is extremely important to pay attention to all the details. To sell music and make a business out of it means that you have to be organised and efficient around what you create and deliver what you said you would. Time is also a very important factor.

## **What are event organisers paying for when contracting a live musician and band? What are some of the on and off-stage considerations of these costs?**

Creating quotations as a live performer can be very complex, especially when you are dealing with different clients from different backgrounds and technical capacities. There are various considerations that one should have when a live musician or band is booked. This is including the instruments, supporting equipment, rehearsals, transport, refreshments, attire, and the

actual performance fee. So, as I mentioned before, if you ask the right questions, you will be able to understand what it is you can charge for and deliver. If you know that the event magnitude is big and all the technical riders are taken care of by the client, then you consider much less. But if the client expects you to prepare for all the technical resources, then that becomes different. Costing also requires a live artist to be flexible, as sometimes your client cannot afford a full band performance, but perhaps you can transform your set into something that is more acoustic, for example. So you need to know what you are working with. A lot of these costing processes come with experience, but what is very important is to ask the right questions so that you use your creativity to be flexible. I would also add that as a professional performer, you have to be considerate of your retainer fee; the cost at which you commit yourself for the given event by saying no to other gigs as well. In terms of income, payments can also be delayed sometimes depending on the client. For example, government agencies can take up to two months to pay you, and within these months, you need to have something to fall back on. As the head of a band, you have to allocate all the costs that you bring into the preparations of the booked set. And if the client cannot afford what you are charging, then you have to be flexible in offering a good performance on a smaller scale.

## **Do you explain to your clients the reasons behind the given expenses in the quotations?**

Yes, certainly. Before all finalisations, there has to be a series of communication that leads to an understanding between the service provider and client. This can lead to a declined gig from an artist because of low costs, or meeting a middle ground of retransforming your given set if they really want you. For example, from a six-piece band, it can end up to a two-piece performance that is acoustic.

## **When one says that an artist has offered poor services. What would this possibly entail?**

This can be a complex thing. Sometimes it is on the artist, with their unprofessionalism, disorganisation, intoxication, unpreparedness, and lack of information inquiry. But other times, it is on the client. As I said, you get different kinds of clients, and some do not understand the technicalities of live performances. It could be that the technical equipment booked for the event





Photo contributed

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... A GOOD LIVE PERFORMANCE HAPPENS WHEN ALL THE RIGHT DEPARTMENTS, RESOURCES AND PEOPLE COME TOGETHER TO MAKE IT WORK.

was wrong or insufficient. For example, a sound system for a 100-person capacity was booked for a 500-person capacity venue, and this results in the artistic performance being confined. There are a lot of things involved and a good live performance happens when all the right departments, resources and people come together to make it work.

**How would you encourage emerging live musicians to prepare their nerves to get on stage without being under the influence of any substances?**

I always discourage the use of substances to calm stage fright. I understand that not all artists have the capacity to go on stage and give their best with their nerves, but I think one needs to take time and figure what healthy methods work for you. You have to go through some trials and experiences to help hone what works for you. I do not take any substances, as I want to be honest and raw with my audience. I want my audience to feel my nerves and come along on the journey with me. You have to be professional enough to know when you are working and when it's time to have a good time in your personal capacity. I always remind my band members about the time I have booked them for, and when they can be released to enjoy themselves in their private capacity. No one drinks anything when we are preparing for a performance or on stage. This can be a challenge to control, especially

when you are working with adults. I have had a drummer show up intoxicated to a gig and I was truly disappointed, as you can imagine what it makes you look like. So, I would add that you have to seek a devoted team of band members and instrumentalists who can guarantee professional conduct. This boosts your likeliness of preparing and staging good performances. It is hard, however, as there are not many good and versatile instrumentalists, so I would encourage younger artists to develop their instrument-playing skills as this is needed in the Namibian live music scene.

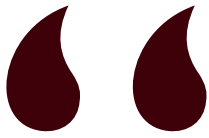
**The Namibian music industry has evolved over the past decade, especially with the emergence of electronic music. Why do you insist on performing with a live band?**

There is only one way for a live performer to do what they do best, and that is live. The more mistakes you make, the better you become. I know that it is a lot easier and cheaper to work with electronic music and perform with backtracks, but from a perspective of sustainability and musical heritage, it is important to make room for live performers to continue doing what they do. Live performances allow income not only for the main artist but for instrumentalists as well. As I mentioned before, I am interested in our heritage and live music allows for Namibia's rich musical heritage to be carried over. It is unfortunate that it is becoming

costlier to maintain as the years go by because electronic music is very popular now, but it is for these reasons that I insist on performing live. I would encourage young artists to make use of live musicians and instrumentalists because it creates more revenue in the music business.

**What is your take on critique? Has it added value to your career?**

Critique has certainly helped my career. My inner circle is very critical of my work; even though I do not always hear what I want to hear, it helps shape my sound and work. Critique can be good if you can take away what is constructive. I have heard a great deal of positive and negative things about my work, but I always take away what needs to build me and stretch me out of my comfort zone. We tend to take a lot of things personally, but this doesn't help with the process and in the business. Do not create work in your bubble and not have different perspectives critique it. You can control the kind of perspective you want in your work. I remember when I was much younger, my mother would encourage me to develop my singing but I didn't like singing that much because I was more interested in playing an instrument. I actually wanted to play the grand piano. Though I was encouraged to sing, I was never taught or mentored on the technicalities of singing or reading notes. So, later in my career, I decided to invest in my career and skills development and enrolled



I HAVE REACHED A POINT IN MY CAREER WHERE A PERSON REFERRING TO ME WOULD INHERENTLY BE REFERRING TO MY UNIQUE SOUND, PROFESSIONALISM AND QUALITY SERVICES.

for vocal training and music theory. Some of the critiques led me to develop this skill. To this day, I am grateful, as I have gained more skills and music-reading abilities that help with composing and communicating with my band members.

**So training is important even when you are an established artist?**

It is, because it helps you develop a lot of things that you did not know how to adjust, for example. There is always something to improve on. This is an advantage for you as an artist and the services you offer.

**You have performed twice at the Old Mutual Jazz Encounters in 2008 and 2010, and shared the stage with other reputable musicians. Would you say that your work ethic background also led you to perform on such a platform? What are some of the practices and attitudes you maintain to this day?**

As an artist who is still growing and learning, it means a lot to me to perform on big platforms that include other great artists. I have been selected to perform in countries such as Sweden, the UK, Cameroon, South Africa, and other African countries and have had the opportunity to represent Namibia and my music. This comes from all that I come from, have invested in and worked for. I have an opportunity to hone my value and worth and challenged myself to not

become a corporate artist who gets booked every other day. I spread myself across various platforms and competitions such as the NTN Battle of the Bands to challenge myself to compete with the greats such as Ras Sheehama. I have learnt so much and this allowed me to switch from being comfortable to a competitive and focused artist. That experience gave me that boost to perform across various events and within different sets because I now know that I am not threatened by anything. When people see me, they know what to expect. I have reached a point in my career where a person referring to me would inherently be referring to my unique sound, professionalism and quality services.

**As a live musician, how do you safeguard a brand around your services and ensure that a client books you again?**

The majority of my gigs come from other gigs and referrals. I try to maintain my relationships with clients and ensure that I perform when I am in good shape. Sometimes, it is necessary to take a slight step back from live performance when you need to recuperate for different reasons and also reflect on the journey you walked so far as well. This helps with measuring how far you have come, what shortfalls you have, and what you need to work on further. You have to consistently stop and check to ensure you are on track. I take care of myself and also ensure my conduct in the general

public is respectful. Young artists need to be very mindful of this - paying attention to our general conduct and behaviour because bad conduct has a lot to do with how society labels us. Talent is not good enough to take you where you have to go. Nobody was born knowing everything, but there are people skilled in their respective areas who you can go to invest in training. Nobody was born pitch-perfect. We should not only invest musically but also in our image and portray the brand you created.

**In reflection of the past decade in the industry, how do you want emerging musicians to develop sustainable careers? What would you suggest as key areas of focus?**

I think firstly you should make music because you have something great to offer. Not for the awards or the fame. It is a good thing to get honoured, but it is important to believe in what you are doing. Do not be a fly-by-night artist. It is extremely hard to sustain a career in the sector, and if your motivation is from awards, it will not keep you on track. I only received my awards much later in life, and until then I was the only live music performer to get an award for best artist, as back then it was largely studio-based artists. Invest in genuine music making and focus on what value you have. I would also suggest that artists focus on working with serious executive producers for album productions so that the focus of the project is aligned.

*Photo contributed*











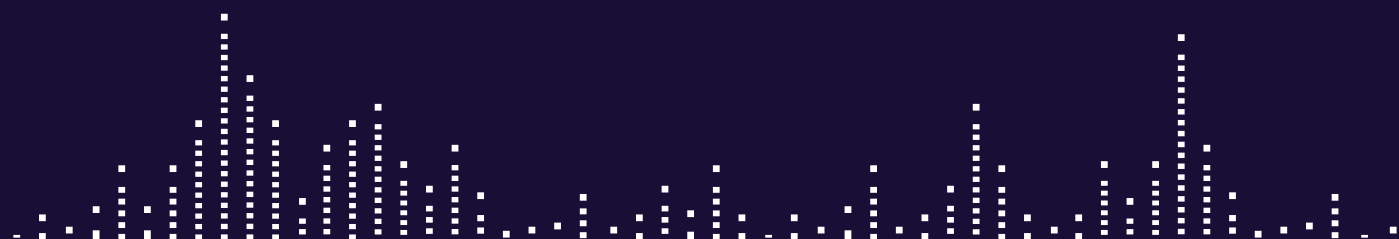
*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*

# BIG BEN

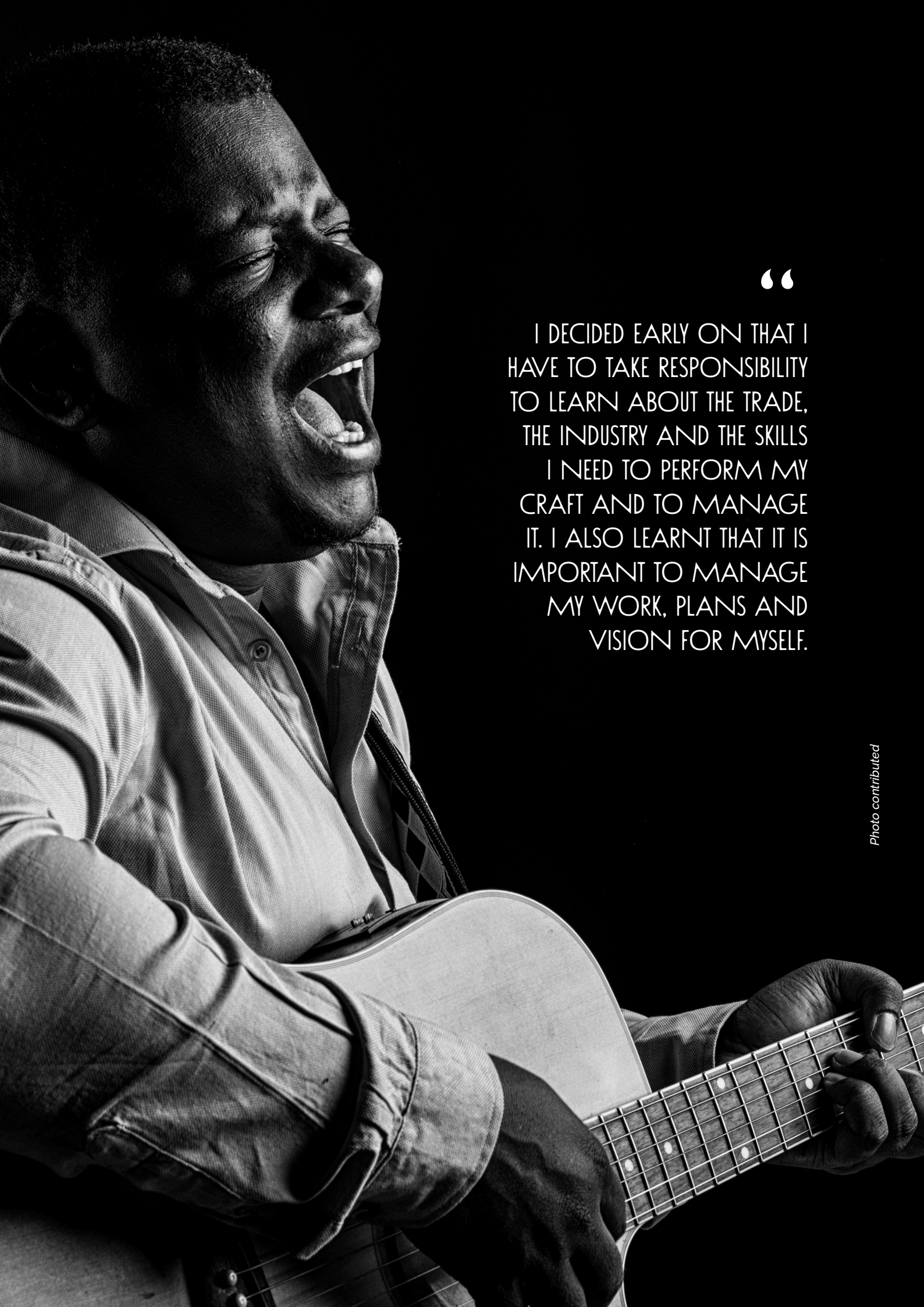
## **APPROACHES TO FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT FOR LIVE BANDS**

### **SINGER, SONGWRITER.**

Big Ben is a Namibian singer, guitarist and saxophonist based in the capital, Windhoek. In 2016, he won best male artist of the year at the NAMAs. In 2013, he won best jazz/instrumentation at the NAMAs, and in 2015 went on to win the best song with a message, also at the NAMAs, for his single 'Africa Penduka'. He has shared stages with prestigious African artists such as Hugh Masekela, Salif Keita, Freshlyground and Dan Shout. The musician represented Namibia in the UK, and on the corporate circuit. He has worked on O&L Group's Mwenyopaleka Roadshow, which featured 17 performances across the country. Big Ben's band, known as The Last Band, comprises Pius Paulus (drums), Jean-Pierre Ntsika (bass), John Kasinda (keyboard) and Sam Batola (lead guitar). The band has shared the stage with Johny Clegg, Will Ramsay, Sipho 'Hotstix' Mabuse and many others.







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THE BOTTOM LINE IS THAT IF YOU UNDERSTAND MONEY, YOU WILL UNDERSTAND THE MUSIC BUSINESS. IT IS A BUSINESS. YOU CREATE MUSIC THAT MAKES PEOPLE FEEL SO THEY BECOME CONSUMERS OF THAT PRODUCT.



Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt

*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**Your career has stretched over two decades now. What have been some significant processes that guided you to understand and exercise yourself as a business?**

When I started making music, I was jobless and homeless and music was a source of income for survival as much as it was an escape during hard times. Music was never a hobby to me, even though it is one of the activities I can perform and actually enjoy doing it. The one significant process that guided me was the principle that you must eat from your own hands and sweat and you must do the right things the right way. This is especially for the things that matter to you. I decided early on that I have to take responsibility to learn about the trade, the industry and the skills I need to perform my craft and to manage it. I also learnt that it is important to manage my work, plans and vision for myself. An expert will still not be able to help you if you do not understand what is expected of you and if you lack vision for your career.

A soccer player has to learn not only the rules of the game but all the factors that would affect their success. This includes laws, business structures and processes, and the politics. The owner of a logistics company needs to know the ins and outs of his business, the competition, relevant laws within his country and across the borders. If

they can't master it or can't manage, they will have to hire those who understand it better.

**You are consistently vocal on issues concerning the sustainability of artists in Namibia. Compared to your observation in the early years in the industry, what business practices have you witnessed growing in Namibian musicians?**

As a small population with limited reach to the outside world, we do not have a ready market to exploit, therefore, we have to diversify the revenue streams and then exploit such opportunities to the maximum. Namibian artists - be it performing arts or visual arts - have for a very long time restricted themselves to traditional business practices they copied from other countries. Those practices were based on the dynamics of those societies and markets, whereas, applied here in Namibia, caused major failure and frustration.

Technology that enables certain income streams are not based in Namibia or simply not accessible in Namibia due to the country's laws and the uninspiring market demographics. Namibian artists are now investing time and money into online revenue streams such as streaming, online download sales and monetisation on various platforms. These are heart-warming developments, but things change fast and Namibia is still playing catch up to the rest of the world. We have to learn to follow trends quicker, predict and adapt at the speed of light.

There was a time that online possibilities were growing and everybody went into that direction and dropped traditional packaging and distribution methods. Unfortunately, that too has evolved.

Once upon a time, album sales were the ultimate source and tours were only necessary to promote album sales. Now that the albums can be accessed online, sales have declined and live concerts have become important again as consumers now rather pay for a personalised experience than downloading music or watching videos online. Touring is more profitable than album/song sales, especially when you throw in merchandise sales. It all keeps changing at a fast pace and we have to change and adapt faster.

**A musicians' career survival is intricately dependent on financial management. In your observation, what bad financial management habits have you witnessed that developed challenges for musicians?**

No one should care more about your finances than you. You may have convinced yourself that you do not make music for money but you need the little money you make to fund your career further and to survive. So, pay attention and avoid mistakes that will put you in debt, broke and unable to practice your craft.

I have witnessed musicians spending on



frivolous indulgences and not keeping track of their money. A typical artist who earns a bit of money will invest in renting an uptown apartment in a posh neighbourhood, buy a popular brand car, frequent all the hyped up and expensive hangouts, and entertain entourages to the point that the little they made that week all gets swallowed up. Since the income is frequent, even if it is not a lot, they do not notice that they are locked in a loop that takes just as much as comes in. After five years and the revenue drops, they realise that they still have nothing. They should have invested in assets, not in liabilities.

Not all of us can quickly acquire assets, but one still needs to learn to tell a liability from an investment. Be on the lookout for what looks like an asset but later becomes a liability.

The bottom line is that if you understand money, you will understand the music business. It is a business. You create music that makes people feel so they become consumers of that product. You repeat the process, to hopefully make better music and recruit more consumers. They pay for their indulgence and, in turn, you use that money to acquire the assets that will enable you to produce more good music. If the money comes in and you do not re-invest in your current activity and the future, you will not be able to produce good music and you will not have customers any more.

Financially illiterate musicians make poor financial decisions. They do not acquire the equipment or advice they need and their careless mistakes bring them expenses and debt and rob them of the little they would have made. They also neglect the long-term. They forget that at some point they will not make as much money and will then wish that they learnt a different skill, invested in housing or a small business to carry them on in life.

**You are a live performer who often works with a committed band. This essentially makes you an employer as a bandleader. Many artists look towards working with a band. What are the realities and considerations around financing a band (not just limited to studio work and booked gigs)?**

When you are a performing artist, the band, equipment and musical instruments are your assets. You will have to do the right things the right way to keep that band healthy. This includes paying the members and taking care of them when on duty and performing. It is essential to take care of these expenses before you spend on entertainment or

whatever it is you would waste your funds on. Do not forget that faulty equipment easily becomes a constant liability and the same applies to a member of your band who has no discipline. The latecomer, no-show, intoxicated, unruly member who fails to do their part the way you need it done is a liability. As much as you must respect and take good care of the members, it is your responsibility to ensure that your money-making machine consists only of top-quality performing parts. Get rid of problems before they bring you more misery.

If you have an agreement in place that specifies how they each get paid and who owns what rights, stick to that agreement at all times and be transparent to avoid mistrust.

**An important feature of the music business is to budget wisely, record regularly and efficiently. How have you approached this in the absence of project funding?**

I registered a trading company to enable me to open a bank account in the name Big Ben, into which all income from my music-related activities goes. Ensuring that all such income goes into such an account is already record-keeping as you will always be able to get the bank statements. An important investment I made over 10 years ago was to pay for invoicing and quotation software which helps keep all such records and can be accessed from anywhere in the world. An event calendar app on my phone also allows me to schedule events and based on all the events I complete; I know which have been paid for and which I still need to follow up on.

Software such as StudioCloud is good for this purpose but complete online solutions such as WavesApp is ideal as you can access all your invoices and quotations on the go. A simple calendar app with added features such as reminders will also allow you to manage at least 80% of your business.

The bottom line is that you must learn to spend only on the bare necessities and save the remainder for unforeseen situations and expenses; you need to pay for yourself or pay before you get paid. A client could require you to fly to Pretoria, South Africa, to perform and you will only get your performance fees when you arrive, but if you do not have reserves to cover such urgent costs for airline tickets for a band, you will not get to the gig and you will not earn more. Saving also allows you to have a surplus to initiate your own concerts and events instead of always waiting to be hired or sponsored.

**Some professional live performers fall into undercharging for gigs,**

**not considering the areas that should be looked at as liabilities and investments. What areas do you consider important costs when quoting a client for your services?**

Every service has very specific costs related to its delivery. You must pay for the musicians who will perform with you, their accommodation and meals, transportation for a band, which includes not only fuel but mileage, wear and tear on the vehicle if you use your own car. Have a contingency plan, if a tyre bursts, you can fix it, buy another one or rent a car. A little bit of clever quotation and estimating is needed to weave all the small percentages into the costs so the client can recognise and understand.

It is not a rule that you must charge what everybody else is charging. You can be the lowest paid artist but, still, make enough or more than the highly paid bodies because you clock 10 gigs in a month while others are waiting for one big job every four months. Your attitude and cost of doing business will determine your pricing policy.

**Saving money is an important feature, though difficult, for working musicians. What is your suggestion for emerging artists in managing incomes from gigs, and balancing between (1) generating savings and (2) attending to bills and daily needs?**

Considering that every artist knows that the frequency of income is very far apart, it is advisable to save most of the funds earned and to spend only enough to sustain the operational costs and yourself. All the advice about spending wisely, as I have pointed before, is about ensuring that there are funds when there is no income.

I would advise that you calculate the bare minimums expenses for your living and then start saving that amount from each earning until you have enough to live for 12 months if there is no other income. As soon as you have 12 months' expenses covered, start paying yourself that amount every month. The trick is you start paying yourself that monthly saved amount, every new earning will now be saved entirely, apart from the occasional "spoil yourself" indulgence. Your first 12 months will be the hardest as you adjust and maintain a minimal lifestyle but you will eventually start spending more on yourself when you know you can pay your bills for at least a good 24 months without much worry.

This also means that you have to avoid buying things on credit and long-term contracts that do not produce an income

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CONSIDERING THAT EVERY ARTIST KNOWS THAT THE FREQUENCY OF INCOME IS VERY FAR APART, IT IS ADVISABLE TO SAVE MOST OF THE FUNDS EARNED AND TO SPEND ONLY ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN THE OPERATIONAL COSTS AND YOURSELF.

on their own. An MTC contract number is no longer a necessity and can be avoided. The same goes for everything that you seemingly only need because they are trends or fashionable.

**Money is also required to handle necessary components of the music business such as marketing, public relations and branding, just to name a few. How have you approached this economically in your career?**

When you separate your personal finances from your business finances as I have advised earlier, you are able to maintain financial profiles which financial institutions such as banks can look at when considering your profile for an overdraft or loan. This became important because I was determined to organise and host my own concerts when no sponsorships were coming my way. I had to pay for my own concerts and the projected budgets would sometimes go over an initial injection of N\$50 000 to get started. That kind of money for an artist would only come

from a financial institution, if not saved.

Save enough to be able to do your own things, to pay for your transport to gigs, pay for your accommodation, marketing and production costs, if need be. There are business-related costs that you cannot avoid such as marketing, public relations and branding. However, you need to balance what you spend in cash and the organic growth of good work and a good reputation. When you spend too much on maintaining an image, it also crumbles when there are no funds. You have to be careful with your strategy.

**As an independent artist, you also sell your own work, such as the recent development of your USB-based albums. What are the challenges involved in selling your own work?**

The thinking behind this move is in two parts. Firstly, we have a few releases from the early times of Big Ben that were never marketed and distributed properly and so it

lies in archives and will remain unexploited until we try something. Secondly, the sharing of digital files, especially music, legally or illegally, is unavoidable and the best move is to learn to live with it as opposed to doing nothing at all.

With this in mind, we decided to put all early albums on a USB flash drive and sell that as a package. It was successful with those who owned an old album but perhaps lost it, or those who always wanted the music but could not find it due to our weak marketing and distribution system. Most of all, the branded USB drive has become a permanent item in their cars, and the name Big Ben will stay in their faces for as long as it takes. We discovered that the customers often get rid of other media in the car and copy everything onto our branded USB drive.

When I speak of maximising all potential revenue streams, I mean everything. Especially those ideas where you have no middle people and you can cash indirectly.



*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*









# MARIA IMMANUEL

**ENTREPRENEURIAL  
THINKING FOR  
NAMIBIAN MUSICIANS:  
SETTING GOALS AND  
BUILDING A PLAN**

**AKA ML MUSIK**

MUSIC COMPOSER, ENTREPRENEUR, TECHNICAL TRADE ADVISOR.

Maria Immanuel, also known in the music industry as ML, is a multi-talented woman who is passionate about education and entrepreneurship. She is a technical trade advisor by day and a musician on weekends. She is also an emerging entrepreneur with interests in music, tech start-ups, cosmetics, and e-commerce. ML is an independent artist with her own publishing company and has to date released four albums with her latest, 'Money Music', released in July 2021. It can be streamed on her website [mlmusiknamibia.com](http://mlmusiknamibia.com).



During the early 2000s, Namibian music underwent a shift as new talent began to emerge, establishing what is today known as the Namibian music industry. The industry is a mix of many talents who represent the country's diversity. Modern musicians blend traditional sounds such as oviritje, ma /gaisa, shambo with kwaito, house and hip-hop, creating popular commercial music. In order to extract the full economic benefits of modern Namibian music, the industry has to evolve and shift into a robust, thriving music business. Much has happened to facilitate growth, from quality production infrastructure to Intellectual Property (IP) laws such as copyright and monetisation platforms driven by technology as an enabler. This piece aims to highlight available opportunities and strategies musicians can leverage to grow their talents while evolving into entrepreneurial-driven artists.

## Music business landscape in Namibia

The music industry can be categorised into the services sector. However, the definition of the services sector as it contributes to the GDP does not necessarily include music. Due to how informal the music industry is set up and to a larger extent continues to operate, it is hard to determine what is the contribution of the industry to the economy, let alone the number of jobs it creates. It is thus imperative for any sector to present data to inform key decision-making initiatives such as policy development. For example, the Nigerian music industry is known to contribute approximately 1.4% to GDP. This highlights the potential of the sector and attracts deliberate efforts from both the public and private sectors in the form of investments. The ripple effect is also the development of other associated value-chains/sub-sectors such as promoters, publicists, music managers, videographers, script-writers, directors, etc.

It is critical that the industry transforms into a structured business model to champion profit-making initiatives while creating a commercial ecosystem that rewards talent and hard work. How do we start? Well, every musician who intends to commercialise their music should register a company with the Business Intellectual Property Agency (BIPA). BIPA is the mandated institution for company registration in Namibia. They can be accessed at [bipa.na](http://bipa.na), where reservation of a business name can be done online. The key factor is to register a company that aligns with building your brand, so pay close attention to the name and core functions of the business. The benefit of having a registered company is having a business bank account. This is the professional way to do business anywhere in the world. Once you reach this level, you are ready to monetise your art, as you can now legally conduct business. Having a registered company is a basic requirement when dealing with corporates for endorsements and other business partnership initiatives. So, again, to reach this level in your career, you should - at the onset - professionalise your music through a structured business model.

**Lesson:** Register a company to obtain a bank account for your music business. The monetisation of your art requires a structured business model.

## Setting goals and building a plan

In a perfect world, there is no "one size fits all" winning formula to make it in the music business. Many musicians made it to the top through various initiatives and others through trial and error. However, if you get to a point where you are recording an album for release in the commercial space, it is important to consider the 'basic rules of the game' that will enable you to get closer to that number one spot. The following are key to a successful music business:

- **Production:** Decide on the type of sound you want to feature on your album and identify producers to work with. The cost of music production in Namibia currently averages between N\$800 to N\$1 500 including mixing and mastering. This cost will assist in budgeting the number of songs you intend to have. An album with 12 songs could cost approximately N\$18 000 for quality production. This obviously excludes important items such as artwork, photo shoots and styling that are part and parcel of an album launch.
- **Publicist:** When studio time is done and dusted, the real work starts. It is important to create a team if you are an independent artist. Otherwise, if you are under a label, then these are the types of services they ought to give you. Chart out the objectives you wish to achieve with a publicist. Their main function is to 'publicise' you as much as possible. This job requires someone with both industry and corporate networks.
- **Marketing and promotion:** This is the new world of content creation. It is considered an effective approach to release a music video before your album release as it gives it wider

Photo contributed



IT IS IMPORTANT FOR MUSICIANS TO UNDERSTAND ALL THE AVAILABLE DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND HOW THEY CAN USE THEM TO DISTRIBUTE THEIR MUSIC AND MAKE A PROFIT.



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Photo contributed

MUSIC MANAGEMENT  
IS CRITICAL TO A  
THRIVING MUSIC CAREER.  
MANAGEMENT CAN  
COME IN THE FORM  
OF A RECORD LABEL OR  
AN INDEPENDENT ARTIST  
UNDER A REGISTERED  
COMPANY.

exposure. Putting visuals to a song is a powerful way of marketing music. It not only plays on the radio but on TV too. In Namibia, and to a larger extent everywhere in the world, popular releases are those with videos. Accompanied visuals play a critical role in the consumption of music releases. This segment includes other promotional activities such as interviews, media releases and performances. Don't forget social media platforms. This is one of the most powerful tools available for artists to create an online presence. A big following attracts monetary partnerships through corporates.

• **Distribution:** The most critical and challenging thing in Namibia is the distribution of music. Namibia has limited distribution channels, both soft and hard. After the closure of Universal Sounds, which pioneered the selling of Namibian music, music distribution mechanisms were reduced. This had a negative impact on both sales and consumption of releases. The challenge of music sales is further affected by the lack of distribution channels, and not necessarily the demand or lack thereof. Consumption is definitely high and growing every day. Fast forward, technology is here and it presents unlimited opportunities for growth and monetisation.

#### Monetisation of music in Namibia

The way in which Namibians consume music has generally shifted, and this is underpinned by digital platforms. Technology now presents many opportunities for musicians to monetise their music. This should be pre-planned prior to the release of the album to comply with production requirements. International platforms such as YouTube, Apple Music, Spotify, Boomplay and Deezer have become popular music platforms in Namibia and present revenue-making streams for musicians. Hitting a million views on YouTube could get you paid around N\$100 000 by the platform, while iTunes sells digital albums for N\$120 on average. YouTube, however, does not operate sustainably in Namibia and, therefore, it seems Namibians can only piggyback on South Africa by making their accounts appear South African. There are other international payment platforms one can link to Google to receive payment for monetised content. YouTube is gaining popularity in Namibia and hopefully it will be fully operational here soon. For now, it is important to grow the numbers nonetheless.

Namibian digital platforms which gained momentum in recent years and are positioned to commercialise Namibian music include Donlu, Playbit and ViralCom. Donlu is a streaming service online, while Playbit is an app that competes in the space of Apple Music. However, as a Namibian app, Playbit prioritises the local market. ViralCom is an SMS-based system that charges N\$4.00 per song. It's an interesting platform because it addresses a fundamental problem – 60% of the country's population still resides in rural areas with poor networks to consume music on digital platforms daily. This can be a game-changer as it bridges the digital gap in the delivery of local music. It is important for musicians to understand all the available digital platforms and how they can use them to distribute their music and make a profit.

• **International platforms:** These work mostly with third parties to distribute music for selling or streaming. Popular distribution companies include tunecore.com and distrokid.com, which require registration on their website and charge approximately N\$950 to distribute music to international digital stores such as iTunes, Spotify, Apple Music, etc. After meeting all the requirements including your credit card for payment, sales of your releases are collected on your behalf from all stores on their distribution list.

• **Namibian platforms:** Contact the various platforms available and arrange the set-up of releases.

• **CDs/USBs:** Many Namibians still want to buy CDs for their collections or to play in their cars. To a certain extent, CDs bring fast cash in the pockets of artists. The other lucrative CD market is the jukebox. It is estimated that Namibia has approximately 150 000 jukeboxes across the country. Artists who sell their music in this market profit more than the average artist in Namibia. Identifying your target market helps your distribution strategy. In order to keep up with the times and technology, it is important to adapt to the convenient ways people consume music. USBs have become part of our daily life as they offer convenience in carrying and transferring documents and media content, including music. Modern cars and gadgets work with USBs only. Why not release your music on encrypted USBs just as you would sell CDs or cassettes when it was convenient to do so?



## Management, tours and corporate endorsements

Music management is critical to a thriving music career. Management can come in the form of a record label or an independent artist under a registered company. In other parts of the world, management/record labels are investors with a business where you the musician are the commodity. Management assists with setting up tours, events, corporate endorsements, and any other business-related issues. Your music brand benefits from this as well. Namibia generally lacks good music managers. Most are not necessarily investors but promoters who rely on the musician to blow up in order to commercialise them further. The highest-paid artists in Namibia range between N\$30 000 to N\$50 000 on a booking per gig. This was, of course, prior to Covid-19's impact. The NAMAs remains one of the most lucrative award events for musicians in the country. Musicians win between N\$30 000 and N\$80 000 per award. However, the sponsor sadly withdrew their support of the annual awards in 2020. The industry currently awaits new sponsorship to take over the awards.

## Taking ownership of your intellectual property rights

Intellectual property (IP) rights identify ownership of a song and everyone involved in its production and provide security against others from creation. It is important to understand by definition, the roles of everyone involved so you know how much royalties is due to you.

The following are useful concepts:

**Artist:** A performer, whether vocal or instrument, regardless of who the writer and/or composer is.

**Composer:** This is the beatmaker or creator of the music in a song. You do not necessarily need to play an instrument but if you direct or instruct how and what an instrument can be played, you are a composer.

**Author:** Someone who writes the words or lyrics in a song. If your identity as a songwriter is not hidden and you are credited, then you are not a ghostwriter but an author.

**Arranger:** Someone who takes an old song (whether from the public domain or traditional song) and rearranges it. There is no arranger in

a newly composed song.

**Publisher:** This is the owner of the IP. What an artist has written or created in a song is owned by the publisher. When anyone wants to sample the song, they seek permission from the publisher and not the artist, unless the two are one.

**Producer:** A director and a person who has a good ear for music. Their job is to organise and direct the whole recording session, including the music and the sound in the studio. Beatmakers are not producers but composers, but few can be.

**Executive producer:** The one who pays for the project such as studio time, sessionists and everything required for recording. The person

who pays for the recording owns the master. Note: It is not a remix if the original is not yours. You cannot record over TopCheri's instrumental and call it the 'Calling Heaven Remix'. It is a cover version, rendition or interpretation.

the Namibian Society of Composers and Authors of Music (NASCAM): Licences music users such as radio broadcasters, retailers, pubs, clubs and restaurants and other businesses that use music in their establishments for payment of performance and mechanical and needle-time royalties.

**Performance royalties:** Radio and TV.

**Mechanical royalties:** Digital, sync, ads, etc.

**Needle-time royalties:** Used for sampling or remakes.

In terms of music IP rights, the song could be split in royalties to the following: Composer, producer, author, publisher, etc. It is important for Namibian artists - including producers and publishers - to understand the IP rights to claim their fair share. In Namibia, this is facilitated under NASCAM ([nascam.org](http://nascam.org)). On one hand, this can facilitate investment from publishers and management because they have the protection on their Return on Investment (ROI). Presently, most Namibian producers are not aware of this and do not receive full or any royalties on songs they produced or composed. Equally, Namibia does not have a 'Music Industry of Namibia' which could facilitate and take care of the publisher's music interest as an investor in an artist. IP rights might be the bigger challenge to the growth and formalisation of the music industry. In the long run, music IP rights are seen as legacies of artists and provide sources of revenue beyond their career (more information on Namibian music IP rights can be found on the Nascam website).

## Diversification – investing in other sectors to grow wealth

Musicians should not only be trapped solely in the music business. Like every other smart entrepreneur, musicians should diversify their income by investing in other sectors of interest. The best way to start is to invest in initiatives that can build a robust ecosystem around the brand. For example, investing in videography to produce your own content while offering the services to others for profit. The investment could be in equipment and required skills. Other opportunities are found in various economic sectors as prioritised by national development plans such as agriculture, tech start-ups, manufacturing, etc. For it to be a music "industry", it has to take the shape of any other industry and create linkages with other relevant industries.

Education is a key element in turning the music industry into a lucrative sector. Economies of scale are cited as a threat deriving income from the industry, however, it is probably one of the industries that can leapfrog on the digital economy to create a new entrepreneurial creative ecosystem. They say that the average Nigerian artist has a degree. As the fastest growing industry in the world, this should inspire many musicians around the world including Namibian musicians to prioritise education as the enabler.

In summary, every musician should start thinking entrepreneurial from the onset of their career. It is pertinent to formalise the industry. This is so that record labels and management services can be offered under a legal entity to conduct legal and sustainable business that can employ other creatives. The spin-offs are huge, purely because music has no boundaries, so it can be sold anywhere in the world. With the right attitude and education, musicians can change the world beyond their lyrics and sound. Like any other sector, education should be the foundation and, therefore, musicians should never compromise on their education.









# LIZE EHLERS

## **SELF-MANAGEMENT PRACTICES FOR ARTISTS**

MUSICIAN, THEATRE-MAKER, RMB SONG NIGHT FOUNDER AND DIRECTOR

Lize Ehlers is a Namibian singer, songwriter, musical director, producer, actress, playwright, director and poet. She is also the founder and director of RMB Song Night, mentoring emerging singers for free since 2011. Born and raised in Mariental, Namibia, Lize is a national creative pioneer, who was awarded the first-ever artist of the year award at the NAMAs in 2019. She also co-composed the soundtrack of Baxu & The Giants; Namibia's only film currently on Netflix.

General logistical and day-to-day management of one's artistic career is so important. Paying attention to all processes of your artistic, administrative and business process ensures good planning. This increases the likeliness of successful projects and increases the probability of bookings. Good management ensures smooth and professional communication, maintenance of business relationships, well-planned projects, up-to-date promotional strategies and overall long-term and strategic planning of your career.

### What is self-management and why is it important for musicians?

Self-management is when a performing artist like a musician controls their own:

**A) Brand** – the perception of the said musician's product, service and the experience they provide to their audience

**B) Sound** - the musical product that consistently gets put out into the world by said musician

**TIP:** Explicit musicians get fewer performance opportunities than family-friendly content providers due to the conservative business model in Namibia and the corporate world in general

**C) Public relations and sales** - the promotion and distribution of the work done by the musician (music and merchandise)

**D) Bookings** - (promotional and paid performances by the said musician)

The practice of self-management not only deals with creating and performing the music but includes actively securing performances and income opportunities through promotion using the media, especially social media, engaging and networking with clients (connecting with people who book and pay musicians to perform at their events) and staying relevant in challenging economic times. Especially in Namibia, where the population is small and the visibility and reputation of the musician determines their long-term success.

A self-managed artist working directly with clients gives you the power to ensure all performance/booking expectations are understood and executed. Self-management can also include owning equipment to make use of your own technical system and booking smaller performances with private clients who organise their own events such as engagement parties, weddings, book launches, etc. This is a sustainable way for a self-managed artist to secure smaller but necessary income - instead of just working exclusively with venues, event planners, festival organisers, corporate functions and other institutions.

### What are the challenges in the sector, and how do management practices help in this regard?

The main challenge in the sector is the lack of opportunities and the lack of strong international affiliations to secure performance and education prospects for Namibian musicians. Opportunities are rare due to the small number of people who consider entertainment an asset to an event and to the country. Many people do not quite understand the relevance and importance of well-executed entertainment at a corporate or private event. When a musician captures the attention and imagination of the audience, a memory is created that can last a lifetime. In the digital era, original music makers also play a big role in creating content for various creative collaborations such as online talk shows, advertisements, music shows, online theatre, fashion events, etc., eliminating copyright complications when using the work of other musicians.

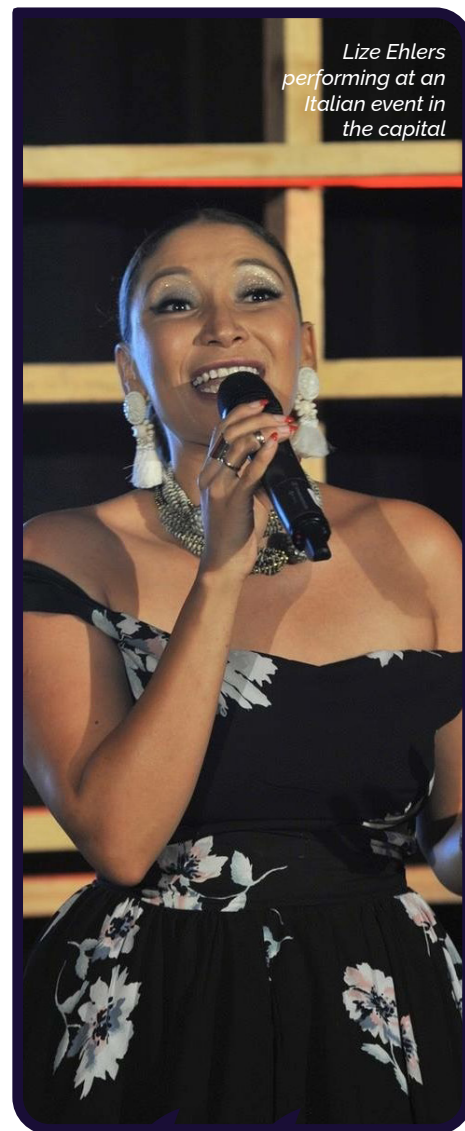
### The three main fail-safe self-management principles to apply as a musician are:

**1. Ensure you are punctual** and if you cannot be punctual due to an emergency, professionally communicate with your client. Make sure you engage in professional practices at all times to create a reputable brand. This is so that clients may book you frequently.

**TIP** - This includes not queuing at the bar after your performance is over, not asking for a complimentary gift meant for the event guests, and not bringing an entourage to your private corporate performance.

**2. Be well-rehearsed and read your crowd** - that way you fit into the purpose of the event and stand out with your artistry.

Lize Ehlers  
performing at an  
Italian event in  
the capital



GOOD MANAGEMENT  
ENSURES SMOOTH  
AND PROFESSIONAL  
COMMUNICATION,  
MAINTENANCE OF  
BUSINESS RELATIONSHIPS,  
WELL-PLANNED  
PROJECTS, UP-TO-DATE  
PROMOTIONAL  
STRATEGIES AND OVERALL  
LONG-TERM AND  
STRATEGIC PLANNING  
OF YOUR CAREER.





Lize performing  
live at the  
Namibian Annual  
Awards 2015

AS A SELF-MANAGED ARTIST IN NAMIBIA FOR MORE THAN A DECADE, I HAVE NOT ONLY SECURED INCOME FOR MYSELF BUT WORK OPPORTUNITIES FOR OTHER ARTISTS TOO. KNOWING THAT YOU CAN TRUST ANOTHER ARTIST TO DO A GOOD JOB IF YOU ARE NOT AVAILABLE TO OFFER YOUR SERVICES IS A VERY BIG PART OF MY PERSONAL SUCCESS. BEING ABLE TO SHARE OPPORTUNITIES IS THE KEY TO SHARED SUCCESS.

**3. Reinvention and easy accessibility** are key to overcoming the challenge of lack of work. Being reachable is half of the battle won. Replying to quotation requests on time commonly results in confirmed bookings. Sending your evolving repertoire and easily accessible links to possible clients is necessary in self-management; this ensures that you are on the radar for clients when they are planning new events. Self-promotion and branding are important to ensure bookings come in even during uncertain times.

#### **What are further considerations for self-managing artists?**

**1. Punctuality and clear communication** are the ultimate power tools of any professional.

**2. Sobriety and professional behaviour** are linked to the success of Namibia's top performers.

**3. Understanding that** when a client books an artist, it is not a jamming session but a paid work opportunity.

**4. In the event of an unpaid self-promotional gig**, professional practices will also gain the musician's respect when starting on time, being prepared, dressing appropriately for the occasion and honouring your brand.

*All of the above result in giving artists a collectively good name.*

Self-management can ensure faster and more direct contact with clients. This approach also cuts out expensive costs associated with hiring a manager. Essentially, one needs to be highly self-organised and accessible to ensure that all information is received in a timely and accurate way. With regards to independence, self-management also ensures that the artist creates and navigates in the exact way they want to shape their brand, sound and public relations. This does demand the artist to wear many different professional hats, but it is possible with a regulated strategic vision.

As a self-managed artist, I am always aware of which platforms I want to perform on, which brands I want to affiliate with and which charts I want to top, which keeps me aligned. This frame drives me to work towards my specific goals, knowing that every positive public appearance can boost my following and success.

#### **Clients and business partners are always looking for reputable performing artists who will do the following:**

- 1.** Be punctual, prepared and professional.
- 2.** Elevate the event by providing highly entertaining, well-rehearsed music that fits with the overall theme and purpose.
- 3.** Follow the event briefing - if you are booked for soothing background music, follow the brief and provide a befitting performance.
- 4.** An artist must be a service provider and work together to make the event a success. Clients do not appreciate diva behaviour and inappropriate demands. At the same time, the client also has to respect the technical requirements of the artist and any approved needs communicated clearly beforehand.

As a self-managed artist in Namibia for more than a decade, I have not only secured income for myself but work opportunities for other artists too. Knowing that you can trust another artist to do a good job if you are not available to offer your services is a very big part of my personal success. Being able to share opportunities is the key to shared success.









# JOHN WALENGA

## **WORKING WITH A RECORD LABEL: CONSIDERATIONS AND PROCESSES**

BUSINESSMAN, MEDIA PRACTITIONER

John Walenga is a businessman, media practitioner and avid devotee of matters concerning Namibian culture and heritage. He is the founder and board member of Eagle FM, a commercial radio station that aims to encourage discussions to find solutions to some problems facing the nation. He is also the founding manager of Omalaeti Productions, a premier Namibian company that included a newspaper and magazine publisher, a record label, a technology company, an events company, a news app and much more. Established on 16 July 2012, Omalaeti Music is known for its music production, music videos and event management. Artists who were signed to the label include PDK, Tate Buti and Promise Tanauka.

*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**Namibia is a country with vast talents, and in terms of the music business and industry, the country only started to see sparks of this in the early 2000s. Would you agree, and what in your perspective, sparked this development?**

I slightly disagree with the citing on the development of the Namibian music business as an industry. One cannot speak about an industry without the participation of industrialists in their different roles. When you are talking about the Namibian music industry, then we should be able to identify industrialists, and in the absence of these, maybe we should call it something else. That should be across the board of the entire art sector. You first have to identify the people with excess capital to invest in the industry, and those would be the industrialists. They will move the industry. I suspect the reason why we are where we are is due to the fact that we do not have such people - economic movers and shakers. This is particularly why we depend on handouts in the sector. Currently, many artists survive on the corporate social responsibility of companies. Hence, I beg to differ on the idea of an existing industry. An industry cannot depend solely on corporate social responsibility. It requires its own mechanisms, strategies and investments.

**What would you say boosted the development of the sector, if we can call it that?**

The growth of a sector cannot be based on the success of a handful of artists. Success - in my opinion - has to be measured across the board. Success elsewhere, in this sector, does not happen by accident. It has to happen with a deliberate policy and strategy. Unfortunately for the music business, this strategy cannot be championed by the private sector. It has to be driven on a national level. This is where the government is supposed to come in and mandate policies and strategies. If you look elsewhere, artists succeed because they are appreciated in their own countries and because what they are doing resonates with their communities. The unfortunate thing that has happened in our market is that what we have put forward is not reflective of our communities. In the early years of the sector, we got excited and got carried away with the wave from South Africa. This created implications where artists largely imitated what was coming from South Africa. They imitated and repackaged it and sang it in their vernacular. What they didn't

realise is that by repackaging these cultural materials, we deviated from the promotion of what Namibians have to offer. Unfortunately, there were no bodies in higher positions to intervene with this phenomenon. We went on and rode on the wave, not realising that we would eventually deal with consequences; consumption that is not locally centred. This could largely have been avoided if a national policy were put in place, by deliberately investing in and promoting what is local. You have to avail resources and mechanisms to effect change on a macro level. I am always sceptical when we expect growth in this local 'industry' without a deliberate policy at hand.

**Let's talk about Omalaeti Music, what sparked the development of the label?**

I am a product of my time. The place where I was born and grew up was the hub of arts and entertainment in northern Namibia - Ondangwa. There was a deliberate policy of the then South African administration to bring in artists from South Africa because of the circumstances around the war. These artists would not even pass through Windhoek, they would come straight to Ondangwa to mobilise the people in the surrounding areas and to entertain the particularly black, South African soldiers.

I grew up in front of entertainment. My father was headman in the village and our traditional homestead had all sorts of cultural activities that would take place. We had artists like Tate Kwela, Boetie Simon, and the likes. These artists would frequent our business establishments (ou kaamba) to entertain people, and we grew up in love with their music. So much so that at the end of the day, my dream was always to record Tate Kwela and I was fortunate to get the opportunity to do so. Tate Kwela's only properly recorded music is under Omalaeti Music.

My arts and culture interests backed the development of Omalaeti Music. I was involved in running a company called Zebra Holdings on behalf of Swapo and there was a time when the party was facing a transition from Dr Sam Nujoma to the second president, Hifikepunye Pohamba. The party could tell there was a difference between the youth of that time. The party had to find a way to attract and influence the youth by coming up with a mobilising project labelled Omalaeti O'Swapo. That was the beginning of Omalaeti Music. We worked with top artists of that time, such as was Pablo, The Dogg and Gazza, who were recorded and produced by Elvo. I managed the project and curated the political content.

The idea was to capture the masses where the youth was centred. We loaded political messages in the music, and it worked. We ensured all radio stations, lounges and spots played the album. That was the beginning of what we later labelled 'polytainment', which is all about transmitting political messages through music. The party commissioned us, and the project worked well. So, that is probably the spark you are referring to. By the time I had come into the music scene, artists were paid N\$500 for performances. Can you imagine a top artist being paid no more than N\$1 000 per performance? That was the maximum and deemed a good pay cheque back then by event producers and organisers. But, through the Omalaeti O'Swapo project, I changed the performance rate from N\$500 to N\$10 000. It was much easier to arrive at as it had set a rate in the business by then. This was particularly important when corporate Namibia was bringing in South African artists who would get paid anything close to N\$50 000. I was stunned by this and wondered why corporate Namibia was prepared to pay N\$50 000 for promoting someone else's heritage, and N\$500 for their own. We affected change in the sector, and the rest is history.

After the project, I had to think about what Omalaeti could be doing in the sector. I had the choice to stop or continue with the project. Zebra Holdings did not focus on music; that was not part of its operations, so I had to start Omalaeti Music on the side by getting permission from the board. I was very clear from the beginning that I would only promote what was ours. I wanted something that we could relate to, something that would last. The best musicians in the world reach the top because of their unique style. Artists gain their unique styles from their cultural backgrounds, and this is what I was interested in, encouraging artists to draw from their raw sociocultural materials and folklore. To this day, I encourage artists to breathe new life into our folklore, because that is our raw material. You breathe new life by contemporising it for consumption by the masses. What propelled an artist like Tate Kwela to stardom was his remixing of folklore - the people of his time could relate to it. To have someone remixing these materials with a guitar was phenomenal. So, I learnt this model from him.

I did not want to have too many artists on the label. I wanted a maximum of four. Each would be doing something completely different, not competing against each other. Hence, I went for Tate Buti, and we developed his sound and persona together after the album with Janice through the duo Boeti and Janice. Tate Buti's favourite artist at





AN INDUSTRY CANNOT  
DEPEND SOLELY ON  
CORPORATE SOCIAL  
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INVESTMENTS.



the time was Mzekezeke. I thought: There's already a Mzekezeke, why produce another one? So, we explored various options and designed his quality and presence. The same goes with PDK, a lot of attention and processes went into designing and producing artists the masses could enjoy and consume.

To be frank, we need more of me in the industry to call it an industry. It requires many players for it to work. I can't say that I am an industrialist, because if I were an industrialist in that space, then I would still be there today. I have given it a break because it is hard to fight and position all sorts of strategies on your own. You end up burning through your money, and it's not worth it. I stayed in the industry for close to 10 years and there have been many transformations over time. Omalaeti ploughed back into artists and equipped them. The music business is not just about the talent, but understanding the economic strategies involved, and I am glad the artists moved on with that understanding.

**With the various transformations of the Namibian music business, would you say there is an advantage to working with a music label?**

You need structures in place for anything to work. A musician has to be a musician and focus on the music. Ideally, somebody else should be doing the business and logistical side of things. It works effectively that way. Of course, you do have musicians who are doing the business side of their music and managing their own affairs, but not everybody is fortunate to have those skills

and that much time. Especially for new talent, they need to be guided and enlightened with all the planning and resources that go into music production and business. During the operation of Omalaeti Music, I would assure the artists with an allowance, lodging and studio infrastructure.

A creative mind does not like to be confined. Creative minds thrive better when they are in a studio or an inspiring space. The artists had the freedom to record any time they liked, and the producer would come in to see what they had gotten up to. That is how it was done, and I would make sure that I would take care of what needed to be taken care of. For upcoming artists, there are not many players taking care of the business strategies and operational needs. If we do not have players intervening with these features, then we will continue to lose Namibian talent and see the sector dissipate. It also takes disciplined artists to work with music labels. Talent is not enough. Talent without discipline is not sustainable. Thus, we need key players to tap into these talents and equip them to produce and export Namibian richness locally and regionally.

**Artistic freedom is often a concern when artists consider signing to a label. What is your perspective on artistic freedom when it comes to business agreements in this regard?**

Unfortunately, when you are speaking of business, it has to move into a set and agreed on direction, otherwise, there is no profit for either party. If your input into that business is music and you are not bringing your part

of the agreed deal, then it will not work. It is as simple as that. The music business is linked to the entire arts industry with all its different processes. It is not enough to just be talented; your real life begins outside the studio, and not within. There is prescribed conduct and etiquette for this. Your real life determines whether you will attract a following and respect from the masses and consumers. The era of artists making money just because of a name is long gone. People want to see the person, how they conduct themselves and based on that they will respond accordingly. Like any other business. Talent is key in the studio, but discipline carries you outside of the studio.

**Is compatibility a critical factor between artists and labels? Would you suggest young artists consider this?**

Compatibility is not really the issue. The key issue is the return on the investment. You can be buddies with your manager, but is friendship the essential feature? In my opinion, the answer is no. If you have to be compatible, it is with the market and strategies involved. Of course, the professional relationship has to be healthy, and both the label and artist have to work together to produce for the consumers. That is what is important, that the products are produced conductively to be enjoyed by consumers. If you are in the business for fun, then it will not take you anywhere. Fame also does not bring you money. If your existence is based on fame, it means that you are in the wrong place and should reconsider altogether.

**What are other misconceptions do young artists often have towards music labels? Particularly when it comes to legal matters such as royalties?**

It is important to ensure that you take care of yourself. Ensure that sure your creative pool does not run dry, and maintain discipline. When you have these three key things together, the investor or label would definitely devote anything to such a person. All the contracts and legal matters are prescribed and should be to any agreement, but they do not ascertain success in the music business. The documents are there to govern the relationship, but on top of that, there is a lot more to consider. Anything else between the two entities is for you to make the best out of that relationship. If the products you make don't sell to the market, then sooner or later, the relationship between the artist and label will cease with all its transparent contracts.

As for royalties, there are structures in place that protect the composers and owners of the music. This is not collected through the label, but through governing institutions like NASCAM.

**Some artists have gone on to start and run their own music labels to provide opportunities and interventions in the sector. What is your advice to these entrepreneurs?**

You need money. If you don't have capital, then I would advise against it. It is very hard to encourage an upcoming entrepreneur to consider starting a label at this stage, with the lack of all other key players required. You cannot operate in isolation. The sector operates collaboratively, and there are major gaps to be felt if some key players are missing. I think the approach can be taken strategically; not to merely operate as a music label. The process with Omalaeti is that it existed and functioned as a brand, which brought its benefits. So, I

would encourage upcoming entrepreneurs to think much more strategically about the models to take on.

**From an entrepreneurship point of view, are there any other key roles you would encourage professionals to take on to fill the gaps in the sector?**

An artist should live the life of an artist, and if there are professionals who play their role to ensure this, then that is great. Everything is about strategy, and one should think about how they want to make an impact and, at the same time, make a profit.

Artists should carry themselves professionally; this will also allow room for everyone else to play their part properly. Artists cannot not only conduct themselves professionally at selected times. I think the sector can grow more if we produce good songwriters for artists as well. There is a lot of room for this. The same goes for new producers. Marketing is another area. We need players who can market and drive appetite for our local products. But these products have to be of quality and standard, which goes back to the issue of the disciplined artist. But for all those things and other processes to be in place, for the benefit of artists, investors and consumers, the government has to step up. Our culture is what makes us who we are, and we cannot shy away from promoting it. Pride must come from the top so that when you have visitors coming here, you don't parade the same uninventive models. We have so much natural talent that is waiting. We need to tap into our uniqueness and heritage, as it will drive local appetite for ourselves.

It is not a good road ahead if Namibians decide we will just be the consumers of the heritage of other countries. We should be able to arrive at what makes us unique as Namibians. We should be able to get that out of this pool of musicians. It should be a priority.



FOR UPCOMING ARTISTS, THERE ARE NOT MANY PLAYERS TAKING CARE OF THE BUSINESS STRATEGIES AND OPERATIONAL NEEDS. IF WE DO NOT HAVE PLAYERS INTERVENING WITH THESE FEATURES, THEN WE WILL CONTINUE TO LOSE NAMIBIAN TALENT AND SEE THE SECTOR DISSIPATE.





*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*





# OTEYA

## LIFESTYLE AND WELLNESS IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS

SINGER, SONGWRITER.

Oteya is an Afropop and fusion artist based in Windhoek, Namibia, with an artistic tenure serving more than 20 years in the music sector. She emerged from the then-popular R&B duo Gal Level with Frieda Haindaka. As a talented group, their work quality was considered to be international status material. Since 2014, Oteya has pursued a successful solo career. Her debut single, 'Ethimbo' (meaning "it's my time"), saw her being nominated at the MTV Africa Music Awards in the video battles category in the same year. She was the first Namibian to be nominated in that category. Oteya has performed internationally and shared the stage with prestigious artists such as Boyz II Men. She is the winner of female artist of the year and best Afropop awards at the 2015 NAMAs.



*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**You have been honoured and acknowledged for your success and longevity in the Namibian music industry and beyond. What three words would you pick to describe your 20+ year career?**

There are so many words. But I would say: Unpredictable, life-changing and roller coaster.

**Did you know you were always going to become the big artist you are today?**

No. It only started with the love of music. I have always loved singing. Of course, you dream about it but you never really know; everything is a risk in this world. I have always wanted to sing but I didn't know 20 years from then I would be doing what I am doing now and that I would become a household name. I was just a young girl who loved singing. That's how it started.

**And within the roller coaster of your early career, when did it dawn on you to sit down and to think about the business of your career, apart from being a talented artist?**

I think it was when I was part of Gal Level, that is when it dawned on me that I can make a living out of it. Initially, I was working full-time at a bank and then performing part-time. But I realised that I was actually making more of a living from performing than my full-time job. It dawned on me that I can make a profession out of this and that is when I took the bold step to resign from the bank and start to make music full-time.

**What would you say has significantly contributed to your career longevity?**

Perseverance. I am a person who pushes. It has not been an easy journey but the love of music has kept me going, as well as the love from my fans and the support I have received. These are things that kept me pushing even when I thought to myself 'I can no longer do this'. Now I have no intention of stopping.

**Namibia has some talented artists who have not enjoyed a long and rewarding music career. What are your views on this, and what are some of the issues that contribute to careers being cut short in the sector?**

I think that happens when artists enter the industry with unrealistic expectations. Some artists want quick fame and money. They are expecting to be recognised and booked after releasing one single. But it isn't about that. I think having the wrong attitude also contributes to this. Trust with record labels is another thing if you have one. As an artist, you need to trust that your label has your best interests at heart. Thinking that you know better can lead to your downfall.

**You highlight collaborations in the industry. Such as an artist trusting and working with financial, legal advisors and trusting their profession and expertise?**

Exactly. The record label is a company that has those departments you are mentioning. It has the legal, marketing and branding departments that support artists. The record label as a whole is an entity that looks after the interests of the artist. They work together with the talent of the artist and take care of business while the artist does what they do best.

**As a multi-award-winning artist with a large following, how have you built your strong profile and brand? Why was this important?**

Well, I am very fortunate because I work under a music label. They have made it easier with their investment and as a team, they worked together to make sure that my brand stands out and that it is strong. That has really worked well for me. The investment was important in building the Oteya brand as it depended on how other brands affiliated with it as well. It is up to the label to do the work to market the Oteya brand so that when the desired event comes, the investment returns and the business grows even further. So, that is where the trick is, working with a management team that has the resources to invest in you. This is so that the artist has sufficient time in the studio, while the record label and supporting management team work hard on the marketing, planning and distribution of the work. Within that process, the brand grows and followers come with it. That is where the artists get their advantage, as the company does the hard work. And that's where I think it is lacking in the local music scene because many artists are not business-oriented. They do not understand the business of music, the implications, the risks and the trust thereof, even against bad media coverage, which in turn has a negative impact on the business.

**How would you describe a 'harmful/unhealthy network' in**

**the context of an artist's career?**

An unhealthy network is putting yourself around people who abuse substances. That is unhealthy. As a performer, I do not go onto the stage under any form of intoxication. I remember many artists were surprised with my sobriety before I would go onto the stage and I would respond by saying that I need clarity when I perform. I need to focus on what I am doing and I don't want anything to cloud it. That's just how I am. These harmful habits may start slowly, but you get hooked quickly with drugs and alcohol. It is really harmful. It's a known fact that a lot of artists out there abuse substances. Unhealthy networks include hanging around with 'yes people'. People who do not provide constructive criticism.

**That's unhealthy for you?**

Definitely. I need to grow. I surround myself with people who keep me grounded, people who tell me like it is. People who help build me so that I keep pushing myself to keep getting better because that is what you want at the end of the day. This is what I always tell people; the biggest competition for me is not anybody else, it's me. It's about being better than I was yesterday. I need to push myself to be better and I can't do that if I am always surrounded by people who only tell me how great I am. They always think your song is the best and so forth. You need to grow and improve and you can't do that if you are surrounded by people who think you are the greatest at all times.

**Is it important to keep a healthy environment for you to grow in?**

I need that. It is the one thing that has kept me consistent over the years. It is so important. I keep my circle very small. I do not associate myself with many people. I surround myself with people who are real. Because this entire industry is 'show' business and the reality is not what people think it is. You do not need that in real life.

**But that is contrary to what many artists understand networking is about. That it is about being consistently visible?**

Well, yes, you need to be visible. But there is a difference between being visible and being seen everywhere. It has to be strategic. The music business is about strategy. As a music label, you need to create value around the visibility of your artists. So, at times, the record label or management should appear on behalf of the artist at events to maintain the artist's network and business with the right people and stakeholders.

**Wellness is also very much linked to financial matters. What does financial wellness mean to you? How does this contribute to entering into safe and good business agreements?**

I think, to put it plainly, financial wellness is about not worrying about it. It is quite stressful to be in constant worry about how you are going to take care of your daily expenses and pay for services.

And that can really get to you as an artist and affect your creativity because your mind is all over the place. So, financial wellness is that comfort and assurance of knowing that the basics are taken care of and attending to what you are good at, and trusting the contracted expertise around you as well. That is why you are signed to a music label - because they carry your burdens. An artist is not supposed to be worried about daily needs and expenses, but should rather focus on the creation of the work. An artist's job is to create and produce good music, the rest is what the label should take care of.

**What would you advise artists who are not signed to music labels**

**but need to pursue that financial wellness in order to focus on their creativity?**

The thing is, currently, music in Namibia cannot sustain you fully. Especially with the pandemic and the recession that has been going on for a while now. One has to be able to understand that there will always be challenges; one of those being our small population. I take calculated risks, like how I was working full-time while I was building my fan base until I realised that the fan base was strong enough to sustain me and that is when I realised I was ready to do music full-time. My advice would be to find a way to make an income that can sustain you for whatever it is you need. Because at the end of the day, you need money to make money. So, do that, or get a family member or a support system who can sponsor you. But you have to push yourself because it is never going to be handed to you on a silver platter. People think that the road is easy, but it is hard for everyone. We were being paid peanuts when we started in this industry and I always tell people seeking advice that one has to actually help themselves. I can offer all the available advice and direction, but you have to go through the door yourself. You have to work hard and push for what

you love and eventually, you'll get to where you need to be.

One also has to understand that Namibia has one of the fortunate sectors in terms of resources, however minimally available. It is just that one does not understand it. There is some access to facilities and resources that are not available in some parts of the world like in some African countries. It is a matter of you being organised and going to the arts council with a concise proposal. It boils down to being learned. Organise yourself and approach the NACN properly, because one never knows - you could get your capital from there and multiply further.

You also have to understand that the NACN can't help everyone all the time. You have to think small. I think a lot of the time people think too big and too far ahead. I believe that an artist can start as small as recording one good song, regardless of your profession or circumstances at that time. Start small and work your way up. Recording and mastering a song cost less than N\$3 000 at a good studio. Many artists are pushing to start with albums and these are very expensive projects to pursue. Sometimes all you need to start off with is one great song and approach radio stations and be persistent. Push your music.



*Photo contributed*



You can then work further to push for a music video. Ogopa, for example, has a package for music video production for emerging artists, which is much cheaper than established artists. Artists can approach the label with their songs and what they have in mind. At the end of the day, you need to start small and push yourself.

**The music industry is one that requires risk-taking for certain successes to follow. How do you measure major decisions that could have a good impact on your career or otherwise?**

I think fortunately for me, because of the music label, we take calculated risks. I remember the risks that were discussed with my transition from being a member of Gal Level to Oteya, the solo artist. So, the Oteya brand was one of those successful risks we took as a team.

It was not easy behind the scenes. There is a lot of consideration that goes into these decisions. Business is a risk, but the label should carry most of that risk. The artist's concern is creating a good or bad song, while they leave the rest to the music label. Even with the prepared song under consideration for release; you still consider the risks. Ask yourself, will people listen to it? Is it marketable?

Because it is money at the end of the day, and you need to make sure that whatever you put out there is worthwhile. That's business logic. This is why I always tell people that it is important to study your market and ask what is it that people like and what people want to hear. If you go in blindly, you will come out blindly. That's why some artists end up with drug and substance abuse problems, because of the frustrations that come out of bad and uncalculated decisions. Especially when it involves money. It is not easy in this industry, and that is why this country needs investors who understand the business of music. I just wish people understood that the music business is not a gateway for hobbies as it is commonly misunderstood. It is a business, and government and corporates should accept it as a sector that contributes to the GDP of our country. It has a lot of potential. It also creates employment.

**Exactly, it's a sector that creates employment for administrators, technicians, event planners, and so on.**

Yes, and that's how it has become the most affected in this pandemic because the employment we have mentioned is a lot, from security, drivers, designers, marketers, and so on. The chain is so extensive.

**As a performer, your body and mind are important tools for your profession. How do you consistently ensure wellness for these assets?**

I think most of the time we tend to focus on physical wellness, forgetting that mental health is just as important. Because if the mind is not right, how are we going to take care of everything else? The mind controls everything else. I feel that it's something we should take seriously. You need to be okay. You need to be fine for you to be creative as an artist. If I am not okay, how am I supposed to write music as a songwriter? So, body and mind need to work together. I am thinking perhaps we need to have more talks about this. Because a lot of artists are not taking care of themselves. There is a lot of frustration in show business, and I think we often forget what's real and what's not. People are frustrated and are not doing okay behind the scenes. Substance abuse becomes a coping mechanism because of the frustrations and we need to talk openly about it.

**Would you say self-care has contributed to your long career as well?**

Yes, and I think what helps me is that I have a really good support system. They are the reason why I stay grounded and remain focused. This gives me purpose and it has really helped me and kept me in the industry for this long.

**The music industry serves many challenges and demands on artists. How have you navigated these hazards, set limits and maintained a balanced lifestyle for a successful career?**

I think it is an attitude thing. My fans keep me going. I mean, we all have our good and bad days, but my fans keep me going. Of course, everybody is different, but this is what works for me. I try to keep my circle very small. They say that the company you keep says a lot about you, so I try to keep my circle small and surround myself with positive people.

**Frustrations can also lead to mental health issues and pressure. Especially on the artist who works in isolation in the various departments of their career, such as administration and marketing. Would you say getting together a committed, supportive and professional team contributes to wellness and career sustainability?**



*Photo contributed*



*Photo contributed*

Absolutely, you need a team. It is not sustainable to work in complete isolation and one can easily burn out.

**You are a recognised figure on continental platforms as well. How do you want the international sector to view the 'Namibian artist'? How can emerging**

**artists maintain and display this reputation?**

I think they need to view their music as a business. You have to know that when you are out there with international artists, you are representing your country and the industry as a whole. That is what should be at the

back of your mind. That is what these artists need to remember all the time, that they are representing the music industry. I have been fortunate to collaborate with many international artists and the international community does take notice through these collaborations. So, the music should also be good and speak for itself.



AN UNHEALTHY NETWORK IS PUTTING YOURSELF AROUND PEOPLE WHO ABUSE SUBSTANCES. THAT IS UNHEALTHY. AS A PERFORMER, I DO NOT GO ONTO THE STAGE UNDER ANY FORM OF INTOXICATION.



Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt





Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt

# STEVEN /NARUSEB

**DECENTRALISING  
AND SUSTAINING  
THE MUSIC BUSINESS  
ACROSS NAMIBIAN  
REGIONS**

PRODUCER, WELWITSCHIA MUSIC PRODUCTIONS MANAGING MEMBER

Steven Alvin /Naruseb is a renowned musician, music producer and businessman. He is the founder of Welwitschia Music Productions (WMP) and his collaborating artists are a team of highly talented musicians and performers, committed to expanding the music industry by encouraging collaborative, unique music making. /Naruseb studied cost accounting and business management (1996 to 2001) and attended jazz piano classes at the College of the Arts (COTA) in Windhoek for four years. The musician, producer and mentor strives to effect change in the Namibian music sector with his vision to provide explorative music making for various artists he works with.

WMP vision:

We aim to represent Namibia and its arts, especially local culture music from Swakopmund, by giving hope to underprivileged talented musicians and artists to further be an example for the youth and community.





IF YOU DO NOT PERFORM LIVE, YOU WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT THE PEOPLE WANT TO CONSUME, LIVE AND DIRECT.

*Interviewed by Lavinia Kapewasha, NTN production coordinator.*

### **What is your background and how did your interest in music develop?**

I grew up in Mondesa, Swakopmund, where I was born. I am a musician and professional keyboard player as well as a businessman. My musical journey started from a very young age when my father introduced me to playing a traditional homemade guitar. My mother played the flute. I can say I grew up in a musical house, however, in those years, of course, you could not make a living out of music and both my parents had other professions. They loved music, they had tapes, which I would listen to all the time, and this influenced me to create melodies from a young age. Although music was abundant at home, it was mostly foreign music, and I did not want to be a follower. I think that is why I decided to make music; I wanted to be original and not consume what the world was listening to.

I studied cost accounting and business management at the Polytechnic of Namibia (now the Namibia University of Science and Technology) and piano at COTA. During my stay in Windhoek, we had created a band with Amakhoe and Salomon Harises and this created a space where we applied our musicality a lot. I also gained studio recording and mixing skills from Burton Reid at NBC, and this is how I grew as a producer with a background coming from live music.

### **When and why was WMP created? What was the aim of creating the music label?**

In 2003, I moved to Swakopmund with WMP from Windhoek. Establishing WMP in Swakopmund was driven by the fact

there was no place at the time to nurture the raw musical talent in the town. There was a need for infrastructure, as we would often see artists travelling to Windhoek for music production. With the experience gained from Burton, I invested in equipment and had the studio set up. WMP increasingly filled a gap in the coast by nurturing young artists who were working in isolation and had little direction in building their sounds. Most of the artists didn't know how to collaborate, therefore, WMP nurtured a space of collaborative music making. It functioned as a space and label that embraced multiculturalism and experimental music making. That is how it became popular. During the peak of the label, the brand had grown and carried so much weight across the country. Artists would go on tour, and shows were well attended and received well by dynamic audiences. The main aim of WMP is collaborative work towards building Namibian uniqueness. I have always invested in building a unique Namibian sound and identity, hence developing ma /gaisa.

### **WMP has been a pioneer in promoting music, particularly in the Erongo Region. What have been some highlights of the label at the coast and beyond?**

The artists who were signed to WMP were followed and their work was consumed nationwide. Their recognition had grown to an extent that even the city of Swakopmund honoured them with street names. This is because the artists played a key role in promoting the creative potential of the town. Swakopmund had quickly become a music hub through WMP. The label had also seen artists recognised on the continent. For example, Stella is the first Namibian to perform at the Kora awards, as well as the Boundless Africa Festival in Durban and the

Nelson Mandela Festival.

Another consistent highlight is personal development through music making. Most of the artists come from troubled backgrounds, and they sign on and work towards their careers to make a living to sustain their lives. This is why I had to highlight Erongo, as I believe you have to start at home. I believe that the music business should not only be limited to Windhoek. More can be done in other regions as well.

### **WMP has also been key in enriching and promoting the ma /gaisa sound. What have been some highlights of the genre over the past years? What business opportunities did this unique sound offer to artists?**

The first produced album from WMP in the ma /gaisa genre is with the late Phura; known as the king of ma /gaisa. Phura won Fame Factory, which was a competition with local bands in Windhoek that took place in 2004 at the Warehouse Theatre. He won the grand prize and from there, the genre started to grow as he promoted it further. Many had become interested and embraced the sound further. As you know, popularity goes hand in hand with sales and consumption. As a unique sound, many Namibians were listening to it. It became very influential. Even in South Africa, still to this day, they still play Phura's music.

For many, music making through ma /gaisa has become a carrier, a source of income and a sense of belonging. It is a genre that has changed the perception of the public, and drove consumption. Audiences and listeners feel that it is relatable and lively. This is what I would like to challenge young artists with, creating unique sounds that are

relatable and consistently take audiences on a journey when played or performed.

**You are an artist with both a live and studio practice. What is your perspective on the importance of live band performances for young artists?**

Live performance is like being part of a soccer team. A group of people all with different tasks, but blending it all into one. Live performance teaches one artistic discipline and focus. This is needed for any performer. As much as live music is robust, it teaches you how to balance stage enjoyment, service and teamwork. It is also a great way to explore and show off your artistic growth. It is not a very good idea to limit yourself to the studio only; it weakens your performance muscles. There should be a balance.

Fortunately, when I was studying, I had a band with Amakhoe and Salomon Harises. The experience of performing live helped us learn different genres and allowed us to perform with Ras Sheehama and others, as we were like seasoned musicians, even in the early days.

If you do not perform live, you will never know what the people want to consume, live and direct. You get to read everything happening at the same time (trends, audience engagement, tech, etc.) during live events. Especially for live audiences, any musician needs to study the needs, wants and processes of audiences. You are consistently exposed and try new things with live audiences. It can be challenging, yet it exercises your muscles at the same time. I would add that this is where the challenge of studio-based music making comes in. There should be some sort of balance so that we do not completely move into the studio or towards electronic-based music. Live performance is extremely important, as you get to connect with various audiences in a way that electronic music is limiting. If you study your community, you will know what they want.

For example, we all know how busy and packed oviritje and ma /gaisa shows are; it is because of their uniqueness and the robust quality of the live instrumental performances.

**Many seasoned musicians live and work in Windhoek. What is your suggestion for artists balancing access to good infrastructure such as studios in main towns, but still growing their following across smaller towns?**

What I have noticed about music is that if the sound or idea is good, you do not need a

huge studio for the music to be recognised. Some artists do not need to produce in big studios at all. It's quite simple, if the song is great then people will enjoy it. I would suggest for the upcoming artists to work on melodies and artistry. Your work will speak for itself. If your music approach is enjoyable and relatable, you don't need the big fancy studios. I believe that what you push for you will accomplish. This is if you have a clear understanding of the market and quality. Therefore, hard work pays off. I must add that not everyone wants to come to Windhoek to record their songs. Within this pandemic, many places have closed down, especially here in Windhoek, and the city is expensive too. They must try to produce their music within their towns, work with their peers to produce great music, as you can always travel to Windhoek whenever you have to perform. In addition, people from big towns do not always support people from smaller towns or communities. So, I would advise artists to start laying their foundation in their hometown.

**Touring in smaller towns is also key to building a music career and following. What guidelines would you set out for artists touring and performing across different Namibian towns?**

When WMP was promoting artists, the team would tour from the north, or in the south. We would go around the country to promote the artists and it was working. We were lucky enough to tour as a group, but it would be different for an individual artist. It is essential to tour around Namibia, but artists should take into consideration that they must perform as if it was the last time they ever performed. They need to give 110%. They must properly conduct themselves, as their name will carry them. They must dress properly and always be professional.

If you don't tour, how will you promote yourself? It is a marketing strategy. Young artists must get around. I prefer small towns, as marketing in small towns is easier and infrastructure is affordable as well. News spreads fast. Artists should also bank on the fact that very few activities take place in small towns, thus there is a likeliness that a considerable amount of people will show up for your shows when on tour and when marketed. Additionally, you do not need to spend a lot of money in smaller towns and the rentals of infrastructure would probably be cheaper.

**You recently held the first The Next Ma /Gaisa Star Search. Why did you embark on this venture?**

This was part of my vision and my desire. The show was not forced; it came from my need to share the message of the sound and my



MOST OF THE ARTISTS DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO COLLABORATE, THEREFORE, WMP NURTURED A SPACE OF COLLABORATIVE MUSIC MAKING. IT FUNCTIONED AS SPACE AND LABEL THAT EMBRACED MULTICULTURALISM AND EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC MAKING. THAT IS HOW IT BECAME POPULAR.



purpose. I aim to promote something unique; something called our own; truly Namibian sound addressed solely as such. It is for the next generation to be able to work on the sound and generate more of this sound for future generations. It was a new experience for many of the people involved; my band for example learnt a lot and, for me, that means a lot.

**You had artists auditioning from different parts of the country. What were some of your reflections from the talent you witnessed?**

Everybody has their uniqueness and that, of course, was interesting. With some of the auditionees, I could see the influence of the

foreign sounds and music, which in turn gave an idea of how you can approach and adapt the sound.

There is a lot of promise with the young talents as well as the musicians who formed the band. Unfortunately, we could not accept everyone who applied, but hopefully, this year [2021], more talent will come forth. We had over 200 applications, only 50 made it to the judging stage, and only five performed for the finale. You can imagine the amount of interest.

Music changes and adapts, and ma / gaisa will go through that. With the new generations, it will change, but as long as the foundation is there and we know that

this is Namibia, then all is fine. I aim to have the foundation laid. With the young talents we saw, they adapted the sound, and it is interesting to see the natural progression.

**What would you like to see the next generation of Namibian artists do differently?**

I wouldn't want them to do something different, but I would love for Namibian artists to make music with our sound and languages. I want to encourage young musicians to study our cultures, study the norms, study the music, and come back to the city and implement. We shouldn't lose touch with ourselves, otherwise, the internet and globalisation will confuse us too much.

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*Photo contributed*









Photo contributed



# DJ KBOZ

## **DIVERSIFYING THE NAMIBIAN SOUND FOR THE REGIONAL MARKET**

PRODUCER, DJ.

DJ KBoz is one of the most influential DJs in Namibia. He was born in Kenya and later moved to Canada. In 1998, he moved to Namibia. As a producer, he has worked on award-winning tracks such as 'Boss Madam' by Sally, 'Onkalamwenyo' by Mushe, 'Koskola Daar' by Exit and 'Tuhafeni Pamwe' by Blossom. He was part of the team that produced albums such as 'Letter to the President' by Mushe and 'Komuthima Gwomeya' by Blossom. He is involved in a number of genres such as hip-hop, R&B, jazz, house, pop, rock, Afropop and dancehall, and has worked on multiple award-winning albums in Namibia.

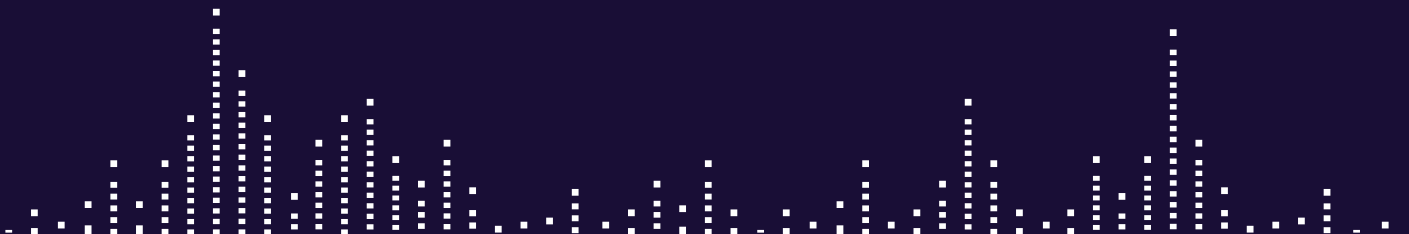




Photo contributed

*Interviewed by Lavinia Kapewasha, NTN production coordinator.*

### **Who do you make music for?**

I am the kind of artist who goes with the time. I pay particular attention to consumers when I make music. My music changes for generations. Moving with every generation allows me to introduce my sound to the next because I also want to experience what the new generation is doing. Music has to be timeless; therefore, you need to move with the times. Take for example the producers I started with, not many are relevant today because they are stuck to a certain sound and, unfortunately, if you remain strictly tied to a certain sound, you can easily be left behind because things are ever-changing. I often look at producers such as Maphorisa (SA), he is the type who constantly reinvents himself, which is a trait I follow and strongly recommend.

### **How would you describe your sound and what are your influences or inspiration?**

My sound is a collective of different sounds, drawn from my upbringing, which was centred on African sounds. I also commit

myself to study what the newer generations are listening to and like. In this regard, as a producer, there is no reinventing the wheel. I simply take the old African sound and modernise it.

We always have to remember that the younger generation is still African, and the younger generation still listens to the sounds their parents used to listen to when they were younger. Now, when they grow up and you familiarise them with that old sound with a new feel, a different sonic twist takes place that captivates them. So, with my basis on African sounds, blended with what is relating to passing generations, is how I approach my sound.

Secondly, what influences and inspires my sound is the mental state of the people. I always tell producers and DJs it is good to travel. Not just around the world, but in your own country. Travel and take time to see how people live so you can realise how irrelevant your sound is in those places. This approach helps me stay informed on what I can adapt and embrace, especially for the different audience spaces I have to fulfil. I gained so much from travelling around the country, and I live by the words that the more you travel, the more you are exposed, the more

intelligent you become as an artist.

### **When you initially started working as a producer, what was Namibia's sound then in comparison to now? What has changed over the years?**

Back in the day, unique contemporary Namibian sounds were still shaping. There was no sound standardisation amongst producers. We were winging it most of the time. We would copy big hip-hop or R&B sounds, or try to copy Jay-Z until Killa B, a Namibian producer, inspired me. He introduced me to the Damara punch sound and the bongo flavour, I started practising and playing that kind of music. It was terrible at first; we did not have the software and access to many studios. Back then, we used FruityLoops and we hated it, as the software was substandard. It was not until I was introduced to Reason Studios software, which was easy to work with and manageable and a dream. In our early days, we did not know how to mix and master. Songs and sounds would be distorted and not mixed well. We would be satisfied with a clean mix, but it was below anything reputable.



However, for this generation and era, the internet and the software that is being utilised are much better than what producers used back in the day. Young producers can do so much in their bedrooms; they are producing studio-worthy material, which is leaps and bounds from what we did. Despite all of this, we still have a long way to go due to the population. We, unfortunately, have limited consumers, which translates to making less income. Less income equates to not having enough money to buy the latest software or hardware. For example, there are producers from Nigeria who I produced with back in the day, having been in the industry a certain time. If I compare them to us, where they are right now, it is as if they started way before me. They can charge how much they want for their tracks; the artists will come and record and then you do the math and see how much they end up with. There, you can do anything you want just from one artist. You can charge per song and make a substantial income from one artist. Sadly, our population is not big enough for me to compete with the next producer to be able to have the same equipment and opportunities. This is our reality.

**As a producer, what encouraged/ influenced you to explore blended sounds?**

My background in studying music theory allowed me to explore sounds. I studied music at school and ended up doing classes with Bonnie Pereko, which was more or less a course to keep my music skill at par. I am a pianist and piano is the core of any producer. You can do so much with the piano in comparison to other instruments. If you know how to read music, you will have a very long career as you can adapt to any environment and need. The beauty of learning to play the piano is that you are taught how to create. From creation comes reading and listening.

Producers nowadays are not taught that. They do the opposite; they listen, and then they emulate. Quite a few producers will listen to a song and reproduce it by picking up the different notes and instruments. The Namibian sound is certainly facing challenges, one of those being the lack of skills such as improvising. I was taught first to read, and then taught to listen, and thereafter to compose; thus creating. Many fail as they cannot create. For blending sounds, my varied experience and musical taste stem from a vast amount of African music. From this foundation, I started to understand why instruments sound the way they do, and

when we play, it has a certain impact and effect. My teacher told us that our syllabus teaches us classical music, but there is a reason why we have traditional music, which gives you an indication of what African music should sound like. This is a very important foundation, which many recording artists and producers do not have.

If I did not go through my foundational and theoretical training, I would not be here. I would only be making western-influenced music. You need to understand the two and blend them. If you do not want to take my advice, look at the 60s and 70s for example, where the best music in the world came from, as they experimented and did not know what they were doing, but they made sounds. The 80s, on the other hand, was driven by sampling. Now, each generation has to find a sound they like. We have to listen and see how we can blend it, as music is universal. Not all of us have the skill, but that is why there are producers who are highly knowledgeable and respected as they cracked the code - the likes of Dr Dre, Timbaland and Maphorisa. I have to draw from Maphorisa once again, as he does not necessarily have to be the one who is producing, but he knows how to put it together and can offer theoretical recommendations that are applicable at any given moment. Maphorisa made it mainstream; he was able to change amapiano sound with soul. In my view, we have not reached that level of theoretical application in the Namibian music business to effect enough influence.

**Would blending Namibian sounds with international influences boost or diminish visibility for music coming from a small country? Especially in terms of the continental competition.**

I will take you on a little journey. When we released the Die Hele Box, a producer in the UK asked me what sound this was. I said it is Namibia. To my surprise, he said it would be a hit in the UK due to the diaspora. The beats would fit well with the UK grime artists and rappers as well. It was described as a unique sound, with elements of African sounds and others we know of, such as hip-hop and amapiano, but it is a new sound nonetheless. He explained further that in the UK, they would not know how to explain it and that the uniqueness would make me stand out. The process of creating the album stemmed from the idea of what Exit would like, and the idea of what Samuele (previously Qondja)



*Photo contributed*

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would like. We got the fans excited on social media and asked them what they would like to hear, and they said they wanted the 'Koek en Jam' Qondja and the 'Koskola Daar' Exit sound. With that in mind, I went back to the era and incorporated modern sounds. I did not know it at that moment, but I created a completely new sound, and it was met with praise. It put into perspective how our people, Namibian people, like our music.

### **Are you saying that Namibian artists should diversify their sound for sustainable purposes?**

I have come to realise Namibians get bored easily, but that does not mean the sound is not working; it might just not be working due to the current circumstances. We have to stop trying to make everything a hit. People might not be ready for this sound right now. Art is subjective. Do not expect everyone to like it. The amount of work and creativity an artist puts in might not be the space where the consumers are now.

One thing we have to remember, especially in this time, is that the world stopped listening to music the way it used to. This time has taught us that change is not the enemy. Change is needed; we need to change everything about ourselves, depending on your consumer. And it is not called being a sell-out. The entertainment business is about entertaining the consumer and you cannot entertain your consumer if your brand is not correlating to what they are doing in their day-to-day life transformations.

### **From a producer's perspective, what do you think are the keys to success in making profitable music locally and within the continent?**

It comes down to studying audiences. One of the most prolific artists in Namibia is Tate Buti, who knows his audience. Whatever he does, he has his audience in mind. He knows to change his sound and still cater to that audience. He incorporates his sound and puts a little bit of house here and there, and it still works. Finding that sweet spot of knowing your consumers makes you a successful artist. Another example is Gazza. He changes with time, and it comes effortlessly, as he studies what the younger generation is doing. It is a question artists need to ask themselves: Who are my consumers? Ask yourself this question and assess from each angle. Whom did you create for? Whom are you creating for now?

Whom will you create for in the future?

There are three audiences you have to cater for all the time. You have your audience that is your peers. You have your current consumers, and then you have your future consumers. Create for your peers so they know that you still have it. When you have proved that, you take them back to where they loved you at first. Your current consumers are your everyday consumers and you cater to them daily. Then, your future consumers, the oncoming generation. This is where your social responsibility comes in handy. You do activities such as youth-centred events. This is because they are your future, and you want to make yourself known to them. This is so that they are aware of you and relate to you throughout. This comes in handy when they grow into consuming adults. It is an approach to build a future following and appreciation of your work.

### **What model can producers look at in pushing sounds to reach the continental market?**

Our population is challenging the growth towards a sustainable sector. Secondly, in Namibia, we need to learn to make more noise now. This is dependent on other key players in the sector. We are very complacent and quiet when it comes to our music, people and culture. Thirdly, we give up and throw in the towel too quickly or we do not like the long tedious processes. We have to be comfortable with doing something now that might not bear fruit instantly. The journey is long and tough, however, without the consistent input, I would not be here. I had to take many losses where I was questioned, which never came easy when I was younger. I felt attacked. Now, I understand the process of how and why it happened. You have to believe in yourself, you have to understand making people believe in you comes with time. Time will tell, which comes with experience. The person I was back then, a hungry young producer who suffered from anxiety due to this insane pressure to be this big producer and DJ, is far from who I am now. You get to a point where you are challenging everything in the system because it is not working for you, but you learn as you go. And it is not that people do not want to work with you or do not trust you, it's only that people don't know you. Giving your best occasionally will not cut it, as they will see you as the person who is just seen once in a while. But if you are consistent, your consistency is what makes

people keep having that eye on you, and anticipating what you're about to do next. I look at my career and assess it, I might have been the biggest DJ from 2003 to 2013, but then from 2013 other DJs came out and took that space. Which is great! So, if I'm going to base everything on my legacy that happened years ago, then I am lying to myself. I have to keep that consistency that even with the DJs who are popular right now, my name should still be there. I might not be "in thing" right now, but everyone knows you cannot have a show without having Kboz.

### **How do you think young and upcoming music producers can encourage and explore sounds informed by local heritages?**

Young producers and musicians need to be exposed to our sounds. We cannot expect them to be exposed if the avenues and channels are not showcasing our sounds. The younger generation might not be exposed to what is going on in their own country. Secondly, we need to make this music available. NBC can look at opening up their library, so that the young musicians can have access and to listen to the archive, research and inspire them. Thirdly, travel. As mentioned before, travel to get yourself out of your circumstances, circle and sphere. Open your eyes to the rest of Namibia. From my travels, I came to realise my favourite indigenous sound is from the Zambezi Region.

We all know trap is popular, and I do not mind artists using trap beats, but what will make you stand apart is being traditional on a trap beat. Look at Nga-I, the ovi-trap chief. He is the king of hooks in my book, if you want a great hook, look to Nga-I. He has mastered heritage, taking our indigenous sound and modernising it. One can assess it by looking at his music - if you take away the music and just listen to the vocals, he sings in the traditional oviritje timbre. That is how you take a traditional sound and modernise it.

### **In terms of the music business, how does an artist strike a balance between blending lucrative sounds and maintaining some form of authenticity?**

Finding the balance between lucrative sounds and maintaining authenticity comes down to the presentation. Look at companies like MTC or Coca-Cola. When you drink Coca-Cola, it is still the same taste, however, the





bottle keeps changing. So, all you are doing is you are giving a different presentation of the same product. It is the same with MTC, the airtime and how they present it. When you walk all over Namibia, you recognise the iconic MTC blue, which is deliberate. The more you see blue, the more you think of MTC. The same applies to artists. It does not matter if you're changing sounds, or whether your sound is the same throughout your career, if your presentation is changing, people will embrace you. Your consumers will not feel like they are being served the same drink or production repeatedly. It is about sustaining your middle ground, which is not solely making good music. It should be about monetary value. I should be able to tell the next big producer "oh, look at this,

you can own a house here from music". My aim now as a producer is to help people see the monetary value. For example, the studio space we built and invested in took sacrifice. But I see the bigger picture. You make the sacrifice to achieve. Do not sacrifice blindly, but strategically.

**What is your perspective on the gaps that challenge Namibia's continental market reach? Why haven't we seen successes like our Angolan, Zambian and South African counterparts?**

We have the music, we have the content, but we do not have enough channels. This is not only broadcasting channels; we need

media channels all over. Channel O via DStv can play a song's music video numerous times a day; now imagine the traction that creates. Our music and content need to live elsewhere, not only on YouTube, but also on various other channels for it to sell, stream and reach audiences. We have Donlu and ViralCom. However, we need more. There is a potential for television producers to play a bigger role here.

**In your opinion, what is the best sound to come out of Namibia?**

I would definitely say anything and everything ma /gaisha and oviritje. It is a rich foundation, on which a lot can be built.



WE HAVE TO BE COMFORTABLE WITH DOING SOMETHING NOW THAT MIGHT NOT BEAR FRUIT INSTANTLY.





Photo by Opas Onucheyo



Photo contributed



# DJ CASTRO

## NAVIGATING IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS AS A DJ

DJ

Castro is a DJ based in Windhoek, with eight years of experience in the music sector. He has created a name for himself in the Namibian music scene as one of the most entertaining and influential DJs. He was nominated at the 2020 NAMAs for best newcomer, best house and best male artist. DJ Castro has worked as the brand ambassador for DStv (2019), Cake Energy (2019) and Standard Bank Namibia (2020).



Photo contributed



*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**What are some significant highlights of your career, and at what stage did it become critical to rethink your business and artistry?**

I would say the most significant highlight in my career was sharing the stage with Heavy K in 2016 at the Bush Party, which is an annual event that happens in Otjiwarongo. I performed for a crowd of 2 000+ people and that boosted my confidence as a DJ. After that, I realised that I had to grow my brand into a business. I envisioned myself on the same level as David Guetta, Martin Garrix, Black Coffee, and many other prominent musicians. I mean, after all, dreams are free for an 18-year-old boy from Orwetoveni. I

had to draw up plans on setting up a team, get finances and focus on the aspects that would enhance my chances of becoming an international DJ. Luckily, I spoke to one of the masterminds of the Bush Party event, and after a fruitful conversation, he came back to me with positive feedback and I ended up joining a record label called YNot Records. I'm still with the same team I started with. We are not where we want to be but we're moving closer to where we see ourselves. Small progress is still progress.

**There are some creatives who think it is easy to become a professional DJ. What are your views on this?**

No, being a professional DJ is not easy. Had it been easy, I believe most people would've been professional DJs. I am still

evolving and growing into the DJ I aspire to be. I've faced challenges, through which I've gained a lot of experience. Coming from a small town with a population of about 30 000 inhabitants has made it more daunting for me to be part of the mainstream. Everything is happening in Windhoek, which means we had to travel for everything. It didn't come easy but we had to make the necessary sacrifices to grow as individuals and as a team.

That was my biggest challenge because in most cases we had to travel for NBC's Whatagwan and radio interviews, which were very costly, but we were left with no choice because we were committed to the cause. Our eyes were and still are fixated on the end goal. I will do everything in my capacity to keep the brand alive and relevant.

**DJs play a significant role in the music business, such as setting new trends and introducing new sounds to audiences. How do you create a balance between current trends and showcasing unique sounds at various events?**

I do not follow trends but I love creating my own. I like creating my own sound which I think is suitable for my craft. I believe balance is important. It is important to know your audience and then tailor your sound to the audience. I think what makes you stand out as a creative is your authenticity. By all means, try to give one-of-a-kind experiences to your audience because that will help you balance the mixture of new trends and your own trend.

**Is it important for a DJ to develop a significant sound and uniqueness? What is your perspective on the issue of versatility in relation to ensuring bookings from different clients?**

As a DJ, I try my best to be unique with every performance. I give my best with every performance and I am always full of zest. In all honesty, the type of genre the majority play is house/dance. For some reason, it is only recognised more if it is from South Africa because that's where the sound originates and they are known for making their house music trend. As for me, developing a significant sound is not a problem because I love soulful music. I love adding my own energy to it and making it happen. At this point, amapiano



music from South Africa is taking the world by storm, which has forced so many DJs to be versatile. I have also worked on a few amapiano songs on my new album dropping at the end of 2021, but most of them are soulful. My perspective on versatility in relation to ensuring a variation of clients is tricky. I believe every DJ has their style because we all don't play the same music or same genre, which makes us all unique in our own way and that's what makes us secure bookings, simply because you attract the type of audience your client aligns with. However, I would encourage emerging DJs to be versatile because you're challenging yourself and by doing so, you are growing and learning.

**What have been some important lessons you've learnt from working with event organisers in Namibia?**

I've learnt that communication is of paramount importance. It sets a tone of understanding yourself and whoever you engage with. Poor communication often leads to misunderstandings and frustration. There are a few procedures to be followed when booking me for your event because it's difficult for a DJ to delineate their art if everything requested in the technical rider is not available as requested. Some event promoters don't respect that, which leads to a DJ not performing as planned. Especially in Namibia, our event promoters have been

failing us but a few are learning and pulling up their socks. My team never compromises when it comes to my bookings because they make sure everything is arranged as requested before I make my appearance on stage.

At this point, we haven't been working with a lot of international gigs because of Covid-19, but I remember being booked in South Africa and Angola. It was a cordial reception and that motivates one to work harder because people in other countries appreciate your art.

**With DJs being important stakeholders in promoting musicians, how would you encourage emerging artists to engage, network and share their work with DJs? What works and what doesn't in your experience?**

I encourage emerging artists to always make sure that their songs are well mastered and sent in full packs because it makes it easy for the DJ to mix it. When you give a DJ a song that is not well mastered, it makes it difficult for them to add it to their playlist. Emerging artists should also try to reach out to various DJs who play their genre. For example, it's easy to play Afropop songs when you are a DJ who mostly plays Afropop. It's all about alignment.

**Building a strong brand is critical**

**for a professional DJ. How have you approached this and business networks?**

Consistency is a language that I speak eloquently when it comes to delivering music and being active on social media. Social media is the prime platform to connect as an entrepreneur and it has made it easier to promote my talent. I am research-driven and because of this attribute, I spend much of my time doing research on my career and other things I love such as fashion and influencing. I deem it necessary to educate myself on the things I have an interest in.

**You have partnered with significant corporates such as Coca-Cola and Standard Bank. How does this reflect on your profile and brand? What are some of your great lessons in working with corporates?**

Working with Coca-Cola, Standard Bank and DStv has helped me understand corporate service providers and build great capacity in terms of business and social media. Corporate service providers give you the experience, maturity and discipline you need to become a better influencer. Corporate teaches you to be passive aggressive and the significance of time management, which has a positive impact on your profile and brand. One of the greatest lessons of



*Photo contributed*



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I DO NOT FOLLOW TRENDS BUT I LOVE CREATING MY OWN. I LIKE CREATING MY OWN SOUND WHICH I THINK IS SUITABLE FOR MY CRAFT. I BELIEVE BALANCE IS IMPORTANT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE AND THEN TAILOR YOUR SOUND TO THE AUDIENCE.



Photo contributed

working with corporate businesses for me is how they encourage you to bring the best out of yourself and simultaneously instill composure in my character. Your brain becomes wired in such a way that you start thinking on a corporate level which gives you little to no reason to reply to negative remarks said about you on any platform. This is because you are associated with big brands and whatever you do will reflect back on them.

**Would you say it is beneficial for a DJ to be signed to a label or have managerial support?**

Yes, as it can offer more opportunities. Some might feel it's not necessary for Namibia but think of it as a creative who wants to grow internationally. Obviously, you will need a PR team, graphic team and stylist to help you reach the top. Get a team that is equally hungry for growth. Transparency should be a foundational element in any team.

**What protective mechanisms would you encourage for DJs, especially with regards to copyright and legal issues?**

Marking your work is a clear indication that it's protected by copyright. The best way in Namibia would be to get registered and licensed with NASCAM for full legal protection. Uploading your music online can broaden your audience; I realised that my fellow Namibian artists don't really consider online music. Let us please upload our music from various cultures online to promote our cultures like other countries. Music is a universal language.

**A DJ career can be unsustainable without strategic vision and planning. What common business mistakes have you witnessed in Namibian DJs across the years?**

I think as DJs we shouldn't just focus on gigs

alone; we need to branch out. Let's make our own music as DJs and try our ultimate best to push our own songs. Don't limit yourself; sell yourself to the corporate world as well. Lastly, don't be hesitant to tap into other industries like fashion and business ventures and try to see business in every aspect of life. At the same time, master the art you love. Namibian DJs need unity in order to break barriers and promote exposure. We have to push our culture as a whole like other countries.

**Global sounds and music trends are ever-changing. What barriers would you encourage emerging music artists to break in Namibia?**

Always keep up with new trends and don't be afraid to venture into new sounds. Challenge yourself to move beyond what you are used to. Humility is an important attribute that will open many doors for emerging artists as well.





*Photo by Opas Onucheyo*

Photo by Luciano Siluka



# RUKEE KAAKUNGA

**BUILDING YOUR  
CAREER IN THE  
MUSIC BUSINESS:  
IMAGE AND  
BRANDING**

## COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONAL

Rukee Kaakunga is a Windhoek-based communications professional who is passionate about the use of creative storytelling to help build brands. A qualified journalist, her career began on the entertainment desk at The Namibian, working as a reporter for The Weekender. Currently employed as the content editor at 99FM and the public relations officer for #LearnOnOne – a One Africa TV educational programme, Rukee prides herself on her ability to merge her journalistic skills and communications expertise to help Namibian brands stand out.



Everyone who understands public relations (PR) will attest that when it comes to a career in the limelight, image and branding is everything! The same can be said for music brands, which require strategic publicity, marketing and promotion in order to reach wider audiences, attract new fans and maintain sound relationships with stakeholders (including audiences, the media, fellow musicians, etc).

For the following piece, I aim to explain the importance of PR and branding specifically as areas that can boost musicians' careers and help to propel them to greater heights.

### **Why invest in PR?**

Look across the world and you'll realise that your favourite musicians all have a great image and PR story, complemented by a strong brand identity. Think Beyoncé's famous PR machine that kept her 2016 surprise album a secret and had the press, fans and foes alike eating out of the palm of the megastar's hand once it finally dropped - unannounced. The pop icon is known as the one celebrity whose private business remains mostly private. Her brand has evolved strategically from a wholesome member of an R&B girl group to a global phenomenon adored by her legion of fans.

These days, with the number of artists competing for recognition and visibility, it isn't good enough to simply make good music, and artists like Beyoncé understand this. She capitalises on the digital sphere, uses powerful imagery to sell her music, and her ability to share private information on her terms keeps fans begging for more.

Good PR helps you build a strong brand identity and artists who invest in or - at least understand - basic PR fundamentals are usually the ones who shoot to stardom while the rest remain invisible.

To understand why you need PR, it's important to know what PR is and the value it adds to your team. The definition of PR can be traced back to the early 20th century, but for the sake of relevance, we'll go with the [Chartered Institute of Public Relations](#) modern definition, which states: "Public relations is about reputation - the result of what you say, what you do and what others say about you." By this definition, PR is all about reputation. It's about managing your reputation by influencing opinions, behaviour and maintaining beneficial relationships sustainably.

### **PR and the artist - making the most of your story**

Once you understand the need for PR, you'll soon learn that it isn't as simple as getting press features. It's crucial to first and foremost establish who you are, what drives you, what your purpose is and how you can use that to connect with fans, clients and the media.

Understanding who you are and your brand identity helps you develop a brand identity that's unique, identifiable and valuable. Ask yourself how you wish to be identified. When someone looks at you and interacts with you, what is the one thing you want to stand out? Understanding this, understanding your purpose in life and what you want to be known for will be the first step a PR representative will take to create a PR strategy that works for you.

### **Publicity and the art of media engagement**

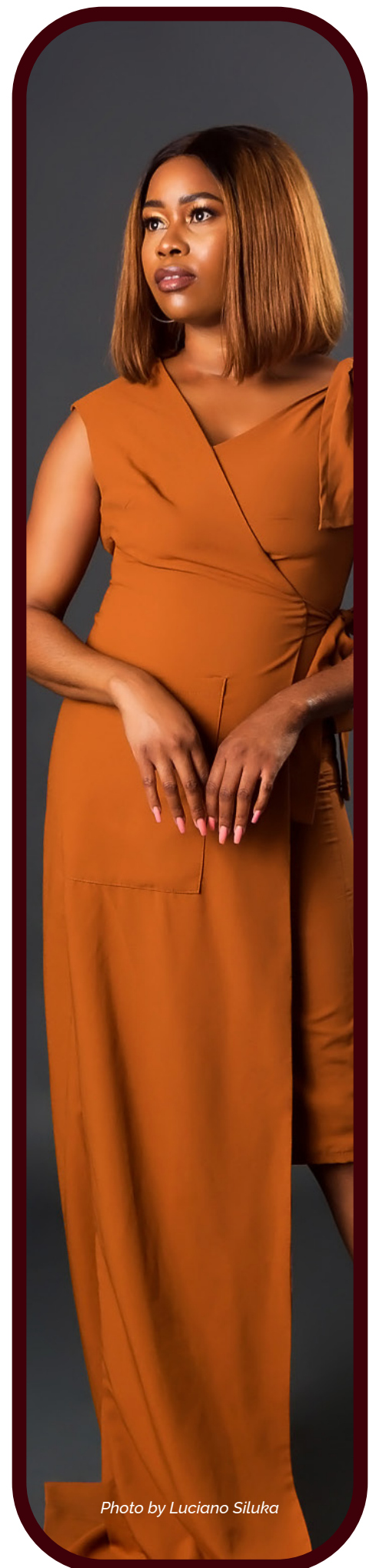
Another important area of PR is how you leverage media to get free or paid-for exposure for your brand. As one of your most important stakeholders, the media can literally make or break your career, so your relationship with them is of utmost importance.

Your relationship with media practitioners is just as important as the one you have with your fans, in fact, it's through the media that you can disseminate mass information to your fan base more efficiently. Remember that in Namibia the percentage of people who are on social media is very low. According to the 2019 [Hootsuite data report](#), only 26% of Namibians are active social media users. This means that traditional mediums (radio, TV and print) are still the most accessed in the country, so as an artist, the best way to reach larger audiences is through these platforms.

With the Namibian entertainment sector being quite small compared to mega industries elsewhere, it's quite easy to access the media as long as you know how to. For journalists who have a nose for news, it's fairly easy to notice artists as long as they publicise their work correctly. With the right PR strategy, a musician can easily book interview spots with all major broadcast, print and online media houses in just one week of a carefully planned press tour. Even if you aren't based in Windhoek, access to the media is a phone call or email away.

### **Media 101: Common mistakes artists make**

I've worked on both ends of the spectrum - as a journalist covering entertainment news and



*Photo by Luciano Siluka*

Photo by Luciano Siluka



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as a PR representative for entertainment brands - and I can say this: Getting the best out of the media boils down to your professional relationship with them as well as the way you present yourself. However, many musicians are unaware of the mistakes they make when dealing with the media, mistakes which cost them in the long run.

#### **- Not doing your research**

Call all the journalists on your media list and ask them how their systems work. More often than not, they'll happily share this information with you as it makes their work easier. Knowing the guidelines that media houses operate under is the quickest way to know what kind of content they usually publish or broadcast. Find out where the local journalists work, what they specialise in and what kind of media house they represent. It's also important to keep track of career shifts amongst journalists and keep track of entertainment journalists, radio DJs, TV producers and relevant editors.

#### **- Not properly presenting your brand**

So, you have no website, you don't consistently share your latest projects on your social media platforms, your social media platforms have no contact information, you are almost never available for interviews and you have no press pack... There are all common mistakes to avoid:

#### **- Unprofessionalism**

Arriving late for interviews, not showing up at all, attacking journalists when you're unhappy with their coverage - all this does is antagonise the journalist and block any opportunities you may have had to be featured.

Many of these mistakes also stem from a general misunderstanding of the role of the media and its importance in the careers of artists. Misconceptions range from the perception that journalists are obliged to cover all artists, no matter the context, or that they are not allowed to give negative critique. Some artists fail to understand that unless you pay for press coverage, a journalist does not owe you a good review or any coverage at all. They cover your story according to their editorial guidelines.

#### **How to stand out and get noticed by the media**

One of the best ways to package your brand and make it easy for journalists to learn about you or to give them easier access to your current projects is through press packs/ electronic media kits.

Think of your media kit as your artist CV. It should be professional, legible and provide all the information you want to convey. As long as you have access to the internet, it's easy and cheap to create a basic media kit. Free sites like Canva make it easy to create your own, with thousands of templates to choose from.

#### **What to include in your media kit:**

- Your name and a short, professional biography
- High resolution, professional photos of yourself plus artwork (ideally downloadable)
- Links to previous press coverage you have received
- Links to your music, videos and social media pages
- Your contact information

Ideally, you should update your media kit yearly with your latest information, achievements and projects. Regular, creative and professional photographs are also highly underrated by Namibian artists. Book yourself a photoshoot with a photographer at least twice a year to keep your imagery updated. A cost-saving alternative is artistic collaborations with photographers, designers or videographers. This allows you to tap into their fan base, tap into each other's skills and creativity and the result is usually phenomenal work that doesn't cost anything.

As Encore blog head of artist relations, Jonny Vervell, says: "Having professionally shot photography indicates to potential clients that you are serious about your craft and understand the value of marketing yourself visually". Yes, photos are that important. A key element in your branding and image, photos have a beautiful way of telling your story and capture your essence beautifully. Photos and videography that show you in your element, while rehearsing or performing, are also something you can consider to up your imagery.

Social media - the gift that keeps giving

In the 21st century, anyone with a career in entertainment would be a fool to stay off social media. Unfortunately, though, while many understand the importance of having a social media presence, few are capitalising on the many online platforms and what they offer. Many artists don't realise that they can lose out on a potential brand endorsement with just one tweet, one Instagram story or one scandalous Facebook Live session.





UNDERSTANDING WHO YOU ARE AND YOUR BRAND IDENTITY HELPS YOU DEVELOP A BRAND IDENTITY THAT'S UNIQUE, IDENTIFIABLE AND VALUABLE.



*Photo by Luciano Siluka*

### Social media 101: How to capitalise on it

- **Understand each platform:** Its benefits and pitfalls and keep up with updates, particularly those concerning privacy and copyright.

- **Platforms like TikTok and Instagram** are particularly great for marketing your music. Think of Drake's very Instagrammable lyrics or viral TickTock songs like Megan Thee Stallion and Cardi B's 'Savage'. Get into these kinds of trends to stay relevant, attract more followers and keep your content fresh.

- **Connect and share news via your social media platforms** and tag your local entertainment journalists, but avoid spamming them.

- **Be creative.** Some artists have mastered the art of creatively teasing

new work, sharing their personal stories or collaborating with other artists and sharing this on their pages.

- **Be professional at all times.** Avoid getting into arguments or being an annoying troll.

- **Capitalise on your community management.** Engaging your followers doesn't only keep you in tune with what your fans think about your work, it also helps you to gauge audience perception and is a great tool to develop a loyal following. Your online community will let you know what they want, so listen to what they're saying about you, and adjust your strategies accordingly.

Whether through social media or the more traditional media route, there are many opportunities to market your brand. If you can afford it, it's always advisable to hire PR and digital marketing professionals who manage your brand while you focus on creating. If that isn't something you can afford, simply learn how to use your social media, work on your relationship with traditional media while maintaining and cultivating a professional image at all times, and making sure that your work is accessible.

Once you start to use PR properly, you will be able to promote any new projects with ease. You will manage your public image more effectively and build your business and personal brand.





*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*



Photo contributed



**BUILDING YOUR  
NETWORK AS  
A CREATIVE  
ENTREPRENEUR**

MUSICIAN, ENTREPRENEUR, PHILANTHROPIST.

Lazarus Karandu Shiimi, mostly known as Gazza, is a musician, entrepreneur and philanthropist. After completing matric, he went to South Africa to pursue his studies and make a name for himself. Gazza studied marketing at Boston City Campus and Business School in Cape Town and later focused on building his music brand. His music is a mixture of kwaito, dancehall, house, reggae, amapiano and hip-hop. Gazza sings about real-life issues, and his 'Chelete' music video, which talks about the financial challenges Namibia is facing, made him the first Namibian artist to reach one million views on YouTube. With 12 albums to date, Gazza has won more than 30 music awards, including five Namibian artist of the year awards and two Channel O Africa awards. With a career spanning over 16 years, he has won the most accolades in the existence of the NAMAs since 2011, with 19 awards, including artist of the decade.

*Interviewed by Lavinia Kapewasha, NTN production coordinator.*

**You have a large fan base that has followed your work since your early career. How have you managed to maintain a relationship with them, and explore new sounds at the same time?**

My relationship with my fans has seen its ups and downs. With the ups, we celebrate together. I had to find a place of comfort and pride with my fans, that's how I've managed to maintain the relationship. When the relationship is off, I work harder, pushing for innovation and creativity to meet their expectations. I can't measure it countrywide, but my fan base grows as I reach various objectives and expectations. I follow a model of listening more and talking less. Combine that with talent and creativity, which is how it has all worked out.

People approach you with different intentions, where you have to filter the information through. Thankfully, I have a very strong team that assists me in these matters. Our approach is very simple. We want to speak the language people understand. Even when releasing music, I release a body of work that adheres to what my people expect from me.

On the other hand, when I experiment and discover myself with music, there might be an adverse effect, but I'm sort of a bridge between the young and the old. I grew up in the village and studied in cities. I have an overview and I try to balance that, even in my music. I incorporate the language of the village, add in the modern flavours and then somehow communicate to the younger generation. This creates a different vibe, language, and feel all at the same time. The music I make comfortably is not defined by genre or sound, it is defined by my preference. Some of that music never sees the light of day, because of fear. The music has a unique experience, which I have to consider might not appeal to my fans. Instead, I make it for myself, and hopefully, in the future, you will hear a whole lot more of that music. I can hear them now: Is this even Gazza? They will ask. However, the music features traditional melodies and harmonising, which is not defined by the keys that we learnt in school. In addition, I try to pass on my tradition through the music to the younger generation. This music also includes messages, and I dream of the day when they can encode the messages to find the real meaning of my music.

**Would you say versatility is an important feature for the music business and the longevity of one's career?**

I wouldn't advise the next artist to aim for versatility. It may not apply to their artistry, their sound, or who they are as a person. If so, then why is Jay Z still doing hip-hop and not amapiano to stay relevant with the time? He doesn't have to, as his brand and value keep him active in the industry. All I enjoy doing is

*Photo contributed*



making music that is authentically me. If it speaks to me, it speaks to me. I do not hear a genre that is new and popping and think to make music around it. I don't just jump on a trend. I try to understand it first and study the methodology behind it. So in the instance if I do jump on it or when I apply my voice to it, it should be authentic. You rarely see me doing a specific genre of music that is popular if I do not understand the sound. If I do, it is because I recognised the sound and ended up becoming enamoured with the genre.

There's a quite few genres or popular sounds that came through, but I never attempted them. Take the gqom sound. I've been trying to understand it, till now, I still haven't. Hence I wouldn't do it. I believe authenticity defines longevity as your message will resonate longer, living in the hearts of the people. That is my definition; it is about your vibe. If you're going to cough on the song, cough with the vibe, with the authenticity, so people will recognise your cough for the next 10 years.

**You studied marketing in Cape Town. How has that helped you to understand the mechanisms of branding and marketing?**

Studying marketing wasn't my first choice. At that time, I didn't know whether I was going to do music, but I knew I wanted to study. Marketing was the only option available and I didn't want to stay another year without educating myself, so I registered the year after matric. At the time, I was working for my brother in the hopes he would pay for my tuition. Unfortunately, he didn't - he said he didn't have the money, but that didn't stop me. I took a bold choice, got on a truck, and hiked down to Cape Town. It wasn't easy, I squatted and had to take the train every morning, 30 kilometres to Boston for three years. If that's not dedication, I don't know what that is. My aim was to be educated and to achieve qualifications.

I didn't see it then, but now it's all coming together. When I started doing music, I didn't



think that I was going to need my marketing background, but I was mistaken. It came through with all I do, even with the vision to start Gazza Music Productions (GMP) and how we execute it to this day. We want to expand and grow into a media house where we provide marketing solutions. We still do music but we advertise, we make commercials, broadcast on radio and television and design magazines too. The label has been sustained from my marketing background and GMP returns on the investment. The money isn't coming from musicians; it's coming from the marketing background.

Marketing is not carved into stone. I learnt about the fundamentals and foundations, but the rest is up to the individual. It keeps you constantly researching to stay informed. Otherwise, we would be thinking billboards and TV or radio are the only means of marketing. New arenas are opening up, which you have to keep up to date with and ensure you're on the playing field. If you want to feed your audience and keep the interaction with the market, it requires different platforms and different ways of communicating. It is an ocean of endless goldfish up for grabs, it all depends on how much time you spend fishing ... you're bound to get one.

**How much time do you invest in studying the industry and how it how shifts and transforms? Would you analytically attribute this feature significantly to your successful career?**

Having analytical skills and applying them to your business is something that everybody should be doing daily. I would not be able to quantify or explain how much time I spend analysing the industry, because that is my life. That is me every day. I have to be on my toes all the time.

It's not a job and I do not think you should even measure it in terms of how much time I spend analysing the industry. It should just be a way of life for an artist; otherwise, you are too comfortable. You'll be comfortable enough to make one hit, you get paid and it's a wrap. Whereas in other industries, artists are surviving off their royalties. We are far from that in Namibia, we have to release an album with hits all the time. Otherwise, you are out and forgotten.

Times are different now. Those of us who are moving with the times are competing with the new age. One thing about the new age is that they are entitled and they make a hit and expect everything to run to them. They think you're only supposed to put in your work and your talent, primarily to make a hit. However, our industry is still in its infancy stages and some of us have to be the manager, the driver, and the choreographer and still manage the emotions within our teams, produce the music, write it, sing it, and still hold the team together; because come morning, the team is on the road again. Let them see your vision, let them see their passion and love for it. With that, you get loyalty.

The old school competing in the same playing field as the new school has the upper hand. We have grown in the industry.

Not everybody knows your name. I have to humble myself in public. I can be anywhere, in a village, but I will introduce myself. You can't expect everyone to know who you are. You will end up making a fool of yourself, and the person's perception of you changes, it will never be the same again. First, assess and learn who they are. That's the difference between the new school and the old school.

**You have built strong brand alliances and have been awarded numerous ambassadorships in your career. Why is it important for an artist to build reputable affiliations?**

Brand affiliations are important, but I've learnt that brands may only come to you when they need something from you. They will not come to you with an interest in building you if you do not have anything to put on the table. Even if you approach them, they'll still reject your request or your proposal because they do not see your value.

Know yourself as a person. You have value. Your time is valuable all the time and putting that energy into your craft is very important. Once you have that value and you have the people, that's what matters. The people are your biggest value because once you do something people like, the corporates will notice.

Working with corporates comes with sacrifice. You will have to discipline yourself and your actions because the following day you have a meeting. This is not in vain. Changing the perception of artists and

*Photo contributed*



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MARKETING IS NOT CARVED INTO STONE. I LEARNT ABOUT THE FUNDAMENTALS AND FOUNDATIONS, BUT THE REST IS UP TO THE INDIVIDUAL. IT KEEPS YOU CONSTANTLY RESEARCHING TO STAY INFORMED.



*Photo contributed*

musicians can come from you. If you present yourself in a certain manner, they might think that the next artist will follow suit, instead of believing the stereotypes about artists. I want people to see that we're the industry and a contributing factor to the economy, just like the other arms of the country. Artists are misinterpreted. It doesn't define us. I want the corporates to sit down with artists and see them for who they are, their capabilities, and capacity - only then should they make their judgments.

**What vital experiences have you taken from working with reputable corporations such as Kia Motors and NBL, to name a few?**

I've learnt that it is all about image and brand equity. If your brand is losing value, they'll lose interest in you. It's not personal, but pure business. If your brand doesn't deliver, they are not shy to cut ties. The relationship is not working any more. In my younger days, I lost out on endorsements because I became careless. I wasn't looking after my brand, but as an artist, you are your brand, decisions you make publicly or personally are attached to the brand. I learnt I had to control it better. You see, I can't just be angry with the public. Even if you provoke me, I must learn to walk away because I am a public figure now, with brand affiliations. If I do not want to lose my affiliations, I need to let go. There was a time where my integrity was questioned, but I had to forego that to protect my brand.

Through interactions with those brands investing in me, I have learnt and experienced how it can be to invest in people and other talents. That indirectly adds to my brand equity because then people respect me. I am not bothered on whether it's five people or

less I helped because I can't help everybody, but at least I am doing my part and I can sleep at night. It helps to sleep at night when you know what the truth is and I try to live by those quotes, not letting the algorithm control me. Even though I have a persona and presence on social media, I try not to get involved in social media too much because it's driven by algorithms. Instead of looking at the drama, learn to understand the algorithms, so that one day you choose an algorithm that will make you happy.

People on social media are not even people, though, let me call them cyborgs. Those cyborgs are monsters and you can never feed enough. They are never satisfied. They always want more. If you start showing up on social media, expect the scrutiny, with statements that you're only showing the work because it's not from the heart. You are only doing it because you want to keep up your brand, your visibility or your appearance.

**You started as a solo, independent artist in the industry. When did you realise it was important to have a professional team to work with and enhance the reach of your work?**

That moment can never be defined by a decision, it's defined by pressure. The moment you realise that you can't do everything and the pressure mounts, that's when you realise that you need help. My first manager was Oraly Zaku, and she was assisted by Sergio. Between the two of them, they took over all administrative tasks and business aspects. They managed me, disciplined me, covered for me, and did everything to protect the brand.

With GMP, I realised all my mistakes from

my younger days, as I have to manage my artists who are signed to the label and I see what great work they did for me. The lessons I carry and enforce now with our artists, is ensuring that discipline, time management, and professionalism are carried throughout.

You can self-manage for now, there's a point when you can do everything for yourself and that's when you start to manage yourself, and but once you start growing, consider finding a manager. If you can't get a manager at the moment, then invest in a personal assistant to help you with administrative tasks so that you can focus on being an artist, which is what matters.

**Why was it important for you to create GMP?**

Creating GMP was not about owning music. When I created that label in 2003, I had no idea what running a label was like. I had my marketing background, however, which helped. I realised I didn't want my work to be floating in the air, I wanted the work to fall under a body, under an umbrella.

Thinking about it, I did not even dream of having a label that has artists represented on the label, it was to protect the music and have a body regulating my music, which is why I called it Gazza Music Productions - the only artist signed at that time was Gazza. It came about for protection, to safeguard the future as I wanted to be in a position where if I have to stand in court one day, I must be representing a company that owns my body of work.

**Working with a team surely means one has to work even harder as there are now more employees. Can you share what this requires in your business?**

At GMP, it requires leadership. At the end of the day, I still feel a sense that they depend on my leadership qualities to be able to carry out and make the vision possible. Everything in life for me has to do with vibes; the atmosphere and a conducive working space. If I have to say something, it means something is bothering me. Other than that, I want to depend on them for their guidance and advice, but then at the end of the day, they all understand what they are fighting for and what the consequences are if they are not delivering. Everyone has responsibilities and everyone has stakes. I'm waiting for the day they tell me to step down and just focus on being an artist and they take control. When it comes to that day, it means my leadership qualities are no longer upholding the standard and I have to understand that and accept it. As we are building toward a future, the vision of the GMP is a media house. We don't know what the future holds, but it might not even be my family running GMP in the future. However, with the mission and the vision clear enough, it can be handed over.



I could have retired a long time ago; living on a farm and growing my maize with other business ventures, but I was not ready to let go of the music. I realised that it is about the responsibility to take on this challenge of being able to touch lives and make a big difference countrywide and in Africa.

**You have collaborated with reputable local and international artists over the years. Besides the creative alliances, how careful should decision-making be for collaboration in the music business? What should emerging artists be aware of in these processes?**

I require a lot of positive energy. When I create my music, it comes from a very deep place, it's spiritual. It's a moment where I allow myself to share my spirituality and creative space with another person, which begs the question: Are they going to carry out the same type of message? So, somewhere and somehow the energy of who I am working with has to be in sync. I am a believer in the power of the universe where energy is the determinant factor. It has shaped me into the person I am today. Projecting that energy is also just as important as receiving it.

I've always been open to collaborating, but one must be careful. Some people want to make use of your name. I experienced that mostly in the past, where you help them achieve milestones, but once they reach a certain level, they show you the middle finger. It takes a while to assess a character. I would've happily recorded songs with emerging artists, but if I feel some of their energy and strategy is not right. I don't even charge them a cent. You can be as talented as hell, but if your attitude is not right, I will not do it. I'm not willing to go against a spiritual moment for me, where I feel I am selling myself. However, what works for me might not work for everyone. Music is personal, and we all have our reasons and preferable processes. It is different for the next artist, but be mindful, even if the price is right, make sure you're comfortable when you make that decision.

My first collaboration was with King Tee Dee, formerly known as The Dogg, and the late Pablo. Back in those days, we had no structure, we were just friends messing around and making music. Nowadays, when

it comes to collaborations, there should be lawyers involved, copyright, IP rights of usage agreements, etc. This is completely different from when we were doing it for the love for music.

**It takes vigorous networking from an artist to maintain your level relationships across the continent. However, at what stage did your work start speaking for itself? What are the gives and takes of networking mechanisms?**

Networking is the same as maintaining a relationship with corporates. When I worked with Davido, I had to be present, disciplined and professional, as he is giving you his time, which is valuable. You have to bring something different to the table, which is similar to any relationship. Say, for example, you and a friend are talking, but it is a one-sided conversation, with the one friend talking about themselves too much. With you not giving, and the other giving too much, there is the point where you cannot give and tolerate any more, and you lose interest. We have to be available to each other too to value each other's time.

If you are consistent, your work starts speaking for itself. You never know when the moment comes, but it does. Everything about putting out a song is a gamble, if it keeps winning, good for you. You will get calls or messages because they have heard this song. Then... boom! Collaboration. It's doing the work while hoping that the next one is going to climb higher than the previous one.

**What did it require of you when you first started to explore the continental music market? What are some of your useful lessons?**

Africa, the continent, there are different climates, different weather conditions, and different humidity levels, and the same applies to working within the continent's music markets - different climates, weather conditions, and humidity. When I worked with Maphorisa, I travelled to South Africa where I was met with a different climate, weather conditions, and humidity. A few days after the initial scheduled recording session, he suddenly decided that we must record immediately, days after the scheduled dates, but I just had to do it. That's what it takes, patience.

Then you go to a place like Nigeria where basically everything is flipped, your planning is crucial due to traffic, corruption, etc. Then there are the others, when you go there, they treat you as if you are nothing. But you don't have time to address it all now, you just have to humble yourself and get what you came for then move on. Nobody needs to necessarily see how you live for them to respect you; they have to know who you are for them to respect you. That's what carries me everywhere I go.

Again, it is almost sacrificial, as Namibia is being put on the map, then the upcoming artist never has to go through the same thing and they don't have to go and introduce who or what Namibia is, because we are paving that way. It's easier for them now, they can just take it from where we left off and take it further.

**As the artist of the decade, which you were awarded at the 2020 NAMAs, and as an artist who is mentoring emerging artists, what do you consistently emphasise when it comes to them navigating the music business?**

I believe in being true to myself. Be driven by faith and maintain patience. The industry changes, people come and people go. Appreciate the time that you are adored and understand there will be a time that you are not appreciated.

I regret that I did not learn how to do it right from the beginning. The longer you see yourself in the industry, the sooner you should start to do things the right way. Have your rights, register your music, so when the industry falls, you are guaranteed your royalties for lifetimes. The sooner you start putting things in order, the sooner you will be able to live comfortably and not under any sort of pressure because of past mistakes. Own your masters and IP, so in the future your family will still enjoy the fruits of your labour.

Don't make hasty decisions, like creating quick hits to save your financial circumstances. You end up releasing a body of work and you deliver something that doesn't match up because mentally you are not there, you are merely chasing the money. Retire on a good note; I surely want that.



HAVING ANALYTICAL SKILLS AND APPLYING THEM TO YOUR BUSINESS IS SOMETHING THAT EVERYBODY SHOULD BE DOING DAILY. I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO QUANTIFY OR EXPLAIN HOW MUCH TIME I SPEND ANALYSING THE INDUSTRY, BECAUSE THAT IS MY LIFE. THAT IS ME EVERY DAY. I HAVE TO BE ON MY TOES ALL THE TIME.



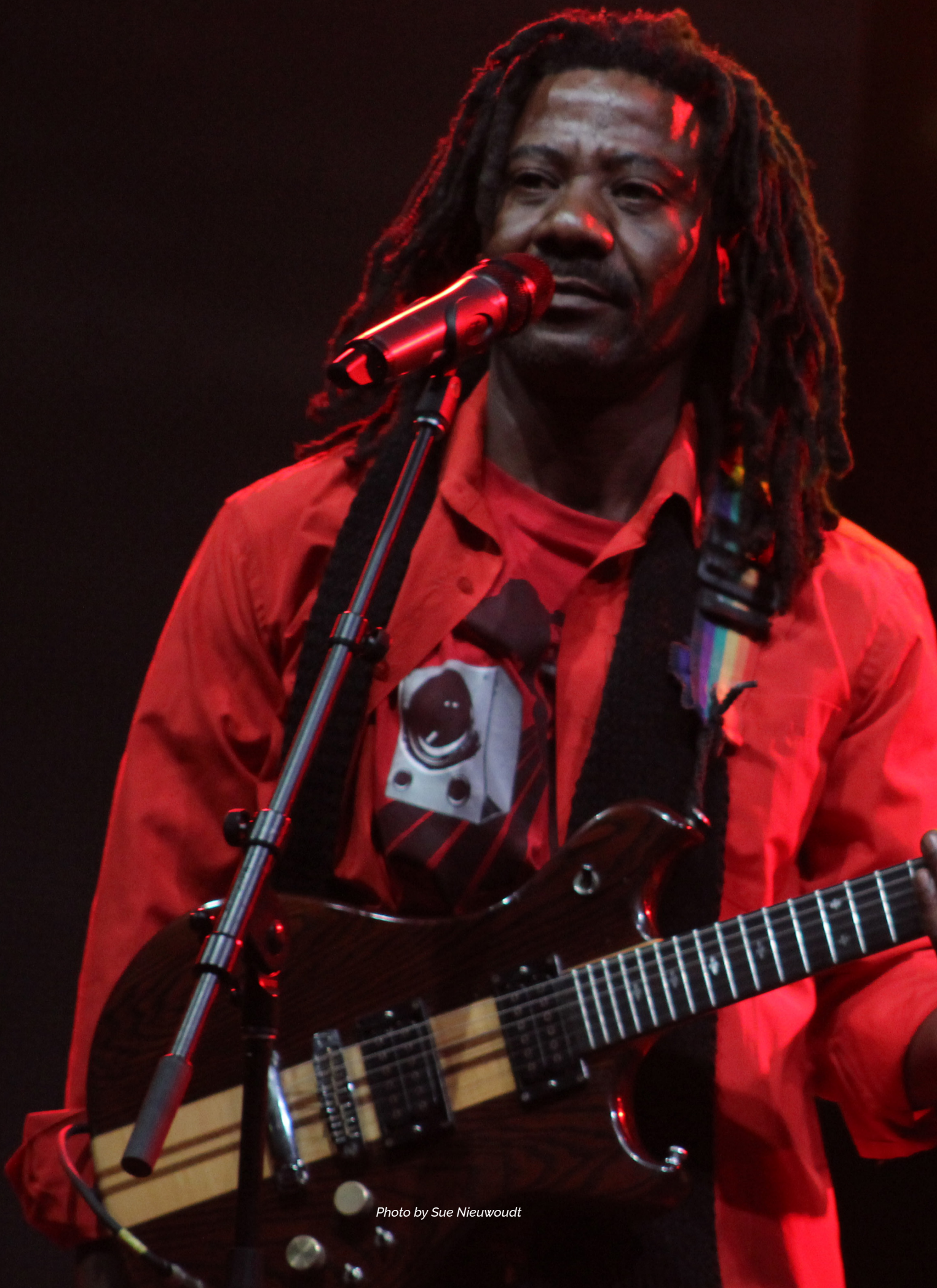


Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt



*Photo contributed*



# EINO JOHN MAX

## **UNDERSTANDING YOUR RIGHTS WITH NASCAM**

### NASCAM CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Eino John Max is the chief executive officer of NASCAM, which administers the rights of the authors, composers and publishers of music in Namibia. He is the chairperson of the CISAC Africa Region, a sub-regional body that is responsible for all the collective management organisations in Africa. He has served on many creative industry committees representing authors, composers and publishers of music as well as other artistic disciplines. Max is one of the longest-serving executives in the collective management organisations (CMOs) of Africa and has helped many establish copyright societies. He has played a role in the development of the Southern, East Africa Copyright Network copyright guide policy and was one of the founding executive members of that committee. He also served as a member of the national committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in Namibia, representing the interests of the creative industries. Max served on many national committees that deal with arts and culture and his main focus is to guide and maintain the protection of the rights of creators, and fight piracy in Namibia.

*Interviewed by Lavinia Kapewasha, NTN production coordinator.*

**How was NASCAM conceived and why was it important to create this organisation in the Namibian industry?**

NASCAM was established after the Copyright and Neighbouring Protection Act, no.6 of 1994 was enacted, and under Section 55 to 60 of that Act; where you find the provision of establishing of the collective management organisations (CMOs). It was through such provision that NASCAM came to its existence with the main aim to collect and distribute royalties to the individual rights holders or to serve the interests of authors, composers and publishers of music.

**What benefits do musicians/artists receive by registering at NASCAM?**

NASCAM is mandated to administer the rights of its members by registering their musical works, managing and collecting royalties on behalf of all those members. Songwriters have enjoyed the benefits of being linked to the international database of all songwriters and composers around the world, as this means their musical works will be protected throughout the world. The other benefit is that of receiving royalties every time their music is used on-air by the different broadcasters.

**Not many artists understand what copyright and IP are, please define the terms? Why is it important to register your work? What does it protect you from?**

IP rights are economic benefit rights that are driven from a human mind when objects or tangible properties have been created, and these rights are divided into two forms of rights, which are copyright and industrial property rights.

Copyright protection extends to expressions and not to ideas, therefore copyright protects "originality" but not ideas.

**The following are protected under copyright:**

- Literary works
- Musical works
- Cinematograph films
- Sound recordings
- Broadcasters
- Programme-carrying signals
- Published editions
- Performers rights

**The following are protected under industrial property rights:**

- Trademarks
- Patent
- Utility models
- Industrial designs or services

It is very important to register any of your creative works with BIPA and NASCAM in order to enjoy legal protection as well as economic and moral benefits.

*Photo contributed*



**How can artists who do not live in Windhoek access NASCAM services?**

Songwriters and composers who live in different regions in Namibia can access NASCAM information through our website and some prominent music studios in their region. Applications forms for our services for members and information booklets are attainable at arts cultural officers in the regions. One can always contact those offices for more information as well.

**Part of NASCAM's duties is to collect royalties and fees for registered music. Does registering work allow royalties to be received from utilisation internationally?**

"Royalties" is a legal term that exemplifies the payment for a service that one delivered either by request or for his or her creative works used for commercial or pleasure purposes. The word derived from ancient times when kings and queens used to invite

NASCAM IS  
MANDATED TO  
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AND COLLECTING  
ROYALTIES ON  
BEHALF OF ALL  
THOSE MEMBERS.



talented artists to perform at their palaces. After such performances, the artist received a token of appreciation as a form of payment - these were usually gifts from the royals called royalties. Therefore, if you register your musical works with NASCAM and if your music plays anywhere in the world, we are notified through our international data system, for which you are entitled to receive royalties outside Namibia.

**Are the services of NASCAM inclusive for vocalists and instrumentalists? Who can register at NASCAM and be able to benefit from the services? And how long can one be entitled to these services?**

NASCAM does not register performers such as singers or vocalists. NASCAM only registers songwriters, composers and publishers of music. It is for this reason that those individuals create music as original works, while vocalists and musicians are regarded as talents who perform, as they are directed or as per creative work that already exists. The registered works are protected as long as the registrant is alive, as well as 50 years after their death as per the current Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Protection Act.

**How many artists are currently registered with NASCAM?**

NASCAM has registered over 7 000 members.

**What are the great success stories of Namibian music that have been able to sustain and collect royalties for artists/musicians?**

The Namibian music industry has its own season based on various factors; we have seen music that has dominated airplay via

public demands. There is also Namibian music that is enjoyed throughout during national events such as independence celebration time, Cassinga Day, Heroes Day, Easter weekend, Christmas time and during the NAMAs. All of those music tracks are used during that lucrative seasons collect great amounts of royalties. Unfortunately, music that is poorly promoted is cultural -traditional and gospel music, which is a pity, as traditional and folk music are the roots of Namibian music and tradition, but it is often not given enough attention. We need to have special channels to showcase our traditional and cultural music, which needs to continue keeping our identities as Namibians with unique cultural diversity intact.

**Why do you think artists are not aware or not informed about laws pertaining to creative and intellectual rights? Is it the dissemination of information or lack thereof?**

It has been a challenge to provide information to artists. We have seen instances where artists do not attend stakeholder meetings that share information relating to copyright and the overall of CMOs operational and how their royalties are collected and distributed. We have tried to organise such meetings and sometimes it is really challenging as we have limited funds to keep the momentum of the meetings going.

**How is NASCAM regulating usage rights in Namibia? Are corporations and institutions following the correct protocols? What can they do to understand the protocols and safeguard the rights of Namibian musicians?**

Most music users are aware of NASCAM rules and regulations; however, they do not comply and do the right thing, as

per the guidelines of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Protection Act and similar Universal Copyright Protocol. The NASCAM copyright music inspectors conduct inspections around the country and do issue licences to music users, with the terms explaining and training those interested parties on why music users should apply for licences. NASCAM encourages all music users in the country to apply for music licences, and if you are using music without licences, then you are in the violation of the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Protection Act.

**What are your thoughts and wishes for the future of rights in Namibia? How do you envisage the industry to work?**

Namibia is a unique country in comparison to many other countries on the continent and I wish that we would maintain the culture of respecting our laws; they are there to guide us and provide benefits for all Namibians in order to safeguard us from conflict. The creative sector needs more support in order to encourage the creators of artistic works so that, they can continue to create beautiful works for our nation and outside markets so that their lives are respected as other professional workers, and their creative works/ products can be enjoying space on the shelves of Namibian and international markets.

**Any other points you would like to share?**

Being "artistic" is natural and we all live a life based on different types of art objects that we use on daily basis, therefore, let us respect the creators of music, art and artworks and respect the value of the arts as it was not created for free usage but to contribute economically to someone's livelihood.



IP RIGHTS ARE ECONOMIC BENEFIT RIGHTS THAT ARE DRIVEN FROM A HUMAN MIND WHEN OBJECTS OR TANGIBLE PROPERTIES HAVE BEEN CREATED, AND THESE RIGHTS ARE DIVIDED INTO TWO FORMS OF RIGHTS, WHICH ARE COPYRIGHT AND INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY RIGHTS.

*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*





Photo contributed



# CISLÉ JACOBS

**COPYRIGHT  
LAW:** CONTRACTS  
AND PROTECTIVE  
PROCEDURES FOR  
MUSICIANS

LEGAL PROFESSIONAL, FOUNDER OF INTRIK™ CONSULTING SERVICES

Cislé Jacobs holds a LLB (honours) degree from UNAM; and a LLM (specialised in IP) from the University of Cape Town. Cislé has practiced in the legal fraternity and worked in the corporate industry for PwC and Momentum Metropolitan Namibia group of companies. She has freelanced in IP consulting for years and in 2020, founded Intrik™ Consulting Services- a business specialising in IP consulting. She is passionate about the human mind and its creative products.

Music is a powerful force uniting people from varied backgrounds, uplifting us all to higher realms where joy, comfort, fun and inspiration dwell. The rights in music and the lyrics, the sound recordings, the performance and the published editions, together with the rights underlying the merchandising, are the source of the money that flows through the music industry. Unless artists and their advisers understand the basics of copyright, they cannot maximise their income or fully protect the integrity of their work. This is more pressing now due to the digital shift resulting in borderless fandom for artists and genres blending for music. The intersection of music, however, lacks coordination with the legal and technological infrastructure in order to support this globalisation.

### Why is copyright important?

A society that recognises creativity, innovation, and imagination must then accept that copyright is the principal tool by which we accord that recognition. This is economically expressed by the award of a range of exclusive rights that grant the owner the power of control and the right of commercial exploitation. To make real money in the music industry, copyright is indispensable.

### What is the source of copyright in music?

Copyright protection in Namibia is provided by the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Protection Act, 1994 (No.6 of 1994). In addition, Namibia is a member of international treaties, including the Berne Convention (1886), and the TRIPS Agreement (1994), which dovetail into the Namibian laws. Namibian copyright owners can use these treaties to get reciprocal copyright protection in other treaty countries.

BIPA is in the process of developing a new copyright legal framework, which hopefully addresses the global digitisation of music.

### What is covered by copyright in music?

The most important concept in music copyright is that every single piece of recorded music involves three distinct works:

- 1. Musical work:** This is the underlying musical composition, that is, the specific arrangement and combination of musical notes, chords, rhythm, beat, and harmonies.
- 2. Literary work:** This refers to the lyrics making up the song.
- 3. Sound recording:** The actual sound recording of music.

It is often the case that the three distinct rights are owned by separate individuals or entities. In general, artists own or control the musical and literary copyright, and record companies own or control the sound recording copyright.

### When will your work be protected?

Copyright protection will arise in music if it is "original" and reduced to "material form". Originality in this sense does not mean the work must be inventive or new. Of course, the reverse is true, if a work is inventive or new, it will be original. Originality means you must not take or copy some else's work. You must, as an author, use your own knowledge, independent skills, and efforts to create your work.

The rule of thumb is that copyright does not protect ideas, thoughts or facts. Thus, as soon as material that is capable of copyright protection is given "material form", copyright exists in it, by law. For example, to put a musical work (e.g. a melody) or a literary work (e.g. a lyric) into a "material form", you need only write it down or record it in some way. So, if you make a recording of a song, you have reduced it to a material form. In this case sound recordings, although works in their own right, also act as tools for the reduction of music into material form.

### What rights does copyright include?

Copyright is a bundle of rights. Copyright gives the owner of the work certain exclusive economic and moral rights in respect of that work. Economic rights give the owner of copyright the exclusive right to authorise or prohibit the following uses of their music:

- 1.** Reproduce (copy) the music
- 2.** Make new versions and adaptations of your original music
- 3.** Publicly distribute the music
- 4.** Publicly perform the music
- 5.** Broadcast the music
- 6.** Let or sell the music

The Copyright Act provides authors and performers with two moral rights, namely the right to paternity (the right to be named as the author of the work when someone uses your work); and the right to protect the integrity of the works (the right not to have a work subjected to derogatory treatment). Even if the author has sold his/her economic rights



UNLESS ARTISTS AND THEIR ADVISERS UNDERSTAND THE BASICS OF COPYRIGHT, THEY CANNOT MAXIMISE THEIR INCOME OR FULLY PROTECT THE INTEGRITY OF THEIR WORK. THIS IS MORE PRESSING NOW DUE TO THE DIGITAL SHIFT RESULTING IN BORDERLESS FANDOM FOR ARTISTS AND GENRES BLENDING FOR MUSIC.



in the music, he/she will retain the moral rights in the music.

### How can you get copyright protection?

The Copyright Act provides automatic protection. No formalities are necessary, provided the person claiming copyright is a 'qualified person' (i.e. a Namibian citizen, company, or someone normally resident here). However, in the event that your work is infringed, evidence may be required to support your claim. Thus, in practice, you can register your copyright with BIPA. It also helps to deter infringement if you make it clear that your work is protected under copyright law. It is also advisable to mark your music with this © symbol.

### Who owns the copyright?

The general rule is that the "author" of the song is the first owner until work is sold or where exceptions apply. The author of the music is the composer. The author of the lyrics is the lyricist. The owner of copyright in a sound recording is usually the person who made the arrangements and paid for the master recording to be completed. If their authors are different

people, then separate permissions will have to be obtained from each one if you want to reproduce or cover the song.

The exceptions would be work for hire, work created during employment, or where exclusive rights are transferred. Even if a composer is commissioned to write the music, he/she still retains the copyright unless the terms of the commission agreement state otherwise. Avoid contracts where you transfer all economic rights of the work.

### How long does copyright protection last?

Musical and literary works are protected for the author's lifetime plus 50 years after his death. Meanwhile, sound recordings are protected for a period of 50 years from the end of the year in which it is first published.

### Performers rights

As mentioned above, one of the economic rights of an owner is the right of performance. However, not all musicians own rights in music, lyrics, or sound recordings, but are merely performers. There is no copyright in a performance itself. The copyright

only subsists in the embodiment of the performance – the recording, the video, the film.

It is essential that everyone who performs on a record signs a properly drafted 'performer's consent' form. This should be an absolute standard, no exception practice. All of the artists, the session musicians and the producer must sign off.

### Commercial transactions of copyright

We should untangle a key term: Royalties. Royalties are basically the amount paid to any owner(s) when a song is sold, distributed, used in other media (like a commercial or movie), or monetised in any way. The royalties are split among all owner(s) at various rates negotiated amongst record labels and agencies. Royalties are the most traditional route to earning money in the music industry, but it is a pit of unpaid money that hasn't yet made its way to artists because of faulty metadata or bad communication amongst the various services involved in reporting the proper numbers.

UNDERSTANDING THE LEGAL ASPECTS OF THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, PARTICULARLY COPYRIGHT LAW, IS CRITICAL FOR ANY PROFESSIONAL MUSICIAN WHO HAS AMBITIONS OF A LUCRATIVE CAREER.



Photo contributed

## How can you generate income from your copyright?

ASSIGNMENT (SELL)	LICENSING (RENT)
Transfer of copyright ownership to another person.	Permission by the owner of the copyright to do one or more exclusive acts (check economic rights).
Can be all or part of the exclusive rights or to a specific country.	Exclusive or non-exclusive licence.
Only for a specified period of time of the duration of the copyright.	Exclusive: Licensee exercises exclusive rights to the exclusion of the owner and all other persons. Tip: Must be in writing.
Must be in writing to be effective.	Non-exclusive: Licensee does not exercise exclusive rights to the exclusion of the owner.
Assignee can sue for infringement.	Only exclusive licensee can sue for infringement.

## Key terms you should look out for in a music contract:

Copyright is a very flexible piece of property. These are the main clauses you must consider when negotiating music recording, licencing, and assignment contracts:

1	Parties involved	Who is the contract between? Who is the grantor and who is the grantee? Although it may seem obvious, in an era of complex legal structures, it is sometimes not as easy as it seems.
2	Works involved	What work(s) are included in the transaction? Include an attachment or schedule showing what works are part of the deal.
3	Rights	What rights are being granted? What parts of the 'bundle of rights' are included in the agreement? Is it to include all of the rights of copyright or only some of them?
4	Duration	For how long are the rights to be granted? You can assign or licence copyright for a set number of years.
5	Uses	What uses are you going to permit? You may be happy for your song to be used for an MTC commercial but not for a toilet cleanser commercial.
6	Exclusivity	The grant of rights may be exclusive or non-exclusive. Even where they are 'exclusive', the extent of that exclusivity can be limited. For example, you may grant an exclusive licence to use a song for car commercials yet still grant a film producer the right to include that song in a film.
7	Territory	You can licence or assign someone the right to use your rights in a particular territory, but retain the rights in other territories
8	Creative control	What changes to your work are you going to permit? What degree of control are you going to retain? Will these affect your royalties? Who can authorise changes?
9	Payment	How will the copyright owner be paid: With an upfront fee or by royalties or a mixture of both? This will be largely determined by the type of deal, and the relative bargaining power of the parties.
10	Obligations and guarantees	What obligations and guarantees are the parties offering each other?
11	Accounting and inspection	How can the copyright owner check that they are being paid the right amount?
12	Further grant of rights	Can the grantee licence the rights to anyone else?
13	Enforcement	Who will protect the rights against infringements? Who will pay the legal costs? Who may 'settle' a dispute if it goes to court? How will damages and costs be split?
14	Termination	Are there circumstances in which the contract can be terminated? How is termination brought about? What happens afterwards?
15	Disputes	How will you settle disputes? Is there a mechanism in the contract that makes the parties undergo mediation or arbitration of a dispute that cannot be resolved by negotiation?



To be successful in the music industry, you need to surround yourself with good people. The fact is, musicians have to deal with a ton of dizzying legal issues throughout their careers, which means an IP lawyer can end up being one of the most valuable members of your team.

#### **Other methods of generating revenue from your music:**

There is by no means a comprehensive list of ways that modern artists make money:

1. Streaming platforms: For revenue most platforms (Spotify, Apple Music) are either subscription or advertisement based. Platforms use the pro-rata model, which pays based on the total share of streams each artist has.
2. Live performances and touring.
3. Advertising and marketing.
4. Merchandising, fashion and other direct sales.

And yet, the average modern artist is still strapped for cash. Streaming services, while reinvigorating the music industry, at large aren't lucrative for artists unless they're chart-topping names. The law is having a tough time keeping up with the technological advancements in music.

In the meantime, taking advantage of the technoculture driving music creation and marketing, musicians must build an online following that rivals stadium numbers before the industry engages with you. Social media followers and engagement are "currency" in the eyes of labels, publishers, promoters, and investors. Having evolved steadily over the last decade, it has now taken centre stage.

#### **When is your copyright infringed?**

Infringement of copyright occurs when someone takes either all of your music, or a substantial part of it, or does any of the exclusive activities without permission. However, there are several exceptions (fair dealing) which allow a copyright work to be used without permission.

#### **What should you do if your rights have been violated?**

If someone has infringed your copyright, you could contact them directly, or seek legal advice from an IP expert. If you decide to take legal action, there are a number of remedies that you can seek from the court. It can be costly to sue an infringer so it is advisable to consider other resolutions such as mediation.

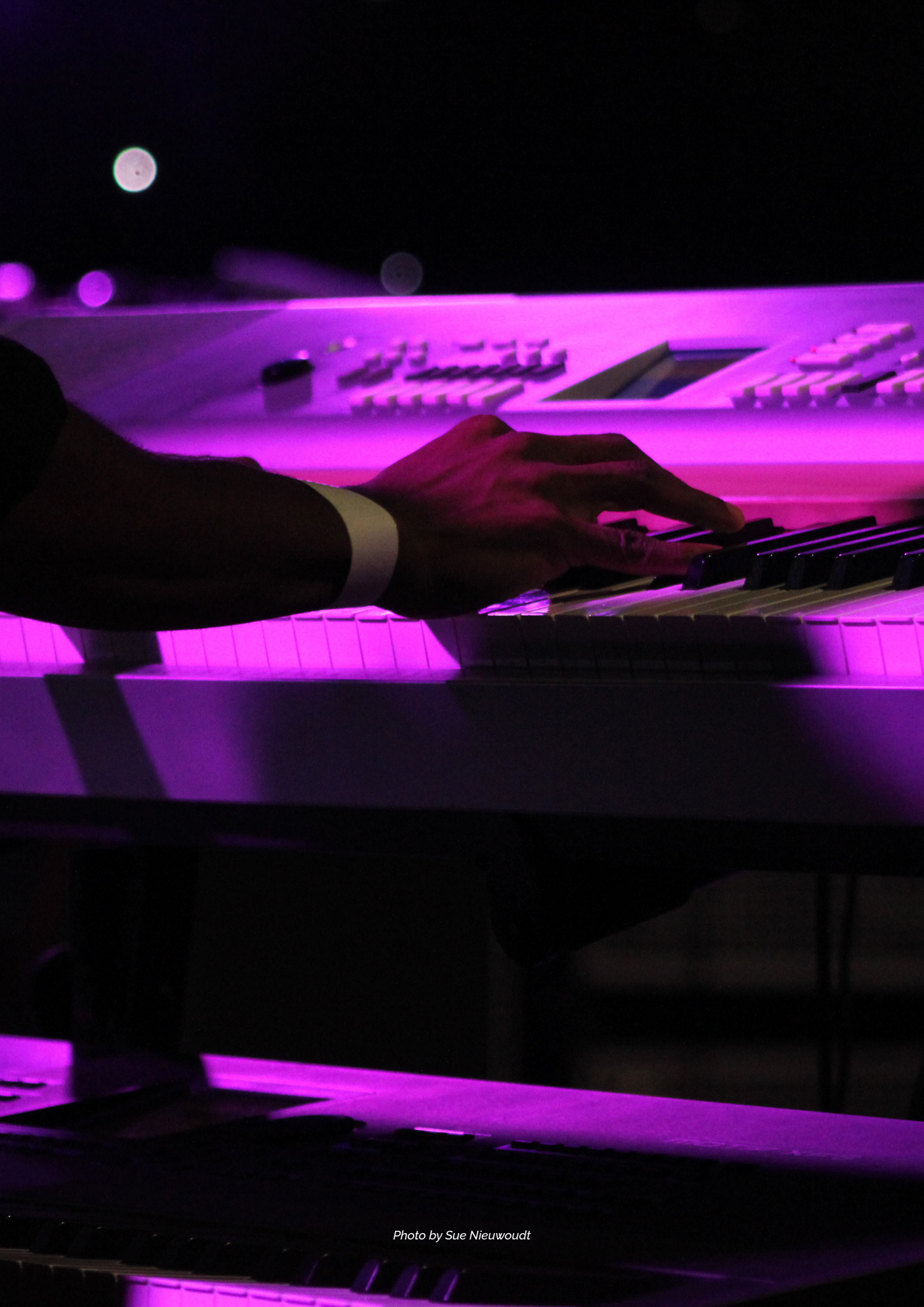
#### **Concluding thoughts**

Understanding the legal aspects of the music industry, particularly copyright law, is critical for any professional musician who has ambitions of a lucrative career. Simply put, the music industry has transformed. In the past, it was far less legally managed and there were nothing like the protections you now have access to.

You can find out more about Intrik at [intrik-consulting.com](http://intrik-consulting.com).



IN THE MEANTIME, TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THE TECHNOCULTURE DRIVING MUSIC CREATION AND MARKETING, MUSICIANS MUST BUILD AN ONLINE FOLLOWING THAT RIVALS STADIUM NUMBERS BEFORE THE INDUSTRY ENGAGES WITH YOU. SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS AND ENGAGEMENT ARE "CURRENCY" IN THE EYES OF LABELS, PUBLISHERS, PROMOTERS, AND INVESTORS. HAVING EVOLVED STEADILY OVER THE LAST DECADE, IT HAS NOW TAKEN CENTRE STAGE.



*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*



*Photo contributed*

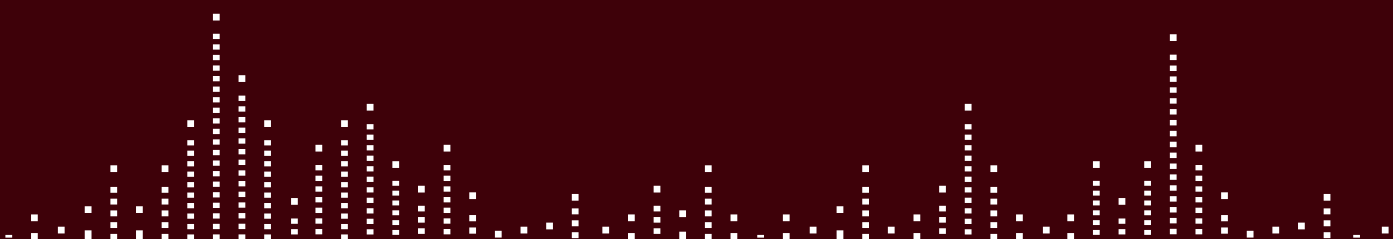


# LLEWELYN ADAMS

## **ONLINE MUSIC DISTRIBUTION AND REVENUE STREAMS**

### **DONLU AFRICA FOUNDER.**

Llewelyn Adams is the founder of the Namibian music site and e-commerce business DONLU Africa, which was established in 2017 with the sole purpose of offering Namibian artists a chance to sell their music and get paid in real time. This mission was realised through various strategic partnerships with companies such as PayToday Namibia and DPO Group. With music as the backbone to everything at DONLU Africa, the company is focused on music technology and market development.





IN THE WAKE OF THIS, WE DEFINITELY NEED MORE E-COMMERCE ANALYSTS AS WELL FORENSIC COMPUTER ANALYSTS, SECURITY ARCHITECTS, ETC. WHO CAN HELP WITH STRENGTHING OUR SECURITY.



Photo contributed

*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**The sustainability of the music business in Namibia is fundamentally dependent on platforms that focus on the promotion and distribution of music. What prompted the development of DONLU Africa, and what opportunities has it offered in the sector?**

DONLU Africa stemmed from what one can call a hobby at the time, which later evolved into what it is today. Roughly about 10+ years ago, I took an interest in the music industry and it grew to a point where I started managing and consulting for upcoming artists. Soon thereafter, I still felt that there was something missing in the industry and seeing the lengthy and somewhat tedious process our artists had to through just to get their music onto international platforms sparked the idea to set up an online merchandise store. Although Spotify launched in 2008, Namibians couldn't make use of it and with Apple Music only being available to Namibians from 2020, there weren't many other platforms Namibians could use. That too contributed largely to the founding of DONLU.

**The word streaming is often used loosely and can be quite ambiguous. Streaming has different components such as**

**advertising, digital downloads (paid and free), and product sales. How can artists understand the mechanism of 'streaming' in its dynamic features?**

Music streaming works in a very simple way, a streaming service such as DONLU delivers data to a streamer/public in small amounts so that the user can get music that has been pre-buffered a few minutes or even seconds before playing a song.

**A component of some streaming mechanisms is featured with free downloads. Are there any benefits to this, and when should artists consider free downloads or free music streaming platforms?**

There are both pros and cons to this. Some of the benefits include that the music is easily available and spread far and wide. One of the things we always advise artists on - especially new artists - is to come out strong and release a few singles which will help build a brand and a fan base. Once you have a fan base, you can start selling your music. One of the cons to this is that something that is plentiful tends to be of lesser value so if an artist releases an album and it includes quite a few singles that have been released for free, the album tends to not sell that well.

**Radio is still a very effective form of distributing and promoting one's**

**music. What do free downloads offer that radio is not already offering?**

Apart from spreading it far and wide, nothing really.

**There are increasing concerns around piracy when it comes to streaming. How concerned should musicians be about this?**

Music piracy and copyright will always be a concern, especially given the growing hacking community. However, as a streaming service, you need to ensure that your website/servers are safe from cyber threats which could lead to music being pirated. Apart from that, there isn't much that a streaming service can do to curb piracy. Stream-ripping is another thing that is trending now. Stream-ripping is the obtaining of a permanent copy of content that is streamed online. The process can be carried out on audio and audio-visual content and, in either case, it is possible to create an audio-only copy of the music as defined by prsformusic.com.

**With the advent of fast-growing technology and electronic commerce in the creative sector, what does this serve for local solutions in the kind of skills and expertise in demand? What supporting careers does this demand from Namibia? (e.g.**



## **software engineering, e-commerce analysts, etc.)**

In the wake of this, we definitely need more e-commerce analysts as well forensic computer analysts, security architects, etc. who can help with strengthening our security.

**Streaming caters to a certain demographic of consumers. This means that streaming cannot exist in singularity. What is your suggestion for musicians in balancing their distribution and sales methods in catering for various consumers? (e.g. jukebox, live performance, USB, etc.)**

One of the key things we always advise artists on the verge of releasing new material is to research past works to see what worked and what didn't. In the Namibian context, jukeboxes still play a vital role in distribution, however, they're not as important as they used to be. With the ever-changing methods of music consumption, artists need to look at more digital platforms to release music. Artists need to invest in marketing both pre and post-release so as to get max return on their releases. You cannot wait until the day of the release to start marketing it. They can release on digital service providers (DSPs) where the music is only stored for offline listens as opposed to being downloaded.

**Are there any quality check considerations an artist should have when distributing their work online?**

With DONLU, the procedure is the same as with other DSPs in terms of quality control. We require music to be in either .wave or .mp3 formats and artwork to be of a certain standard. DONLU, same as other DSPs, reserves the right not to publish any music that it deems not up to standard.

**What sustainability does DONLU serve for artists? What difference does it serve against streaming platforms like iTunes or Spotify?**

DONLU's value proposition has and always will be that it has the biggest online archive of Namibian music. DONLU is not significantly

different from other DSPs, but it's the first and biggest Namibian online music streaming platform.

**Over the past several years, artists have been increasingly vocal about not receiving fair compensation from certain music streaming platforms. What are the key considerations that one should have around these areas?**

Transparency is the biggest thing a DSP should focus on. The more musicians trust your service, the more they'll keep making use of your platform. Trust breeds success.

**How does DONLU serve transparency?**

DONLU, in the current business model, did not offer payment per stream services, thus most of the music submitted was made available for free download as per request from the artist. DONLU has received albums that were put up for sale and statistics were and are provided to the artist, not just applicable to their albums but for everything. In the new business model, DONLU will be offering a premium service, through subscriptions. Artists will be able to get paid per stream and the statistics will be made available in real-time on their profile pages so that they are able to track the plays, which translates into sales.

**Do you have any legal advice when it comes to an artist considering streaming?**

Always read the fine print of any contract/agreement you enter into with any DSP.

**Streaming can be a complex mechanism of the music industry. What is the future of these mechanisms and what future growth and developments can artists look forward to in the local context?**

In the local context, with DONLU, artists can look forward to earning more from online streaming. Not only that, but we're putting plans in place to host various interactive workshops to educate artists on the industry,

streaming, financial literature, and many more things. More will be put in place in collaboration with various private entities to assist musicians, especially those making music a full-time career.

**What further guidelines do you have for artists in streaming and distributing their work online?**

Artists need to be multifaceted. The music industry is more than just releasing music and performing live. Artists need to learn the ins and outs of the industry, how certain things work, etc. so as to be better artists. They also need to learn to drop the ego and pride and become teachable.

**What advice would you give a young entrepreneur starting their own music distribution business?**

It's not going to be easy. Nothing about the industry is as easy as it seems. Be willing to invest a lot of time, money and resources into it without seeing any return on investment for at least the first 10 years. Be mindful of being vocal about your favourite artists, especially on social media, as you need to remain objective at all times.

**DONLU recently announced a new business model, tell us about that?**

Basically, we changed the system to allow for subscriptions to be done. Fans can subscribe to various packages to listen to premium content which now includes Podcasts as well. These packages range weekly to annual packages.

The move will allow us to be able to pay artists per stream basically. We adopted a user-centric system, which means the subscriber fees gets directed to the artists they listen to as opposed to the model where artists are paid according to how much their streams represent out of the platform's total streams.

Payments will be done every 30 days in 2022 so as to support musicians better. The onus now remains with the artists to promote their music. The more their fans subscribe and stream, the more they can earn.

For more information, visit [donluafrica.com](https://donluafrica.com).

*Photo contributed*







*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*



# ONLINE STREAMING TICKETING SERVICE PROVIDER

**ibuynam is a business that fully specialises in a secured online streaming, events management, and online ticketing system. The digital pioneering transformer focuses on secured, monetised live streaming, video on demand (VOD) streaming, events management (box office services), online ticket sales, and management.**

*Interviewed by Lavinia Kapewasha:  
Production coordinator, NTN.*

**How was ibuynam, a platform for digitised and monetised content, conceived and why was it important to create this platform in the Namibian industry?**

During the first lockdown in Namibia, most creatives, especially musicians held various free online shows to keep entertaining their fans and hoping that a corporate sponsor comes on board to support their online event financially.

**What is video monetisation? Can you clarify the differences between advertising video on demand (AVOD), subscription video on demand (SVOD) and transactional video on demand (TVOD)? Where does ibuynam fit in?**

Video monetisation is a way of making money off your video production. This can be a live video or pre-recorded video. AVOD is defined as: "Audiences can access videos without paying money to the content owner, or to the platform owner, in exchange for subjecting themselves to the advertisement(s) that run in front of, or alongside, or in the middle of, or at the end of the video". (clearbridgemobile.com, n.d.). ibuynam does not offer AVOD.

SVOD is referred to the ability to stream videos once you have subscribed. ibuynam can offer this service.

TVOD, which is ibuynam's business model, is where clients pay per view, within an allocated viewing period.

**What benefits do artists, performers, and content creators get by putting their content on platforms such as ibuynam and not on YouTube?**

Through the ibuynam platform, creatives have control over their finances as they have direct access to the live/current information in terms of ticket sales and the number of people streaming their event. The ibuynam platform allows creatives to sell their services and makes sure that only paid clients can view their content and the link to the content cannot be shared (secured). Which is the opposite of other free platforms such as YouTube, Facebook, etc.

**What content does ibuynam look for and utilise?**

ibuynam is looking for creatives that can showcase their talent through produced videos and live recording performances or shows/talks.

**Not many artists understand the reach of the internet. Why is it important to upload content on the internet? What advantages are there?**

The internet is a global marketplace that has managed to interconnect the whole world. So, as a creative, one expects to be recognised for their talents, and the internet is the cheapest – yet most effective – way of doing that.

**With the current pandemic circumstances, quite a few events have moved to Zoom or other live streaming services. What advantages does ibuynam have by providing live streaming services? Can artists, performers, and content creators earn from live-stream events as well?**

ibuynam allows creatives to make money when performing online. So yes, artists and other creatives can make money through live-streaming their events through the ibuynam platform, as ibuynam offers online ticket sales as well.

**How do artists, performers, and content creators earn from their content on the ibuynam platform? What does it entail?**

Creatives sell tickets to their events via the ibuynam platform. ibuynam will then be able to securely allow paid-up customers to view the content and not able to share the link to the event with anyone else. ibuynam deducts a small commission fee – or 8.25% from the total ticket sales – and the rest belongs to the creative. Our ticket sales system is also secured with a licensed payment gateway system. So the whole process is efficient and user-friendly. Keep in mind that the video can be hosted on ibuynam servers and can be accessed and sold at any time to the public.

**When it comes to utilising ibuynam services, who does the content belong to in terms of rights of usage and copyright?**

The content will always belong to the creator/creatives. ibuynam is simply a platform for creatives to share and sell their content.

**Can artists, performers, and content creators decide the price of the ticket, the duration of the streaming of the content, and the percentage cut for profit?**

Yes, ibuynam is flexible and always ready to discuss.

**Who administers the tickets, the communication, and the liaising with the public?**

Both ibuynam and the creative may be able to administer the tickets. As

for any technical issues, the ibuy**nam** technical team is always available.

## How long can one be entitled to these services?

The duration of the services is depended on the package the creative chooses.

What content has been streamed before on the ibuy**nam** platform? What were the reach and the engagement rates? Are there any success stories? ibuy**nam** streamed the MTC #KnockOutHomelessness event and it reached an audience of over 30 000 people.

Boet & Sus VOD through the NTN reached over 5 000 people and event page visits.

## What type of content is uploaded? Are there any technical specificities one needs to pay attention to?

Ideally, the content needs to be of the best quality to ensure a smooth stream or live stream. Therefore, paying close attention to the production of the video or the live stream is critical.

**The file formats we expect are:**  
MP4 or MOV

**The video quality we expect is:**

Codec supported  
Frame formats supported  
**Resolution:** 1 920 x 1 080  
**Video bitrate range:** 3 000 to 6 000 Kbps

For live streams, cameras should capture the stream at a high level in 720p or 1080p. However, 4k can be considered depending on circumstances.

**The audio quality we expect is:**  
Codec PCM (Little or Big endian/16bit / or 24 bit)  
Sample rate: 48Hz

**Channels:** LR (Stereo)  
Audio and video must be embedded in one container format and not delivered separately.

It is important to consider equipment and content when creating video productions. Ensure that you have consulted production houses who will assist with the video production, using high-grade and quality equipment and technology to ensure that the video production or the live stream is uploaded as the best quality.

**What are the security parameters of ibuy**nam** to ensure content is not illegally taken, forged or duplicated?**  
ibuy**nam** has secured and encrypted the stored content. The content cannot

be shared through links.

## What are your rates? What are all the costs involved to have video content uploaded and streamed, or to have an event live-streamed?

Below are our packages.

## How can artists who live in the regions access ibuy**nam** services?

ibuy**nam** is online, meaning it can be accessed from anywhere with internet access.

## What preparations should prospective clients have for the marketing and promotional features of the streaming content?

The client has to be prepared and drive all the marketing and aspects of their content. This requires research as marketing for online content and services has its own demands and strategies. Creatives are encouraged to think critically about their target audience, partnerships, promotional strategies, and overall competitive value of the content.

Email ibuy**nam** at  
[local@ibuy\*\*nam\*\*.com](mailto:local@ibuy<b>nam</b>.com)

### Beginner

100 GB Bandwidth  
5 GB Storage  
8.25% Ticket Commission to us

N\$299 monthly  
N\$1,500 semi-annually  
N\$2,400 annually  
N\$4,999 event-streaming, once off

### Intermediate

350 GB Bandwidth  
10 GB Storage  
8.25% Ticket Commission to us

N\$399 monthly  
N\$2,100 semi-annually  
N\$3,600 annually  
N\$4,999 event-streaming, once off

### Advanced

750 GB Bandwidth  
50 GB Storage  
8.25% Ticket Commission to us

N\$799 monthly  
N\$4,500 semi-annually  
N\$8,400 annually  
N\$4,999 event-streaming, once off

### Professional

1 TB Bandwidth  
Unlimited Storage  
8.25% Ticket Commission to us

N\$999 monthly  
N\$5,700 semi-annually  
N\$10,800 annually  
N\$4,999 event-streaming, once off





*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*



Photo contributed



# EMILY DANGWA

**THE VOICE AS A TOOL:**  
VOCAL TRAINING  
AS A NECESSITY IN  
DEVELOPING MUSICAL  
PRACTICES IN NAMIBIA

SINGER, SONGWRITER, MUSIC EDUCATOR, VOCAL COACH.

Emily Dangwa completed her undergraduate in opera studies and postgraduate – with distinction – in music performance from the University of Cape Town. She worked in Cape Town, singing in the Baxter Theatre and Arts Cape for productions. She has performed in productions in South Africa, on various Namibian stages and corporate productions. Through her music academy, ED Music Academy, she has produced and organised numerous music productions incorporating classical forms. Dangwa is also a vocal coach for the RNB Song Night performers and works very closely with local classical composers to premiere their work in local languages. ED Music Academy offers vocal coaching, music theory, and piano, and her production company ED Music Production strives to showcase these talents through performance.



*Interviewed by Lavinia Kapewasha, NTN production coordinator.*

**Not only are you a trained opera singer but a skilled musician as well. Do you think being multi-skilled has had a significant role in how you approach music and your musical career?**

I am a vocalist first. I do play the piano, but purely for myself. I play by ear, which means I hear the melodies in my head and I play it. I have had a few classes and training in piano and at university; you need the skills as you learn how to read the notes. So, I can read the notes for my voice because when I learn the music, I need to learn the notes. I also notate music, as when it comes to composition, I have to compose my work. The notation also comes in handy when I have to compose for strings or another instrument group, as they need notes to play with. And, of course, if you want to publish your work, you need to notate it. I would not call myself a composer, however. We have our composers who will sit for hours, but it is like an extra skill that I have. In Namibia, we do not have many who can read music, however, our strengths are that we understand the style and the concept of things.

At the beginning of my career, my passion fuelled me and it all came naturally. I was already gigging and singing as a backup vocalist and participating in concerts. Nevertheless, I always felt like something was lacking, because I could not speak to other musicians in music. This is why I decided to go and study because I believe if you are going to specialise in something, study it. Additionally, I did not want to just be a music talent. I wanted to be a music professional, which makes a huge difference. We have many talented people, but only a few are trained. To create something worth remembering and theorising, you really need something more than just your imagination. This is why the training was important for me.

**Please expand on your classical training?**

Classical training is rigid. It's almost like ballet. It follows a set of rules to create certain sounds; in essence, it is the logic that creates beauty. If the note is not perfect, if the pitch is not perfect, if the timing is off, the whole piece is off. It forces you to work extra hard on your concentration and your musicality. There is no room for distractions. You cannot even afford to let the wind distract you, because once the conductor is ready and you are not ready, you are off and this is disappointing to the orchestra. You would not want to show your face. The nature of classical music practices is that it teaches you how to read music fast because the educators speak to you with the music. Moreover, it forces you as a person, as a singer, to live a healthier life. You take care of your diet, you train, you go to the gym, and you make sure you're fit.

*Photo contributed*



You do your vocal exercises religiously. As you train your body at the gym, your vocal cords need the same training. It teaches you about breath control, therefore you need to keep up with the standard.

My students at the ED Music Academy receive compliments, with audience members saying that they have great breath control. That is something I pride myself on because it is one of the hardest to master. I always tell my students, choose one art form that they can perfect, and then everything else falls into place. I trained in the violin for a short while, then the piano, but the voice was always my interest. I was more interested in the power that can come from a person and the ability to move people with your voice. Therefore, I wanted to understand how those little vocal cords create a sound, and opera training is the highest form of vocal training you can do. Therefore, if I was going to do it, I wanted to go all the way.

**Do you believe every musician needs some level of formal music training? What are your thoughts on studying our indigenous styles and vocal forms?**

Indigenous music is taught by ear and has been passed down from generation to generation by ear. It is not notated. I have been working with some of the most talented conductors, Eslon Hindundu and Engelhardt #Unaeb since 2018 on indigenous pieces that we are notating to present at high quality. We have performed some of the pieces, singing opera in Khoekhoegowab, and Otjiherero for the first time. Our challenge is that we are writing, but nobody can perform it, as the level is intricate. Indigenous music is not classical, it's not jazz, it's not pop. It's its own thing, with its own structures and approaches. We hope to keep doing this work, as it will give the new generation the knowledge. However, if you did not grow

up listening to it and singing along with your grandmother, you won't understand it. The good thing about music in Africa is that everybody knows it. The community will continue to sing how they have always done.

But of course, when you put something new on stage, you want to take it across the borders. That is when we start to tweak it, where the composers come in. They give classical arrangements. It is a challenge, but people need to continue presenting this because it is our culture. With our history of colonisation, we should be celebrating our indigenous and folk customs instead of always foregoing them. At the ED Music Academy, I work towards integrating Khoekhoegowab, Oshiwambo and Otjiherero musicality and song, so that people can learn how to sing in their languages. Even if you speak it, there is a struggle to sing in the language, due to articulation and pronunciation. There's a difference between singing a language and speaking a language. I am currently busy with my MA in ethnomusicology, where I will study Engelhardt #Unaeb's work and compare it to Schubert's work because it is similar.

**What would you say has significantly contributed to your vocal strength and durability over the years?**

I have had a vocal trainer train and perfect my voice for over seven years. Coming to Namibia, I struggled because the climate is dry and I kept getting laryngitis with no idea of the cause. I grew up in a humid country and then moved to a dry country, this affects your skin, your hair, and the vocal cords. I went for training to see how I could fix and help me deal with the changes. Ideally, you should see a vocal trainer at least once a week or once every second week, because you need someone with a professional ear

to hear you. You cannot hear yourself. So ever since moving here, I must say I have been struggling in the sense that I have no one who can train me. I have tried to find a vocal trainer, but I've been told they don't know what to help me with.

With the current Covid-19 pandemic and the lack of travel, I have resorted to virtual training via Zoom. That's why I decided to do my MA. As you get older, your voice changes. It matures. The older I'm getting, my voice is changing and I feel like I don't know how to handle the new voice that is coming. My voice has become deeper and warmer. But you see the voice stretches both ways. It does not just go one way; it goes down, it goes up. I have more range than before. I'm a mother too, and somehow it has made my voice warmer - it's the hormones. If I listen to myself as a student now, I sound like this sharp knife in comparison to now, which is warm and inviting. That's why I love the voice because it's got everything to do with you, as an instrument.

**A healthy and strong voice is a commodity in the music business. How do you keep your mind, body, and voice in shape?**

Singing is three things; 1) Your body, 2) Your mind and emotions, 3) Your spirit - your whole aura. Therefore, if you are physically unfit, your voice suffers. If you are emotionally not well, your voice also suffers. When I was a student at university, and whenever I was upset and depressed, I would always sing flat, it was gruelling to stay on pitch. I would force myself to smile to feign the mood. If the mind is not focused and you're feeling at odds, then your voice also suffers. Everything has an impact on your voice, so does your mental well-being. I struggled to find a pianist to work and practise with when I came to Namibia. Because it is very different practising with a pianist and practising with a backtrack. I had to learn how to warm up myself and practise my songs in the healthiest way possible, and at the same time, pay attention to my diet and lifestyle.

When I became pregnant, I joined Cross Fit; to shape up my body and because the high-intensity training would be my cardio. I wanted to build my stamina. While performing, your body can start to burn up and you have to push through that burn. I get the same feeling from the gym, when you are running on the treadmill, you get to a point where you want to quit, but then you pass that point and then you go. That is the kind of stamina and energy you need to survive as an opera singer. There are times when I am finished singing and my back hurts because my diaphragm and muscles were working each side, the stomach muscles, the packs, even the back muscles. The higher you sing, sometimes as low your pelvic muscles hurt. As a performer, your overall physical fitness will see you far. In regards to vocal training, my pianist Ruzanna Mnatsakanyan and I regularly meet to work on my repertoire. The singing

practices help to keep my voice light, with Ruzanna's musical intellect training my ear. The most important is vocal warm-ups and vocal training, which you should aim to do twice or three times a week. I have to admit, I can only master once every second week because it is busy.

You should also look after your general beauty, taking care of yourself on the outside too. Do not think you must look like a Barbie doll and the mic will find its way to you; a singer's body is the instrument. The vocal cords, found in your throat, are only responsible for creating a pitch, whereas your diaphragm and your stomach muscles are your engines. Those muscles are big enough and strong enough to control how much air you get in, the energy that that air comes out with, and the control that it comes with too. Essentially the breath is what carries your voice out. Your whole headspace is your resonating area, which is how the sound resonates with space because the sound bounces off the bone cavities. Resonance training will tweak your voice quality and tone. This is why every part of your body must be trained in singing. Many singers end up having nodules or going for surgery for vocal fatigue, where the vocal cords do not touch any more because they put too much strain on them or the vocal cords might be too weak and too small to handle that pressure. At the music academy, vocal restoration and health are what we teach as well, as we try to give the students the skills of getting their voice back by doing bodywork and slowly massaging the vocal cords until they are ready to take a full approach once again.

**How consistent should vocal training be?**

All music needs vocal training to deliver quality vocals. This is not only for the vocalists but actors and performers, for which training in breath control is key. They don't realise the strain on the bodies. If this carries on, you create future problems for yourself that you could have avoided. Rappers can improve their pronunciation and intention via vocal training. This will help reinvigorate the form, so it is not monotonous. Anybody who is striving to be professional has someone in the back who has found a way to get the best out of you and does need to be recognised for that.

**Please expand on professional etiquette for vocalists/singers?**

Professionalism is knowing what you are doing in your talent. Therefore, whether that is a pianist, a guitarist, a producer, or a vocalist, know what you're doing. Secondly, be punctual, disciplined, and have your things in order, in place, and ready. Being prepared shows you have respect for the people you are working with.

Conduct as well; we cannot walk around with a sense of entitlement. We are just as talented and hardworking as the next talented and hardworking person. We need each other to work to create something beautiful. Humility can go a long way.

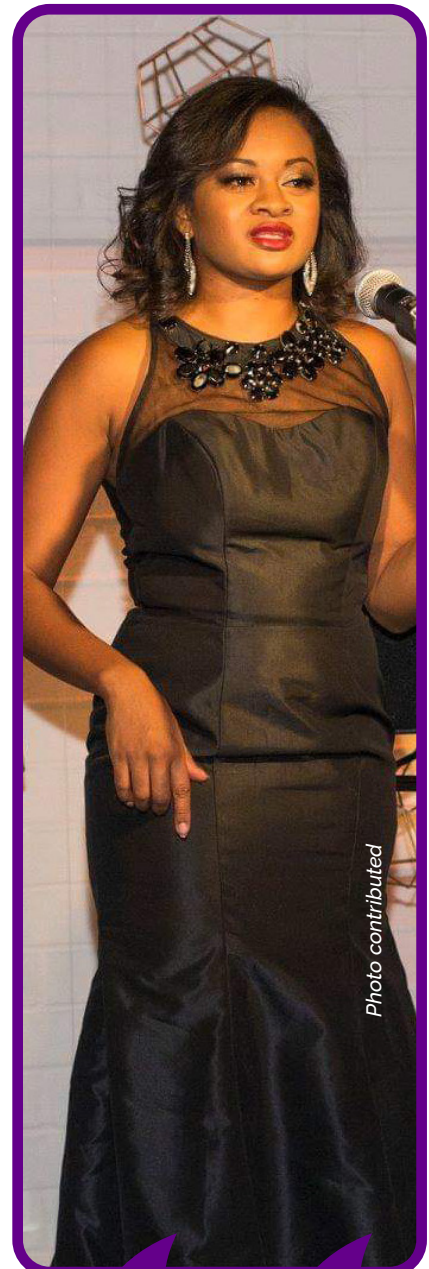


Photo contributed



I BELIEVE IF  
YOU ARE  
GOING TO  
SPECIALISE IN  
SOMETHING,  
STUDY IT.



If you do not work on the product, the product cannot sustain its promise. This is why we see artists come and go. They're fighting fatigue, fighting noise, fighting anxiety, and some drink before they sing or they smoke before they sing, or they drink a lot of Red Bull and energy drinks. It all affects stamina and the ability to get there. We see those stories, the famous rock stars who die from throat cancer or are suffering from vocal fatigue, and their health is compromised. It is dangerous for untrained artists to see and try to follow in those footsteps because they think that is the culture. It's detrimental to a career.

### **How would you suggest for emerging vocalists to balance musicianship and business at the same time?**

Artists need to know how the business works, but at the same time, understand that they're selling a product that needs to be polished in a particular way. If you do not have an idea of how to polish your product, then you will not be able to sell it. Unfortunately, we don't have agents and managing bodies, who can guide artists holistically. Thus, self-development is critical, and I cannot stress this enough for one's artistry. One has to invest in self-development, and cannot expect to have this at no cost. We are expecting trainers to give us all their knowledge, but for free. This is a problematic approach, that must be gotten rid of. You are being disrespectful to that person's time, by expecting them to offer free training and guidance. So, I would suggest consistent attention to both artistry and business of one's career so that you are able to practise at an efficient level, and with up to-date-business trends and approaches.

### **How lucrative is voice music in Namibia?**

I would say, like any business in Africa, you have to be very tactical, very strategic on how you are going to make money and sustain it. I teach, which earns my monthly income. I perform as well. Through my performance, I earn more than my teaching, but the difference is, I have constant work through teaching. Though it is very demanding, that's the route I decided to take. There are certain responsibilities that I could not have met if it wasn't for teaching. I've got kids and I needed some sort of routine. If you want to be a full-time artist, then look at Lize Ehlers, she is one of the most dynamic entrepreneurs in Namibia. She's good at

everything and she has taught herself to be good at everything because she needs to be strategic. Identify your strengths firstly to see where you can fit and do a great job while at it. Like Lize, every project she takes on she gives it 100%. Essentially, it is the product, you work on your product and see that it is something people want. You will need to be open-minded and willing to work with actors, singers, dancers, media people, and promotions etc. Flexibility is key.

The Namibian population is small, those who go out of their way to buy an album are far fewer or those who download an album. I've come to realise that our people want to go to events, they want to be part of something. The pandemic has affected public events and we had to resort to Zoom and virtual platforms, but we miss the personal approach. You have to step out of your comfort zone and find ways to supplement your income. You can look at selling merchandise. It doesn't mean stop making and recording music, continue to do so. We need to make the albums, print them and distribute them, so we showcase Namibia. If anything, I would say rather try to break into the international market. In Namibia, we're interested or get introduced to your music is if it plays on the radio. But very few go out of their way to download it.

I studied performance, as I wanted to perform, but my mentor saw the potential of my teaching. It is a skill and a gift. We have a lot of people who study education but they are not teachers. Keep an open mind to teaching, it's a stable income, and you are giving back to the community by passing on your legacy. For my academy, it started with just one student, and now I have about 13 enrolled.

### **How can back-up vocalists make themselves visible for opportunities in the business?**

Start by having some sort of social media presence. Use Facebook or Instagram, put your work out there and make it easy for people to contact you. With social media, you don't necessarily need a website. You may use your social media to put your videos on there, your experience, and your collaborations. Videos are effective. Make sure to add your biography; write a little bit about yourself.

As a backup singer, you get to a point where you are like 'now I want to work on myself as a solo act'. There is a whole process. When I look for backup singers, I look for soloists who can do backups, because I need my backup to be just as strong as my voice. That's the whole point, they need to match you, otherwise, they don't elevate the performance.

Be open to being a backup singer. Backup singers bring value, and if treated fairly, just like how we want to be treated, then the perception will change. At the end of the day, it's the whole product that makes it special, not just you. Give credit to backup singers and treat them well. Treat everyone well.

### **Where can an emerging vocalist find vocal exercises that are affordable?**

Two main ideas: Look up diaphragmatic breathing (which is a type of breathing exercise that helps strengthen your diaphragm, an important muscle that helps you breathe) and try to understand the mechanics of it and apply that. Work on your breathing, you can do it anywhere. Scale warm-ups (which are exercises that warm up the muscles that control the vocal cords.) The universe of YouTube has something, but be selective, don't just take anything.

I would also suggest that emerging vocalists work with vocal coaches that are trained, and not merely those that are 'talented' at singing. This is because of the techniques involved, and one could easily hurt their voice by applying approaches that are not backed up by tried and tested theories.

### **What is your one wish for young Namibian vocalists in terms of sustainability?**

The younger generation should endeavour to educate and not give up. Remember that you are doing it for yourself, and if you do not believe in yourself, no one will believe in you. When I say self-belief, I don't mean vanity or pride. It is knowing you are a solid product that cannot be dissipated.



*Photo contributed*

“ARTISTS NEED TO KNOW HOW THE BUSINESS WORKS, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, UNDERSTAND THAT THEY'RE SELLING A PRODUCT THAT NEEDS TO BE POLISHED IN A PARTICULAR WAY.”



*Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt*





Photo contributed

# SUZY EISES

**WORKING AS AN  
INSTRUMENTALIST  
AND COMPOSER**

MUSICIAN, SAXOPHONIST, COMPOSER

Suzy Eises is a saxophonist from Windhoek, Namibia. She began playing the saxophone in high school. Eises has received certificates from music schools in the UK and US, and has been making a name for herself as one of Namibia's most sought-after instrumentalists, performing at corporate, private and government functions. In February 2018, she and fellow singer Elemotho represented Windhoek in a performance by San Antonio's International Sister City Jazz Ensemble.



*Photo contributed*

*Interviewed by Lavinia Kapewasha, NTN production coordinator.*

**You are a multi-instrumentalist musician, qualified in various courses for music. How much time and effort does it take to master an instrument? Were you ever at the crossroads of quitting? How did you prevail?**

The time and effort to master an instrument usually starts off with daily or at least regular and consistent practice for many years. I started learning piano and to read and write music at around age eight and picked up the saxophone at 16, so I have been practising for about 22 years. I love performing and learning about music so much that it never crossed my mind to ever quit. I honestly couldn't imagine doing anything else. When you become part of music so deep, it's hard to think of ever leaving it, especially when it comes from the heart. I have a deep love for music. I do have times where I feel it is very hard being a musician and have had many challenges, for example learning to enjoy practise and learning to practise almost daily, but I have never thought of leaving music. When I receive positive responses from the public and especially my family, I keep going, I feel inspired and at peace with my purpose.

**What was your intention in focusing on the saxophone and did you think you could have such a sustainable and promising career in it?**

I started playing the piano at a very young age, around eight, singing in competitions, eventually playing in small ensembles and singing in advance choirs. When I was 16, I was exposed to the saxophone at high school in Cape Town, South Africa. I am the youngest of my five siblings and was very shy - the saxophone allowed me to grab attention and feel and be heard. I loved the sound and the style of music it generally belongs to, which is jazz. I developed a great love and desire to learn more about jazz music and attended jazz festivals and workshops in South Africa.

**You have gained auspicious qualifications in music; do you believe that studying has forged the path you are on currently with your career and music, and how?**

Studying music from a very young age has helped me understand so many aspects of music, not only performing and playing. Over the years, I have learnt about music history, music theory, music composition,

and the music business, and I feel it's important to learn as much as you can about many different styles and aspects of music. It has helped me personally to not only perform and play but to teach music. Because I am able to write and compose and read sheet music, I have the advantage to share my knowledge with students of all ages. I became a music teacher and professional entertainer because of my studies in Oranjemund, South Africa, the US, and the UK.

**Many of Namibia's instrumentalists work mainly part-time due to various reasons, but mainly because they have full-time jobs. Did you always envisage you would become a music educator? How did this come about? Do you think merging your passion and career dynamically into one is the best strategic move in terms of sustainability and career longevity?**

I first started teaching a few students around 2017, and during 2020, it became clear that more people were interested in learning a new skill during the pandemic, so I decided to continue teaching and grew to love it, even though I never thought it would be



something I would do more than performing at events and recording music. The lockdown allowed me to share my knowledge and earn a little as well. Regarding entertainment, in 2011, I found myself being one of only a few saxophone players in Namibia, which helped me find a gap in an area and start a career in music. There was a need for more instrumental music in Namibia and I was able to fill that gap.

**As a multi-instrumentalist yourself, do you believe it is easier to be flexible and broaden one's sound in terms of being booked for performances, concerts, and events? Are there any challenges that come with being a multi-instrumentalist and how do you overcome them?**

I think the real challenge is being a business person and running independently. Learning from scratch how to run a music business in Namibia is a very big challenge, as it's new and you have to learn and experience and research your target market well enough to understand how to operate and make a good profit in Namibia. I think for many musicians, we are not initially managers or financial experts, and that was my biggest challenge - understanding how to grow financially and how to manage my business. We are simply creatives and musicians and learning the business side of music can be very hard if you are doing it on your own as a start.

**Good musicians understand the technicalities of music. How can emerging instrumentalists hone their skills and practise their craft in Namibia? What tips can you share?**

Practise daily or at least regularly. Learning the music language is just like going to the gym. You will strengthen your muscles and gain if you train daily or regularly. Music is a language and the more you practise the language, the better you will get. Study, study, study! You become extremely skilled if you train consistently.

**Sound score and instrumental music design can also be applied in other sectors such as the advertising and the film industry. Would you say that there are opportunities for sustainability in Namibia in this regard?**

Namibia has a great environment for advertising and film and music is always going to be needed in these sectors, so yes, there is a lot of room for opportunities to provide music services in Namibian advertising and film. Films and adverts always need music compositions, jingles, and background music to set the tone and mood. Many international investors and local companies produce adverts and films in this country so there is definitely room to provide music if the client is willing and interested to support Namibian music.

**You have the ability to adapt and adopt various genres in transposing and integrating them with the saxophone. This has created unique sounds, even when you collaborated with other music producers and DJs. Can you tell us how these collaborations benefitted your career?**

It is very challenging earning a living as a musician as you never know when your next booking is coming, so it's very important to be versatile in other genres. Being flexible to play any style of music helps me get more work and more opportunities. The biggest collaborations I had with international artists, DJ Maphorisa and Busiswa from SA, helped others learn more about me and gave me a better reputation since these artists have a large following, are very successful in South Africa and other parts of the world and are highly professional, and skilled in the music they create.

**In terms of corporate events, instrumentalists are often booked to create a 'smooth, palatable ambiance'. However, there is potential for instrumentalists to increase their coverage by exploring newer sounds for live events. How would you advise emerging instrumentalists to expand to bigger platforms, especially in the live events of the entertainment industry?**

Musicians should learn different styles of music and be open to seeking work in all genres of music and all capacities of work in music. For example, I don't only perform, but I compose music as well and I teach music. It is also very important to master whatever genres or styles you are getting into and whatever type of music works in order to allow more opportunities.

**Your name has become synonymous with the saxophone in Namibia. How do you keep the public persona up to date with the current trends in terms of jazz/classical music and mainstream music?**

Merging different styles of music help the old match the new. I like to take old songs and create modern covers to appeal to all audiences with different music tastes.

**Honing your skill has allowed you to travel and perform at various regional and international shows. What are your key takeaways for emerging instrumentalists in navigating exposure and international opportunities? How does one find performance opportunities, especially as an instrumentalist?**

Photo contributed



MUSIC IS A  
LANGUAGE  
AND THE MORE  
YOU PRACTISE THE  
LANGUAGE, THE  
BETTER YOU WILL GET.

I think it's great to network with as many people as possible - local, global and international clients are key. Talk to as many people as you can about your music and make friends in music all over the world. Using social media is key in receiving opportunities outside of the country. Now more than ever, people are using their phones, laptops, and apps to connect - this is a great way to get gigs internationally and to promote your music. Above all, you should be skilled at what you do, and work will find you.

**'Learn the rules like a pro, so you can break them like an artist.' Is this a quote you live by? Since you studied music theory, how do you take the formalities and techniques of classical music and translate them to African music techniques and styles?**

This is a great quote - and very true. You need to learn all the things you can learn in music and then use those techniques and formulas to create your own style and personality. Classical music has helped me learn to structure, order and discipline and I use that in my African music when I want to organise and structure a song.

**As a music educator, was it difficult to start the process of having your studio and teaching your students? How accessible were resources such as a metronome, writing sheets, etc.? How can one easily access these resources?**

Nowadays most teaching resources for music can be found online, although the challenge is purchasing sound equipment and instruments - they are very costly. If anyone is serious, they will work hard to purchase an instrument or equipment. Almost every musician/instrumentalist

who has their own sound equipment or an instrument will tell you they worked hard to get it. I worked as a waitress in London in 2009 to save up for my first saxophone.

**With nurturing and educating the future generation of musicians in Namibia, how do you go about teaching the fundamentals of music theory, while still honouring and instilling African music techniques and styles into the curriculum?**

There is good in almost everything - so I use music theory for a practice of repetitive concepts that are vital and needed in order to excel in further areas like African music. For example, learning scales can guide you to make great melodic and harmonic choices when playing African music, and learning to improvise helps to create melodies and harmonies in African music.

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MUSICIANS SHOULD LEARN DIFFERENT STYLES OF MUSIC AND BE OPEN TO SEEKING WORK IN ALL GENRES OF MUSIC AND ALL CAPACITIES OF WORK IN MUSIC. FOR EXAMPLE, I DON'T ONLY PERFORM, BUT I COMPOSE MUSIC AS WELL AND I TEACH MUSIC.



*Photo contributed*





Photo by Sue Nieuwoudt



Photo contributed

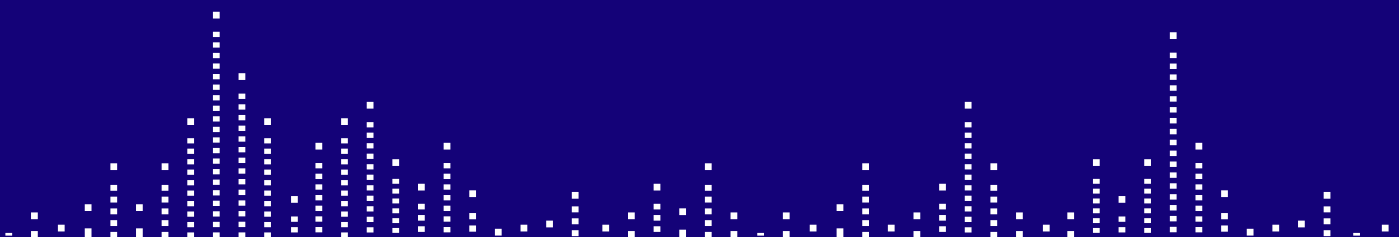


# BURTON REID

## **STRATEGIES TO CONSIDER FOR THE LIVE MUSIC SCENE**

### SOUND ENGINEER

Burton Reid is a Namibian sound engineer with over 20 years of experience in various disciplines in Namibia and South Africa. He started off in television and radio in Namibia. His primary focus at present is music production for live events, recording, mixing and mastering. He has conducted various workshops in music production techniques, and is driven by his passion for music, respect for people and desire to learn.





*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**Please share your background and some highlights of your career. What particularly developed your interest in live music?**

I come from a very quiet and small Namibian town, Lüderitz. I moved to Windhoek in 1989 for high school at St Paul's College and this is the time that I developed my interest in music, from a technical point of view together with my good friend David Benade. After matric, I went to UCT to pursue my first year in business science, however, after the first year, I moved back to Namibia for an 18-month long NBC internship in 1992. With my love for music and all things technical, I quickly gained the skills to work in production. By the time the internship was over, I had gained a lot of insights by shadowing various professionals and studied the archives at NBC Radio, which had great resources. I read every book on audio and music production. By 1995/6, I got a position at NBC Radio, which made me grow more into my element. I thank NBC and David for pulling me out of a degree out of business science [laughs].

By then, David had left NBC and, through his work with Impactus Four, started his company, so I worked on some of the productions. One of my earliest highlights was live mixing for a band called Dondo, with legendary drummer Vusi Khumalo, which had won at the South African Music Awards for album of the year at the time. They decided to have a series of shows at Zoo Park and I mixed their first show. I was thrown into the deep end and it went very well. I received so many compliments. My sound work continued to grow with David Benade, and we worked on many other live events in the country. This included events like the Windhoek Jazz Festival, and Hart van Windhoek, which the latter, to date, saw the biggest audiences for a music event in Windhoek. Audiences would average on 10 000 for Hart van Windhoek.

Across the years, my background spans from starting as a junior operator from the NBC news studio, variety TV productions, sound design for TV shows, post productions for documentaries, films, and movies to mixing for live shows and for esteemed local, regional and international musicians. I had been involved in the entire spectrum of audio work to music, studio productions, and live events, which I now specialise in. I have also grown from the analogue days and progressed to the digital; I moved with the technology. I think that overview is something that is lacking; many people lack insights into the history of where certain

structures and technologies come from. A lot of these new technologies are actually informed by the analogue structures.

I eventually moved to Johannesburg at the end of 2009 and continued to work as a sound engineer in the industry. At the moment, I tour with Selaelo and TKZee and work as their road and technical managers, as well as their sound engineer. I am also the second engineer for Lira, meaning I mix her live shows when the first engineer is not available.

When it comes to my career highlights, I would think of the time I mixed performances for Kenny Lattimore, Eric Benet and Karyn White. These are all artists whose work I love and it was memorable to mix their performances; such as having 7 000 people in a closed arena, all singing along to a mix you are making, and at the same time, witnessing these artists you have an emotional connection with. That is the thing about live music, once the bug bites, it's hard to let it go. It's a very special feeling.

I also started my company, Reid Music Productions, which is still in its infancy. This is a label I am pursuing that creates solutions for artists on various technical, management and marketing matters.

**The Namibian live music scene has transitioned in interesting ways. In your perspective, what has this transition been like and what are some of the developments and shortfalls over the years?**

I would generally like to speak about the transition of live music in both South Africa and Namibia, with regards to the size of audiences for live music events. For me, it is not really the musicians who have changed, but the audiences who have become challenging over the years. They have come to have a very short attention span because of the advent of technology. It has become very difficult to grab their attention. This has caused some implications for live music events, and the general business. In the live music space, I categorise two kinds of performances: Background music and foreground music. Unfortunately, these days, most musicians fall into the background music category, and perform while audiences are captivated by other things. This has been a distinct development over the years.

Audiences are not present or engaged with stage performers. This means that for the live performance space, artists have to work on capturing their audiences very quickly. I can reference Selaelo here, who when organising his own gigs, always has

a development aspect, allowing opening acts he identified to expose to an audience. But even though these opening acts are talented, the audiences generally do not listen in an engaging manner; they end up doing other things. But as soon as Selaelo, the main act, gets onto the stage, the audiences immediately pay their attention to the stage. It is as if they get dragged out of what they were doing as he immediately captivates them. This is something to pay attention to, as it brings me to my next point: In the music business, I think it is much more important for an artist to build a brand (as an artist), than to build musicianship. Of course, the musicianship is important, but you have to focus on building a brand, otherwise, you end up having great talent but not much to sell.

As far as I can see from my perspective, the current trend is that promoters book brands that are relevant to their audiences. They don't look at how good is a musician is, that becomes secondary. They do not concern themselves with exposure and developmental opportunities for artists. Promoters these days look at the brand and its following, and if the event will establish ticket sales. That's just how it is. An increasingly contracted artist shows that as a brand owner, they deliver on their brand consistently. Think about how the biggest R&B singers sell their stage image? A lot of work goes into building a persona. This is a model I don't see enough in Namibia. I find that people do not work strongly enough on their brands in order to meet audience traction and expectations. For instance, with Selaelo, he intentionally performs like it is his last, and this is how his audiences know him; he always delivers uniquely, however many times you have seen him. One would see this on his social media comments, with reflections on how he never disappoints on stage. It doesn't matter what emotional state he is in; he gets onto stage and delivers on his brand's message and promise. It is the same with TKZee. To put into perspective, the members of TKZee all have different practices in their personal lives; Kabelo is an ordained pastor. But you do not see any of this on stage; what you will see is TKZee, the famous kwaito group, at its best like never before. So, for me, that is the most important message, you have to create, protect and maintain your brand.

To perform live is to prepare. You do not just get onto the stage and sing. You have to very quickly get onto the stage and make an emotional connection with your audience and maintain that throughout the entire performance. Otherwise, you lose your audiences, and this ultimately affects your following. As a live performer, you have to consistently give captivating performances that compel audiences. This way, your



... YOU HAVE TO CREATE, PROTECT AND MAINTAIN YOUR BRAND.

followers will anticipate that you will always offer something they do not want to miss. That is the point that we need to address to our artists; that it is not merely about your talent or musicianship, but that at the end of the day, you have to give your audience the very best. That is the transaction in this business.

**Namibia is seeing an increasing pool of beatmakers and studio-based artists, and a significant decline in young instrumentalists developing their skills. What value is there in developing live instrumental playing amid the rising demands of electronic music?**

I don't think electronic music should be belittled. Different creative expressions are useful for different spaces. For instance, not all events have to be geared towards younger people. There will always be a need for live musicianship. I think what will keep challenging Namibia is that artists these days generally do not learn enough. They do not take their studies or skills far enough to be able to make them versatile. That is one of the big differences that I see between Namibia and South Africa, given that South Africa already has an established industry with a pool of many good artists. For instance, there is a very small pool of backing musicians [instrumentalists] that artists can depend on in Namibia. This is an issue of musicianship; general attitude and culture towards development. For instance, expanding your musicianship allows you to explore other avenues that are not necessarily limited to your brand, so that you get to offer newer experiences to audiences, especially in spaces where you could grow a newer following.

Your brand will depend on the story you want to tell to your audience, but the skill set will determine the versatility within the music industry as a whole. I want to see, for example, a trained artist expands their musicianship and sound across different spaces. How wonderful would it be if, say, for instance, an Afrofusion artist collaborates and performs with a full symphony, and orchestrates their music for a different audience? You can grow your audience this way, especially for the kind of audiences who are willing to pay active attention to your performances. This way, you gain foreground gigs and not remain a mere background artist. But to do this cross-collaborative work, you need to have the skill. As an artist, it is important to cross over and bring different skills together and capture new audiences, who will in turn follow your work and appreciate your musicianship. This is what a lot of great African musicians have done. They continue to perform in small venues and branch out into different performance streams.

**You have had the privilege of working with various events organisers, producers, and festival curators. What are some trends that are significant across recent years that artists should be aware of?**

It is unfortunate that music shows these days are for the general social vibe than the actual music itself. Audiences no longer come to shows to listen, they just come for the atmosphere. This is also because of the way organisers set up their events. Audiences have increasingly grown rowdy, even with the Cape Town Jazz Festival. It is unfortunate, but that is how things are. These days, as a promoter, if you want to

target audiences who willingly want to listen to music, you have to target markets like the symphony audiences who come to the theatre to engage with the music. Even in South Africa, jazz festivals are increasingly only jazz by name. What is dominating now are the DJs. The curation of the line-ups is compressed, without enough downtime for audiences to absorb and rest. I have been to many festivals where acoustic performers play between DJ sets, while the MCs shout over the DJs performing between sets over. It's all too much sometimes, especially for audiences who want to engage with what the musicians have to offer. The trend is that too many artists are booked, and the show is too long. I would encourage event promoters to organise shows targeted at music lovers and not just for the vibes.

I would implore artists and festival organisers not to book young talents to perform at big open-air events where they can get swallowed up. Their talent goes unnoticed. Rather, for the young artists, I would advise that they build their following from smaller spaces so that they are joined with appreciative audiences onto the big stages. It is seldom that you get people who understand this concept. This is going to require government intervention to provide spaces where young talents can explore and develop their stage work as well.

Again, I will take it back to the conversation about the brand. The sustainable trend that I see these days is the model of specialist events with specialist audiences; where artists team up with brands to reach a specific market and audiences. The musicians must build a brand so that they can partner with commercial bands to host sustainable events. This is the only way I see commercial events being successful that are not backed by the government funds.

*Photo contributed*

“YOUR BRAND WILL DEPEND ON THE STORY YOU WANT TO TELL TO YOUR AUDIENCE, BUT THE SKILL SET WILL DETERMINE THE VERSATILITY WITHIN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY AS A WHOLE.”



The trend now is truly an event with a big headline sponsor, like a cellphone company or a beverage brand that drives the entire thing. This goes with bringing the musicians closer to audiences who are relevant to them as well.

**Can you expand more on the issue of versatility and ensuring work? Particularly with the likeliness of being booked by these commercially-driven events and festivals?**

My instinct is to say that you should not dilute your brand. There are a lot of people competing in a lot of different spaces. I think artists should be aware of where they can perform and where they can't. It is not necessarily good that you perform everywhere, even when you are not relevant to that platform. My feeling is that you should be diverse but within your brand. Let us take TKZee for example, they can do club gigs just with a DJ, or they can scale it all the way up with a symphony. That is what I would call being versatile, but your content remains the same. You cross over for different audiences, with your story and brand. I think it is very important to decide on what story you want to tell, but also be consistent with it. At the same time, don't pigeonhole yourself, and don't limit yourself in a box.

The versatility would also come in for the musicians (instrumentalists) who support your brand. They must be versatile. Not all of us will end up being the brand (face), but there is a role for everyone within the entire package to benefit from. As a background person, I make sure that the brand's vision connects with the audience in terms of sound quality. And this is the same that band must do; they must make sure that the brand's vision connects with the audience and that they do not try to steal the show for themselves. When a show or booking goes well, it goes well for the entire team involved,

and professional artists know when and how to acknowledge everyone that contributes to a successful performance.

Moreover, I feel that if you aim to be a global musician, then that is where you should ideally be and not remain merely in Namibia. Don't just limit yourself to being a Namibian musician. One thing that I must pinpoint is that Namibia has some unique qualities. For instance, if I play ma /gaisa here in South Africa, they are so fascinated by the bassline, because it is unique, even though some of it is absorbed qualities. The people here [South Africa] find it fascinating. So, we should not have an inferiority complex about our own music in a global context. This can only be done if you expand your skills as a musician. Training and expanding your musicianship skills is critical. The route that you studied does not necessarily have to be in your brand. But the fact that you studied, and acquired skills, allows you the opportunity to tell your story to a wider audience.

I was very fortunate to have worked with the late Willie Mbuende on the Sidadi Music Making Project through the NTN. He toured the whole of Namibia recording traditional music. The project and band took the sounds and blended the materials with contemporary approaches. I remember getting goosebumps on the trip during the collection of materials. I do not see enough artists doing this level of research in Namibia. This is something that beatmakers can also consider drawing from. For instance, there are some very powerful drumming patterns in the Zambezi and Kavango regions. Beatmakers can actually incorporate these rich and unique rhythms into their work. This requires studying and engaging with these communities so that these patterns continue to survive in our contemporary times. These traditions still exist, and I think this is where cultural institutions can intervene to connect local communities with artists. This approach will allow our rich heritage to be preserved

and expanded to a larger audience. I am interested in Namibian artists who can embrace what is ours and commercialise it further.

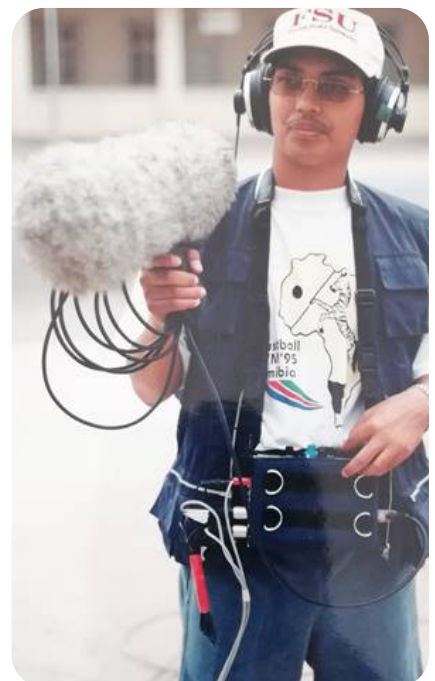
**The issue of audience numbers is a determining factor in the growth of a Namibian music industry, having a small population. Do you see the population issue as a myth, opportunity, or barrier?**

It is quite unfortunate that the audience numbers are a barrier to doing the kind of commercially viable events that will need to sustain an artist's career. Large audiences make commercial sense in terms of the cost of the production. There is a minimum number of people you need to support an event if you want to make a profit at the end of the day. Otherwise, artists are going to continuously depend on sponsorships and partnering with brands, so that these institutions end up carrying the burden of the costs.

One of the ways I can see working around this issue is for artists to work on their skill level and brand so that they become good enough to be booked on international platforms. I don't think anyone who is serious about their music, and making a living out of their music, can expect to sustain a living out of the audience numbers that Namibia is limited to. For instance, the Windhoek Jazz Festival only happens once a year, what other platforms do artists have to perform for that kind of audience size in Namibia? I would think that Namibian artists need some kind of creative way to build partnerships with brands across SADC on an annual basis. Audience size is certainly a barrier if artists don't cross beyond borders. There must be an effort to expand their audience. That may help, and you can only do that if you up your skill and overall competitive performance qualities.



TRAINING AND  
EXPANDING YOUR  
MUSICIANSHIP SKILLS  
IS CRITICAL.





*Photo by Opas Onucheyo*





Photo by Paavo Shooya



# ALMA ULAMBA

## **APPROACHES TO FUNDRAISING AND BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS IN THE MUSIC BUSINESS**

ARTS AND CULTURE MANAGER, NTN GENERAL MANAGER.

Alma Ulamba is an avid devotee of all things culture and arts. She comes from a musically inclined family and has a training background in television production from the Natal Technicon in Durban, South Africa, now known as Durban University of Technology (DUT). From 2003 to 2014, she worked as the NTN's programming and production manager, as well as the theatre's regional theatre coordinator. She has vast experience in managing productions and festivals, such as notably being part of the organising committee of the Windhoek Jazz Festival (2015 to 2019) and Ae// Gams Festival. Ulamba has served on many boards such as NACN deputy chairperson (2005 to 2009), NASCAM (2007 to 2013) and NACN chairperson (2009 to 2012). She has also served as a judge for the NAMAs for a tenure of 10 years. Since 2014, she serves as the General Manager of the NTN.

*Interviewed by Nelago Shilongoh, NTN artistic director.*

**In your perspective, what have been some highlights of the Namibian music sector, and how has it transitioned over the years?**

The Namibian music sector has transformed in a very positive light, but slowly. I entered the performing arts sector in 2003 and at the time, kwaito was the main music as we copied everything from SA. Over the years, the focus changed from kwaito to house, to now amapiano, etc. Other Namibian sounds were developed by the likes of Arafath Muhuure and Pedrito, to name a few. We also saw the spectrum moving from studio-based music to live band music as a preference, especially for the economic active circles. I saw the change during my tenure as a NAMAs judge. Each year, the bar was raised by the winners of that year, making the rest of the contenders work harder to perfect their craft in the pursuit of getting awards as recognition for their efforts.

**As a seasoned NAMAs judge with an overview on the development of Namibian music, what approaches would you encourage local artists to consider to promote their sounds on the regional and continental map?**

I would say Namibian musicians should seek exposure - either in the form of education or collaborative efforts across borders - in order to start composing music for an international audience if they wish to grow and be recognised beyond the borders of Namibia. They should follow the trends of what's happening in order to be in sync with their counterparts. It is also important to keep a Namibian sound as this will make their music unique. We have great examples such as Elemotho, Suzy Eises, Big Ben, Erna Chimu, Castro and Hishishi Papa who have embraced music education and participated at international festivals as a way to sell their music to the world.

**What are some hurdles in the Namibian music business that emerging artists should be aware of and steer away from in developing their careers?**

It's not as glamorous as everybody thinks. It takes a lot of hard work to perfect your craft in order to convince a paying audience to part with their hard-earned money to support you. Funders also need to be convinced of a product to be associated with; depending on the brand they are dealing with. It's about keeping a clean image and always uttering positivity. Image is everything and if you don't take care of your brand, you will collapse as soon as you start. I would also suggest the following:

- No hate speech towards others.
- Willingness to learn and invest in one's craft.
- Clean public conduct at all times.
- Clean dress code all the time.



- There is only one chance for a first impression.

**You have previously worked as the chairperson of the NACN. In your experience with working on various funding schemes, in what ways would you advise emerging artists for funding applications amid the competitive space?**

Namibian artists must know that nothing is for free, you must prove that you are worthy of the funds being invested in you and your profile must speak for yourself. It's a misconception out there that the NACN must just provide. Like any other funder, you must put up a convincing proposal with clear timelines of delivery in order to qualify for the seeds. Just like any other funder, a body like the NACN would cover production expenses, however, if the project is of commercial nature, the producer is then expected to compensate themselves from such proceeds instead.

**The arts play an important role in cultural engagements between countries, involving artists to get booked for international travels and showcases. How can artists engage with embassies and foreign affairs agencies?**

Artists should, first of all, make an effort to go and introduce themselves appropriately and offer to perform at events of such agencies/ embassies. If not, invite these agencies to your gigs as this will give them an insight into the type of music you perform. This, of course, goes hand-in-hand with preparing a readily available and well-presented artistic profile. Secondly, most - if not all - of these agencies have a website where they display

their projects and the areas of interest they support. Should any of them have a cultural officer, artists should make it a point to get acquainted with them as they are the right person to engage for cultural engagement.

I must also share that some of the embassies have cultural agencies, e.g. the French have the FNCC while the Germans have the Goethe-Institut, and the USA has the American Cultural Centre, etc. That's usually the arm that deals with matters of arts and culture on behalf of an embassy. Through these agencies, artists can ask to be linked to managers of the music business from those countries as part of trying to reach a wider audience. I would also encourage musicians to think collaboratively when approaching the agencies. Think of how you can collaborate with American, German, French artists, and practitioners, etc. to create sustainable projects that can be supported by these agencies. This way, local musicians also get to extend their market and audiences. Ensembles like VMSix have an international manager, that is why they have been able to perform internationally.

**The NTN often works with international producers and organisers who inquire about trending Namibian musicians and sound artists. How can emerging and talented artists introduce their work to arts and cultural institutions?**

The NTN initiated a drive some time ago to build a database of the different offerings from our local artists. Sadly, the artists did not heed the call. This initiative was created due to the influx of inquiries from the international producers in order not to favour the common few, but to make the playing field a levelled one for everyone. We will look into it again



and hopefully this time around the artists will provide their profiles because you never know who will be browsing our website or social media sites at any given time. At the same time, I would encourage artists to keep sharing their profiles and media packs with our production department at [production@ntn.org.na](mailto:production@ntn.org.na). It also helps when you make a physical or telephonic appointment to introduce your work to cultural institutions so that they are aware of your work, and can reference it when the opportunity presents itself. A lot of artists have shared their releases with cultural institutions, and I would encourage this further, as it allows for the arts administrators to stay updated with their work. You have to get yourself out there. Do it consistently, and with sophistication. Presentation is everything.

**Building partnerships with arts and cultural institutions is also an important process for sustaining Namibian music. What insights can you offer in the process of building partnerships, and what should artists consider bringing to the table?**

Artists should also bring something to the table and not always expect the institutions to cover it all for projects. It seldom works like that. Thus, when approaching a cultural institution, artists should have a plan already and not show up empty-handed with only an idea. This shows that yes, you have great ideas, but no capacity to run a project. It's important to note that the fact that you have an idea does not mean you qualify to be entertained without it going through the scrutiny process. Institutions run with structures and processes, and artists must always keep this in mind. Do not approach an institution as if you are approaching a mere individual. It helps to inquire on the processes of various partnerships, then have the time to sit with your idea and return with a thorough proposal and presentation. Have the courage to ask the questions, so that you prepare accordingly.

It is also important to note that arts and culture institutions seldom have finances just waiting to sponsor artists at any given time. This is reflective of our economic climate. Projects and programmes are usually planned a year in advance, thus if you are looking for immediate (to commence in three months) support, then rather look at the resources that the institution has readily available. These are resources such as venues for staging, rehearsals, and so forth. Arts and culture institutions like the NTN and NAGN are subsidised by the government. As a result, they create platforms through their programming to join forces with the creatives in order to make the artists' dreams a reality by either staging a production with them or hosting an exhibition for them. Institutions have the infrastructure required to put together productions while the artists have the craft as an offering. Additionally, we should not forget that there are enablers in the form of technicians and administrators who also make up the equation in order to

complete the productions. It is not merely about getting onto stage and performing. Think of the following:

- Logistical resources
- Overtime for staff
- Supporting freelancers
- Marketing resources
- Ticketing service providers
- Videography and streaming service providers
- Additional equipment to be hired
- Fuel for vehicles
- Ushers and Front of House managers (for smooth public hosting)
- Safety officers

There is a lot to consider, in any given professional show/staging.

There is always a stringent selection process involved in order to present only the best for the year. There is a misconception that as long as you are an artist, you will automatically qualify, but it is not the case. This is illusionary. Artists are expected to work on their craft just like in any other profession, and present their A-game with potential partners. This includes business and strategic thinking as well. Artists should also know that the creative departments of all cultural institutions follow trends and are aware of what is happening where.

**How can artists approach business networking when challenged with business communication etiquette?**

Every artist should have an updated and well-presented artistic profile in place in the event they don't know how to verbally represent themselves. Their profile would express on their behalf. Profiles should provide an indication of how the artist has developed/matured over the years by showcasing their work. Secondly, having a seasoned manager/assistant is always a good way to have representation on the artist's behalf when it comes to engaging with the business/corporate world. It is also an added advantage for artists to educate themselves by taking up short courses in the field of communication as this comes in handy should they be invited to do live interviews, presentations, etc. They can also just do their own research via Google/YouTube, there is always an avenue to log onto in order to improve yourself as a person. Topics such as public speaking are of great assistance. When writing letters to engage the business world, artists should approach someone to review and proofread their documents for corrections before submission. As the saying goes, you only have one chance to make a first impression. Once a letter/proposal is well presented and the approach is clean, the party being approached will definitely take notice. If the proposal is in line with their strategy or mandate, they will invite you for further engagement. Most importantly, artists should plan their year accordingly to avoid last minute funding and partnership requests. This happens often, and does not yield success. Lastly,

Photo contributed



IT'S NOT AS GLAMOROUS AS EVERYBODY THINKS. IT TAKES A LOT OF HARD WORK TO PERFECT YOUR CRAFT IN ORDER TO CONVINCE A PAYING AUDIENCE TO PART WITH THEIR HARD-EARNED MONEY TO SUPPORT YOU.



AS THE SAYING  
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artists should remember that their public conduct and dress code can influence the investors' decision to associate with their brand, therefore they need to be mindful of their image.

### What can emerging artists explore further as sustainable approaches?

I would suggest the following:

**1.** The power of working together should not be underestimated. It's unfortunate that our artists choose to work in silos instead of collaborative efforts, but I have noticed some efforts from a select few. Collaborative work is economical and beneficial in the different approaches that can be taken, meaning you get to create a dynamic portfolio.

**2.** I remember the FNCC created a platform to enrich artists with a presentation by Elemotho, who is a well-exposed local artist in the international market. He shared tips on how to explore the regional and international markets, festivals, concerts, markets, etc., but only a handful showed up. It was for free but no interest was shown. Thus, expose yourself consistently to training and information-sharing platforms. This is key. Your talent, as a singular factor, is not enough not to sustain you. This cannot be stressed enough.

**3.** Artists need to invest in a proper product if they are to put it out there. Be open to critique, especially in terms of studio and performance quality. This will help greatly, especially in terms of growing your quality for potential investors and partners.

**4.** Artists should have an online profile/presence as this will make it easier for potential consumers, followers, investors and partners to relate to their work. Social media works wonders with regard to updates and information sharing. Update your profiles consistently. A consistent artist is a trusted artist. Even if you are taking much-needed time out, try in some way to maintain engagement on your platforms. A funder is less likely to contract an artist whose platform was last updated in 2017. This raises questions.

**5.** Artists should think of themselves as a business. Thus, I would advise that they consider setting up stations at expos, in order to share and sell their work. Even if the exhibited products are not sold well, your expanded visibility would benefit your career well. This is especially with regards to performing services, such as performing at corporate functions, weddings, youth events, etc. A team of interns can be set up at the station, with scheduled appearances by the artist.

**6.** Shelf space in local shops is underutilised. It's a matter of approaching the business development office or the procurement office to find out how to rent a shelf in a particular shop. Let's also explore petrol stations for a shelf to place our products. Artistry goes hand in hand with merchandise as well. Thus, with a growing brand, artists

can look at attaching their brand to various entrepreneurial pursuits.

**7.** I noticed some artists resorted to selling music on USBs. This is a great way to buy music for a vehicle owner, but it should be within affordable ranges. Think of how you can package different releases, such as EPs and albums.

**8.** Tourist and craft centres are full of visual arts materials, but music, not so much. Though music sales are becoming increasingly digital, artists could think of ways to sell their music in physical forms. This can also be used as a marketing approach, just so that your music is visible to international visitors.

**9.** Restaurants, lodges and hotels are frequented by visitors both local and international. Pursue performance deals with them, especially during high tourist seasons in Namibia. This can go as far as lodges that stretch off the main roads. Ensure that your proposed music is in line with what tourists would look forward to; authentically and soothingly Namibian.

**10.** The Ministry of International Relations is our gateway to all our Namibian embassies around the globe, they can be lobbied to assist in getting our products out there. Even if it is just to have a stall at an international fair managed by them since they are already in those countries or even at our national days when celebrated out there. Get in touch with the officers and staff working at various Namibian embassies globally.

**11.** The NACN participates at a lot of forums locally, regionally and globally. They can be approached to add local music to their stands. Ensure that you consistently share your music with the officers. Printing and dropping a few flyers containing your brief resume and information that they can keep at their craft table would also be useful. Ensure that the flyers are attractive and well designed.

**12.** Schools are also unexplored. Social entrepreneurship goes a long way, as the arts can be used as tools to empower and develop the youth. Design a package that can be presented at schools and youth-centered organisations. Other societies such as the bible society and SPCA make use of schools to fundraise. Here artists can also sell their work in collaboration with schools and offer incentives.

Thus, all in all, like any given business, it requires you to be well prepared, inquisitive and informed on various processes and trends. Applying for funding requires you to be well informed and articulate in order to be persuasive to potential funders and partners. Outdated and disorganised approaches tarnish your potential. Be mindful of the 'system' and take note that it requires trust in order for people to pursue business networks with you. This ultimately is dependent on how you develop and present yourself seriously.



A woman with her eyes closed, singing into a microphone and playing an acoustic guitar. She is wearing a white lace top, a colorful headscarf, and a beaded necklace. The background is dark with blue and purple stage lights.

# APPENDICES



One of the essential keys to ensuring funding, cooperation and partnerships is an articulate and well prepared proposal. This is ensured by preparing a clear and concise document that expresses the vision, motivation and objectives of a given project. Good proposals stem from the art of persuasion, and one does this by offering a sharp, confident, and unique proposition.

The following section takes you through the requisites and frequently made errors of proposals.

### 1. The following are the different types of proposals stipulated on the [Illinois University Library](#) website:

#### • Solicited proposals

Proposals submitted in response to a specific call issued by a sponsor/donor.

#### • Unsolicited proposals

Proposals submitted to a sponsor who has not issued a specific call, but is believed by the applicant to have an interest in the subject.

#### • Pre-proposals

These are requested by a sponsor who wants to minimise an applicant's effort in preparing a full proposal. They are usually in the form of a letter of intent or brief abstract. After the pre-proposal is reviewed, the sponsor notifies the investigator if a full proposal is warranted. This is usually the common form of proposals.

#### • Continuation or non-competing proposals

These confirm the original proposal and funding requirements of a multi-year project which the sponsor has already provided funding to for an initial period (normally one year). Continued support is usually dependent on satisfactory work progress and the availability of funds. This is typical in [donor-funded projects](#) that comprise of large project funds.

#### • Renewal or competing proposals

Proposals which request continued support for an existing project that is about to end. These requests - from the sponsor's viewpoint - generally have the same status as an unsolicited proposal.

It is, therefore, important to acquaint oneself with the different types of proposals, which require their own specific structures, tones and complementary engagements.

### 2. A good proposal generally has the following features:

- It is a sufficiently structured document that is not too lengthy.
- It contains a cover page which gives an executive summary about on the applicant's background, and the content of the proposed project and the objectives around it.
- It clearly offers context into the applicant's professional background, and includes relevant information that is linked to the skill set needed for the proposed project.
- It includes information on projects that were actualised by the applicant previously.
- It reflects truthfulness and accuracy on the applicant's background, skills and information.
- It is clearly structured, organised and contains the following:
  - Executive summary - details about the background and vision of the proposed project
  - Statement of need - details about the significance of the proposed project
  - Applicant's details - provides information about the applicant, their background and skill set
  - Project description - details the specifics, objectives, timelines and activities in the proposed project
  - Budget analysis - provides concise details on the resources required
  - Conclusion - summarises the proposal's main points
- It is well written, comprehensible and engaging.
- It clearly outlines the key objectives of the proposed project.
- The project vision is refreshing, unique, well thought through and realistic.
- It clearly outlines the envisioned timeline of the project.



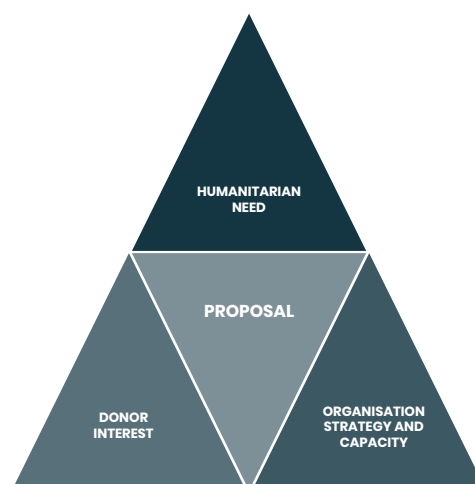
- It is reflective of early planning, and does not request for resources immediately before the project's commencement
- If it is an unsolicited proposal, submit a proposal at least three months before the envisioned commencement period.
- It includes a risk assessment, and offers envisioned mechanisms around the projected risks.
- It clearly compliments the recipient's mandate and values, showing that thorough research was done.
- The requested resources are realistic.
- Requested recourses are market-related.
- It is not submitted haphazardly, but stems from a series of introductory conversations that were had [unsolicited proposal].

### **An unsatisfactory proposal contains the following features:**

- It is incomprehensible, badly written or contains communication approaches not suitable for the recipient.
- Proposal contains too much technical language, driving recipient away from following the content of your proposal.
- Background of applicant is untruthful and blown out of proportion.
- It is extremely short, lacking significant information.
- It is too lengthy, containing too much unnecessary information.
- Project design is unrealistic, and objectives are blown out of proportion.
- Project design is not relevant (mandate and values) to the recipient, showing a lack of research.
- Project design is against capacity of the applicant. Start small, according to your background and capacity.
- Objectives are too many. This is a sign of no direction. Clearly outline what your key objectives are; three to five are sufficient.
- It is overtly narrated, and does not clearly outline the proposed terms of funding/partnership or resources required from the recipient.
- It leaves too many questions for the recipient to follow up on.

### **3. What do prospective funders/sponsors and partners want?**

- A skilled professional deserving of a grant or partnership
- Experienced in project management, particularly knowledgeable in the administering project funds.
- Presenting a well-organised and articulate image, complementing that of a professional organisation
- Extensive research on the organisation, informing the needs and gaps being filled by the applicant
- Project /proposed idea is aligned with the organisation's mandate and values
- Project/proposed idea is socially and politically mindful
- Project/proposed idea allows for the organisation to reach a target audience / readership in line with that of the organisation
- Project/proposed idea does not pose a threat to the organisation's image and brand
- Project/proposed idea is refreshing and unique, and reflects the organisation's position on development and innovation
- Project/proposed idea positions the organisation in a forward-thinking and socially progressive manner.



**Image Source:** <https://had-int.org/blog/what-makes-a-good-proposal/>

- If provided, follow the guidelines and instructions of the sponsor/funder (solicited and continuation or non-competing proposals).
- Provide all the requirements stipulated.
- Do not prepare a proposal last minute. This will reveal a rushed and unprofessional image of yourself.
- Write clearly and concisely. Start by writing down as much as you can, and condense the content of the proposal to fit the appropriate direction and tone. Avoid writing irrelevant things.
- Review and revise your proposal draft. Ask the right people with the appropriate expertise. This includes proofreading.
- List the contents of the proposal and concept notes, and outline key differences between the two documents.
- Outline the use of a [theory of change](#) to demonstrate how change will happen.
- Outline the use of a logical framework and recognise the difference between activities and results at different levels.
- Inquire on requirements of and templates used by different funders/donors.
- Write proposals in a style that are concise, accurate and engaging.
- Develop a narrative note to accompany an activity-based budget.
- Integrate international standards and cross-cutting trends throughout the proposal.

[illegible]



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Windhoek, Namibia  
info@intrik-consulting.com  
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### SERVICES

TRADEMARKS

INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS

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As an artist, you have to be able to sustain your career and livelihood and to do so, one needs to be aware of one's worth - realising your worth is paramount to having a sustainable career. Ideally, in many parts of the world either management or agencies fight the good fight and ensure artists and performers are paid ethically and equitably; however, in the Namibian industry, there is a lack of monitoring bodies or unions that determine, set and govern artistic rates and payments. Artists are left to fend for themselves and formulate figures to fit their needs. Thus, it is imperative that artists, at the very least, know the of the general baseline rates in the local context, in order to give direction to their costings. If you feel you do not know how to go about it, here is a practical guide on how to quote for your services within live music practices.

Firstly, one needs to understand and consider their career and their experience according to three key stages;



### SETTING YOUR RATES

When looking to quote for your services, consider the following:

1. Performance scope (deliverables and expectations from client)
2. Costs for commissioned works (writing new music for the project/event)
3. Client's general expectations
4. Required resources (what the artists needs to offer the services)
5. Timeline (preparations, rehearsals and performance)
6. Rehearsals and preparations for performances/recordings
7. Locations and venues

*The following are a range of rates that one benchmarks when contracted for live music projects/performances.*

#### NEWCOMER PERFORMER/ARTIST

Taking into consideration these factors, newcomer performers/artists can quote according to these rates:

REHEARSALS/PREPARATIONS:	PERFORMANCE FEE:	LOCAL TRAVEL (NAMIBIA):
N\$80 – N\$100 per day  This fee is inclusive of transport fare, meals and logistical costs	N\$800 – N\$1 000 per performance session	This when booked outside your hometown.  Accommodation (bed and breakfast) should be covered by the client. Ensure that there are separate rooms for everyone.  Per diem (daily allowance): N\$200 daily (excl. accommodation and breakfast)

#### Additional expenses to consider:

The above-mentioned fees are not inclusive of the following items (operational costs):

1. Extensive stationery, printing, copying and logistical resources.
2. Styling (if necessary), hairdressing, and make-up.
3. Additional gear and equipment to be rented for the project
4. Additional collaborator(s) to be contracted for the project/performance (incl. their rehearsal fees)
5. Additional services and items not stipulated or agreed on with the client



### MID-TIER, INDIVIDUAL MUSICIAN

Taking into consideration these factors, mid-tier musicians can quote according to these minimum rates:

REHEARSALS/PREPARATIONS:	PERFORMANCE FEE:	LOCAL TRAVEL (NAMIBIA):
N\$100 per day  This fee is inclusive of transport fare, meals and logistical costs	N\$1 500 per performance session	This when booked outside your hometown.  Accommodation (bed and breakfast) should be covered by the client. Ensure that there are separate rooms for everyone.  Per diem (daily allowance): N\$250 daily (excl. accommodation and breakfast)

#### Additional expenses to consider:

The above-mentioned fees are not inclusive of the following items (operational costs):

1. Extensive stationery, printing, copying and logistical resources.
2. Styling (if necessary), hairdressing, and make-up.
3. Additional gear and equipment to be rented for the project
4. Additional collaborator(s) to be contracted for the project/performance (incl. their rehearsal fees)
5. Additional services and items not stipulated or agreed on with the client

### PROFESSIONAL, INDIVIDUAL MUSICIAN

Taking into consideration these factors, professional musicians can quote according to these minimum rates:

REHEARSALS/PREPARATIONS:	PERFORMANCE FEE:	LOCAL TRAVEL (NAMIBIA):
N\$120 per day  This fee is inclusive of transport fare, meals and logistical costs	N\$4 000+ per performance session	This when booked outside your hometown.  Accommodation (bed & breakfast) should be covered by the client.  Per diem (daily allowance): N\$300 daily (excl. accommodation and breakfast)

#### Additional expenses to consider:

The above-mentioned fees are not inclusive of the following items (operational costs):

1. Extensive stationery, printing, copying and logistical resources.
2. Styling (if necessary), hairdressing, and make-up.
3. Additional gear and equipment to be rented for the project
4. Additional collaborator(s) to be contracted for the project/performance (incl. their rehearsal fees)
5. Additional services and items not stipulated or agreed on with the client

### PROFESSIONAL DJS

**N\$5 000. – N\$10 000 (incl. deck costs)**

The above depends on the scale of performance/booking.

#### Additional expenses to consider:

The above-mentioned fees are not inclusive of the following items (operational costs):

1. Extensive stationery, printing, copying and logistical resources.
2. Styling (if necessary), hairdressing, and make-up.
3. Additional gear and equipment to be rented for the project
4. Additional collaborator(s) to be contracted for the project/performance (incl. their rehearsal fees)
5. Additional services and items not stipulated or agreed on with the client

### ENSEMBLE / BAND RATES

CHAMBER MUSIC (PROFESSIONAL)	CHOIR: (FOUNDATION FEES)	BANDS (PROFESSIONAL):
<b>Duo:</b> N\$8 000 minimum <b>Trio:</b> N\$10 000 minimum <b>Quartet:</b> N\$20 000 minimum	<b>Newcomer:</b> N\$5000 <b>Mid-tier:</b> N\$10 000 <b>Professional:</b> N\$15 000+	<b>Back track with a supported live instrument:</b> N\$6 000 - N\$8 000 for 30-minute set  <b>Small acoustic performances:</b> N\$10 000 – N\$15 000 for 30-minute set  <b>Basic band (keys, drums, strings, lead vocals, backing vocals):</b> N\$15 000 – N\$25 000 minimum; 30-minute set  <b>Expanded band:</b> N\$30 000 minimum; 30-minute set

\*Note: Daily performance/project rates increase the wider your radius grows from your residing base. For example, as a Windhoek-based creative, you would not charge with your usual rates if the project were based in Swakopmund, Maputo or Berlin. This is to factor that the musician has been relocated, taking upon further costs for the period of relocation. Consider travel costs, accommodation, standard three meals per day and daily supplies and services that would be needed.



### INTERNATIONAL BOOKINGS:

For international bookings, artists should be mindful of the following costs:

#### INTERNATIONAL TRAVEL:

- **Flight ticket:** Depending on country and airline costs
- **Visa/work permit:** Cost of visa or working document (ensure to have a visa at all times, to avoid risks of being held up on arrival)
- **Health insurance:** Health insurance varies, however, factor in N\$500 to N\$1 000 depending on location and scheme (short-term travel health insurances are also available with various service providers)
- **Per diem:** Per diem is the daily allowance to cover living expenses when travelling. Different countries have varied rates per diems according to regulated policies.
- **Accommodation:** Get clarification if the accommodation will be catered for by the production

### SAFETY

Musicians must consider their safety when working as well. As a musician, your livelihood is dependent on your health, therefore consider hazards to be covered in emergencies arise.

Your quotes should have terms and conditions stipulated that the client should cover costs should any hazards occur during the working sites.

#### What are hazards?

- Rehearsal space: Wood floor, concrete floor, dance mats, etc.
- Physical exertion: Lifting, throws, falls, acrobatics, etc.
- Faulty costume
- Special effects: Weapons, fire, pyrotechnic devices, etc.
- Mechanical devices
- Severe allergies

Ensure that your client will take care of medical costs should an accident take place, arising from health and safety hazards from the working environment. This should be stated and agreed upon in the contract.

### CONTRACTS

Never work without a contract! This creates exploitive circumstances and blurred points not backed up by a signed agreement. It also helps to keep all communication on email, so that written communication is traced and referenced to should disagreements take place. Verbal and telephonic communication do not carry enough grounds. Not all clients will have contracts in place, thus it is useful to have a personal template in place and on standby at all times. Further, it is highly encouraged that you look into working or performing hours you will be contracted for. If hours are extremely extensive such as being bound for extended hours on a site, then you may have to reconsider your rates to make up for all the time. Additionally, to make things simpler, you can add your terms and conditions on your quote (to be approved), so that all matters are clear with the client. Ensure to have pragmatic conditions, and not dramatic and overtly obnoxious ones.

*For contract templates, email [prod@ntn.org.na](mailto:prod@ntn.org.na)*

### COMMISSIONING

A thorough agreement needs to be drawn up when an artist is commissioned for a project. This can be in the areas of developing scores for a project, composing soundscapes, developing lyrics, etc. When commissioned to create work for a project it is highly encouraged that all matters pertaining to copyright matters are stipulated in your contract. For commissioned work, it is very important to have clarity on who has ownership of the work before agreeing and signing to develop and create the work. This is the same for collaborative works between artist. Ensure that you understand where and in what context the work will be distributed, and if you can have access to the files for your archives.

Pursuing full-time freelance work is a big step that, when transitioning from full-time based work, should be informed by key considerations such as your skills and abilities, objectives, plan and marketable products or services. This transition should not be taken lightly and haphazardly. Freelance work offers huge benefits and opportunities, but also comes with its own dynamic sets of challenges.

**The following are basic guidelines to look at when considering a career as a freelancer:**

### **1. Start off slow and identify your key objectives**

- Identify why and how you are going to produce your products or services. Have conversations with people who have pursued freelance creative work in your specialisation area and make informed and analytical decisions. Freelance work can be difficult, thus evaluate your SWOT in your ability to run your work on a freelance basis.
- With the inconsistent job opportunities in the creative and cultural sector in Namibia, it is best to start your freelance creative work on the side part-time, so that you ensure basic provision for your livelihood as you work your way up towards a well-informed, independent, networked and strategic creative freelancer.

### **2. Rates and costs**

Working as a freelancer means your sole income comes from work offered to you on an often periodic basis. Thus, you should be able to have gained enough skills to professionalise your products and services to a point where you can standardise your rates according to your abilities, expertise and background. This is so that clients pay your work around or close to your rates. Compare market rates for productions or services by looking at other freelance businesses in your specialisation and design your rates reasonably around what they charge. Do maintain your worth and charges, and navigate costs around your rates along the various projects and experiences.

### **3. Develop your skills**

- You have to consistently develop your skills so that you stay up to date with the latest industry demand and trends. Skills development is a requirement you should consider as part of your annual expenses. These are the kinds of skills that would help establish your work further and create unique offerings, enough to want to make people pay and invest in you.
- You will also have to ensure to learn the following:
  - Understanding different market-related pricing to set the right rates
  - Developing clear briefs and contracts
  - Tax systems and issues
  - Productive working methods.

### **4. Maintaining your brand and profile**

- Self-promotion and marketing yourself as a freelancer is key. With so many service providers available, make sure to articulate what is you do and how it creates solutions for prospective clients. Mystical freelancers are often viewed as undesirable and untrustworthy by clients, particularly in the corporate world. Demystify who you are by having your profile and background readily available, an updated online presence for background checks and clarity on the previous clients and consumers you've worked with.
- Excellent products and services often bring back clients and help to maintain business relationships. Thus, consider the following for excellent and competitive client services:
  - Organised and efficient logistical processes
  - Responsiveness and clear communication skills
  - Politeness, empathy and adaptability
  - Maturity - emotional and social intelligence
  - Innovation and accountability
  - Patience and truthfulness
  - Sticking to timelines and deadlines
  - Provision of added value products or services for clients and consumers.



- Financial management is critical to the work of a freelancer. You have to ensure that your basic personal and operational resources are catered for. Thus, acute financial planning is essential, which in turn creates more demands on the innovative and strategic actions to acquire prospective clients. The general rule is that you should foresee financial stability on a three-month advanced basis to cover your personal basic and operational needs. It is further encouraged to separate your personal and operational expenditure for bookkeeping and accounting purposes. This may require for you to register a business and open a separate bank account when you are ready.
- Apart from your living expenses, operations and taxes, consider affordable schemes you can take on to cover for your health insurance and retirement plans.

Though the availability of work can be sporadic, it does not mean that your organisation and administration processes should be too. With the dynamic and resilient nature of freelance work, it is important that you create a routine, as you would at any other regular job. Thus, routines around the following areas are essential:

- Marketing and creating awareness of your work and services
- Developing skills and staying up to date on the latest developments and trends
- Maintaining an updated portfolio to showcase your skills
- Maintaining efficient and organised communication
- Maintaining networks
- Planning and scheduling timelines accordingly to avoid undesirable clashes
- Developing multiple strategies to find and retain clients.

Making the leap to start freelancing full-time should not be a quick decision, but one that is well considered and informed. Preparation and asking questions is key before the big leap.

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.



Releasing music should be a process that is well planned to meet your objectives and create the impact you foresee. Preparing for a music release should be considered within the competitive market for the target audience to consume, whether through digital platforms or on stage. Thus, one should always plan strategically when releasing music. Though music-making comes with great passion, the various processes should all be strategic; whether it be for expanding creative heights, increasing your following, positioning your brand in a particular way, maintaining relevance or making sales.

Music releases come in different forms in the digital market. Below are the typical formats music releases are sold in.

## SINGLE

A single is typically a release that meets the requirements below:

- The release is one to three tracks
- The entire release is less than 30 minutes
- All individual tracks are less than 10 minutes long.

Newcomer artists are generally encouraged to enter into the industry through released singles and features with other artists. Putting an album together is a huge task that can overwhelm an emerging artist, and it can easily lead to wasted costs that could have been used efficiently at a much later and more appropriate stage.

***The following is a typical budget that can be considered for production and releases of singles:***

BUDGET:			
PRODUCTION & RELEASE OF A SINGLE		SUBTOTALS	
<b>Studio Costs</b>		<b>3,000</b>	
Recording, mixing and mastering	3,000		Quality studio production
<b>General Marketing &amp; PR</b>		<b>2,700</b>	
Photoshoot (incl. styling)	1,500		Professional photos for PR
Graphic Design	1,200		Design of promotional materials, incl. artist profile
<b>Video Production (optional)</b>		<b>5,000</b>	
x1 Video Production (incl. logistical, additional creative and technical costs)	5,000		Package costs (Basic video team, equipment, and editing. Minimal SFX features)
<b>Logistical Costs</b>		<b>2,500</b>	
Administrative & Logistical Costs	1,000		General logistical costs
Distribution costs	500		Subscription of digital platforms and distribution fees
Registration, publishing and licensing costs	1,000		Basic legal costs
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>13,200</b>	
<b>Other Costs</b>		<b>1,320</b>	
Unforeseen	1,320		10% of the subtotal
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>14,520</b>	



**EP (EXTENDED PLAY)**

An EP is typically a release that contains more tracks than a single, and fewer tracks than an album. It generally meets the requirements below:

- The release contains four to six tracks
- The entire release is less than 30 minutes long

EPs usually have 'EP' attached to the release title, e.g. "Take It Slow EP"

The following is a typical budget that can be considered for the production and release of EPs:

<b>BUDGET:</b>			
<b>PRODUCTION &amp; RELEASE OF AN EP</b>		<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	
<b>Studio Costs</b>		<b>7,000</b>	
Recording, mixing and mastering	7,000		Quality studio production. This does not include additional collaborators to be compensated
<b>General Marketing &amp; PR</b>		<b>4,600</b>	
Photoshoot (incl. styling)	2,000		Professional photos for PR
Graphic Design	1,600		Design of promotional materials, incl. artist profile
Paid marketing (digital)	1,000		Paid marketing services (social media boosting, email marketing etc.)
<b>Archival Video Production</b>		<b>5,000</b>	
x1 Video Production (incl. logistical, additional creative and technical costs)	5,000		Package costs (Basic video team, equipment, and editing. Minimal SFX features)
<b>Logistical Costs</b>		<b>3,500</b>	
Administrative & Logistical Costs	1,500		General logistical costs
Distribution costs	1,000		Subscription of digital platforms and distribution fees
Registration, publishing and licensing costs	1,000		Basic legal costs
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>20,100</b>	
<b>Other Costs</b>		<b>2,010</b>	
Unforeseen	2,010		10% of the subtotal
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>22,110</b>	

**FULL-LENGTH ALBUM**

An album is typically a release that meets the requirements below:

- Contains seven or more tracks
- The release is over 30 minutes in duration.

The following is a typical budget that can be considered for the production and release of albums:

<b>BUDGET:</b>			
<b>ALBUM PRODUCTION &amp; RELEASE</b>		<b>SUBTOTALS</b>	
<b>Studio Costs</b>		<b>16,000</b>	
Recording, mixing and mastering (Live band album recording and mixing would be costlier)	16,000		Studio Production. This does not include additional collaborators to be compensated
<b>General Marketing &amp; PR</b>		<b>7,000</b>	
Photoshoot (incl. styling)	3,000		Professional photos for PR
Graphic Design	3,000		Design package of album artwork, promotional materials, incl. artist profile
Paid marketing (digital)	1,000		Paid marketing services (social media boosting, email marketing etc.)
<b>Video Production</b>		<b>12,000</b>	
x2 Video Production (incl. logistical, additional creative and technical costs)	12,000		Package costs (Mid-tier video team, advanced equipment, editing, production design, SFX features etc.)
<b>Album Launch</b>		<b>31,500</b>	
The venue, security, equipment, technicians and supporting staff  *Backtrack album launch (Live band album launch would be costlier)	15,000		Standard venue and tech costs can be waived with sponsorships. Live bands would demand more intricate technical resources
Videography of album launch (optional)	7,000		Standard recording and editing services
Photographic coverage	2,000		Photography of launch (stage and behind the scene)
Paid marketing costs	2,500		Paid services (printing, digital marketing, etc.)
Remuneration of collaborators	5,000		Performance fees of x2 emerging collaborators
<b>Logistical Costs</b>		<b>5,500</b>	
Administrative & Logistical Costs	1,500		General logistical costs
Distribution costs	2,000		Subscription of digital platforms and distribution fees
Registration, publishing and licensing costs	2,000		Basic legal costs
<b>SUBTOTAL</b>		<b>72,000</b>	
<b>Other Costs</b>		<b>7,200</b>	
Unforeseen	7,200		10% of the subtotal
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>79,200</b>	



**Due to the different stages, the above costs are not all actualised at once. Additionally, the costs can be lessened through:**

1. Sponsorships
2. Strategic relationships
3. Barter agreements
4. Negotiations

Not all costs can be negotiated according to set prices at various service providers.

### NOTES

Being a musician has changed over the years. Gone are the days of selling music via CDs, touring all over to earn from gigs and concerts. Nowadays, it is all about your exposure, and how are you exposed by utilising something that sits in everyone's hands: Cellphones/smartphones. Smartphones have changed the music industry, either by easy downloads, sharing of music, Bluetooth or by streaming via the internet. Musicians and artists have to infiltrate every corner of the industry to stay relevant, to keep up your fan base and, most importantly, to sustain themselves. Therefore, capitalising on the different methods to get consumers to buy and listen to your music is the route to choose.

## ViralCom

What is ViralCom? ViralCom digital music store is a Namibian, pay-and-go music shop that sells music via an SMS line that started in 2021. It is neither online nor a streaming site. ViralCom was started out of fate, passion and a dream of seeing Namibian artists flourishing from their work. The idea was to solve a Namibian problem of international platforms failing to monetise Namibia, meaning views/streams did not translate to money for artists unless they used third parties or foreign banks. Using the analogy of Namibian artists pursuing high online views and streaming, we focused on finding a medium that was already normalised in terms of use. We found the SMS solution most significant as Namibian cell phone users are within the range of 12 to 65 years, which is a large target audience.

Consumers can buy music via a SMS line and inserting the name of the song in a message to 10010, receiving a link and then downloading the music.

How to get your music onto ViralCom: Artists are encouraged to submit their music and artwork by emailing [submissionsviralcom@gmail.com](mailto:submissionsviralcom@gmail.com). Artists of all kind are welcome. After registering, artists will become subscribers to the system.

## Royalties and payments:

- For singles: Subscribed users earn N\$2 per SMS
- Non-subscribed users N\$1.40 per SMS (single package)
- N\$4 is split between network and service provider, 50/50. So, the amount sharable is N\$2 (For the single)
- For albums: Subscribed users earn N\$30 per SMS
- Non-subscribed users N\$21 per SMS (album package)
- N\$60 is split between network and service provider, 50/50. So, the amount sharable is N\$30
- It takes 30 days for artists to be paid their royalties, for example, if single/album sales were made in April, you would get paid at the end of May.

## Some success stories:

- Exit & Qondja - Die Hele Box sold more than 4 326 units
- ML - Money Music sold more than 2 158 units
- Sunny Boy - Feeling You sold more than 2 057 units
- Earnings:
  - o ML 2158 x 2 = N\$4 316 (N\$4 SMS line)
  - o Exit and Qondja 4 326 x N\$ 1.50 = N\$ 6 489 (N\$3 SMS line)
  - o Sunny Boy - 2 057 x N\$ 1.50 = N\$ 3 085.50 (N\$3 SMS line)

## APPLE MUSIC

(Compiled from <https://artists.apple.com/support>)

What is Apple Music? Apple Music is a music and video streaming service developed by Apple Inc, launched in 2015. Users select music to stream to their device on-demand, or they can listen to existing playlists.

How to get your music on Apple Music:

1. Label artists: Your label will handle the music delivery on your behalf to take care of your distribution needs.
2. Independent artists: You will need a direct partnership with an Apple-preferred distributor with the tools and resources to get you started.
  - a. Preferred distributors: Believe Digital (French record label and music distributor), Kontor New Medias (Leading digital distribution companies in Europe), FUGA (Music distribution and marketing services)



## Royalties

Apple Music pays a 52% headline rate to all labels. This means artists can distribute music however they like, knowing Apple Music will pay the same rate regardless if you're signed to a label or an independent artist. Apple Music's average per play rate is \$0.01. While royalties from streaming services are calculated on a stream share basis, a play still has a value. This value varies by subscription plan and country or region but averaged \$0.01 for Apple Music individual paid plans in 2020. This includes label and publisher royalties. Meaning, if you have 1 000 streams at \$ 0.01 per stream, you would be paid \$10.

## Payments

Payments will fluctuate each month, depending on the amount of subscription revenue generated and how often your music was streamed.

Apple Music has paid out royalties for more than five million recording artists around the world in 2020, over one million more than in 2019. The number of recording artists whose catalogues generated recording and publishing royalties over \$1 million per year increased over 120% since 2017, while the number of recording artists whose catalogs generated over \$50 000 per year has more than doubled.

## Spotify

(Compiled from <https://artists.spotify.com/help/article/royalties>)

What is Spotify? Spotify is a Swedish audio streaming and media service. It is the world's largest music streaming service provider with over 356 million monthly active users, including 158 million paying subscribers, as of March 2021.

How to get your music onto Spotify: There are three ways artists can upload onto Spotify;

1. Your record label uploads your music repertoire to Spotify
2. You use a third-party service such as TuneCore (independent digital music distribution, publishing and licensing service) or Distrokid (independent digital music distribution) or CD Baby (distributor of independent music working with more than 750 000 artists internationally.)
3. Independent artists upload their music themselves onto the platform

## Royalties

- Spotify pays most artists between \$.003 and \$.005 (one-third of a penny to one-half of a penny) for each stream.
- Recording royalties: The money owed to rights holders for recordings streamed on Spotify, which is paid to artists through the licensor that delivered the music, typically their record label or distributor.
- Publishing royalties: The money owed to the songwriter(s) or owner(s) of a composition. These payments are issued to publishers, collecting societies, and mechanical agencies based on the territory of usage.

## Payments:

- Royalty payments happen once a month, but exactly when and how much artists get paid depends on their agreements with their record label or distributor. Once rights holders are paid, according to their stream share, the labels and distributors pay artists according to their agreements.
- Spotify makes money for music from two sources; 1) from Spotify Premium subscribers, 2) advertisers on Spotify's free tier. Roughly two-thirds of this money is paid out to music rights holders.
- Spotify divides and allots the money based on each rights holder's stream share on Spotify. This money is not divvied up based on a fixed amount per stream.
- Stream share is calculated by adding up how many times music owned or controlled by a particular rights holder was streamed and dividing it by the total number of streams in that market.
- So, if an artist received one in every 1 000 streams in Mexico on Spotify, they would receive \$1 of every \$1 000 paid to rights holders from the Mexican royalty pool. That total royalty pool for each country is based on the subscription and music advertising revenues in that market.

Whether you are a signed or an independent artist, getting your music out there to the masses amplifies your voice and visibility. The following are suggested third-party distributors to get your music on the streaming platforms.

## TuneCore

(compiled from [www.tunecore.com/what-is-tunecore](http://www.tunecore.com/what-is-tunecore))

### What is TuneCore?

- TuneCore, owned by Believe, is the global platform for independent musicians to build audiences and careers with technology and services across distribution, publishing administration and a range of promotional services.
- TuneCore Music Publishing Administration assists songwriters by administering their compositions through licensing, registration, world-wide royalty collections, and placement opportunities in film, TV, commercials, video games and more.

### Features

- The world's largest, most trusted global music distributor
- The TuneCore Artist Services portal offers a suite of tools and services that enable artists to promote their craft, connect with fans, and get their music heard.
- Collect and track your digital music sales
- Fast delivery to top digital music stores
- World-class customer care
- Industry advice and education

### Cost

With TuneCore Music Distribution, you pay to distribute on a per-release basis. Each release subscription renews annually. \$9.99 per single, \$29.99 per album.

### Money matters

Artists, musicians, etc. retain 100% of their sales revenue and rights.

### Where will my music appear?

TuneCore Music Distribution services help artists, labels and managers sell their music through Spotify, Apple Music, Amazon Music, YouTube Music, Deezer, TikTok and more than 150 download and streaming stores worldwide.

### How long does it take for my single or album to be available on streaming services?

TuneCore's review process generally takes about one to two business days to review your release. Once your release has been approved, it will be sent to stores immediately. At that point, it will be the responsibility of each store to make the release live.

Here are the approximate turnaround times for when you can expect your release to go live after it has been reviewed by the TuneCore team:

- iTunes/Apple Music: 24 to 48 hours
- Spotify: Five business days
- Amazon Music: One to three business days
- Amazon On Demand: Six to eight weeks
- Deezer, iHeartRadio: Three to seven business days
- All other stores take one to three weeks
- Remember, these time frames are approximate and we can never guarantee the exact time your music will go live in these stores. TuneCore has no control over the internal review processes conducted by stores and cannot expedite your release.

### How and when do I get paid?

- TuneCore receives publishing royalties according to hundreds of societies' individual distribution schedules. As a result, TuneCore receives, processes and pays out royalties 45 days following the end of each calendar quarter on the following basis:
- Quarter 1 = January to March (payout will occur in mid-May)
- Quarter 2 = April to June (payout will occur in mid-August)
- Quarter 3 = July to September (payout will occur in mid-November)
- Quarter 4 = October to December (payout will occur in mid-February of the following year)
- It typically takes about nine to 12 months to receive your first royalty payment. For foreign societies, it can take upwards of 12 to 18 months.



**Distrokid**

(compiled from <https://distrokid.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>)

**What is DistroKid?**

- DistroKid is a service for musicians that put their music into online stores and streaming services. Then when people listen to your music, we send you money.
- DistroKid is for solo musicians, artists, bands, DJs, performers, producers and creators who record music at home or in the studio, as well as labels.
- It allows artists, musicians, bands, etc. to upload unlimited music to stores for one low price and keep 100% of your earnings.
- The service gets your music into stores in a fraction of the time it takes our competitors to get your music into stores.

**Features**

- Automatic splits
- Instant music video generators
- Spotify pre-save pages
- Cover song clearance
- Big playlists for DistroKid artists
- Synchronised lyrics on Instagram
- TikTok and Twitch support
- Fastest payouts in the world

**Cost**

Only \$19.99 to upload unlimited songs and albums for a year.

**Money matters**

Distrokid keeps none of the sales from music.

**Where will my music appear?**

- You can specify for your music to appear in any or all of the following services:
- Spotify, Apple Music, iTunes, Instagram and Facebook, TikTok and Resso, YouTube Music, Amazon.com, Deezer, TIDAL and more

**How long does it take for my single or album to be available on streaming services?**

It can take several days for albums to be reviewed, approved, and sent to streaming services.

**How and when do I get paid?**

Earnings reports and payments are available to you as soon as DistroKid receives and processes earnings from streaming services and stores. Streaming services usually deliver these reports monthly, and they reflect sales from about three months ago.

**CD Baby**

(Compiled from <https://support.cdbaby.com/hc/en-us/categories/200349509-Get-Started> and <https://www.musicgateway.com/blog/how-to/cd-baby-review-what-is-cd-baby-pricing-and-more>)

**What is CD Baby?**

- CD Baby is a digital music distribution, worldwide publishing rights administration, monetisation of music use on social video platforms, sync licensing, music marketing, online advertising, cover song licensing and physical distribution and order fulfilment for CDs and vinyl records.
- Known as one of the best online record stores, it is the only digital aggregator that has top preferred partner status with Spotify and Apple Music.
- CD Baby helps artists through additional services such as publishing administration, CD and vinyl distribution.

**Features**

- Digital music distribution
- Worldwide publishing rights administration
- Music used on social video platforms
- Sync licensing
- Music marketing and online advertising
- Cover song licensing
- Manufacturing and duplication for physical distribution
- Order fulfilment for CDs and vinyl records

- ### Cost

- ## Money matters

- ## Where will my music appear?

### How long does it take for my single or album to be available on streaming services?

- ### How and when do I get paid?

- ## NOTES

[illegible]



Live shows can be nerve-wracking and confusing. There are a lot of elements and prerequisites that have to be signed off before the main day. As an independent artist, putting together a show without knowledge or guidance can be an upheaval. To manage the pre-production for the performance, then not forgetting to warm up, then getting on the stage and giving your best is too much for one person to undertake, hence why working with key team members is the key to execution. It is important that emerging artists understand the etiquette and constructive working procedures with different role players within the performing art sector. Therefore, here are quick and easy guidelines when preparing to execute a live performance.

## QUOTATIONS

- Ensure that you are easily accessible, to respond swiftly when a potential client requests for your information and rates.
- Provide professional looking quotations.
- Talk over the contracts, paying attention to client's expectations, your conditions and payment schedules.
- Include your terms and conditions in your quotes so that they are clearly outlined to the client.
- Ensure that your quote is either signed, once approved or that a booking is confirmed in writing. Avoid verbal agreements.
- Ensure that the client understands and/or agrees to the said length of the performance. This is to avoid demands on musicians to perform longer when on site.
- You may require a 50% deposit if the requirements are extensive (such as hiring of additional equipment, paying collaborators rehearsal funds, hiring of rehearsal space, preparing elaborate costumes, etc.)
- Finally, ask the necessary questions and ensure that all is agreed upon.

## PREPARATIONS & REHEARSALS

- Ensure that you prepare accordingly for production/event.
- Be mindful of the kind of audiences that will be at the event, and set up your set according to the event's atmosphere.
- Ensure to share your tech rider well in advance. This is preferable upon the confirmation of your booking, so that the client can include your requirements with the technical service provider. Below is an example of a simple tech rider.

### What is a technical rider and why do I need one?

The following section includes experts from [Improvised Music Company \(IMC\)](#):

A technical rider is the name given to the technical information an artist provides to an event organiser or technical staff in advance of a performance. A technical rider should include the following:

- o Stage plan (sometimes called a stage plot)
- o Channel list (sometimes called an input list)
- o Equipment/backline list.

Your technical rider helps the sound engineer and event organiser prepare so that technical requirements are covered and ready for sound check and show. Once your booking is confirmed, you should provide a document detailing where on the stage all the instruments will be situated, how many microphones are needed and what kinds of instruments will be used, etc. These are critical details the event organiser then informs the technical service provider of.

In order to be treated as professionals, it is important for bands and artists to present themselves in an organised manner, so that no last minute requests are made. Having an up-to-date, clear and accurate technical rider will save time for everyone involved in the event or production. A technical rider can be provided in the following formats:

- Word document
- PowerPoint
- PDF

## STAGE PLAN

A stage plan is a visual representation of where all the band members, instruments, microphones and monitors will be on stage in an ideal scenario. All live bands require a stage plan.

It should include:

- A basic visual that displays where each member will be positioned on stage.
- The names of each member and what instruments they play.

- Providing a stage plan will make the set-up and sound check experience quick and efficient. The sound engineer won't have to do any unnecessary, last-minute running around either. That way everyone can save their energy for the show!

## This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



To make an easy stage design, see [STAGE PLOT DESIGNER](#)

## CHANNEL LIST

A channel list is a well-formatted table showing:

- The number of inputs (anything that is being routed through the house PA)
- The name of the instrument/equipment
- The preferred mic/DI to use
- Any notes on positioning of mic/type of stand needed.
- The preferred position on stage (left, middle, right, front, back)
- The input being used on the stage box

Here's an example:

<b>Input Patch List:</b>			
<b>Channel</b>	<b>Instrument</b>	<b>MIC</b>	<b>Stand</b>
1	Kick in	Shure Beta 91/ Senn E901	
2	Kick Out	Beta 52 / Audix D6	Small Heavy Base Stand
3	Snare Top	SM 57/ Audio i5	Small (No Clamp)
4	Snare Bottom	SM 57/ Audio i5	Clamp/Small Stand
5	Hi-Hat	SM81/ e914	Small Stand
6	Rack Tom	Beta 98/ e904	Clamp
7	Floor Tom	Beta 98/Beta 56/ e904	Clamp
8	Overheads Left	SM81/ e914	Boom
9	Overheads Right	SM81/ e914	Boom
10	Bass	DI (KT/BSS)	
11	Violin	DI (KT/BSS)	
12	Acoustic Guitar 1	DI (KT/BSS)	
13	Acoustic Guitar 2	DI (KT/BSS)	
14	Lead Guitar L	E906 (we carry this)	Small (JCM900)
15	Lead Guitar R	SM 57	Small (Fender Twin)
16	Khamok	SM57	Small/Medium
17	Dholak B	SM 58	Small
18	Dholak C	SM 57	Small
19	Ghatam	AKG C411	-
20	Kanjira	Sennheiser e914 (We carry this)	Boom
21	Jishnu Backing Vox	Beta58	Boom
22	Sanjeev Backing Vox	Beta58	Boom
23	Varun Backing Vox	Beta58	Boom
24	Pavan Vox	SM 58	Boom
25	Vasu (Main Vox)	Cordless (We carry - e945 wireless)	Boom
26	Tamte	SM57	Small/Medium
30	Click Track	EP-Dual TS Cable with DI Box	
31-32	iPod/Laptop	EP to Dual TS or XLR (Console)	
33-40	FX Returns		

Source:

<https://www.improvisedmusic.ie/resources/production/what-is-a-technical-rider-and-why-do-i-need-one>

## EQUIPMENT/BACKLINE LIST

An equipment/backline List is a detailed inventory of all of the equipment you'll be bringing to the venue, as well as all of the equipment you'll need the venue to provide. For example:

### Band backline:

- Nord Stage 3 Keyboard
- Fender Jaguar
- Fender Twin Reverb Amp
- Fender Jazz Bass
- Mapex Snare Drum 14"
- DW 9000 Kick Drum Pedal
- Cymbals

### Venue backline (requested)

- DRUMS (Up Center) MAPEX kit requested
  - 20 Kick
  - 10 Tom
  - 14 Tom
  - Boom Stands
  - High Hat Stand
  - Snare Stand
  - Drum Throne
  - Bass Amp and Head
  - Vocal Mic
  - DI Box

If you're a small band and you don't have much equipment or many instruments with you, your technical rider will most likely mainly cover the equipment that you're using on stage. As your band grows, your technical rider will start to include any FOH mixing consoles that you bring with you, your preferred lighting set-up and anything else stage or technical related you need to put on the best possible show.

Remember, the sooner you start to present your band professionally, the sooner you'll start to be treated as professionals by the people you work with to deliver the show!

Your technical rider should be a well-organised documents that can easily be understood by any recipient.

For assistance in putting together a technical rider, email [tech@ntn.org.na](mailto:tech@ntn.org.na)

## TECHNICAL CHECKS

- Always show up for technical checks and ensure that you arrive on time. This is important not only for your quality of performance, but for the technical team as well.
- Ensure to always share your tech rider in advance (last minute technical requests are unprofessional and disruptive).
- Assess health and safety issues for the performance and stage set up. This is especially for collaborating dancers (type of floor) and elaborate costumes (malfunction risks).
- Run through the schedule with the stage managers and/or technicians (have clarity on when in the programme you will be performing)
- If you are performing with a backtrack, do not bring it along on a CD! Always bring your backtracks in .wave, .mp3 or clouded link, however, the latter is not the preferred as there might not be internet on site for downloads. Further:
  - Provide your backtrack in a mastered form.
  - Provide your backtrack with instrumentals only, not with recorded voices. For live performances, it is not professional to sing over already recorded voices.
  - Do not share your backtracks via WhatsApp and other cellular communication apps with technicians (this is unprofessional, and at the same time, reduces the quality of your files altogether).
  - Do not have the technicians play your backtracks from your personal devices during technical checks. This is unprofessional and disrupts the working station of the technicians.



- Ensure that the actual files you are checking with are the ones you will perform to.
- Lock the files on the USB/sharing device if you will be performing unreleased music for the event. This ensures that no files are copied and shared with external parties.
- Ensure that all is communicated and prepared for, so that last minute technical requests are avoided.
- Inform the technical team accordingly of any health and safety hazards. The following are examples:
  - o Stage smoke/fog/haze that disturbs your voice.
  - o You are asthmatic, and cannot have too much smoke on stage.
  - o You are epileptic, and cannot have flashing lights while performing.

## ARRIVING ON SITE

- Arrive sober and on time!
- Some events may be hosted on sites that do not have dressing rooms, so always show up dressed and prepared. As the traffic at events can be bewildering at times, some artists have their assistants inquire on the holding space upon arrival, while they wait in their vehicles.
- Enquire in advance where your parking and waiting areas will be for artists.
- Inform your client well in advance if you will be arriving with a supporting team. Only bring along the absolute necessary supporting team.
- Ensure to inquire on security measures, so that no unnecessary delays are experienced at entrances.
- Your client might not be available to direct you to the waiting area, as they are often busy with many things at once. Thus, be prepared, show up early and stationed at the holding/waiting area.
- Announce your arrival to the organising team and/or technicians. This is to avoid assumptions that you are late and unprofessional.
- Do not demand for food and beverages. This is unprofessional. At the very least, you can ask for bottle of water, or show up with your own. Your client is not responsible to feed you. You are responsible for showing up on time and offering good services.
- Warm up, relax and wait for your turn to offer your best on stage.

## PERFORMANCE

- Do your absolute best!
- Maintain your practice as a sober performer.
- Ensure that all technical checks have been done beforehand, so that you do not command anything from the technician during your performance. This is not a good look.
- Ensure that you learn the on stage communication etiquette when you need to communicate something urgently with the technicians. Do not run off stage.
- Engage with your audiences in a friendly and captivating manner.
- Be sensitive about strong language, particularly with the kind of audiences that are present.
- Do not host propaganda speeches. You may introduce your music sets accordingly, but always remember what you were booked for; to perform and offer audiences an enjoyable and insightful time.
- Perform within your set agreed time, and do not go beyond or under this.
- Be mindful of the stage set, and possible health and safety hazards.
- After your performance, leave the venue when it is appropriate and required.

Lastly, ensure that your client is happy with your services. Proceed with sharing your invoice. A payment should not take longer than 7 business days to be cleared. Do keep a look out for exploitive clients, and ensure to maintain good relationships with paying clients.

## NOTES:

Note: The following section is targeted at young creatives looking to develop creative solutions for the music business in Namibia. Reference is made to creatives in the very early stages of their career.

## Understanding the relationship between consumers and producers

### Market-oriented production

### Consistent product creation and service provision

## Collaborations and partnerships

Creative businesses are based on innovation and entrepreneurship, and their processes are as intricate as that of any other business. Thus, they should be met fairly with their demands and needs. Creative entrepreneurs have the task of integrating their artistic skills with managerial and entrepreneurial abilities. This includes all prescribed business practices. Navigating these demands requires informed decisions that can only be directed by consistent market research, associations and skills development. It is necessary to - critically with time - think about the given gaps and opportunities available, and your approach to intervene in local problems with services and solutions.

The following (next page) outlines a five-year plan that can be considered by creatives looking to develop businesses in the sector.

[illegible]



### YEAR 1

#### EVALUATING AND CONCENTRATING YOUR SKILLS

Once you have completed your standard training in your relevant discipline, it is important to define what it is you want to concentrate on in the sector. This can be in the areas of education and training, administration, publishing, distribution, marketing, etc. Concentrating your specific skill set offers opportunities for possible investors and funders to work with you, as they understand your articulated skill set. Ask yourself what kind of creative you are, and what products, experiences, services, solutions or experiences you have to offer. Fine-tuning your interests and skills also informs the kind of business model to be developed at a later stage. Though exploring your artistic skills can be dynamic across your career, it is important to pinpoint the areas of focus and specialisation. This simplifies perceptions of your abilities and prospective products and services. The process of evaluating yourself allows for opportunities in measuring your given SWOT around your talents and skills.

WHAT ARE MY SKILLS?			
What are my strengths?	What are my weaknesses?	What opportunities are there for me?	What threats are there against my businesses ventures?

#### CULTURAL AND CREATIVE SECTOR RESEARCH

- Acquaint yourself with key organisations in the local and regional creative and cultural sector. Study and consistently read up on their operations, and what value they offer their given communities. This will help shape your understanding of the environment around you and opportunities therein.
- Pursue internships and residencies in organisations in order to expand on your skills and understanding of institutional processes.

#### Set plan for Year 1 - Starting out:

**Skills development** - Develop your skills further by consistently attending workshops and development programmes. Consider online platforms as well, especially for the international context. Ensure to sign up for newsletters for various arts, culture and heritage institutions so that you can stay up to date with their projects and programmes.

**Start creating projects** - Begin conceptualising projects in the disciplines you are focusing on. Focus on small-scale works that you can produce economically. Do not go beyond your means, as this can be detrimental to the personal resources you have to rely on in your early career. Inquire on how you can share and market your projects with various sector players and contributors. Practice this on a consistent basis; you will get to learn and relearn a lot through practise. Individually-driven projects are also useful in displaying your determination, resilience and independence. Keep a lookout for projects and opportunities by institutions, but at the same time, create your own as well.

**Internships** - Apply for internships including arts, cultural and heritage institutions. Alternatively, apply for shadowing work on a project basis at institutions in order to gain insights into their operations. This could be shadowing at a music production, or at a technical company that provides services in the events industry. This is how you can learn efficiently by witnessing processes unfold around you. Internships are also great for gaining foundational interpersonal skills and emotional intelligence found in team-based work.

**Self-exposure** - Expose yourself to professionals and organisations in the sector in order to instigate relationships. Practice good and informative self-presentation. This is how you can begin to secure networks, as professional individuals and organisations are always keen on working with new and self-organised people. Present yourself as a learned, self-organised and determined individual. Effects of these relationship may not be immediate, but they can come in handy with time.

**Invest in trending practices and discourse** - Invest in resources and materials that expose you the fields and practices you are skilled in and interested in pursuing. This will develop intricate and critical thinking that is required for your practice and business at a later stage.

**Study** - Read up on annual reports and studies conducted on processes and projects involved in the sector. Ensure to read up on annual company reports as well. This will expose you to important data and language inherent in arts and cultural entrepreneurship.

**Continue the above activities throughout your career.**

**Skills development** - For Year 1, consider the following short courses:

- i. Project management (beginners)
- ii. Business writing skills
- iii. Presentation skills

## YEAR 2

### SETTING OUT A SERVICE PLAN

Continue to enhance and define the work and services you are interested in as an aspiring entrepreneur. Develop further small-based projects that can help articulate the kind of work you are interested in. Individually-driven projects will create a background reflecting your activity and career development. At this stage, content for your resume should be growing. Share this document with key players and contributors in the sector on an annual basis.

### PURSUING REGULAR FREELANCE WORK

Pursuing freelance work means that you have acquired the basic skills and experience to offer products and services to paying clients. Your basic training in presentation skills, business writing and project management from Year 1 would have given you a solid foundation. Do not overwhelm yourself with too many contracted projects at once, as this early stage is essential to proving your professionalism and quality work for referrals to foster.

### DEVELOPING FURTHER RESEARCH

- Continue pursuing internships and volunteer work in arts, culture and heritage organisations
- Start doing research on interdisciplinary projects that cross between arts, culture and other sectors. For example, music centered projects that have been applied in advertising and sales, education, information technology and so forth. This research will help shape your understanding of how the music business extends into other practices.
- Attend seminars that are not only related to arts, culture and heritage. Expose yourself to evolving discourse and trends in other sectors such as education, trade and industrialisation, and tourism. This will help create a basic understanding on how you can apply your skills in alternative sectors to fill the gaps. Apart from leisure and entertainment, keep in mind that the music business is inherent in:
  - Advertising or commercialism
  - Event producing and planning
  - Creative direction for projects
  - Education
  - Tourism

**Set plan for Year 2 - Applying yourself as a young professional:**

**Creation of interdisciplinary projects** - With your one-year background of individually-driven projects, you should have gained a foundation within your discipline to start crossing over to other sectors. Begin creating small-based projects that apply in other sectors, not only limited to arts, culture and heritage.



### TYPICAL EXAMPLE

**Year 1** - You co-administered the launch of an emerging artist's EP

**Year 2** - You co-administered a region-wide educational campaign for high school learners that incorporated commissioned music.

**Freelance work** - Continue pursuing freelance work and projects. This will teach you basic resilience and expose you to dynamic working relationships you need to experience. You can also do freelance work should you have a full-time job.

**Collaborations** - Start developing collaborations with other professionals in the sector. This expands your network and develops your approach to working dynamically across different projects.

### TYPICAL EXAMPLES

1. As a composer, collaborating with health workers to create therapeutic performances for rehabilitation centres.
2. As a marketer, collaborating with technicians to provide a ticketing solution for an event.
3. As an administrator, collaborating with musicians to create lucrative experiences for tourists.

**Advance internships** - Continue pursuing internship programmes and advancing them. It is important that you apply for internships that not only grow your creative skills, but organisational skills as well.

**Skills development** - For Year 2, consider the following short courses:

- Project management (intermediary)
- Advanced management and effective administration skills
- Bookkeeping

## YEAR 3

### FREELANCE WORK OPERATION

Continue pursuing freelance work. Pay particular attention to work in other sectors. If projects are not forthcoming, study organisations and propose how useful your skills and services may be to them.

### NETWORKING

Strengthen your networks with professionals and organisations. Generate relationships with people across various sectors as well. Creative entrepreneurship is intrinsically dependent on networks and how people understand your skills and services. At this stage, your resume should be professionally organised on platforms and readily available.

### PURSUE THE BUSINESS MODEL

- At this stage, your envisioned business should start shaping itself. This should be directed by your developed interests, gained skills, projects you have worked on and opportunities and gaps you have identified in the sector. Create strategic projects that will eventually influence the model of your business to be registered. Your individually-created projects and works should start growing to advanced stages, so that it can start shaping and moulding your business plans.
- Pursue bigger projects than the previous years. Bigger, but reasonably measured with your level of expertise and experience.
- Pursue funding for your growing projects. Start with local funding streams to learn about funding structures and processes. International funding is advised to be pursued once you have basic experience from your sectors locally. This is due to the demands and bookkeeping requirements that international funding programmes have.

### Set plan for Year 3 - Shaping the creative entrepreneur:

**Shape online presence** - Create an online presence that is well organised and curated with the projects you have worked on over the past two years.

**Strong working relationships** - Grow and maintain your strong relationships in the sector. Use these networks for bouncing off ideas.

**Market strategies** - Study marketing strategies and trends you can apply. Invest in resources that can open your mind to evolving trends and discourses.

**Proposals** – Start pitching ideas to organisations. Start with small organisations first, so that you can learn your way up. Practice your presentation skills. See what works and what doesn't with the different institutions. This will help you gain insight and experience regarding what institutions generally expect. Always align proposals with the mandates of the organisation. Your given projects and works of the past two years will help create a background of your work and capabilities as well.

- International funding and projects - Pursue international funding.
- Skills development- For Year 3, consider the following short courses:
- Project management (advanced)
- Change management
- Basic accounting.

## **YEAR 4**

### **DEVELOPING A FLUID BUSINESS MODEL**

Take time to research and develop your desired business model, based on the projects that you've run and continue to run. Work closely with a business strategist in this phase. This is where your business plan will begin to be drafted.

### **MARKET RESEARCH**

- Do market research with the services and products you are continuing to create, and that will be applied to your business. You can always research what approaches to take to your research, e.g. interviews, questionnaires, in-depth conversations, etc.
- Market research is the process of evaluating the viability of a new product or service through research conducted directly with potential targets and consumers. This will allow you to discover your prospective target market by collecting organised data to make informed decisions.
- Importantly, evaluate the value of your business. Ask the following questions:
  - o What is unique and competitive about my potential business?
  - o What solutions does it offer?
  - o What are the possible threats for my potential business?
  - o What opportunities could it attract?
  - o What flaws and weaknesses are there?
  - o What additional support, resources or partners will I require?
  - o What skills do I have to sustain my potential business?
- Continue to assess the local sector and the gaps it presents, and evaluate how it aligns with your gained skills, networks and business vision.

### **Set plan for Year 4 - Designing the business plan:**

- Business plan – Start to develop a business plan
- Review proposals - Evaluate feedback on pitches and proposals
- Work - Continue freelance work and skills development (if you happen to not have an 8-to-5 job).
- Partnerships - Continue to maintain collaborations and partnerships
- Skills development - For Year 4, consider the following short courses:
  - Basic and advanced income tax training
  - Basic and advanced VAT training
  - Organisational effectiveness.

## **YEAR 5**

### **REGISTER YOUR BUSINESS**

A registered business allows you to operate smoothly in accordance to the country's laws and regulations. Registering your business helps with avoiding legal problems with the government and secures your reputation as a legitimate business. An operational business builds trust amongst your prospective consumers and customers, and opens opportunities for bigger projects and business opportunities. At this stage, with your given experience and gained skills, you should be able to register and start to incorporate your products and services through the business, and not the individual.



### General Information (retrieved from BIPA)

Public companies, private companies and non-governmental organisations require memorandum and articles of association that need to be certified by a notary public who is a member of the legal profession. Therefore, applicants applying for any of the business entities are encouraged to use the services of legal practitioners.

Once a client has collected their registered documents, they must also ensure compliance with the requirements of other relevant institutions namely:

- the Ministry of Finance (registration for VAT and company tax)
- the Ministry of Labour
- the Ministry of Home Affairs (work permits, visas, etc.)
- the Social Security Commission
- The Namibia Financial Institutions Supervisory Authority (NAMFISA)
- Local authority by-laws

For a guideline on how to ensure that your business name is successfully accepted, [click here](#).

### Resources to read on further:

1. [How to start a business – BIPA guide for beginners](#)
2. [Setting up a business in Namibia - Six step considerations](#)
3. [Registering a company](#)
4. [Doing business in Namibia](#)
5. [Frequently-asked questions on business registration \(BIPA\)](#)

### CREATE A FOOTPRINT OF YOUR BUSINESS AND WORK

- Geographical footprint
- Expand your projects regionally, and create a mark internationally through partnerships and international clients.
- Ensure a digital footprint to serve your business
- Use social media channels wisely
- Content marketing is crucial
- Create a website as a base for your brand.

### Set plan for Year 5 - Starting off the business:

**Consultancies** – Ensure to inquire from experts so that your business processes are protected and aligned with regulations

**Accounting** - Create a strong relationship with an accountant to ensure that your bookkeeping is in place and ready for annual submissions

**Expanding footprint** - Expand your work across different towns and regions. Start pushing for international projects to grow your resume

**Work creation** – Do not forget to continue creating work.

### **YEAR 6+**

Proceed to expand your business, and grow with partners and/or employees. Successful businesses do not grow in a short span, thus you have to be patient, resourceful and creatively dynamic over the years. Internal evaluations and risks assessments are extremely important. Start and operate your business from a small scale to maintain your independence and allow flexibility throughout. Further, consult with the suitable experts and entities so that you are well informed all the way.

#### **What are the particular characteristics and development needs of creative businesses?**

Frequently identified needs in creative and cultural entrepreneurship include:

1. Innovation and application into alternative sectors not limited to arts, culture and heritage
2. Entrepreneurial skills
3. Business language and writing skills
4. Awareness of different funding issues and structures
5. Proposal writing
6. Marketing skills
7. Administrative and organisational skills
8. Bookkeeping and basic accounting skills.

#### **What are the barriers to overcome in running a creative business?**

1. Overcoming public perception of art practices and artistic solutions to everyday needs
2. Overcoming the cultural problem of creatives being reduced to arts, culture and heritage sectors only
3. Convincing the relevance of arts and culture in corporate spaces
4. Drastic changes in arts and culture funding locally, regionally and internationally
5. Operational support from partners and institutions, especially in the early years of your practice and business
6. Acquiring the skills mentioned above.

### **NOTES**





**National Theatre  
of Namibia**



National Theatre of Namibia  
2021