GETTING AND SPENDING*
SOUTH AFRICAN JAZZ MUSICIANS' EARNINGS AND EXPENDITURE PRE- AND POST-COVID: 2020 - 2023

Investigating the context and impact of a

short-term basic income relief fund for professional jazz musicians in South Africa

("Swiss-South African Jazz Income Relief Fund")

""The world is too much with us; late and soon. Getting and spending, we lay waste our powers (...) We have given our hearts away..."*

[*The World Is Too Much With Us,* William Wordsworth, 1802]

Research Report

prepared by IKS Consulting

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research occupies a distinctive space within music industry research. It is one of a relatively small number of studies undertaken internationally which provide granular information on what and how musicians earn and, in particular, how they spend it: what the costs of a musician's working life comprise. It draws on data gleaned from 711 recipients of an Income Relief Fund targeting jazz musicians base in South Africa, and implemented during the course of 2020 and 2021 in the context of the COVD pandemic. The Fund (henceforth referred to as the Jazz Income Relief Fund) was managed by the Johannesburg office of Pro Helvetia, the Swiss Arts Council, and financed by a private foundation based in Basel, Switzerland. This research report was commissioned by Pro Helvetia Johannesburg with finance from the same private foundation.

RESEARCH METHODS

The compiling of this report involved mapping the application data of 711 recipients of the Jazz Income Relief Fund and administered by Pro Helvetia in South Africa, the data was provided to the research team without identifying recipients. This was followed up via an anonymous survey. The process of mapping and survey covered more than two years of recipients' experience of their lives in music during Covid, and as the pandemic waned. A sample series of seven interviews in late 2023 strengthened this long-term perspective with some on-the-record, retrospective reflections.

WHY THE RESEARCH MATTERS

The research confirms the importance of live performance as a source of revenue and supports the findings of prior research, including the two Concerts SA-commissioned *Digital Future*s studies and a South African Cultural Observatory study on the impact of Covid on live music, which document the inadequacy of digital music streaming to compensate for lost revenue from live performance, among other things.

Additionally, the research has a near-unique focus on how the interface between grant-makers and grant recipients impacts on both human lives and the ecosystem of the activity being funded. It underlines the importance of administrative data not only to map activities and targets, but as a source of evidence for impact and pointers towards policy.

WHAT WE FOUND: INCOME AND SPENDING

The report maps income and expenses by province, level of experience and gender. Unsurprisingly (and consonant with the findings of much other research), women musicians earn significantly less than men, younger musicians less than their more experienced counterparts, and musicians in urbanised provinces such as Gauteng and the Western Cape considerably more than their counterparts in more rural-based provinces. More nuanced findings include:

- Applicants earned the bulk of their income from music-related activities. Though their main affiliation was live jazz performance, the survey population – exactly like their international counterparts – added a diverse range of other genres and roles in music to make up a viable income stream for professional and household survival.

- Earnings of those grant applicants with substantial professional experience (we categorised them as "veterans") were consistent with the South African Statistical Service's average national monthly earnings of around ZAR 26,000 for full-time, formally employed people. What this means in real terms is that a cohort of genre-specialist musicians with extensive professional experience and reputation (and often academic music qualifications) – assumed in popular imagination to be "earning like stars" – earn no more than a mid-level, formally-employed technical worker.

- Musicians, however, do not enjoy any of the additional benefits available to those in formal employment. The expenditure data revealed the overwhelming extent to which musicians carry almost all of their own work-related expenses and had to borrow /sell the tools of their trade, and make disabling trade-offs between professional capacity/growth and household survival when Covid shut down the live performance sector.

- Spending of grant applicants was reported as higher than national averages on communication, dependants and insurance cover, and significantly lower on retirement planning; again with trade-offs required between personal/family-related spending and spending to maintain the ability to work.

- The expenditure data revealed the extent to which transport spending on a range of aspects of local mobility erodes musicians' ability to grow their careers.

- Rehearsal space, instrument upkeep and data and communication costs were also significant, as were the time and opportunity costs of composing, arranging, rehearsing and instrumental/vocal practice. These are essential to sustain proficiency, but occupy substantial periods of time where no other earning activity can be undertaken, as well as carrying their own monetary costs.

- Expenditure data also revealed that the closure of music hubs (studios, rehearsal spaces and venues) and the financial losses suffered by those that survived during Covid continue to impact in 2023. The cost of accessing hubs has risen, gig fees have remained static or fallen.

- 30% of applicants reported accessing some form of SA government relief funding during Covid. The amounts reported were small, once-off, and inadequate to compensate for loss of earnings when live performance was shut down as part of efforts to curb the pandemic.

- By contrast, Jazz Relief Fund grant recipients reported significant and sustained benefits from those grants. The grants, made in monthly instalments over a 6-month period in the first instance, enabled professional continuity, development and innovation, supported household survival, sheltered recipients' against despair and further supported their psychological survival through the manner in which grant-makers treated them: with openness, respect and trust. These benefits were explicitly reported by the grant recipients, both anonymously in the survey and by the participants in profile interviews.

IS THE MUSIC SCENE "BACK TO NORMAL"?

The data provided evidence of a persistent socio-economic “Long Covid” for jazz musicians. Debts incurred and equipment sold to maintain a musician's household during Covid now had to be repaid and repurchased to resume a music career. Service hubs became more expensive - raising their charges or reducing the fees they paid - to compensate for up to two years of enforced inactivity. The deaths of collaborators across the music ecosystem necessitated forging new and sometimes more costly working relationships.

Many of the problems encountered by recipients of the Jazz Relief Fund relate to the nature of music work as an activity (intermittent and project based; reliant on face-to-face interactions; based on income streams from multiple sources rather than a single, definable "job"), as well as to the contextual constraints of the COVID and immediate post-COVID periods. This emerged from both qualitative responses and quantitative data.

Desk research reinforced the sense that these are problems shared by all musicians, almost everywhere in the world. Global music workers face what has been characterised as a "cost of working crisis", where the expenses incurred to perform may exceed those earned from the performance, and where the additional expenditure required to upgrade a performer's career may be hard or even impossible to finance.

In addition, the sometimes very moving anecdotes shared in qualitative survey responses reflect South Africa's specific socio-economic context: extreme inequality, a significant digital divide, and almost no alternative forms of social security.

WHAT CAN POLICYMAKERS AND GRANT-MAKERS DO?

Our research findings challenge assumptions that grant-making can only offer short-term mitigation. Interventions at a contextual level, better integration between funding silos – for example, between funding for inner-city development or transport projects and music projects – and shifts in funding emphasis could make an important longer-term difference. In particular:

- By acknowledging "cost-of-working" elements in how budget overheads for funding are defined and supported, funding could better sustain artists for future projects, avoiding a situation described by many in the survey of constantly paying debts retrospectively. This might extend, for example, to developing **funding instruments for essential enabling activities** such as rehearsal spaces and equipment hire.

- By acknowledging the impact of **transportation costs,** funding allocations could support both artists in developing their performance profile and music hubs in restoring the gaps in provision created by Covid closures.

- By developing cost benchmarks for these and other working costs (including the time and opportunity cost of rehearsal and practice) funding programmes could assist in **benchmarking best practice guidelines for performance fees and project funds**.

- By developing more **sustainable and targeted grant-making instruments** beyond projects that can be implemented within a 12-month grant cycle, funding systems would provide levels of continuity in work comparable to those effectively utilised by Jazz Relief Fund grant recipients.

- By developing **simplified, transparent application processes in Plain Language -** minimising bureaucracy and employing forms of documentation more relevant to the diverse and often informal ways business in the music industry is conducted, future funding models would build on a feature of the Jazz Relief Fund that supported access to funds and their flexible utilisation.

Other practical implications emerged from this study: bridging the digital divide now emerges consistently as an imperative in policy studies related to South African cultural life, while current tax and import duty regimes on music equipment and instruments are clearly one element of rising costs. Relief provisions for a "home studio" are far less clearcut than those for a "home office" – although for a working musician, the former may be the precise sonic equivalent of the latter.

Philosophically, our findings point towards a rethink of those funding conditionalities for music projects that, in some cases, demand a rapid transition to "business viability". Such

conditionalities often do not reflect the nature of the activities or income flows related to a music project.

GENDER IMPACTS REMAIN UNDER-STUDIED

In addition, as with much recent music industry research, our findings suggested an increasingly pressing need to pay attention to the **gender impact** of projects. Women were underrepresented as respondents – both extant scholarship and anecdotal accounts demonstrate robustly that this is because women are underrepresented in the profession in all roles except vocalism. This is a far more complex issue than mechanically counting or changing the balance of female or LGBTQIA+ heads (which, in the case of women, often has the stereotyping impact of swelling the chorus of female vocalists). Rather, proactive efforts are required to create projects that offer more gender-diverse opportunities and mentorship in non-stereotypical roles such as composing, instrumentalism, ensemble leadership, technical stage support and more. The Southern African Music Rights Organisation has already embarked on research into specific gender aspects; this research further underlines the need for such projects to talk to one another, to maximise intersectional impacts.

GLOSSARY OF ORGANISATIONS, ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Concerts SA	[South African] project supporting the live music sector, including a mobility fund supporting musicians and music venues
DSAC	[South African] Department of Sport, Arts and Culture
Future of Music Coalition	[US] research and advocacy organization
HEIs	Higher education institutions
Help Musicians	[UK] musicians' wellbeing charity
IKS	Indigenous Knowledge Systems - Cultural Consultancy
KZN	[South African Province of] KwaZulu Natal
MIA	Music in Africa Foundation research and networking NPO, and information portal
MIRA	[US] Music Industry Research Association
NPO	Non-profit organization
Pro Helvetia	Swiss Federation body supporting cultural creation, dissemination and exchange at home and abroad
PwC	PricewaterhouseCoopers - global audit and research firm
SACO	South African Cultural Observatory
SAMRO	Southern African Music Rights Organisation
Statistics SA	South African national statistics agency
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
US	United States of America
ZAR	South African Rand [currency]

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CHAPTER ONE: MUSIC AND THE PANDEMIC – THE LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONTEXT

1.1 Introduction

This chapter locates the research project, which focused entirely on South African jazz musicians, within the broader context of local and international research on the impact of Covid on both the cultural and creative industries and the ecosystems that sustain them. By reflecting on this broader landscape the research is able to gain greater insight into the working lives of musicians and the devastating impact of the pandemic. The paucity of both local and international data on musicians – and specifically, working lives, income and expenditure – is marked, underlining the importance of research of this type for the music industry and, more generally, for the cultural and creative industries.

1.2 The impact of Covid on South African music

There has been significant research on the impact of Covid on the South African creative and cultural industries generally: most extensively, the work undertaken by the South African Cultural Observatory (SACO). As well as referring to the subject in industry mapping studies related to the pandemic period, that organisation published a May 2020 survey of industry-wide impact[1] and a follow-up 2021/22 impact study specifically focused on live music and venues[2].

That latter document demonstrated a highly interconnected value chain, where single venues and other music delivery mechanisms served as hubs for multiple music practitioners. If a single hub was unable to continue functioning, work and revenue opportunities for a large and diverse cluster of music industry professionals and service providers were diminished.

The impact of the pandemic, even on established practitioners, was described as "devastating": 90% of the SACO sample lost income; a quarter of those surveyed declared themselves unable to continue with any elements of their business, leading to retrenchments

[1] https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/content/covid-19-impact-survey-report-on-ccis

[2] https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/download/comments/691/10a5ab2db37feedfdeaab192ead4ac0e/Impact+Analysis++Live+Music+and+its+Venues+and+the+South+African+economy+during+COVID-19

and wage cuts. Although a fast and flexible pivot to digital was undertaken by 88%, revenue from that alternative came nowhere close to bridging the gap[3]. The detailed requirements for formal documentation meant only a minority of those working predominantly in very small-scale, informal and project-based activity successfully accessed support funding: only 7% reported successfully accessing the various small business support funds; 21% had managed to access Department of Sport, Arts and Culture funding. Artists reported selling equipment and assets and relying on formal and informal borrowing. Given the absence of any integrated recovery plan for the sector, respondents expressed fears about their ability to recover in the profession even when the pandemic waned. Nearly half of that sample contemplated quitting music.

For the rest of Africa, the most recent PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) *Africa Entertainment and Media Outlook*[4] also describes the impact of Covid on the live music industry as "devastating (...) Across South Africa, Nigeria and Kenya, live music ticket sales revenue collapsed as artists and bands were forced to cancel tours and concerts. All three African markets performed worse in 2020 than the global average, as border restrictions meant that major international artists were unable to perform." (PwC, however, notes a strong, current revenue recovery in industry, not musician, recovery.)

This picture of extensive professional damage during Covid concurs with international experience. In an industry where the highest-earning segment of the value-chain is live performance, restrictions on travel and gatherings simply switched off earning power suddenly and for extended periods, everywhere and at every level.

The PwC report, in common with most retrospective academic research on the impact of Covid on music, focuses on the music industry and its market rather than on the personal experience and professional recovery of musicians. From the qualitative items in this study, by contrast, we are able to discern patterns of personal, household and ensemble experience, and tell human stories. The information our respondents provided is fully discussed in subsequent chapters.

[3] See https://theconversation.com/are-lockdown-live-streams-working-for-south-africas-musicians-144946 and https://www.concertssa.co.za/digital-futures-two-taking-music-online-in-south-africa/

[4] https://www.pwc.co.za/en/publications/entertainment-and-media-outlook.html

In summary, musicians are still living with the legacy of what was described in the SACO and other research reports during the pandemic. In an interconnected industry, the closure of industry hubs and the business losses surviving hubs suffered, have led to raised charges and static or reduced fees to artists. It is now much harder to find performance venues and more expensive to secure support services, with knock-on effects on a wide range of performance-related and professional development costs. Instruments and equipment sold during Covid must be replaced (as, more tragically, must professional colleagues who died); debts incurred then must now be repaid. Covid support payments and provisions have largely ceased, and there is still no national recovery plan in place directed towards the arts.

1.3 South African musicians on the employment and earnings scale[5]

When we describe South African jazz musicians' earnings as at around the national median wage, that description needs to be understood in the context of South Africa's highly unequal employment and earnings situation.

Nearly one-third of all working age South Africans (32.9%) are unemployed. South Africa's Gini coefficient – a measure of inequality – of 63.0 makes it the most unequal country in the world (although the Gini calculation was last conducted in 2014).

Among working South Africans, the highest-paying employment sectors are energy and water, with an average monthly wage of ZAR46,700. The highest-paying occupations within those sectors are in business services where an average salary is almost double that, at ZAR82,400.

The lowest-earning formal occupations are in manufacturing, especially the clothing and footwear sectors, and formal agricultural jobs. A footwear worker earns an average of ZAR8, 900 a month, a formally employed farmworker around half that, at ZAR4,600. However, many more workers in agriculture, as well as in sectors including domestic work, the taxi industry, private security and some divisions of wholesale and retail are casual employees, paid –

[5] Unless otherwise cited, this information derives from Stats SA, QES, 4th quarter, December 2022. https://www.statssa.gov.za/?page_id=1854&PPN=P0277&SCH=73245

assuming their employers are compliant – at the legislated national minimum wage in South Africa of ZAR25.42 per hour.

The Music in Africa Foundation study[6] – employing a very different methodology, sampling approach and work definitions – reported an average "music creator" income of ZAR11,900 (expressed in the report as $658) per month: less than half of the national average wage[7] reported by Statistics SA. The MIAF study noted a higher income of around ZAR 22,000 ($1 249) for jazz artists – slightly below what our data yielded.

Elsewhere, the 2019 UK *Music Creators' Incomes*[8] study reports an average income for its respondents across all genres of "around the UK minimum wage" – lower than our jazz sample's close-to-average earnings. The US Bureau of Labour Statistics Occupational Outlook Handbook[9] employs a schoolteacher as a point of non-creative earnings comparison with a musician.

However, in South Africa the average government-employed teacher's monthly salary package has been calculated as ZAR42,700[10], almost double the median monthly ZAR26,500 of our sample which comprises people who are often similarly educated and experienced. That salary package – like those of most public service and larger enterprise employees – is calculated including benefits such as health insurance and pension contributions. Unemployment insurance contributions for employees are also required from all formal employers. SA musicians do not receive any of these, nor the transport, housing and other subsidies which accompany some formal employments.

In fact, the jazz musicians in our sample – among the most experienced and skilled and in the upper levels of their profession – earn about as much as an **intermediate-level construction**

[6] https://www.musicinafrica.net/RSFAM

[7] StatsSA op.cit

[8] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/music-creators-earnings-in-the-digital-era op.cit

[9] https://www.bls.gov/ooh/

[10] https://businesstech.co.za/news/government/647819/how-much-money-teachers-really-earn-in-south-africa/

industry electrician, an intermediate-level motor engineer, an intermediate level nurse, a payroll clerk or a sales representative, without any of the benefits that often form part of the packages for those formal occupations.[11]

Additionally, formal employment in South Africa is governed by working hours and basic conditions regulation; music and freelance occupations are not. As our respondents allude to, working hours include daytime rehearsal and practice plus evening performance. These can extend work well beyond a standard 35/40-hour week.

1.4 Covid relief provision in South Africa

A patchwork of different funding provisions, state and private, came into being during the Covid period. These can be divided into two categories: generic funding for which some musicians might qualify, and funding developed specifically for those in the arts sector.

1.4.1 Generic support

Private: Multiple non-profit organisations, for example Gift of the Givers, launched food parcel and feeding schemes in local areas, as did public-private partnership the Solidarity Fund. Banks created provision for "payment holidays" on mortgage and short-term loan repayments. These were available to bank clients "in good standing" (up-to-date on payments and with a consistent financial record). That status is often not available to those in project-based, intermittent employments such as music.

Government: The South African government created the special COVID-19 Social Relief of Distress Grant. This paid R350 a month (US$19) to those who applied via an online portal and who were receiving no other form of state support, income or relief grant, and otherwise met qualification criteria. Payments continue at date of writing.

Additionally, the UIF Temporary Employer/Employee Relief Fund (TERS) was created to support previously formally-employed people who had been laid-off, fired or had their hours significantly reduced. Both employers and employees could claim, and employers had to make payouts to employees based on detailed submitted and audited schedules. TERS payments are paid out as regular instalments over a fixed period depending on contributions and eligibility.

[11] https://www.careerjunction.co.za/marketing/salarysurvey

The Presidential Employment Stimulus Programme (PESP) was created as an explicit response to Covid. It used direct public investment to support job creation, job protection and livelihood support. A portion of the programme was directed towards cultural and creative projects, administered by the National Arts Council. This proved highly controversial[12], with allegations of corruption, nepotism and maladministration; in addition, applications to the fund required types of extensive and detailed formal documentation not customarily created for short-term arts projects.

Other generic state Covid relief included delaying statutory payments such as income tax (PAYE) to the fiscus, additional tax incentives to maintain youth employment, assistance to small-business debt administered through the banking system, and a Covid-19 Tourism Relief Fund which also attracted controversy [13] because of its application of stringent Black Economic Empowerment qualifying criteria to the small businesses applying.

1.4.2 Covid relief specifically for artists

Government: The National Department of Sport, Arts & Culture (DSAC) created three rounds of application-based relief directly to artists; a once-off payment at a maximum of R6,600[14]. Fixed-term temporary employees (the status of many musicians employed by national or regional arts institutions) did not qualify; nor did those who had additional sources of income, such as music teaching. Again, extensive formal documentary proofs were required. Most provincial culture departments made similar provisions, including both direct grants and food parcel programmes. The parastatal National Lotteries Commission made a once-off grant to those arts organisations it had funded in previous years.

Private funds: A range of private initiatives to provide relief for artists were created. These were limited by the amount of goodwill funding they could raise and, in some cases, by pre-existing organisational mandates. As examples (not a comprehensive list), the historic charity, the Theatre Benevolent Fund invited applications for support from affected theatre workers. Using a combination of government (DSAC) and member funding, Business Arts South Africa

[12] https://www.facebook.com/groups/theatreanddancealliance/permalink/505657053892581/?locale=ar_AR

[13] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zu8fZ8kUufM

[14] https://basa.co.za/grants/dsac-covid-19-relief/

also offered support initially to both business sponsors to continue their sponsorships and to arts organisations; later also to individual artists, extending the conditions under which it already supported pandemic-impacted projects to individuals[15]. The international Lockdown Collective raised funds to support visual artists through the Vulnerable Artist Fund, which made 636 grants valued at a total of R3 million. That foundation also created bursaries, subsequently funded by the sale of William Kentridge sketches. The non-profit, regionally-based Angel Foundation (Recording Industry of South Africa – RISA) developed a limited, voucher-based, food parcel support scheme for musicians.

Additionally the Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO), a royalty collection society, worked with major royalty clients to pay over funds due and existing funeral policy payments more swiftly, as well as exploring ways of offering additional relief with banks, consistent with its remit.

1.5 Conclusion

From a substantial body of local and international research, the impact of the pandemic on the cultural and creative industries was profound and has substantive long-term implications for all value chains. Studies focusing on musicians highlighted how difficult it was for musicians to pivot, the toll that "surviving the pandemic" took on their assets and resources, and the fact that while many did engage in digital work, those activities did not compensate for income losses from live performance.

In South Africa, while a range of generic and specific relief mechanisms were initiated, many were oversubscribed and often described as inaccessible or inadequate. The relief funding for jazz musicians is one example of a dedicated instrument created to support a relatively small group. The funding and its target beneficiaries are an important example of an innovative and timeous intervention that broke new ground administratively and programmatically.

The following chapter outlines the methodological approach adopted for the research and describes how the data is presented. In particular, it considers the ethics of relationship

[15] https://basa.co.za/grants/dsac-covid-19-relief/

safeguards with grant applicants who had initially applied for relief anonymously, and the way the research process sustained and enriched its longitudinal dimensions.

CHAPTER TWO - THE HOW AND THE WHY
(Research rationale & methodology)

2.1 The background to this survey

In late 2021, IKS Cultural Consulting was granted the opportunity to undertake research based on an anonymised version of extensive income and expenditure data amassed in the course of Covid relief grant-making, specifically to South African jazz artists, by Pro-Helvetia Johannesburg. The fund supported 711 musicians in 2020 and 2021, disbursing ZAR 82 891 080:00 over two application cycles and based on applicants' self-reported circumstances.

The anonymised dataset shared with us by Pro Helvetia at the beginning of this report's research process already offered significant value in generating new understanding.. We knew, in general terms, that limited current research existed on musicians' earnings worldwide. even less on musicians' professional expenditure, and less again on both these aspects in emerging economies. As an organisation, earlier research of ours had already mapped [16] the devastation on those lives wreaked by sickness and lockdowns, and we understood that information about these issues at a granular level would be vital to assist policymakers and development agencies in efforts to support the reconstruction of musicians' professional lives as the Covid pandemic waned.

Our research population was pre-defined by the context of the grant, as described above. The process of developing research processes and protocols to respect the privacy of this population was painstaking. Grant recipients' confidentiality had to be preserved and their informed permission for the research process secured; permission and evidence of adequate safeguards also had to be negotiated with the primary funder and the disbursing organisation. (For the purposes of this published report, the primary funder has opted to remain anonymous.)

Despite the time such safeguarding consumed, it was wholly positive to be part of such care and concern for respondents' information. During the period, discussions among

[16] https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/download/comments/691/10a5ab2db37feedfdeaab192ead4ac0e/Impact+Analysis++Live+Music+and+its+Venues+and+the+South+African+economy+during+COVID-19

stakeholders in the process, including the disbursing body, Pro Helvetia, illuminated the desirability – with grant recipients' explicit opt-in – of further exploring aspects and nuances that had not been relevant to the initial information required for grant decision-making. This fed into the design of survey items.

Thus we embarked on a two-stage process: mapping the initial, anonymised grant application data and following up with a voluntary questionnaire: to enrich understanding and link it to extant scholarship so we could position this cohort of musicians in relation to their local and international peers. A fuller account of methods and approaches is presented in Chapter Three below.

Our first basic mapping of application data collected during the grant-making process over two-and-a-bit grant-making cycles yielded outline information about earnings and expenditure. Two calls for grant applications were issued (first and second cycle), and because a minimal amount of funding remained after the second cycle of disbursements had been made (but still within its time-frame), a handful of additional applications were then considered. Details are presented in Table 19 below.

The first set of findings was thus based on the information on application forms: self-reported and designed for no purpose other than grant-making decisions. That was its primary limitation. Nevertheless, its use is justified by the granular mapping data it yields.

The follow-up survey adds significant unpacking of detail and meaning, particularly around expenditure. It builds a far more detailed understanding of recipients' income and expenditure (and the experiences related to it) than was provided by the initial mapping of anonymised application data. In addition, to inform future grant-making processes, recipients' experience of the Jazz Relief Fund grant application procedure was also polled during the follow-up. The self-administered survey was circulated online during November 2022 to a self-selected (voluntary) cohort who had opted in from among the successful applicants to all iterations of the Jazz Relief Fund in 2020 and 2021.

Our discussions and desk research raised intriguing questions about the definition of a "professional" musician in this research context, and about the usefulness of data from a

cohort self-identifying in the niche of "jazz musicians" for informing knowledge about working musicians' earnings and costs more broadly. This is discussed at 2.2 below.

Finally, because the research had extended over such a long time period, the disbursing organisation, Pro Helvetia, expressed interest in how the whole experience looked to recipients from the perspective of 2023 when the music industry is often said to be functioning 'normally' again, as well as what some recipients might still be carrying forward from their experience. How this interest was accommodated is discussed as part of ethical considerations at 2.7 below.

2.2 Defining the "professional" musician

Music industry research employs a wide range of definitions of the "professional" musician. These range from possessing certain qualifications or training, being able to make a living from musicianship, having musicianship as their main source of income (adequate or not), and producing copyrighted music content, to far more nebulous perceptions of role, status and "behaving professionally".

Contextual differences again make some of these criteria hard to apply in South Africa. As just one example, although access to formal music education opportunities has widened enormously over the past two decades in South Africa, inequalities still render it difficult for many. Elsewhere, the US Bureau of Labour Statistics[17] characterises the training required for musicians not as formal certification but "long-term, on-the-job training", while the 2019 UK report[18] found a weak and, in some categories, negative association between levels of formal education and music careers. There is significant consensus that formal qualifications alone do not define a professional musician.

Further, our study population self-selected by applying for the Jazz Relief Fund, and self-defined (albeit describing activities in other genres) as "jazz musicians". The processes of grant-making investigated the "jazz" aspect of each applicant's self-definition as part of eligibility consideration, in conformity with the funder's requirements. All those applicants

[17] https://www.bls.gov/ooh/entertainment-and-sports/musicians-and-singers.htm
[18] UK Govt, 2019 op cit

who received support from the fund and were counted in the initial data-mapping exercise, and who subsequently opted to complete the follow-up survey thus met the criteria set.

The word 'professional', however, carries other connotations, including an implied role distinction from "worker". Prevalent stereotypes of 'natural talent' or 'doing what you love' - the way music work and the workers involved are often masked - are at best implicit in discussions of markets and consumption, and the emphasis of media coverage on 'stars' (who are very often employers), all serve to blur understanding of musical labour.[19] By contrast, the qualitative responses we received on what it costs to survive as a musician (see Expenses Sections 3.4 and 4.5) highlighted activities and circumstances integral to musical labour: work-seeking, tools of trade, and dependence on external paymasters.

This report employs the concept of a music professional defined in a way most relevant to our research circumstances and study population: one who earns the majority of their income from music-related activities. But the researchers also remain very conscious that in many roles (even for bandleaders when, as often, they also perform in a support position in someone else's band), musicians are workers too.

2.3 The data sets

This report is based on two unique datasets, which it brings into conversation with one another as well as with current scholarship on the incomes and expenditure patterns of working musicians.

The first dataset comprises anonymised data aggregated from the applications of 711 grant recipients of the Jazz Relief Fund during the Covid period. Taken alone, this data presents a snapshot of income and expenditure based on information in the application forms submitted by musicians to access COVID-19 relief grants. These grants, made available to South African jazz musicians on a self-reported needs basis, represented an extraordinary intervention to support artists who lost substantial income due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021. A full description of the relief grant process and its context is found in Chapter 3. The data offers rare insight into the income and expenditure patterns of South African musicians and

[19] This compressed summary owes much to the special conference edition of Music Cultures 41/1 (2014) and its discussions of whether musicians are workers, particularly the Foreword, pp1-9.

documents in concrete, specific terms the enormous loss of income for music professionals who, for almost two years, were barred by public health gathering restrictions from the earning opportunities provided by live performance.

However, there were questions this anonymised dataset could not answer. It was based simply on self-reported pre-Covid income, expenditure and shortfalls at the moment of making the grant application. It lacked information about change in earnings and prospects over time, particularly as the pandemic waned. Further, it did not indicate what specific difference the grants might have made, and how the grant-making process had been experienced by recipients.

So when grant recipients were asked for permission to use their anonymised, aggregated data for the initial income and expenditure mapping, they were also asked for permission to send them a survey, probing these aspects and including open, reflective items. Completion of this survey was again anonymous, and voluntary. Just over half (374: 52.6%) of the full recipient sample completed the survey.

2.4 Utility of the research

The information provided by both application forms and survey responses comprises a substantial, unique and valuable dataset. No previous research has homed in at this level of detail on specifically musicians' income and expenses in South Africa. The 2019 South African Cultural Observatory (SACO) study mapped the earnings of the nation's "cultural and creative" workers, using a range of national statistical sources and aggregated either in that category, or employed the even broader UNESCO definitional domain of "festivals and celebration", within which UNESCO places music. Subsequent research from SACO, completed by IKS Cultural Consulting, has considered the impact of COVID on live music as an industry. A 2022 Music in Africa Foundation study surveyed the broad landscape of South African "music creators" income (a deliberately more widely-defined cohort than professional performers), including COVID-related losses and changes. Its adoption of an 'income stream' lens was an important first for South African research in this area. That report's very extensive, aggregated categories did not however permit focus on the granularity of individual musicians' experience that this research has been able to capture.

This paucity of studies does not only hold for South Africa. Desk research on international studies (see Chapter 1) indicates that while music industry revenue research is regularly conducted and published worldwide, grounded theory around individual musicians' income and, particularly, expenditure is a far less well-developed research area. Although there is a wealth of grey literature (un-accredited and not peer-reviewed) in professional magazines on "What Do Musicians Earn?" and "What Does It Cost to be a Musician?"[20] (examples of which are too numerous to list, although some are cited in the footnote), surprisingly little formal research has been undertaken on this topic. This study adds to what remains a nascent field of study and an incomplete body of knowledge; it contributes strong granular detail at the individual musician level from an emerging economy context, and therefore represents a significant (albeit limited and initial) contribution to theoretical understanding of the field.

2.5 The research population and its representivity

The Jazz Relief funding was offered to South African jazz musicians in line with the source funder's own mission. However, the jazz sector in South Africa is relatively small compared to popular music sectors such as gospel music. Jazz performances occur in predominantly formal, ticketed venues, and thus is positioned towards the higher end of the music earnings spectrum. Further, the more experienced jazz musicians who dominated the research population represent a professional elite, even among jazz players. They are older, with many in their peak earning years, and their income exceeds that of, for example, the broadly aggregated music creator population of the MIA Foundation survey. We at no point suggest that in absolute, monetary terms their circumstances are the same.

In relative, circumstantial terms, however, this population is much more representative of the more general musician population. As the data presented in the rest of this report reveals, they share significant characteristics and experiences with broader populations of musicians studied elsewhere. Specific points of consonance with other findings are noted as they occur throughout subsequent chapters: our respondent population has a similar age and demographic profile; a similar gender skewing; a similar revenue stream profile; and a similar range of costs and expenses. While not superseding the need for specific studies of other

[20] e.g https://output.com/blog/how-much-musicians-actually-earn ; https://indieconnect.com/real-costs-successful-musician-indie-artist/

genre populations in future, we suggest that these findings offer insights well beyond their genre boundaries.

2.6 Sources of musicians' earnings: the 'revenue streams' lens

Until midway through the 20-teens, one stumbling block for researchers was the problem of pinning down workable definitions of earnings in the music professions because:

- a proliferation of intermediaries contribute towards earnings rather than a single "employer";
- multiple diverse working structures and relationships coexist and interact;
- routes for consuming/paying for music are split between many channels and platforms; and
- digitisation has, if anything, intensified these features.

The problem was addressed by researchers Kristin Thomson and Jean Cook with their pioneering study of US artists' revenue streams for the Future of Music Coalition. The project, launched in 2010, with findings published in 2013[21], surveyed 5 000 musicians and conducted interviews and focus groups to identify 25 different types of musicians and 42 unique revenue streams; the 'revenue streams' construct (income aggregated from multiple sources in various distinct combinations) is now widely employed by other such studies.

For example, one musician might combine composing, producing and arranging with playing; another might spend 40% of their time teaching; a third might spend most of their working days as a freelance marketer or some other non-music occupation to support work as a composer. There are as many possible streams and combinations as there are individuals in music, and the revenue streams lens becomes less useful if it is confined to a single, universal set of definitions. Its utility is precisely as a lens: as a way of looking that can accommodate such unpredictable diversity.

This was an important theoretical contribution with significant practical implications. For example, the absence of a revenue streams-based understanding of musician incomes at the level of public service administration in South Africa may well contribute to the constraints faced by musicians here in accessing government grants and relief funding, something alluded to frequently by our research population.

[21] Thomson, K. (2013). Roles, Revenue, and Responsibilities: The Changing Nature of Being a Working Musician. *Work and Occupations*, *40*(4), 514–525. https://doi.org/10.1177/0730888413504208

Broadly, the Future of Music data confirmed that live performances formed the biggest single source of income for all musicians – 47%, including both intermittent gigs and regularly waged work with an ensemble – and slightly more for jazz musicians (52%). These findings also gave other scholars a basis for investigating the importance of individual income sources. As one example, di Cola (2013)[22] considered the significance of copyright income in this context, finding that for most musicians it was not considered a significant source of current income because of the time taken to amass significant amounts and have them disbursed. However, it did offer hope of future rewards.

Revenue streams thinking also informed the US Music Industry Research Association (MIRA) at Princeton University, who in 2018 interviewed 1,200 musicians about earnings as part of a study of their wellbeing and circumstances[23]. They found their respondents, despite identifying one primary genre affiliation, worked across an average of five different genres and earned from a stream comprising 3.5 distinct music activities each year (plus additional non-music work), with live performance again the most important component. 61% of the MIRA respondents reported that despite these multiple activities, their income remained inadequate. A 2019 UK survey[24] focused more on the role of earnings from online activities, and confirmed the same general pattern of a multi-source income stream, with the most prevalent combination being live performance plus song-writing and producing.

For emerging economies, the 2022 Music in Africa (MIA) Foundation study of *Revenue Streams for Music Creators in South Africa* described an income stream made up of live performance (the largest single component at 30%), a huge, diverse and eclectic category of earnings described as "services", plus music rights, grants and funding, and "brand-related activities" (developing a creator's personal "brand", e.g., securing endorsements). The other relevant recent South African study, the South African Cultural Observatory (SACO) Cultural and Creative Industries Mapping Study[25] considers music earnings only within the UNESCO

[22] Money from Music: Survey Evidence on Musicians' Revenue and Lessons About Copyright Incentives*55 Arizona Law Review 301 (2013)Northwestern Law & Econ Research Paper No. 13-01*

[23] https://psrc.princeton.edu/news/mira-survey-musicians-april-june-2018

[24] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/music-creators-earnings-in-the-digital-era

[25]https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/document-library/saco-research-papers

framework as part of the broad domain of festivals and celebration, rather than providing precise income figures for specific single occupations.

Given these category variations in local studies (they are in all cases intentional, and reflect diversity of research aims), and the significant contextual differences with international ones, the breadth of some categories employed, plus inflation over time and shifting exchange rates, as well as variations in how "averages" are calculated, it is not particularly helpful to compare absolute amounts across studies. However, an account of some more practical findings and points of comparison around the earnings of different South African occupations has been provided in Chapter One above.

2.7 Ethical compliance

The data collected for the first part of the study represents the application data submitted by successful grant recipients for consideration to the fund. This was captured into a pre-prepared database to be utilised by this study. Informed by both ethical and legal restrictions on the use of personal information, data capturing and anonymisation was completed by the administrator of the grants, not by the IKS research team. Information was provided to the research team as raw data not associated with any personal or grant information held by Pro Helvetia. Recipients' permission for this use of the anonymised data had been sought and secured, as was their opt-in to being sent a follow-up survey.

Because the grant-makers made it very clear that grant recipients' confidentiality was a primary ethical (as well as legal) concern, responses to the follow-up survey were voluntary and anonymous. The survey itself was worded in accordance with legal advice, and all researchers handling it signed a non-disclosure agreement. The researchers were at arm's length from survey distribution, which was undertaken by the Pro Helvetia office.

Potential respondents had simply been asked previously to opt-in to receiving an additional follow-up survey. Apart from knowing that respondents formed a sub-group from among those who had successfully applied for the Covid Relief Fund, the researchers had no means of identifying the grant circumstances of any individual. To support this, the anchoring demographic information sought was deliberately broad (provincial location, gender and age /experience), consistent with the information needs of the research.

However, a handful of respondents (5) chose to identify themselves by name, most in the context of requesting an opportunity to "pay back" in some way to the grant-making organisation through their music. An additional respondent unwittingly provided identification by naming a recording project they had led in their open response. All this identifying information has been redacted from this text.

2.8 Methodological limitations

2.8.1 Phase One : mapping application form data (self-reported)

In terms of the first phase of the research: data-mapping from grant recipients' application forms, using such secondary data for research purposes presents both advantages and limitations. The primary limitation is that the data was not collected for the purposes of research, but rather grant-making; as such, there are limitations in its scope and application[26].

Importantly, the categories of data gathered do not match those of the national statistical datasets tracking income and expenditure, and further, the data is not generalisable to musicians beyond the sub-group targeted by the relief grant: jazz musicians. In this case, an additional limitation was that no verification of the data provided was conducted, and no request was made for supporting documentary evidence to confirm the value of income and expenditure. Because the application process accepted the data at face value, this research adopts a similar approach. The limitation is underlined in the sections dealing with income and expenditure to remind the reader that this data is not verified.

It might be speculated that applicants would exaggerate the extent of their need because of the purpose (grant-seeking) for which they provided information. That is certainly possible. It could, for example, be a factor in the slightly higher income (and therefore loss) reported by our 'jazz musician' sample as against the Music in Africa 'jazz musician' sample, who averaged R4 000 per month less in earnings. However, the amount is relatively small and the definitions employed by the two surveys were also widely divergent. MIAF reported no checking of their respondents' credentials in jazz beyond self-identification, whereas the Jazz Relief Fund undertook extensive checks.

[26] Vartanian, TP (2010). Secondary Data Analysis, Chapter 3, Oxford University Press

No research can ever rule out instances of individual dishonesty, but the bulk of survey responses are broadly in line with what is already known about what the population earns, and absolutely in line with what is known about their costs and the extent of losses from Covid as revealed by, for example, the SACO studies. All this suggests general levels of honest self-reporting.

Importantly, only 23% of the grant applicants were women, and thus this study perpetuates a substantive emerging research trend in the South African creative industries: a bias towards significantly more responses from males. Multiple other studies, discussed in Chapter One, suggest that the gender disparity is not merely in responses, but reflects the real disparity in gender representation in the industry populations from which respondents come. To try and counter this bias, wherever feasible, the data provided by women has been analysed and represented separately to demonstrate as far as possible the impact of the pandemic on their specific livelihoods.

The Phase One data provides unique insights into the income and expenditure trends of a specific group of musicians who were directly impacted by the grant, at a granular level and including aspects previously un/under-studied.

2.8.2 Phase Two: survey responses

This follow-up survey aimed to develop a more detailed understanding of recipients' income and expenditure (and the experiences related to it) than was provided by the initial mapping of anonymised grant application data. In addition, to inform future grant-making processes, recipients' experience of the grant application procedure was also polled.

A self-administered survey was circulated online during November 2022 to a self-selected (voluntary) cohort from among the successful applicants to all iterations of the Swiss Jazz Musicians Covid Relief Fund in 2020 and 2021.The core analysis is based on a consistent sample of 374 respondents; some questions allowed for multiple responses.

The survey questionnaire predominantly aimed to elicit quantitative data that could concretely disaggregate and nuance the broad sketch of income and expenditure earlier derived from grant application forms.

However, items related to costs, expenses and experience of the grant disbursement process all contained an open "tell us more" section, and a final question invited unstructured reflections on anything mentioned in the survey. These qualitative data were manually coded - first inductively to develop codes, then by applying a latency lens to the codes to form thematic categories, per question and overall. Based on this work, verbatim quotes were selected for illustrative use in the text.

2.8.3 Phase Three: the view from 2023

Rather than embarking upon a protracted additional survey process, it was decided to conduct a limited number of on-the-record interviews with recipients to gather retrospective insights. Again, to protect identities before interviewees had consented, the first contact was made by Pro Helvetia. Details of those who agreed to go on the record with their thoughts and experiences outside the anonymity of the survey were passed on to the researchers, who then undertook the conversations in September 2023. Conversations were guided by bullet-points to ensure essential topics were raised, but there was no formal survey format, and respondents were free to frame and change the direction of the conversations as they chose. Recordings were transcribed verbatim and then edited for length and clarity.

Although all the interviewees had been recipients of the Relief Grant, these final reflections are not presented as "typical" of the full sample, but rather as rich, illustrative instances that, for a reader, can tie the findings to identifiable human lives. They are presented separately as a retrospective, reflective Chapter Five. These respondents are all currently more professionally high-profile in the industry than the majority of the full survey sample. Their higher professional profile might well relate to their willingness to go "on the record"; additionally, it means respondents have had far more practice in interview situations.

Their articulate reflections, therefore, certainly enrich our understanding of individual musicians' working lives since – as well as during – the Covid pandemic, and thus also enrich the longitudinal dimension of this research.

2.9 Conclusion

The iterative approach to this research, building on one grant application dataset to construct a more purposeful solicitation process aimed at yielding a more in-depth dataset, has been useful in constructing as full a picture as possible of the earning and expenditure patterns of

jazz musicians in South Africa. The additional desk research links this to findings from elsewhere, demonstrating that the situation created by Covid had universal impact features. This research creates an invaluable baseline for subsequent studies, as well as contributing in its own right to a research field that is under-researched both nationally and internationally, particularly in the detail it adds concerning expenditure.

Further, the wealth of foundational quantitative data provided by the application process is indicative of the more general importance of ongoing analysis of administrative data, while collecting regular quantitative data as the Phase 2 survey did, has the power to create a much fuller and more dynamic picture of the lives and work of musicians. Both these are of value to inform policy, programmes and projects.

Chapter Three presents an overview of the Jazz Relief Fund grants, the data gleaned from application forms about beneficiaries, and the impact of the pandemic on their professional lives.

CHAPTER THREE: LIFE DURING COVID – "RESILIENCE AND SURVIVAL"
A statistical snapshot of relief grant beneficiaries and grant-making during the pandemic

3.1 Overview of the basic income relief grant for jazz musicians

The grant originator is a Europe-based charitable foundation with a specific mission related to jazz as part of a broader cultural democracy. They have chosen not to be named in this published report. Because of the organisation's mandate, the call for grant applications was directed specifically towards South African jazz musicians.

The initial call for grant applications appeared in July 2020. It was posted by Pro Helvetia Johannesburg (https://johannesburg.prohelvetia.org/en/jazzfund/), the Swiss Arts Council body selected by the grant originator, and was further disseminated by other South African music-related bodies including SACO, SAMRO, the Music in Africa Foundation, Concerts SA and others. Applicants were required to provide basic career information, an account of household costs, a calculation of Covid-related shortfall in current income, and an amount of grant relief requested. Applicants self-reported these numbers and no documentary proofs were demanded.

Table 1 below shows the various iterations of the call and the number of applications received at each.

Table 1: Chronology of Jazz Relief Fund Disbursements

Date	Call for applications / closing date	Proposed funding period	Late applications	No of applications received	No of grants made
Phase 1	29/07/2020 31/08/2020	09/2020 - 02/2021	10/2020 - 03/2021	381	355
Phase 2 (Extension of Phase 1)*	04/03/2021 10/03/2021	03/2021- 08/2021	04/2021 - 09/2021	546	356
Phase 2 New Applicants*	15/03/2021 26/03/2021	05/2021 - 10/2021	N/A		

**This division reflects the need to disburse all funds available within the specified timeframe*

An administrator was appointed to collate and check applications. The purpose of this process was not to verify any single self-reported financial detail, but largely to ensure that applications fell within the eligibility criteria of the call, and entailed desk research and personal communication if an applicant's information arrived incomplete.

A process of long- and then short-listing was undertaken, in consultation with a panel of industry specialists, including representatives of Pro Helvetia on behalf of the fund, music scholars and music organisers. The identity of panel members and the detail of their deliberations were, and remain, confidential. The panel met regularly and considered applications case-by-case - to agree on eligibility where submitted information was scant, and on the amount of each grant (based on the information applicants had submitted and the amount they had requested in relation to total funding available). This process was designed to ensure an equitable distribution over the whole funding period. The panel meetings were lengthy, sometimes extending over more than one day. In some cases, the amount applicants had requested was adjusted (either upwards or downwards) based on panel re-calculation; more often, the amount requested was granted.

Grants, payable monthly, were initially made for a period of six months. The largest monthly sum granted was R15 000 per month, and the smallest was R2 000 per month. Because repeat applications were considered, the longest period any one applicant received a grant was for 12 months; the shortest was the standard six months.

Table 2: Jazz Relief Fund Grant Description

Phase 1 Total funds disbursed *(based on 2020/21 exchange rates)*	ZAR equivalent 20 377 455:00 (CHF 1 132 080:83)
Phase 2 Total Funds disbursed *(based on 2020/21 exchange rates)*	ZAR equivalent 62 513 625:00 (CHF 3 422 979:17)
Shortest disbursement period	6 months
Longest disbursement period	12 months
Maximum monthly amount granted	R15 000:00
Minimum monthly amount granted	R2 000:00
Average monthly amount granted* (median figure)	R10 000:00

The Basic Income Relief Grant for Jazz Musicians was unique in the context of other relief programmes described in Chapter 1, as:

- The grants were specifically directed towards musicians. The qualifying criterion was primary identification as a jazz musician. But because jazz musicians locally and internationally work in other genres in the nature of their careers, spin-off impacts inevitably benefitted music development more broadly.

- The donors were in a position to make available generous funding, particularly because of the exchange rate between the Rand and the Swiss Franc.

- The grants did not require formal proof of previous employment (they simply requested applicants' account of their CV/ work record), or disclosure of any previous relationship

with the grant-makers, or proof of termination/reduction of employment and loss of income; artists self-reported and were trusted.

- The grants employed an 'income streams' approach to applicant income reporting (aggregated 'work', rather than 'a job'); no applicant was automatically excluded by multiple or diverse sources of income.

- The grants, through considering household 'shortfall', were able to accommodate variations in the individual expenditure needs of applicants and their households, rather than applying a one-size-fits-all approach.

- The grants were envisaged as "income support" rather than as support for a specific project or expense, giving recipients flexibility in how they were apportioned between support for maintaining professional activity and personal/household expenses. No formal reporting on how they were used was required.

- Grant application forms, although in English in a multilingual country, were specifically edited for conformity to Plain Language communication principles.

- The grants were paid over an initial six-month period rather than as a once-off sum, offering continuity and some security in meeting recurrent obligations.

- The grants were made available to all jazz musicians working in South Africa, without demanding evidence of immigration status.

It is important to note that a private foundation, particularly one based outside South Africa, faces far fewer administrative and legislative constraints on its activities than a South African government entity or a local foundation. There is no doubt that many other grant-making bodies would have wished to have the resources and/or the regulatory freedom to do some of the things noted below during the pandemic. This account should therefore be read as **descriptive of this specific grant-making**, rather than as critical of other grant-makers. It does, however, point to some potentially beneficial characteristics of grant-making approaches and these are discussed further in the Recommendations (Chapter 6) below.

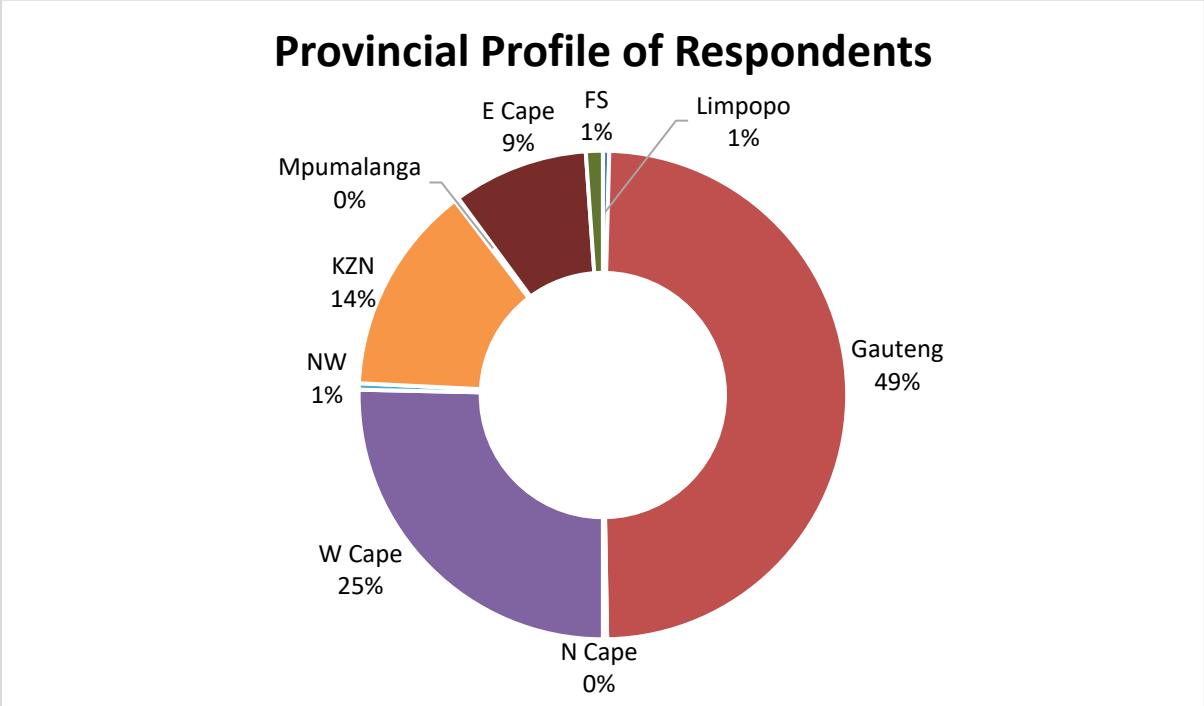
3.2 Profile of grant recipients

The sections below outline the analysis of the application data collected, focusing on the gender and geographic location of the 711 grant recipients.

3.2.1 Location: Phase One application data

Consistent with mapping data collected by the 2020 South African Cultural Observatory (SACO)[27] study, the location of musicians from this sample is overwhelmingly urban. Just under half of the sample (49%) were based in Gauteng at the time of their grant application, 25% were based in the Western Cape, 14% in KwaZulu-Natal, 9% in the Eastern Cape, and 1% or less in Limpopo, the Northern Cape, Free State and Mpumalanga. The location of women applicants is closely aligned to this overall profile, with just under half living in Gauteng at the time of application.

Figure 1: Provincial Profile of Grant Recipients



3.2.2 Gender and Experience: Phase One application data

As highlighted in Section 2, a minority of the grant recipients were women, and as indicated above, the bulk are living in the more urbanised provinces of Gauteng (46%), the Western Cape (28%), KwaZulu-Natal (12%) and Eastern Cape (12%). Less than one percent of the sample live in the more rural provinces of Limpopo, Mpumalanga, Northwest, Free State and the Northern Cape.

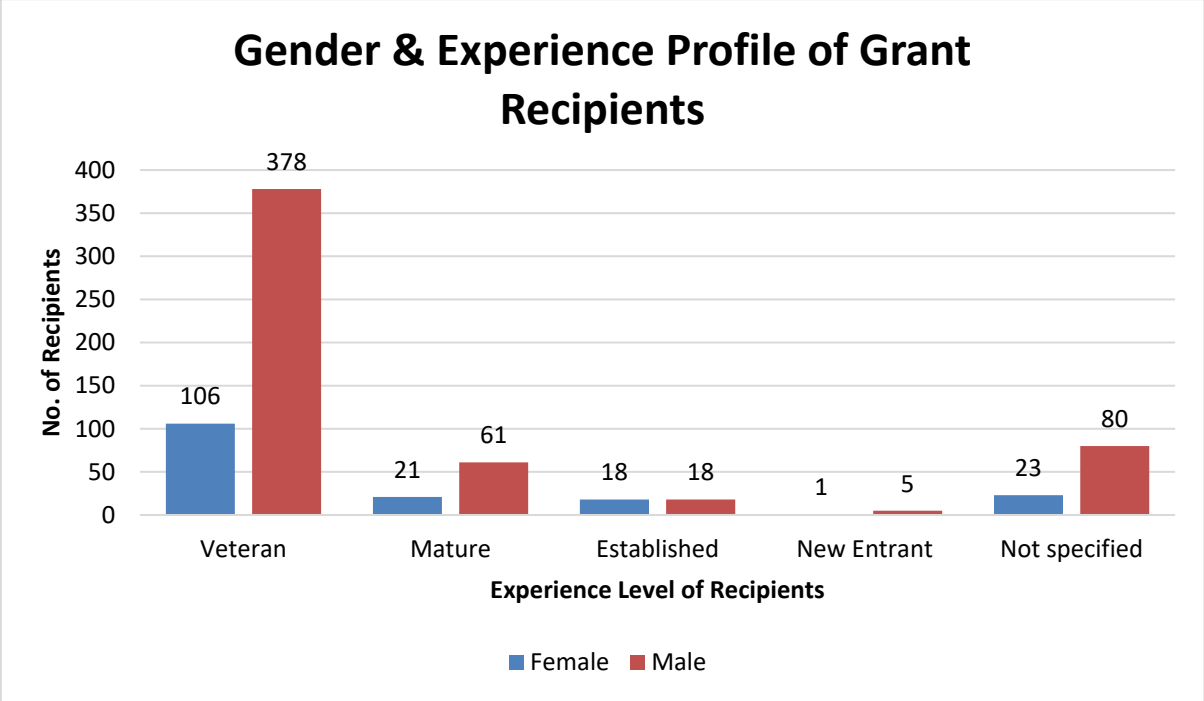
[27] SACO (2020) Mapping Study 2019-2020 Capstone Report, https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/download/727

The provincial location of male beneficiaries matches the provincial profile of all recipients in Section 3.2.1 above, given the large number of applications received from male musicians (76%).

The bulk of beneficiaries (68%) are classified as “veterans”: those musicians with 9 or more years of experience as professional musicians. “Mature” musicians with between 6 and 8 years of experience made up 12%, and “established” musicians with 3 to 5 years of experience comprised 5%. Only 1% could be classified as “new entrants” with less than 3 years of experience. This may relate to the specific professional requirements for self-defining as a jazz musician, which demands both technical proficiency and the ability to improvise – a skill that needs honing through possibly lengthy practical experience ("paying your dues"). It may also stem from more experienced musicians being more familiar with accessing information about professional opportunities and support, and more active as members of information networks. However, a significant proportion, 14% of recipients, chose not to specify their years of experience, perhaps out of concern that this would not be in their favour in the grant application process.

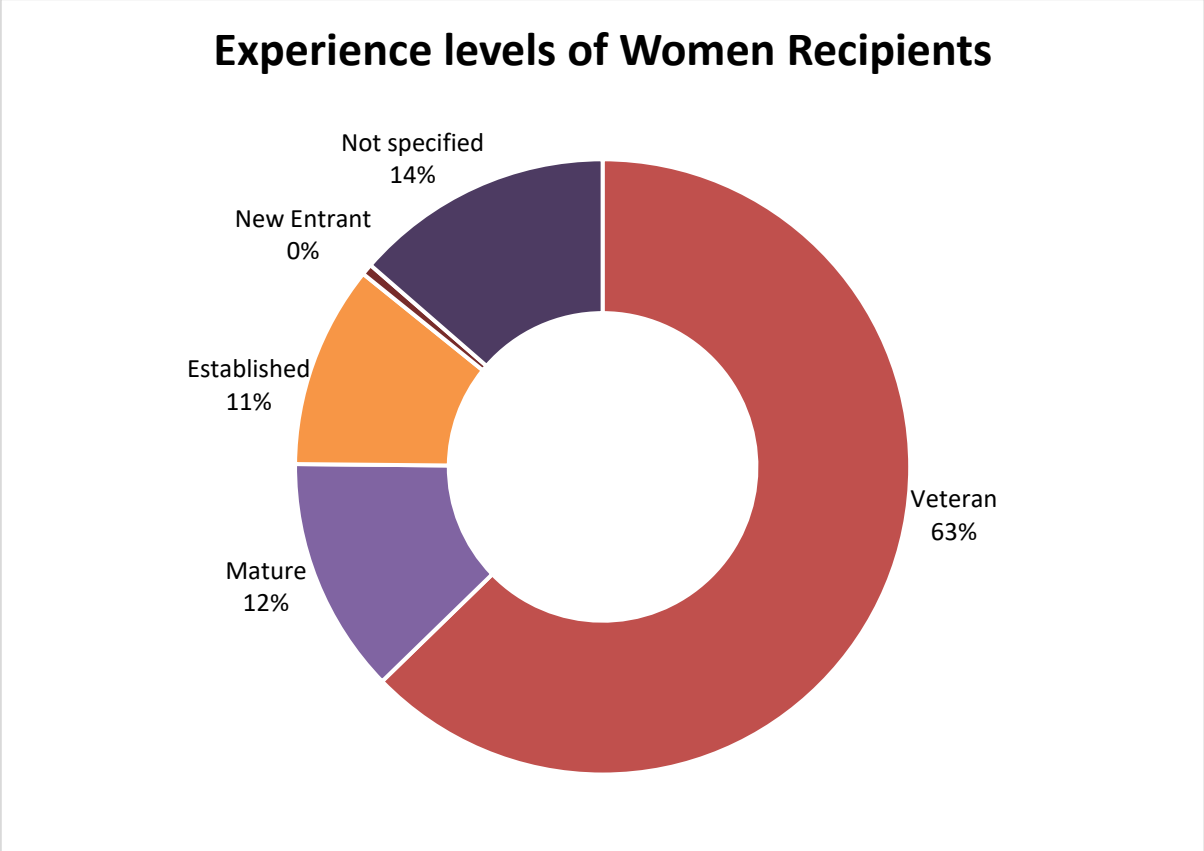
NOTE: The experience categories employed are consonant with those employed by other similar studies internationally: almost universally, for example, 8-10 years of experience is the benchmark for a "more than mature" status among music professionals, which we labelled "veteran". However, the category labels are simply that: descriptive of their category. A label such as "veteran" should not be assumed to carry any of the subjective connotations which, for example, literary or journalistic writing about "music veterans" may add.

Figure 2: Gender & Experience Profile of Grant Recipients



Consistent with the overall profile of the sample, most women beneficiaries were regarded as "veterans" (63%). However, the mature (12%) and established (11%) female categories were very similar in size as the chart below indicates.

Figure 3: Experience levels of Women Recipients



3.3 Income

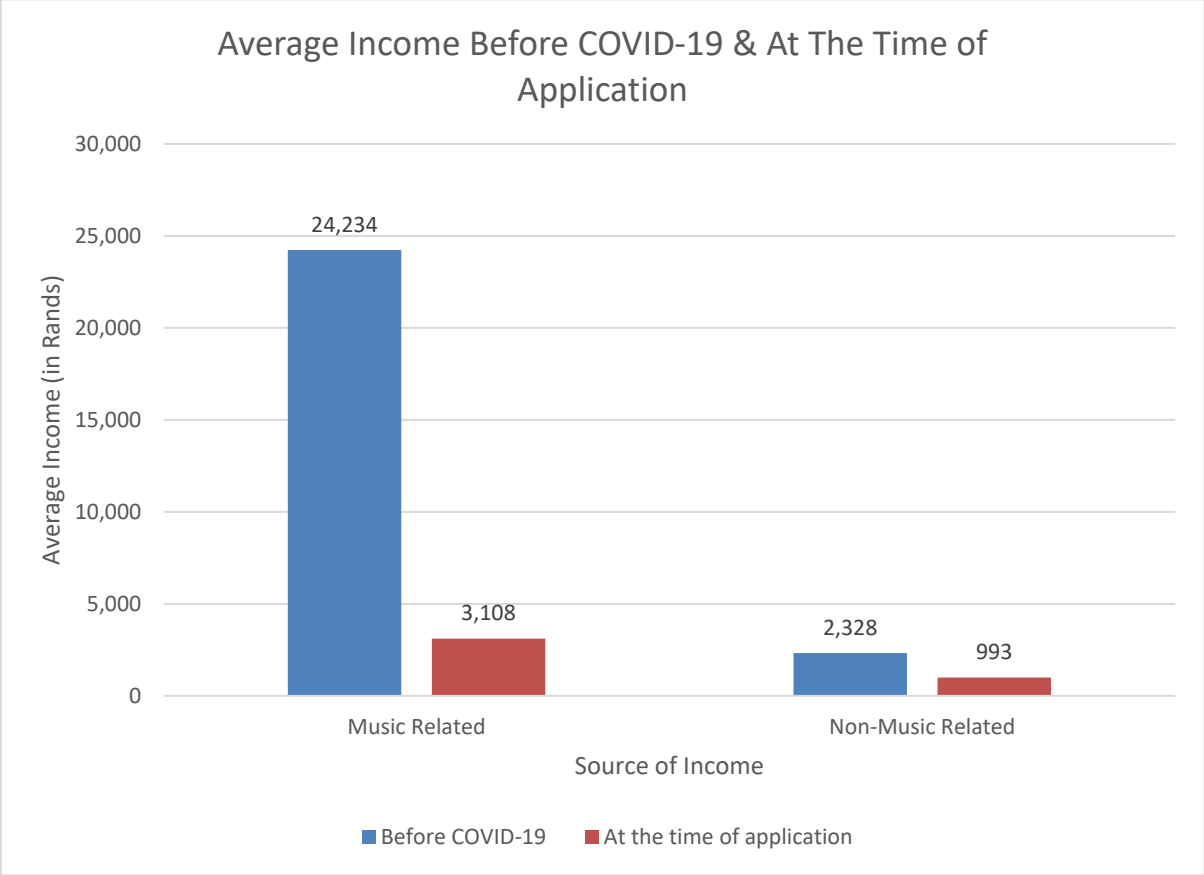
The sections below provide an overview of income and income sources reported by grant beneficiaries. Applicants were asked to reflect on their income "currently". Given the application process, this data thus describes income as at late 2021. They were requested to provide this information against pre-set categories and in a Rand-value format. The application process did not verify the data provided.

3.3.1 Overview of income: during and pre-COVID-19

As outlined in Figure 4, before March 2020 when the Coronavirus pandemic and related prevention efforts decimated local and global music industry, professional musicians who received grants earned an average of just over R26,500 per month. Over 90% of this income was derived directly from music-related activity.

Post-March 2020, this figure dropped by 90% to under R2,500 per month. It is clear from the related drop in non-music related income that any secondary income stream was not able to compensate for the enormous decline in monthly income.

Figure 4: Average reported income pre-COVID and at the time of application

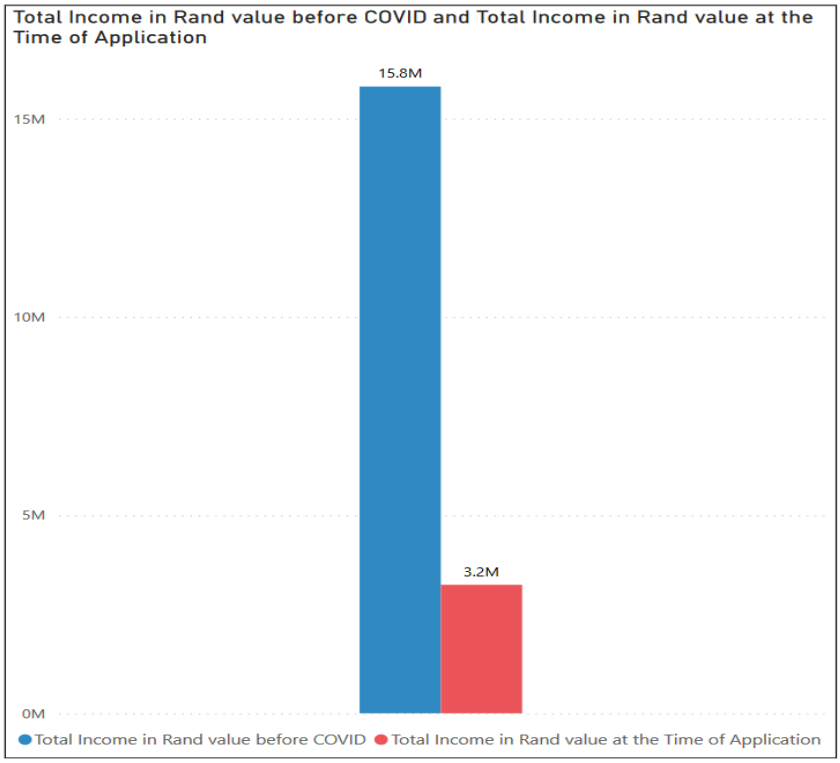


Given that the bans on live events and performance activities were absolute and country-wide, these losses were felt consistently across all provinces. From a total income of R15,8 million reported by the -711 applications used for this research, the income earned dropped by R12,6 million to R3,2 million. This enormous drop in income is consistent with studies completed by UNESCO in 2021[28] and locally by SACO in 2020 and 2021 to document the impact of the pandemic on the creative industries[29].

[28] UNESCO (2021), Cultural and creative industries in the face of COVID-19: an economic impact outlook, https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000377863?posInSet=1&queryId=18d8b725-72cd-4018-ad79-bfdd0ee274e4

[29] SACO (2021) Measuring the Impact of the COVID-19 Crisis on the Cultural and Creative Industries: One Year On, available here: https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/download/comments/803/1aa48fc4880bb0c9b8a3bf979d3b917e/Measuring+the+impact+of+the+COVID-19+Crisis+on+the+Cultural+and+Creative+Industries+in+South+Africa+One+year+on and SACO

Figure 5: Total income before COVID-19 and at the time of application



3.3.2 Regional income profile

Regionally, the average income from music related activities prior to the pandemic range between an average of R8,000 per month in the North West to a high of R29,210 per month in Gauteng. Unsurprisingly, musicians located in Gauteng were the highest earners. However, musicians in the Northern Cape and Free State were the next highest earners, likely a reflection of the experience profile of those applicants; in the main, veteran and mature artists receive higher remuneration.

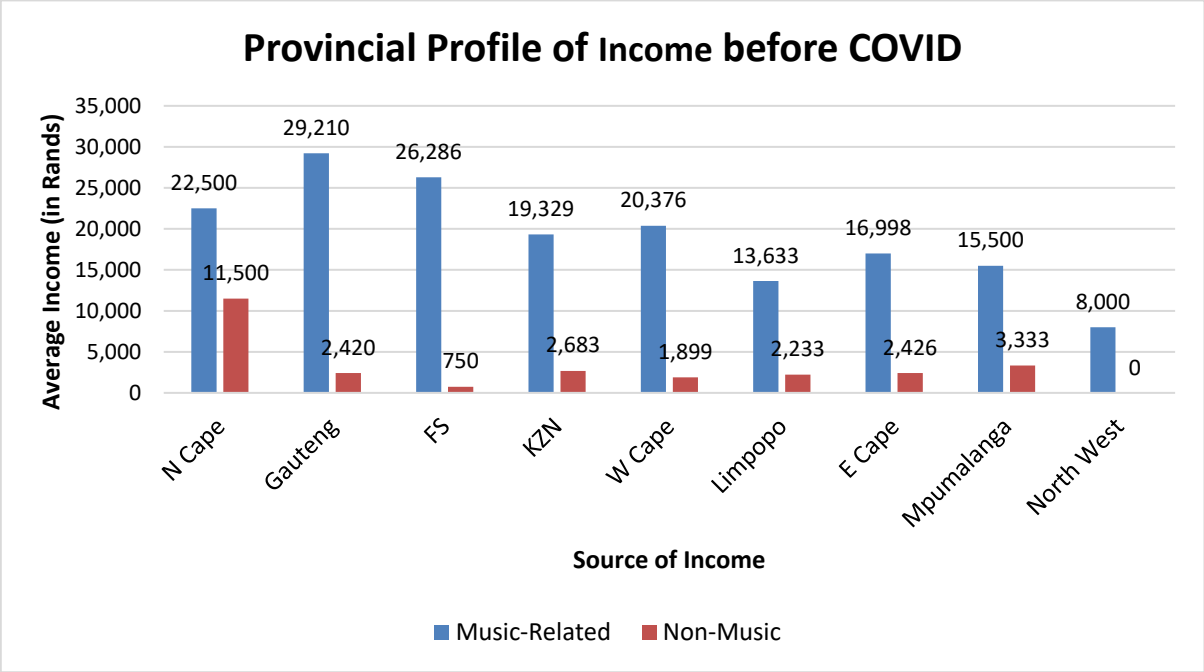
Prior to COVID-19, the income levels of professional musicians were well within the range of average monthly salaries across the country. *Trading Economics*, using information from Statistics South Africa (Stats SA), has estimated that the average monthly income in South Africa in January 2022 was R22,249[30]. When benchmarked against average monthly income

(2020) Covid-19 Impact Survey Report on CCIs, https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/content/covid-19-impact-survey-report-on-ccis

[30] Trading Economics (2020). South Africa Monthly Gross Wage, available here: https://tradingeconomics.com/south-africa/wages

data reported in the SACO *Creative Industries Mapping Study Report* (published in 2021), musicians fall comfortably within the same income category as only 11% of other cultural workers, earning between R16,001 and R37,500[31]. However, our recipients' range stretches from a starting point of R8 000, signalling how much "averages" can mask actual figures.

Figure 6: Regional Income Profile of Recipients before COVID-19



[31] SACO (2020) Mapping Study 2019-2020 Capstone Report, https://www.southafricanculturalobservatory.org.za/download/comments/727/fb89705ae6d743bf1e848c206e16a1d7/Mapping+Study+2019-20-+Capstone+Report

3.3.3 Income by experience

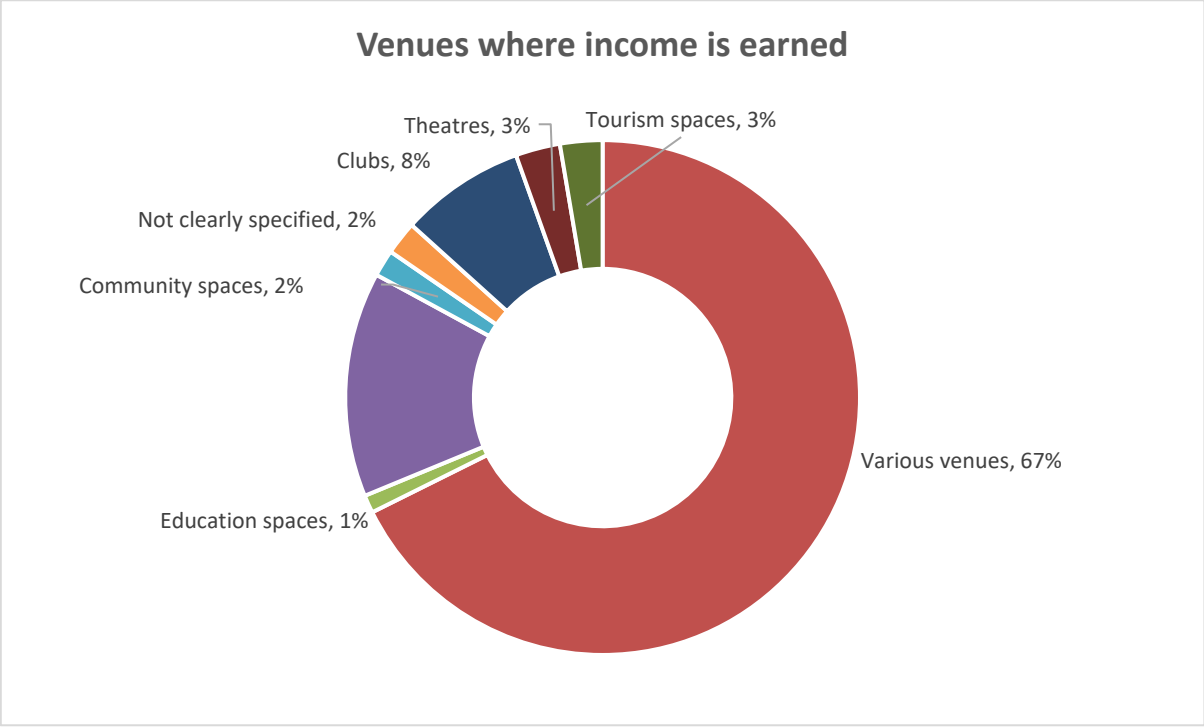
As highlighted above and shown in the table below, experience emerges as a substantial factor in income with veteran artists earning over 65% more than new entrants.

Table 3: Average Income by experience

Years of Experience	Average Monthly Income (In Rands)
9 or more years (veteran)	24,617
6 to 8 years (mature)	14,210
3 to 5 years (established)	14,848
Less than 3 years (new entrant)	8,838

Overall, the recipients reported earning revenue in a variety of different venues (venues were the biggest contributor); however, festivals also emerged as a substantial contributor to earnings, as outlined below.

Figure 7: Places where income is earned



3.3.4 Government-supported grant income

Grant beneficiaries reported that their income from government grants increased substantially over the period of the pandemic in most provinces, with the notable exception of Mpumalanga. However, as a proportion of total income, the figure remained below the

average income of established artists and was generally administered as a once-off payment rather than, for example, the support offer by the Temporary Employment Relief Scheme (TERS) administered by the Unemployment Insurance Fund. The total value of grants increased 156%, from a cumulative amount of R182,601 prior to the pandemic, to a high of R284,916 at time of submitting their Jazz Relief Fund grant application.

213 recipients (30%) reported receiving relief assistance from government, civil society and the private sector post-March 2020, to the value of R2,796 million. The primary sources of relief funding were the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture (DSAC), the National Arts Council (NAC) and Business and Arts South Africa.

3.4 Expenses

Expenditure information was collected through the application forms to understand the shortfalls and needs of musicians supported by the fund; again, in pre-set categories as shown below, and in ZAR values. The application process accepted this information at face value without any verification, in contrast to the detailed formal documentation demanded for government grants. This research followed the same approach and the data presented were not submitted to any verification processes.

3.4.1 Overall Expenditure

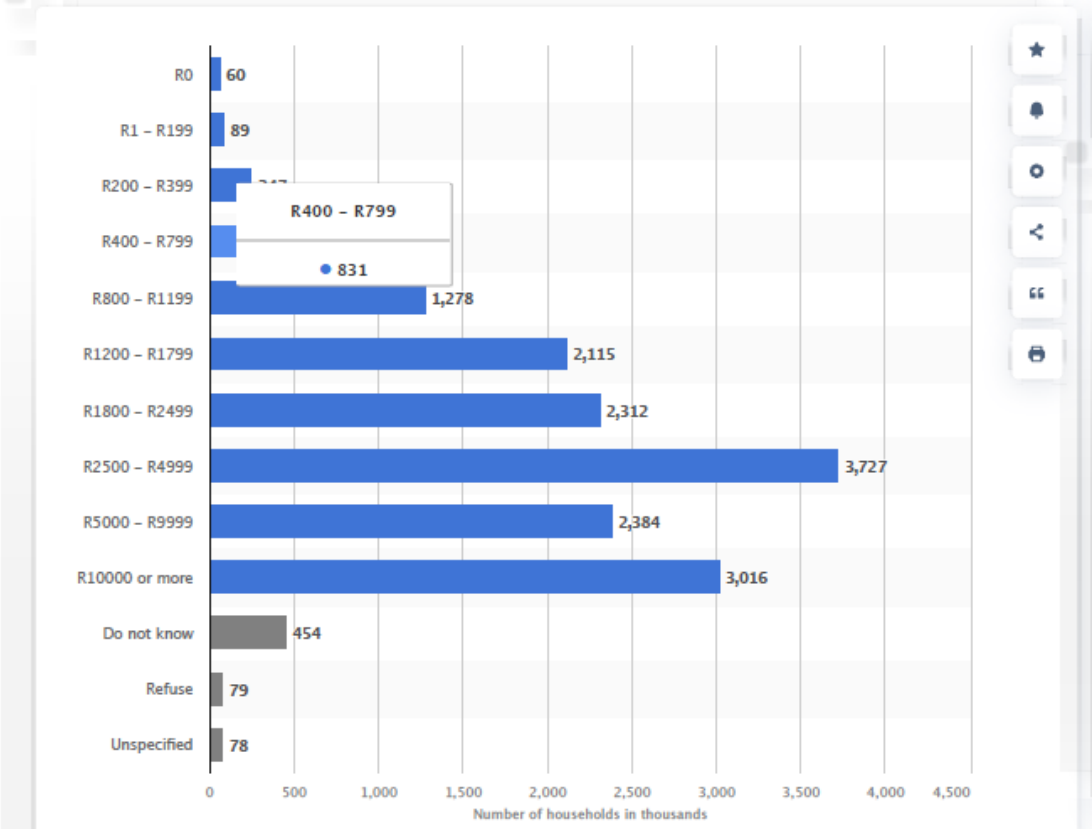
On average, based on the information submitted, grant recipients spend R16,000 on household expenses:

Table 4: Average spend per category.

Expenditure category	Average Spend (in Rands)	%
Communication (data, internet access, telephony)	1 020,78	6
Dependants (children and immediate family)	2 550,98	16
Food	3 540,83	22
Life and medical insurance	1 318,08	8
Retirement and pensions	388,40	3
Rent and/or mortgages	5 151,51	32
Vehicles/transport	2 134,00	13
TOTAL	16 056,77	

Professional musicians are in the highest percentile of household expenditure according to data from Statista[32]. Of concern, given the number of "veteran" musicians who applied, is the low rate of investment in retirement and pension expenses. At only 3%, this is well below the recommended monthly contribution of 15–17% of monthly income.

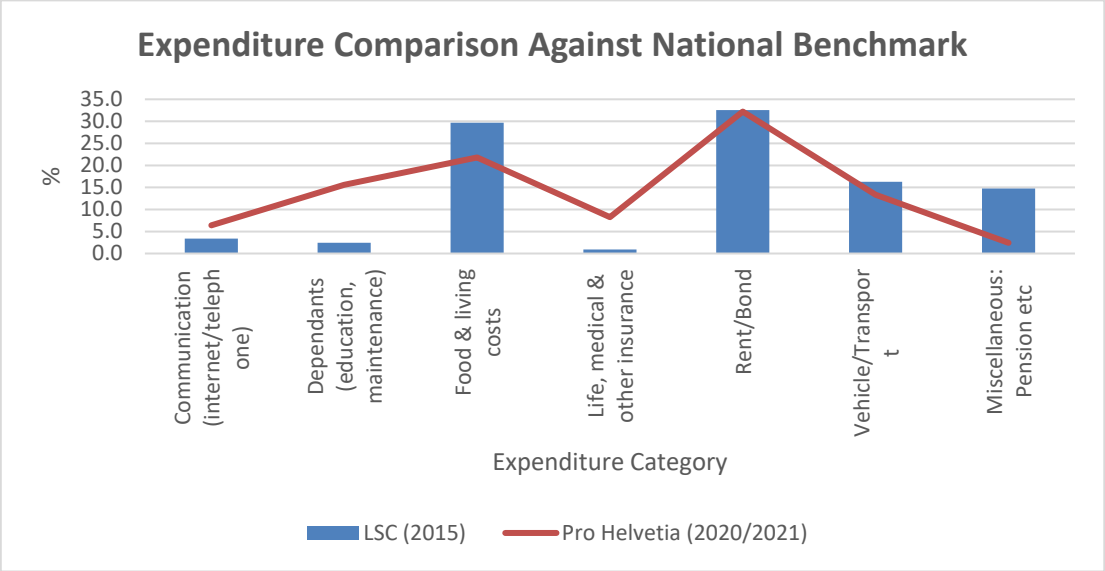
Figure 8: Average monthly expenditure categories: South Africa



[32] Statista (2023) Income and Expenditure Data South Africa: https://www.statista.com/statistics/1116085/monthly-household-expenditure-categories-in-south-africa/

Figure 9: Musicians' spending against average monthly expenditure categories: South Africa

Source: Stats SA Living Conditions Survey (LSC) 2015 (own analysis)



Based on the figures above, prior to COVID-19, grant beneficiaries spent considerably more than these national trends on communication, life, medical and other insurance, and dependants. They also spent considerably less on pension and other related expenses. Expenditure on rental/mortgages and transport is fairly similar to national averages. How specific music-related spending (e.g., rehearsal expenses, instruments, booking administration) factor into these reported figures was explored further in the follow-up survey; the 'communication' (internet/telephone) category is unpacked significantly by those responses.

3.5. Conclusions

This secondary analysis of grant application data has allowed the research team to understand considerably more about the income and expenditure patterns of musicians. In the genre of jazz, musicians with experience have earning potential consistent with average monthly income across the South African economy. As previously noted, this puts them on a par with a mid-ranking technical employee, but without any of the benefits that often form part of a formal wage package, and with substantial upfront but essential working expenses to cover.

The cohort who knew of, applied for, and were awarded a grant from the Jazz Relief Fund represent experienced and often well-reputed musicians; on average, they are likely to be among their profession's higher earners. Yet the qualitative responses to the follow-up survey

(Chapter Four) alluded to desperation and destitution during Covid even among this group. It would thus be unwise to make assumptions based on this data about what situations are like at the lower earnings levels subsumed within that average.

Higher income earners are in Gauteng and related to the experience levels of musicians; relatively high-income earners are based in the Free State and Northern Cape. The bulk of this income is earned through music-related activities, all of which were severely impacted by the pandemic.

Government grant funding increased in the COVID-19 period, but while 30% of recipients did report that COVID-19 relief mechanisms were available to them, the value of these (as low as R6,500 in the case of grants from the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture) could not sustain the livelihoods of most musicians.

Expenditure trends for the sample are fairly consistent with national averages. However, more is spent on communication, dependants and insurance. Of substantial concern is the low level of expenditure (3%) on retirement planning. As previously noted, this is significantly below the recommended 15-17% of monthly income recommended by financial institutions specialising in retirement benefits in South Africa. Our discussions elsewhere of the trade-offs musicians must make to sustain both household and professionalism may have relevance here.

The headline questions emerging from this preliminary analysis stretch wide. They clearly point to a need for far more detailed understanding of musicians' spending patterns, and thus lay the foundations for our Phase Two survey discussed in the next chapter.

Beyond that, these initial data remind us of the continuing questions about low female representation in the industry. We also need to consider whether the preponderance of male veteran respondents/beneficiaries simply reflects the demographics of the studied segment, or whether there may also be questions worth asking in future about effective communication networks in the music community about grants and surveys.

CHAPTER FOUR: LIFE POST COVID - "RECOVERY AND PICKING UP THE PIECES"
Results of the follow-up survey of grant beneficiaries

4.1 Introduction

The data presented in Chapter Three above offers a high-level statistical analysis of anonymised income and expenditure data provided by applicants who received grants from the Jazz Relief Fund in 2020 and 2021. Although it provides extremely useful baseline mapping, it also raised, for the researchers, important questions about nuance, emphasis, recipients' experiences and their spending choices. The subsequent analysis presented in this chapter deepens understanding of these.

This analysis is based on the data from a self-administered voluntary survey circulated online during November 2022 to all successful grant applicants from both the 2020 and 2021 cohorts. The survey aimed to understand the beneficiaries' income and expenditure and their grant application experiences at a level of detail not available from the Phase One data.
Respondents self-selected: first by agreeing to be approached with the e-mail survey instrument; and then by responding.

The core analysis is based on a consistent sample of 374 respondents. However, some questions allowed for multiple responses.

4.2 Demographics

4.2.1 Location: Phase 2 Survey respondents

Respondents from Gauteng represented the largest proportion of the sample (51%), followed by the Western Cape (21%) and KwaZulu-Natal(16%). No respondents from the Northern Cape participated in the survey. Most respondents were based in urban centres, specifically Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, City of Ekurhuleni, Tshwane (Pretoria), Nelson Mandela Bay & Buffalo City (East London).

Relative to the total number of grants awarded provincially, a higher percentage of survey responses were received from Gauteng, KZN, and almost treble (2.7% as opposed to 1%) from North West; a slightly lower percentage from the Western Cape and the Eastern Cape, with similar zero or negligible numbers of responses from other provinces. The two populations are broadly similar in terms of geography, particularly given that some survey respondents (see 4.3.2 below) reported changes in occupation that may also have entailed relocation.

Table 5: Province of survey respondents

Province	Number of respondents	% of respondents
Gauteng	192	51.3%
Western Cape	79	21.1%
KwaZulu-Natal	60	16.0%
Eastern Cape	26	7.0%
North West	10	2.7%
Limpopo	4	1.1%
Free State	2	0.5%
Mpumalanga	1	0.3%
TOTAL	**374**	**100%**

This finding is also consistent with the international research discussed in Chapter One; where location was sought, respondents based in metropolitan areas dominated. This is unsurprising: it reflects the nature of the sample and the predominant urban skewing of performance venues and other music industry hubs. That resources and facilities are so concentrated in urban areas should perhaps be cause for concern, given the widely noted importance of traditional and neo-traditional genres as an inspirational feed for contemporary South African jazz[33].

4.2.2 Gender, age and experience: Phase Two survey respondents

"I feel as a female instrumentalist, especially LGBTQIA+ community, it's very hard getting gigs"

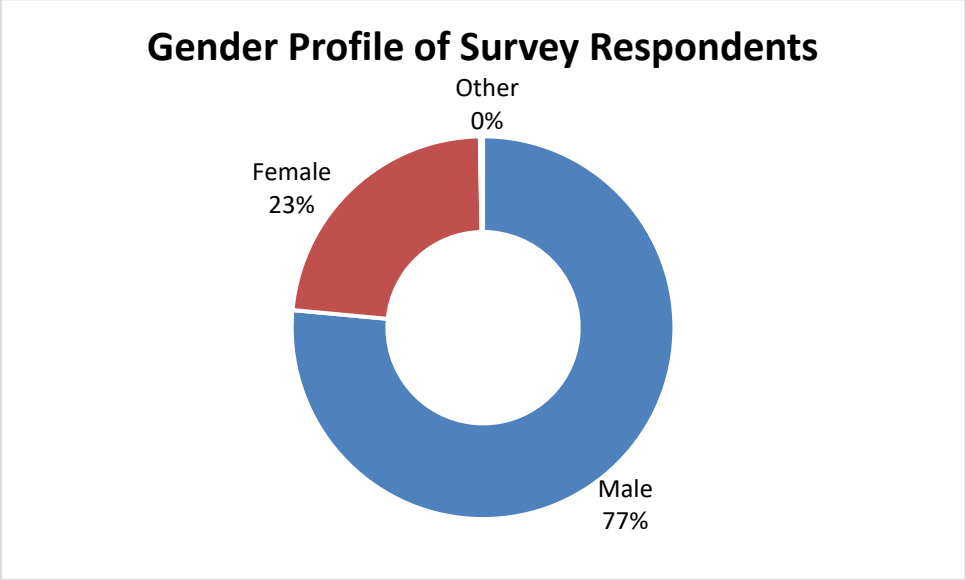
– survey respondent, general comments

Consistent with the first phase of the research, as well as with research in the South African creative industries generally and international research, only a very small portion of survey respondents (23%) were women. The foundational US Artists' Revenue Streams study and the MIRA study both reported around 30% female respondents overall, and only 13% from jazz; the UK Music Creators' Earnings Study, 28% female respondents. MIRA noted that 72% of its female respondents reported instances of discrimination based on their gender, and 67% instances of sexual harassment. The South African MIA study did not disaggregate by gender. The SACO CCI Mapping study reported higher female participation, but for a much larger category of cultural activities (including handicrafts), of which music made up only a small

[33] https://tidal.com/magazine/article/jazz-in-south-africa/1-77540

part. Although this research endeavours to present as much information as possible about the income and expenditure patterns of women musicians to counter a prevalent paucity of information, the size of the sample is not ideal.

Figure 10: Gender profile of survey respondents

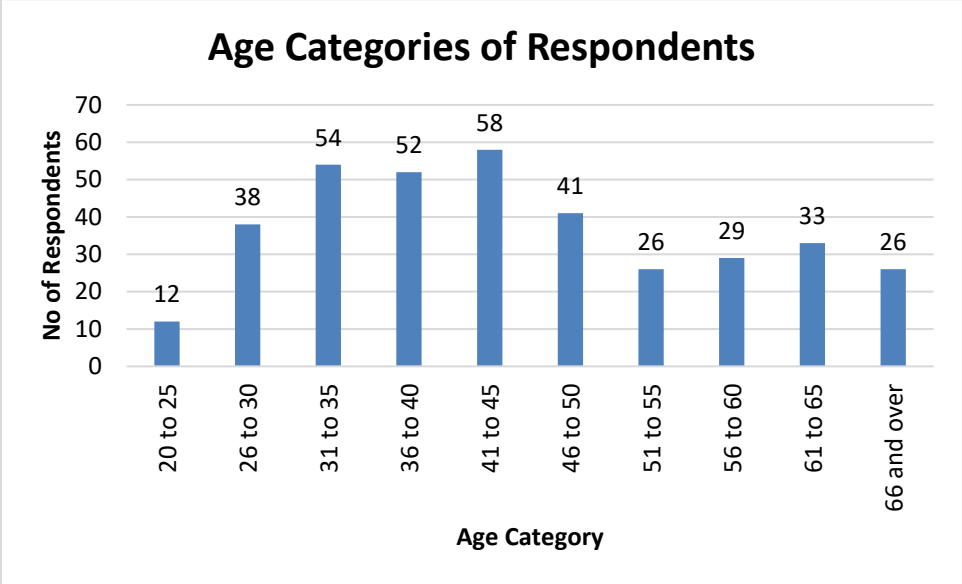


In terms of sexual orientation, 8% of the sample identify as part of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (LGBTIQA+) community, a category which cuts across any binary gender division and thus is not reflected in the table above.

4.2.3 Age and experience: Phase Two survey respondents

In terms of age, 28% of survey respondents were below the age of 35 (the cut-off point for being regarded as "youth" in South Africa) and 24% were over 55 years of age. The largest proportion of the sample (47%) were between the ages of 36 and 54 at the time of taking the survey.

Figure 11: Age profile of survey respondents

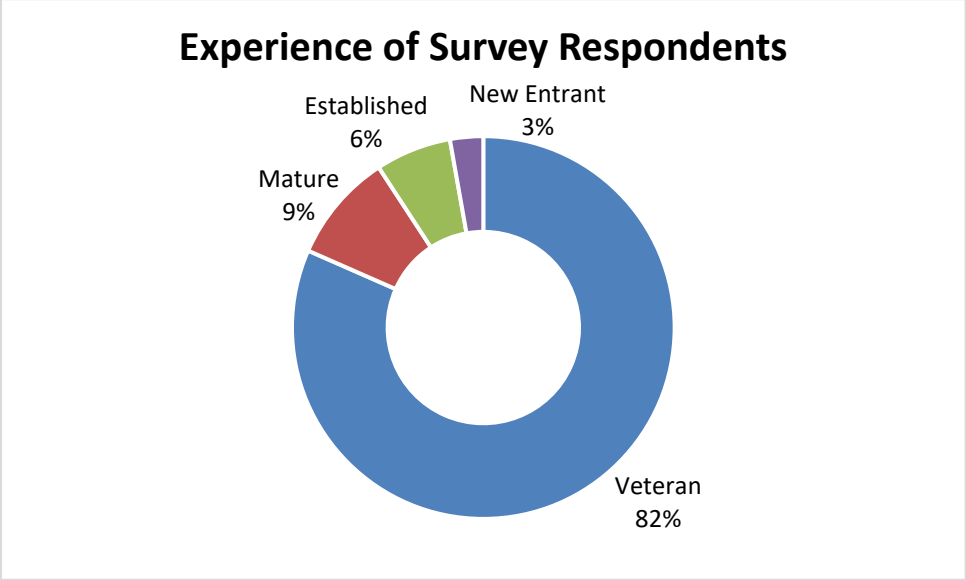


This is again consistent with international research: The Revenue Streams and MIRA study respondent groups both skewed older; the UK Music Creators Earnings study reported 40% of its respondents in the 35-49 category. Clearly 'older', combined with 'more experienced', are likely to skew towards higher income levels. There are also potential future research questions about the integration of younger musicians into the professional networks where information about surveys in circulation is spread – and, in the context of this report, also information about the availability of relief grants. Certainly, all the individual musicians interviewed for Chapter Five made it clear that their networks and acquaintances had been very important in learning about the existence of the fund.

The same categories were used to label the experience levels of musicians as for the analysis of grant applications reported in Chapter Three. A significantly higher percentage of survey respondents to grant applicants (82% as against 68%) were in the category of 'veterans'. Fewer (9% as opposed to 12%) were in the 'mature' category; 6% (as against 5%) were 'established' and 3% (as against 1%) were new entrants.

As a point of comparison, 71% of respondents to the UK Music Creators' Earnings survey had eight years of experience or more.

Figure 12: Level of experience of survey respondents



4.3 Income

4.3.1 Income streams: Phase Two survey respondents

In the sections that follow, we spotlight the genres in which all respondents are active and the changes in income generated from music between 2019 and 2021, as well as the role of women in specific music activities. Survey responses added an important longitudinal dimension to the earnings landscape mapped via the grant recipients' application data, and considerable nuance.

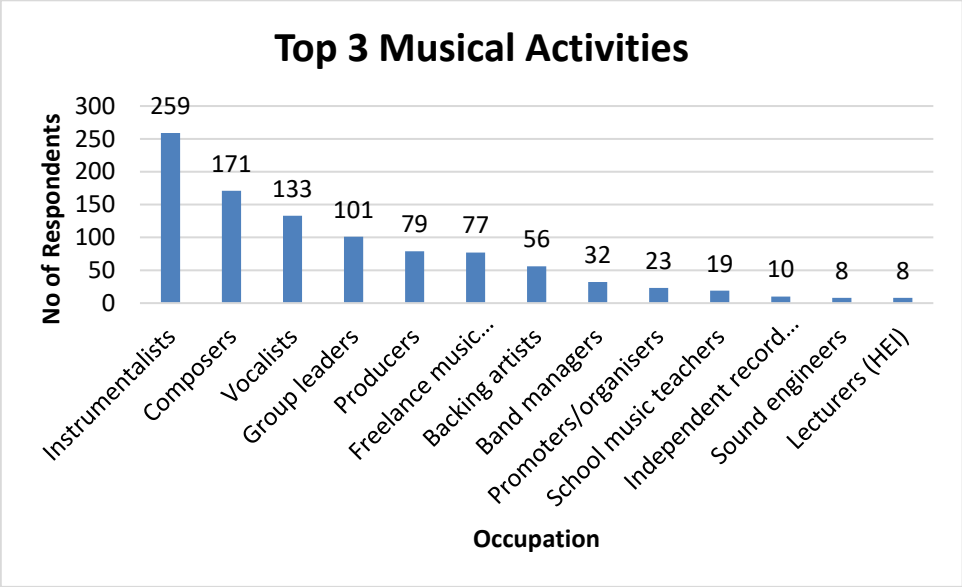
4.3.2 Musical activities and performance genres: Phase Two survey respondents

Survey respondents generate their income predominantly through performance activities. The bulk of the sample named activities relating to instrumental and vocal performance and ensemble leadership as their main income-generating activities. Eighteen percent of the sample described generating income through composition. Teaching was also relatively significant, with 10% of respondents indicating that they earned income from freelance teaching, or teaching in schools or higher education institutions (HEIs).

This is consonant with all the international studies cited, where live performance was the single largest source of revenue pre-Covid. For example, live performance was reported as 57% of revenue in the Revenue Streams study, comprising 28% gigging, 19% regular waged playing (e.g., residency or orchestral job) and 10% session work. The Revenue Streams study

also disaggregated genre, and for jazz musicians the percentage of income provided by gigging was higher, at 37%.

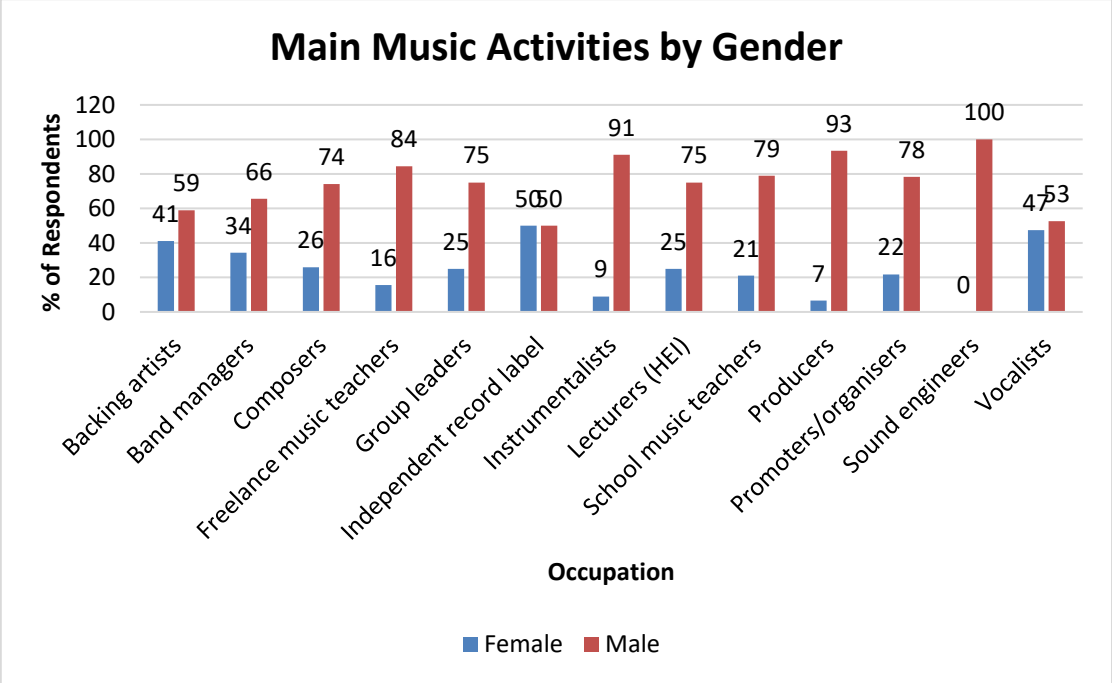
Figure 13: Top 3 income-generating music activities



4.3.3 Gendered division of labour: Phase Two survey respondents

Unsurprisingly, a deeply gendered division of labour emerges from the survey. As noted and discussed earlier, men dominated the sample overall. What the more detailed question items in this survey foregrounded was how women were particularly underrepresented in composition and instrumental activities, as well as leadership activities such as group leadership, production and promotion. Women were better represented in vocal and backing artist roles, where the bulk of women who responded to this survey find their economic opportunities. No female participants indicated involvement in sound engineering as a professional activity.

Figure 14: Top 3 income earning activities by gender



4.3.4 Roles in relation to experience: Phase Two survey respondents

New entrants to music are mainly performers, with musicians having 3 or more years of experience in the industry better represented in the other roles. Mature and veteran artists dominate teaching activities, particularly freelance and school-based teaching. Leadership activities such as producer, group leader and band manager are mainly undertaken by veteran artists and, overwhelmingly, composition is dominated by veteran artists.

Table 6: Musical activities of survey respondents by level of experience

Musical Activity	Level of Experience (No of respondents)			
	New Entrant	Established	Mature	Veteran
Instrumentalists	7	14	24	214
Vocalists	4	13	20	106
Group leaders	3	5	6	87
Backing artists	3	5	4	44
Promoters/organisers	1	1	4	17
Band managers		5	2	25
Producers	1	1	6	68
Composers	4	14	17	136
Independent record labels	2			8
Sound engineers			1	7
Freelance music teachers	3	5	10	59
School music teachers			4	15
Lecturers (HEI)			2	6

4.3.5 Primary and secondary genre affiliations: Phase Two survey respondents

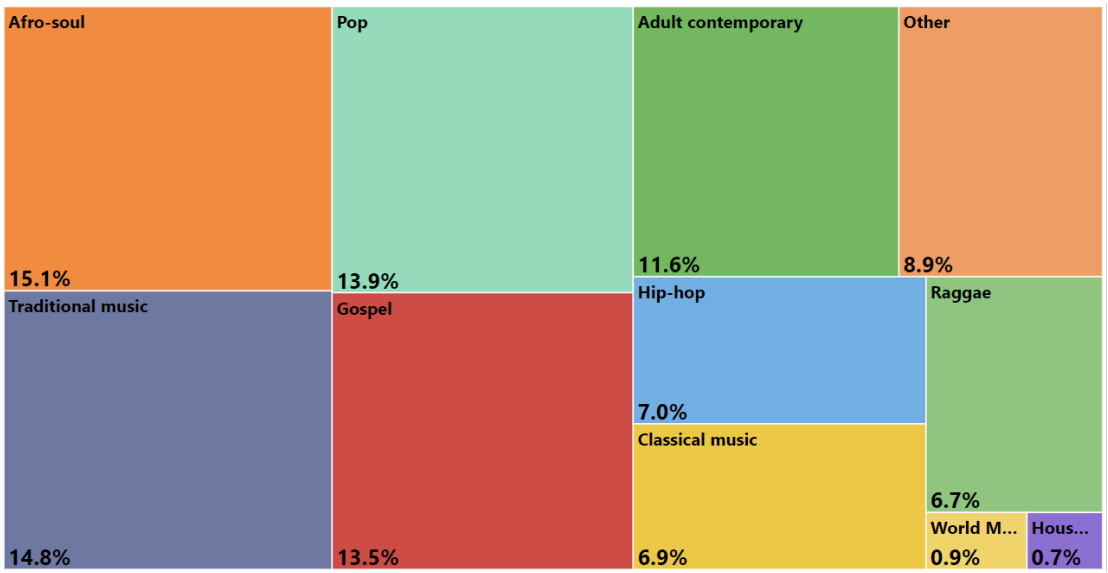
Similar to the international findings discussed earlier, 91% of survey respondents reported that as well as their primary affiliation to jazz, they work across other genres; only 9% identified themselves as working exclusively in jazz. In the individual interviews, some musicians suggested that 'jazz' was a limiting category for the breadth of their work.

Since there is no set of music genre definitions agreed by South African music researchers, the boundaries of any individual genre category may be viewed as permeable. However, what emerges clearly is the diversity of additional genres.

The majority reported work in:

- Afro-soul (15,1%)
- Traditional music (14.8%)
- Pop (13.9%)
- Gospel (13.5%)
- Adult contemporary (11.6%)
- Other (8.9%)
- Hip-Hop (7%)
- Classical Music (6.9%)
- Reggae (6.7%)

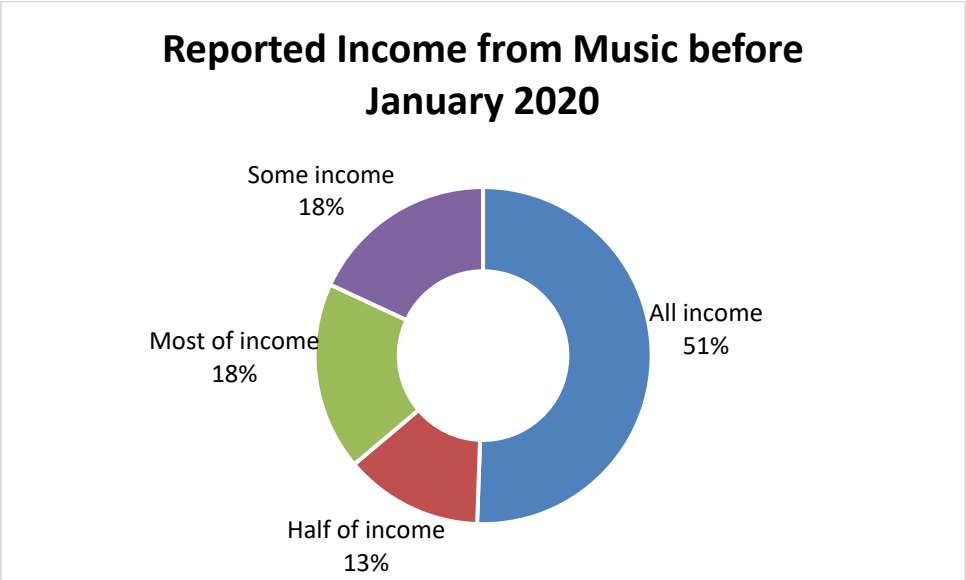
Figure 15: Genres of music additional to jazz in which survey respondents are active



4.3.6 Income from music versus non-music activity: Phase Two survey respondents

Overall, 69% of survey respondents indicated that they earned most or all their income from music-related activities. A further 13% indicated making half of their income from music, while 18% of the sample reported making only "some income" from music.

Figure 16: Reported income from music prior to Jan 2020



4.4 Income stream changes and earnings recovery

4.4.1 Slow pace of earnings recovery: Phase Two survey respondents

Reporting on recovery in 2022, just under one third of survey respondents reported better earnings than in the first half of 2021. The 2022 recovery was, however, rather slower than anticipated, with 45% reporting they had earned the same or worse than in January to June 2021, and 10% that they had earned no income at all in the first part of 2022. Given that the COVID-19 prevention protocols in South Africa remained in place until June 2022, with considerable restrictions on gatherings and live events, this is to be expected. Although the official National State of Disaster ended in April 2022, specific restrictions remained in place until the regulations under the Health Act restricting live events and mandating mask-wearing were repealed on 23 June 2022.

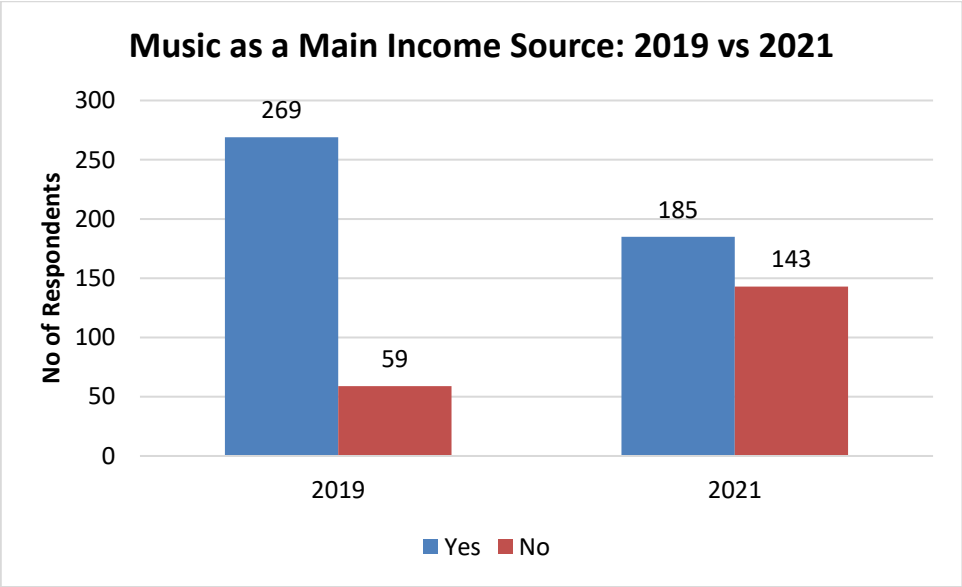
Table 7: Recovery of income, 2021

Music income reflection from January to June 2022	%
My earnings so far are slightly better than in January-June 2021	32
My earnings so far are worse than they were in January-June 2021	24

My earnings so far are about the same as they were in January-June 2021	22
My earnings so far are much better than they were in January-June 2021	12
I have earned nothing so far this year	10

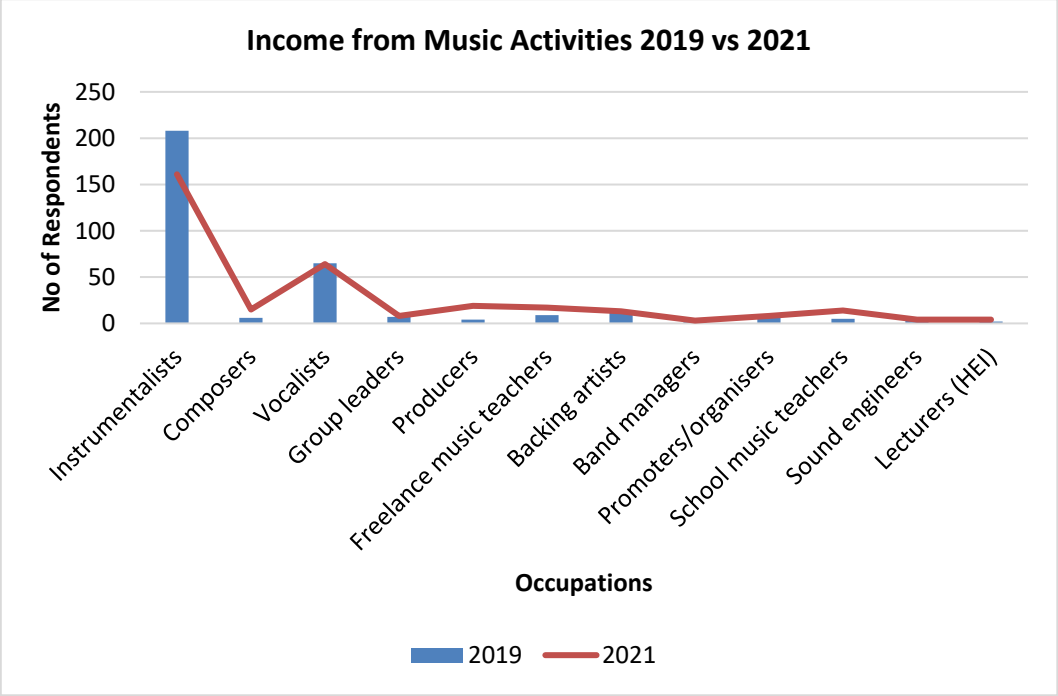
Of substantial concern is the number of respondents reporting that in 2021 music was no longer their main source of income - a decline of 31% between 2019 and 2021.

Figure 16: Changes in music as survey respondents' main income source, 2019 vs 2021



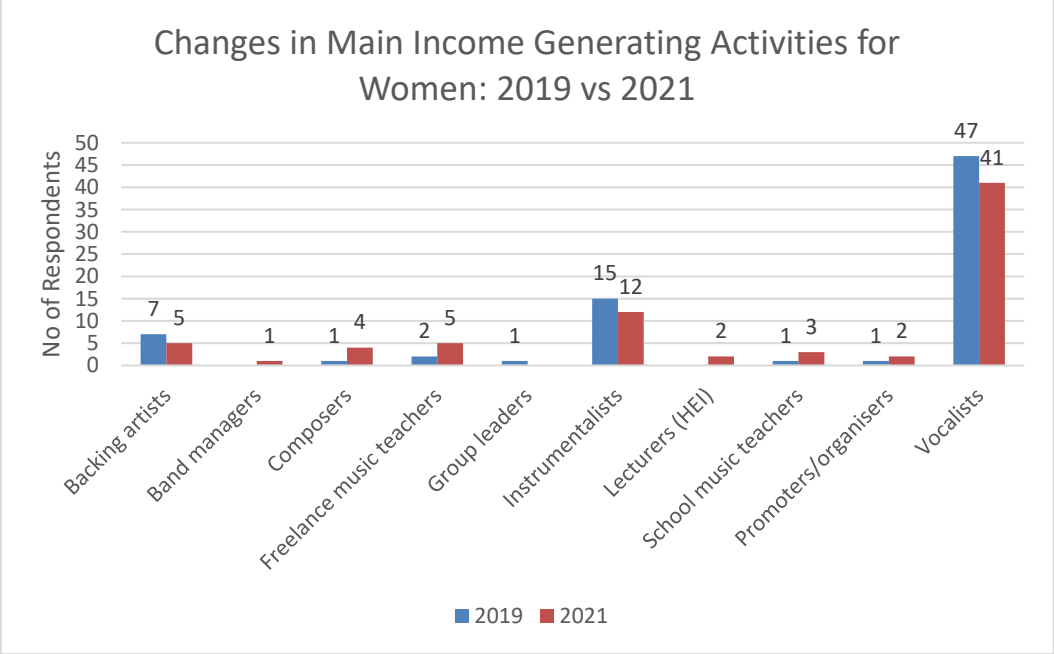
Between 2019 and 2021, there was a substantial decline in the number of musicians earning their main income from instrumental activities. A consistent number continued to earn their main income as vocalists or backing vocalists. While only representing a small absolute number, there was a marked increase in respondents earning their main income from music education activities, including as music teachers, freelance or in schools.

Figure 17: Reported income from music activities: 2019 vs 2021



The experience of women between 2019 and 2021 shows losses in the areas of instrumental, backing artist and vocal activities, with small but significant increases in the numbers of women taking up teaching as freelance music teachers and in schools.

Figure 18: Change in main income generating activity: women survey respondents: 2019 vs 2021



4.4.2 Career pivots

66% of respondents reported making changes to increase their income between 2020 and 2021, adopting the following strategies:

- Started teaching (17%)
- Started working in different genres (16%)
- Created new partnerships (14%)
- Started working outside the music sector (11%)
- Spent more time promoting activities (11%)
- Acquired new skills (7%)

Other strategies included initiating new music-related activities, relocating to places with better opportunities, posting music online, and selling their equipment. (This last may be causative for some of those cited above who are working less as instrumentalists or leaving the industry altogether, and for those reporting earning nothing from music.)

Responses to the open items further detailed the range of strategies that artists were employing to cope with rising costs. As well as leveraging professional and personal relationships, musicians have educated themselves, changed their music formats, moved to more affordable (but more distant) locations, and more. Such efforts meet with varied results. Despite positive actions, not all the stories have happy endings:

"I have mostly been gigging alone as a loop artist and DJ (which I learned to do during lockdown so I haven't had to pay other musicians.) But transport costs have doubled since 2020 and that affects everything pricewise."

"I try being productive by busking, which is off the grid and my personal musical angle to perform at large and generate tips to support my son, 18 (Grade 11). Busking is hard, with the weather, or guards chasing me away."

"This hiring of instruments is the most expensive exercise, especially when the gig is not even paying good money. It leaves us with peanuts which lasts only two days or so. Remember, these gigs come only once in a blue moon. But we do it just for the love of music."

4.5 Expenditure

The expenditure information collected from both grant applications and survey responses is a particularly novel aspect of this research. Spending is the most incompletely documented

aspect of music income research, both in South Africa and internationally. Yet an understanding of expenditure needs is vital information for both grant-makers and policy-makers.

4.5.1 Main music-related expense categories: Phase Two survey respondents

Looking back at 2019, respondents identified the following as their main music expenses:

- Transport to gigs and rehearsals (23%)
- Paying other musicians (18%)
- Purchasing and upkeep of instruments (13%)
- Securing rehearsal space (10%)
- Music-related communication costs (7%)
- Music education for self-development (6%)
- Instrument hire (6%)

Other expenses reported include securing studio time (5%), promotion/marketing (5%), venue hire (4%), producing CDs or DVDs of music (3%) and paying technicians (1%).

Responses to open items in the survey follow a similar but not identical pattern. In order, the greatest impact from cost escalation was ascribed to:

- Transport and fuel costs
- Purchase and maintenance of music equipment and supplies (Interestingly, many respondents named data as part of this discussion, indicating the extent to which digital activity is now integral to a music career.)
- Studio/rehearsal space costs (hire, equipment hire, technical services and catering for those involved) and paying band members received equal numbers of mentions
- Costs of promotional activities and venue booking costs received equal numbers of mentions
- Self-education

As two examples, survey respondents noted:

"Staying where I stay in the Vaal comes with its own costs petrol-wise, and then there's that constant need to have internet/data."

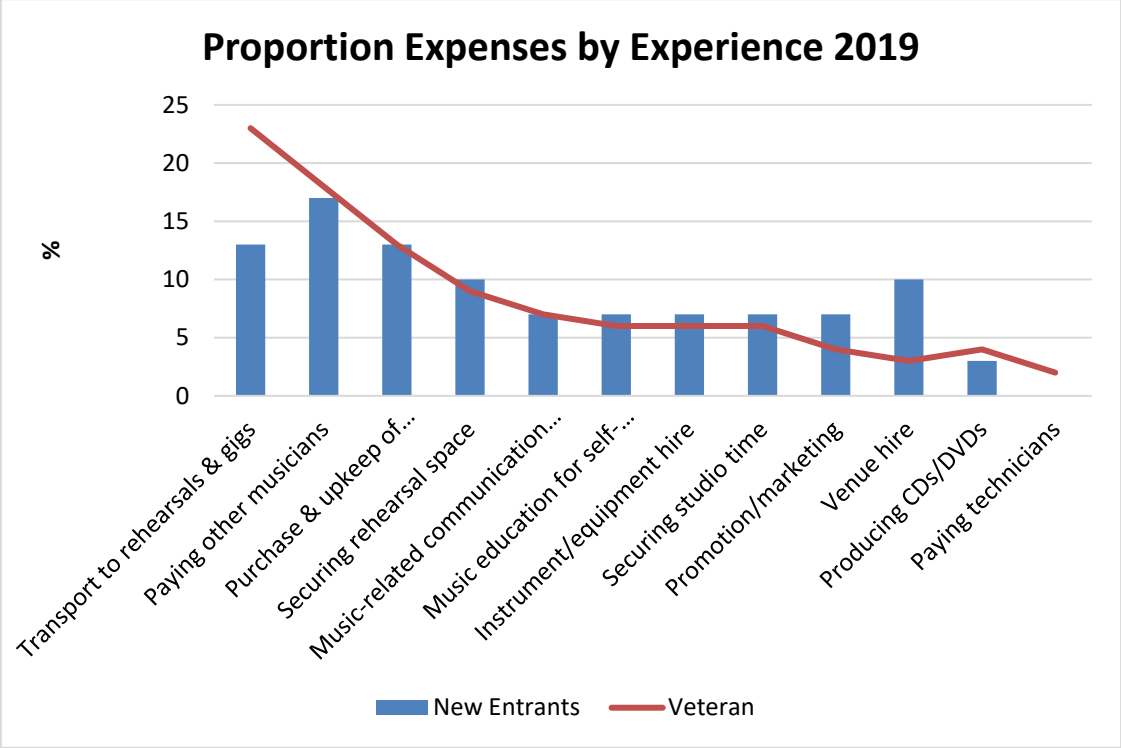
"Post-Covid, the level of interaction/operation is more online, and technology being a way forward more than ever before. Staying online is the only way. Data costs in South Africa are ridiculous!"

This item focuses exclusively on music-related costs, excluding the categories of family and household expenses that were the focus of the Phase One grant application data. The resulting illuminating detail allows the research to nuance the categories of communication and transport, on which much music career activity depends. These categories may form one element eroding the amount available for retirement and pension expenses, on which the survey population under-performs.

4.5.2 Expenditure needs at different experience levels: Phase Two survey respondents

Levels of experience gave rise to marked variations in the expenditure profiles of the survey respondents. New entrants spend proportionally more on venue hire and promotion and marketing activities. (One open response mentioned "paying to get my music played on radio"; did payola – long illegal in South Africa – enjoy a resurgence during Covid?) By contrast, veteran artists spend more on transportation to rehearsals and gigs, paying technicians and producing CDs or DVDs, and proportionately less on venue hire, promotion and marketing activities and securing studio time. This is not surprising: more established artists may already enjoy a higher promotional profile, as well as a network of established professional relationships with service providers.

Figure 19: Proportion of expenses by level of experience in 2019



78% of respondents indicated that there were no expenditure decreases in most major costs between 2019 and 2022: "Nothing has gone down" or "Everything has gone up". In 2022, respondents indicated that the following costs had increased:

- Transport to rehearsals and gigs (27%)
- Paying other musicians (16%)
- Purchasing and upkeep of instruments (13%)
- Venue hire (9%)
- Securing rehearsal space (8%)
- Instrument/equipment hire (5%)
- Music-related data and communication costs (5%)

The increases reported by survey respondents were consistent across all provinces and locations.

4.5.3 A 'cost of working crisis': Phase Two open responses

The UK Help Musicians[34] charity's characterisation of a "cost of working crisis" is equally applicable to South Africa. Further, the way costs impact on artists at different stages of their careers has a very real developmental impact: when certain costs become unaffordable, career growth stalls.

[34] https://mixmag.net/read/musicians-earn-nothing-post-lockdown-one-third-news

The heavier impact of transportation expenditure for experienced artists relates to this group having more national and international touring commitments. New entrants are more likely to play smaller, local venues. What the qualitative responses revealed, however, is that smaller local venues reopened at a slower pace, if at all. It was venues in more affluent areas that now had work available, distant from musicians often living in lower-income areas, as our respondents noted:

"Due to the rapid increase of fuel prices, driving to gigs have become a bit more expensive, especially when living in Cape town. Most corporate gigs are out in the winelands."
"Gigs are now not as close as before. Only upper-class places such as Ballito/ Umhlanga have the hotels and venues to cope. Other places include the [KZN] Midlands for wedding functions, which are no less than 300km per gig."

Respondents report the same about rehearsal spaces: the better-resourced have survived, and these are in central business districts and have their own increased overhead and upkeep costs to cover. One respondent noted the need to pay for a rehearsal space "with their own back-up power" because of loadshedding; another found their rehearsal space lacking equipment that they were expected to bring, "but which I do not have."

"...musicians have sold their equipment to make ends meet, putting a strain on rental [costs]"
"The price of fuel has impacted negatively on my expenses in a way that I cannot just say yes to any gig as I would be spending more to get to rehearsals and the actual gig [than I would earn]."
" Most of the musicians I used to play with passed away due to Covid -19 and we had a good working relationship together, so I had to look for other musicians to play with and that costs more because...they work as freelancers."

4.5.4 The relationship of costs to experience and impact on career growth

Where expenditure is proportionately less, veteran musicians are often able to leverage networks and relationships in the music industry to secure more favourable rates for venue hire or make performance arrangements where no hire fee is required. The value of relationships among the community of practice that is music was a recurring theme in the open answers, from the most personal ("I could not manage but my sister buys me airtime")

to the broader and industry-related: longstanding connection with venues and instrument suppliers ("Because of the relationships we have formed for the past many years it's not really hard to negotiate"), and band members who have become old friends offering their homes as rehearsal spaces.

Not all relationships are so supportive. Respondents noted that in an inflationary period, many venues still offer the same fees which now must stretch much further. Some "clients say they now cannot pay a full band."

Longer exposure in music may lead to less spending on marketing and promotion: musicians with known names require less investment to gain notice. However, becoming better-known can be a double-edged sword; there are expectations that a known musician will also employ better-known support players (who command higher fees), produce better-quality recordings and videos (which require more technical assistance or upgraded equipment), and more. If they cannot do this, their careers stop expanding. This was another recurring theme in the open responses:

"The level where my career is requires me to pay session musicians better because I have just released an album and am beginning to play bigger stages."

"Music gear is now costing me more with the need to upgrade and improve my sound now I am recording and doing live gigs."

4.5.5 An interconnected ecosystem with multiplier effects

The open responses included frequent and sympathetic acknowledgments of the needs of fellow players, venues, studios and more to "make up for" Covid losses in various ways, which made respondents – if they were able – willing to pay more. Additionally, other earlier research has noted that what musicians spend has an important multiplier effect; it creates income for transport workers, for attire makers, caterers and many more[35]. When musicians cannot afford these costs, other sectors – creative and non-creative – also feel the sting.

[35] Ansell & Barnard, 2013 at https://journals.co.za/doi/10.10520/EJC149601

4.6 Local and international comparisons

The expenditure categories described by our sample closely parallel those described in both extensive journalistic coverage[36] and extant research in South Africa and elsewhere in the world.

The MIA South African study[37], as discussed above, employs its own distinct set of revenue stream categories not directly comparable with this study. It presents a very useful breakdown not only of the financial investment required by each revenue stream, but the time investment too. In the one category directly comparable with our dataset – live performance – the MIA researchers estimate that $282 and 80 hours need to be spent for every $737 earned from a live show.

4.6.1 Time and opportunity cost

Although such time – and so opportunity – costs did not form part of our inquiry, it presents an important lacuna for future study, since what differentiates music performance from many other types of work that may appear to have similar revenue levels (contained in that 'national average wage', for example) is the amount of unpaid time required in practice and rehearsal to sustain and enhance skills and thus employability. The opportunity costs of practice and rehearsal are borne in addition to the absolute costs our respondents cite and, of course, reduce the time available for any other supplementary paid work. The US MIRA study[38], whose focus was musicians' wellbeing, estimated that a week with four hours' paid performance could entail up to five hours spent in related travel (to rehearsal as well as shows), and four hours in composing/arranging-related work. 61% of MIRA's respondents, two years before Covid, reported that their income, even when augmented by additional non-music work (in some instances contributing up to 30%), remained insufficient.

[36] e.g. https://indieconnect.com/real-costs-successful-musician-indie-artist/ ; https://www.theunsignedguide.com/blog/466-the-results-are-in-whats-the-cost-of-being-a-musician

[37] Music in Africa Foundation 2022 op cit

[38] MIRA 2018 op cit

In this context, the UK Music Creators' Earnings survey[39] noted that 44% of its respondents reported spending more on their careers than they earned, although this percentage dropped to a (still very substantial) 33% for those whose sole source of earnings was music.

The UK Help Musicians survey, also conducted in November 2022, provides the closest earning and expenditure information to this research. Its respondents also felt hardest-hit by the rising costs of energy, fuel and transport, in a profession where mobility is essential. 60% of those respondents reported earning less in 2022 than in 2021; 80% of them, less than before the pandemic.

4.7 Perspectives and impacts

4.7.1 Music career expectations

The bulk of survey respondents are pessimistic about their future careers in the music industry, with 45% reporting themselves as "somewhat" or "extremely pessimistic" about their futures. However, 36% of respondents are "hopeful" and 25% of the total sample "extremely positive" about their future. Close to a fifth (19%) declared themselves neutral. (By contrast, the Phase Three individual interviewees expressed markedly higher levels of optimism; this may be related to their more prominent professional profiles.)

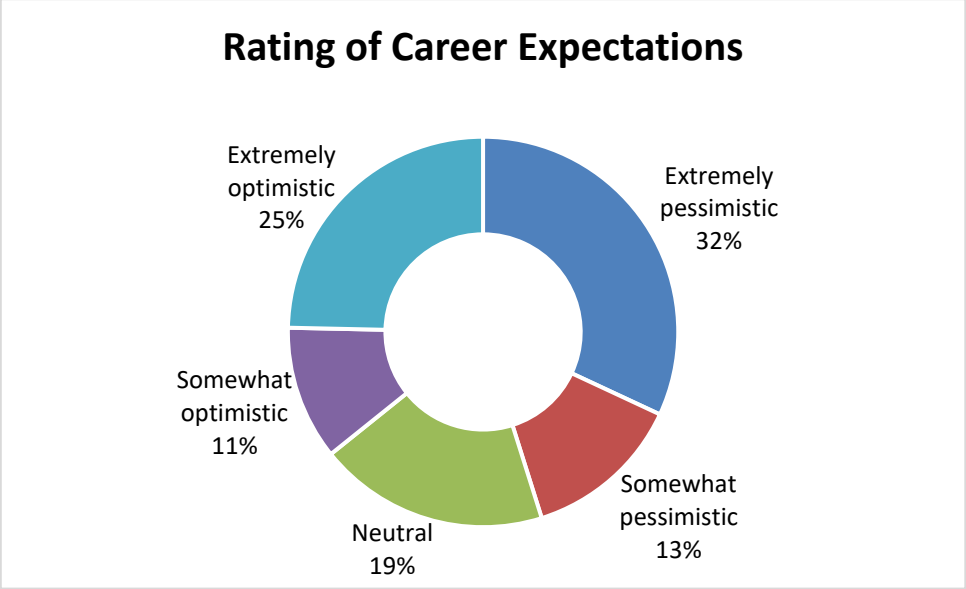
The pessimism is consonant with a survey of 525 artists conducted by the UK charity, Help Musicians, in November 2022[40]. 50% of that survey population reported being "extremely or very concerned" that they would have to leave the industry, with 60% earning less than a year previous, and 80% less than even before the pandemic. While there are UK-specific contextual reasons for some of this pessimism (including the increased difficulty of touring in Europe post-Brexit[41]), some of the key escalating expenses cited by UK musicians are the same as those discussed in relation to South African jazz players above – precisely the expenses that Help Musicians describe as creating the "cost of working crisis".

[39] UK Govt 2019 op. cit

[40] https://www.theguardian.com/music/2022/nov/14/report-finds-98-per-cent-music-makers-concerned-costs-help-musicians

[41] https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/brexit-uk-musicians-eu-tour-b2407129.html

Figure 20: Respondent ratings of career expectations



4.8 The Jazz Relief Fund grant-making process: recipients' assessment

As a final question, respondents were asked to rate their experiences of the application process using a 5-point scale based on:

- Adequacy of the support provided;
- Relevance to the respondents' circumstances;
- Trustworthiness of the process;
- Ease of the application process;
- How far an attitude of trust was displayed towards the applicant; and
- Turnaround time for applications.

Overall, the responses were overwhelmingly positive with ratings of 5 predominant across all categories. Only 11 respondents indicated that their experience of the process was negative.

Where respondents did indicate dissatisfaction with the process it was related to:

- The adequacy of the support provided (27%)
- The ease of the application process (27%)
- Turnaround times (27%)

Neutral experiences were reported mainly relating to the adequacy of the support (36%), the relevance of the support to the circumstances of the applicant (33%), and to a lesser degree, turnaround time (14%).

Figure 21a: Rating of application process by survey respondents

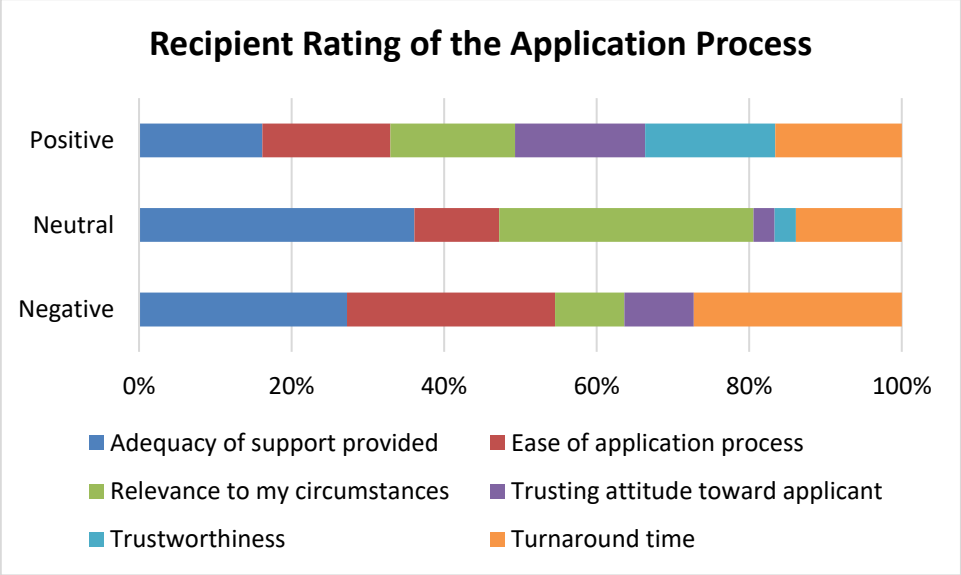
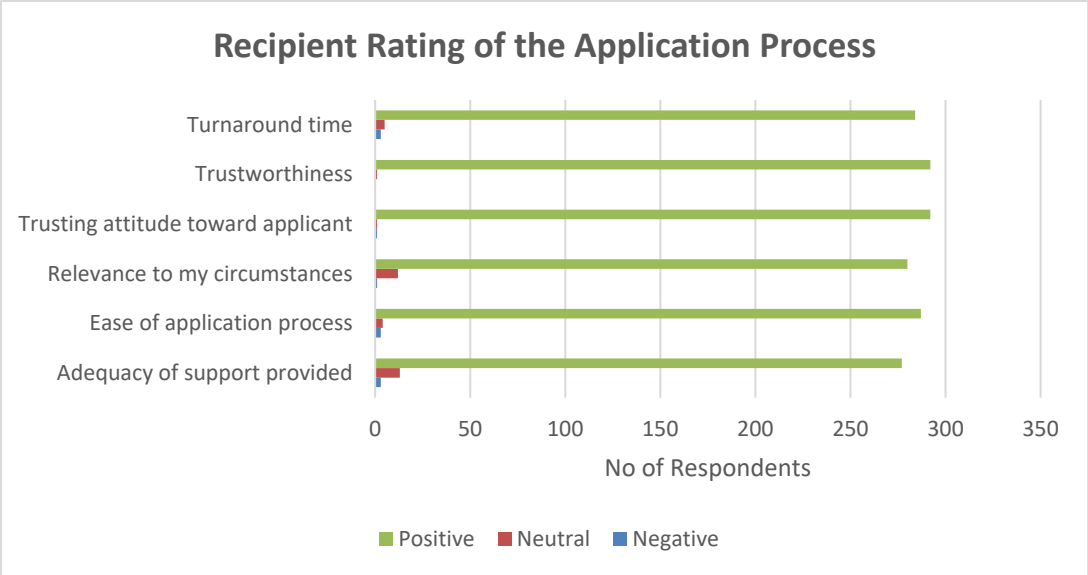


Figure 21b: Rating of application process by survey respondents



4.8.1: Impact on recipients' lives

"In Zulu we say Izandla Zidlula Ekhanda, meaning the highest form of respect and honour. Thank you" (respondent)

The follow-up survey gave respondents spaces for anything additional they wished to say about any topics in the survey, with one such space following directly the question evaluating the relief grant. Slightly under half of all survey respondents took up this option, as shown in Table 8 below. This section draws its observations from those extended open comments,

which were full, articulate and frank. However, it should be borne in mind that those who chose to comment represent only 9% of all those who received a grant from the Jazz Relief Fund.

Table 8: Open comments on the survey form

CATEGORY OF OPEN COMMENT	% OF RESPONSES
No open comments	54
Simple thanks and/or clasped hands emoji or similar	21
Direct requests for more funding	7
Extended comments on the grant	18

Figure 22: WordCloud of dominant themes and terms: Relief Grant open responses

4.8.2 Dominant themes

The terms recurring most frequently in survey respondents' open responses about the impact of the grant were "saved" and "survived". These were used straightforwardly: "You literally saved me"; "You saved our family"; "I/we couldn't have survived without..."

Four dominant content themes emerged from coding of the open responses. These were:

- Career development and learnings from the Covid period;
- Impact on family and household survival;
- Impact on mental health; and
- Impact of the grant process and the implicit open and benevolent attitude of the grant-givers

4.8.3 Career growth and learning

20 responses discussed this aspect. The learnings and career steps described were diverse and varied: it is worth citing them all.

- *I have managed to book a studio, produce a few tracks and release them online*
- *Being a recipient of the grant (...) has changed my mindset and motivated me to work harder*
- *I moved to a place where rental was lower, with (...) a massive increase in output of my recorded work online*
- *The studio costs have gone down for me as I managed to buy some studio recording equipment. I can hire the studio to record rhythm section...and the rest I can record and do the final mixes and even mastering at home."*
- *I am planning to move my music and art project elsewhere*
- *[The grant] helped me to perfect my craft without having to worry about the bills*
- *I am able to continue my career without having to look for work outside my field*
- *The grant allowed me time to recalibrate my professional practice*
- *I was able to use some of that money to start and grow an online [music teaching] business during the pandemic (...) today I have teachers who teach other instruments*
- *[With the fund] I was able to recover my passion for jazz while my livelihood was improving*
- *Having the grant taught me a lot about planning and opening myself up to other music opportunities*
- *Your funds helped a lot in organising and hiring the venue and payments in the studio and I have learned a lot*
- *Going through Covid has caused a lot of musicians like myself to become less dependent on promoters and record companies and grow to creating our own events*
- *The funding assisted me to purchase data to access the literature and have regular Zoom sessions with my supervisor ...[and accomplish]...an important self-development goal (Masters degree in Music)*

- *Part of the relief fund was used to build a stage in our garden to host live music*
- *We were able to play music, hire equipment and stage small concert events, pay other musicians and put food on the table*
- *Your assistance has triggered a deep conversation amongst creatives about how support for the arts in our country can yield a better society...these lessons can change mindsets*
- *It helped ...my band members to survive and kept me hopeful (...) I volunteered to teach music to the youth as healing and am working on a proposal to teach music extra-mural at nearby schools*
- *[Your support] has taught me to be kind and supportive to other people who need help irrespective of whether I know the person or not*

4.8.4 Family and household survival

Aspects of family and household survival were mentioned explicitly by 15 responses – "feed my family"; "put food on the table"; "pay household bills and rent" are typical references. As examples:

- *"It saved me from total financial ruin. I certainly would not have been able to keep my house. I honestly have no words to explain my gratitude and that of my family"*
- *"I was able to feed my kids, take them to school, buy uniforms, pay for my bills..."*
- *"I got divorced due to my poor earnings and it would have happened sooner had I not received help from your organisation"*
- *"With the money I managed to care for my diabetic husband whom I ended up losing on Jan 1 2022 due to Covid. The money helped in getting medication for him..."*

4.8.5 Mental health

Almost as many responses (13) as those on family and household survival mentioned the psychological impact of Covid-related enforced inactivity. About half of these stated or implied that the grant had mitigated what they called "depression" or "anxiety". But for some others, the stress persists. Support for the mental health impacts of music as a highly precarious profession is a need that remains even after Covid has waned.

- *"Were it not for the [Jazz Relief Fund] I would not have made it. Now, as an older musician who has health issues and very few gigs, without another income source I literally have to live from month to month with the occasional handout. Suicide seems a very viable option."*

4.8.6 Interacting with the grant-makers

Nineteen survey responses mentioned the attitude of the grant-makers and the ease and efficiency of applications in strongly positive terms, almost equalling the 20 responses discussing career development and learnings. The Fund administrator was thanked by name by several. Several unfavourable comparisons with the slow, bureaucratic and inappropriate grant procedures of other funders ("red tape", "longwinded applications...") were drawn.

Grant-makers might learn from this by applying Plain Language principles consistently to grant information and forms, and by ensuring front-line personnel receive support in engaging supportively with applicants. This selection of examples indicates how important to an applicant this affective aspect can be.

- *"Your Fund [made musicians feel] like a normal working class"*
- *"Incredible to know there was an organisation out there who genuinely cares..."*
- *"You responded so fast when I really needed you"*
- *"...the ease and benevolence with which it was given..."*
- *"It is open and trustworthy "*
- *"More than just a relief fund but love in action to all of us"*
- *"Your application forms were very simple and straightforward. Turnaround time...was quick"*
- *"Understanding, respect...and help..."*
- *"Thank you very much for your kindness and humanity."*

4.9 Conclusions

As has been noted in earlier Chapters, this Phase Two voluntary survey data came from a majority-male, largely above-35, cohort. Unsurprisingly, the data demonstrated that greater age and experience levels correlated positively with higher income. Like their international counterparts, respondents reported earning much of their income from music, with live performance the largest contributor, and across a diverse range of genres in addition to their main jazz affiliation.

However, a marked drop in the proportion of income earned from music between the pre- and post-Covid years was reported. This is despite most respondents also reporting making changes in and innovations to their music-related activities (in mix, balance and type) to cope with changed circumstances.

In terms of musicians' expenditure, mobility/transport consistently emerged as the most significant cost, even in a context where rising costs prevailed more universally. Among other music-related costs, data is now firmly established as a music-related cost, indicating that this cohort have (to greater or lesser extents) pivoted to digital-reliant activities as part of their Covid adjustment strategies.

Respondents reported changes in their balance of spending related to their age-group: older artists spent more on organisational activities related to gigging; younger artists on promotion. Respondents generally acknowledged that the hub resources they drew on –

recording studios, rehearsal spaces and more – also experienced challenges to survival during Covid. The more expensive and centrally situated were, in the main, the ones that survived and this also impacted on costs.

As well as the "cost of working" crisis all this and more created for musicians, there was also a "cost of career development" crisis. To grow a professional profile further, younger artists faced increased costs on recording quality, different backing bands, and an expanded number and range of performance venues. Accessing these, however, demanded financial and professional network resources that younger performers might not yet have.

The reports of spending underlined one main way in which music is not like many other employments, even if musicians' reported take-home earnings place them in the same Stats SA bands. There is a significant amount of wholly unpaid preparatory work – practice, rehearsal, instrument maintenance - with associated overheads that musicians wishing to maintain or advance their music cannot evade. Substantial time and opportunity cost as well as financial costs are integral to a music career.

Because the music industry functions as an interconnected network, where spending (or not spending) by one role-player has a multiplier effect, such difficulties do not only impact on the individuals reporting them. All such factors contribute to the growing career pessimism the responses reported.

Respondents provided largely positive feedback concerning their experience of the Jazz Relief Fund against practical benchmarks such as speed, ease of application process and adequacy of amounts. The qualitative responses focused on additional positive dimensions: the redemptive power of having money to keep a household together while also sustaining career development, the mental-health impact of both Covid devastation and survival funding, and simply, what it meant in emotional terms for their efforts and losses to be met with trust, respect and an absence of demeaning stereotypes. As one respondent phrased it: "We were treated like a normal working class."

Mobility still looms largest for all the artists we spoke to individually: the costs of getting to gigs, of touring or to collaborate with artists in another town – even to find a specialist instrument-repairer. Shane Cooper provides a nuanced account of the psychological impact of Covid: not merely the loss of work, but the loss of purpose, direction, and connection and the "manic" but unstructured attempts to put alternatives in place. All the musicians, and particularly Cooper and Thandi Ntuli, recall with affection the punctuality and reliability of the Jazz Relief Fund as contributing to some kind of counterbalancing "peace of mind" that supported and enhanced musical creativity. Zodwa Mabena underlines the network of community connections and expectations that had to be maintained, and finds common ground with Sakhile Simani around the constant, individually petty but cumulative ways in which "things have got worse" for gigging musicians since Covid. Senior musicians Herbie Tsoaeli, Menyatso Mathole and Hilton Schilder discuss the need to preserve the distinctiveness of the South African jazz heritage and create a useable archive, and Schilder also reminds us that, as age advances, ancillary expenses such as medical support add even more to the costs of working.

Shane Cooper: interviewed 6 September 2023

Shane Cooper is a Johannesburg-based musician (primarily a bass player) composer and producer with 20 years' professional experience. He identifies as primarily a jazz musician and earns 100% of his income from music-related activities, although increasingly more from his studio-based work ("60-70%") than from live music. This was true even before Covid, but has become more marked in the Covid and post-Covid periods: *"I consider the practice of music the thing that I do daily, regardless of how it is or isn't monetized. The monetization is the business part of it, but really, daily, I'm working on music of any kind."*

Income, expenditure and opportunity costs

I've pushed for [...creating more income from the studio...] because concert fees haven't really gone up with inflation. They're quite radically left behind. And performing is not a very profitable activity for the average musician because you're taking a lot of equipment there that you don't get paid for rental for. There's wear and tear, there's costs to maintain that kind of stuff, there's lack of sort of infrastructure for security of equipment and stuff so things often get stolen… It's just a very unstable way of earning money for what it costs to be able to perform. You spend a lot on petrol, you spend a lot on rehearsals, you spend a lot on equipment, and the return isn't great.

Whereas with studio work, it's a little bit more… you can regulate it better in terms of the time you put in, how you charge for the time that you put in, and sort of working it into a more manageable schedule is easier as well. The problem with live performance is that though people might see you on stage for two hours, you've been at the venue for six hours because of soundcheck and loadshedding delays and people running late and that sort of thing, and maybe complications with venue and equipment.

You've had two rehearsals of four hours each. You had eight hours of time leading up to that. So you're not really getting paid for the time you put in unless you are playing with very famous acts on big festivals – then the money goes up! The general gigging ecosystems within South Africa, at this point… if I compare wages for what you earn, they're often not that much higher than they were about 8 to 10 years ago for the average working jazz musician, whereas the cost of living is radically higher than it was 8 to 10 years ago.

So at least within studio environments, one is able to kind of work in, I think, a little bit more of a regulated format of quoting and charging that people are kind of a little bit more familiar with. So even though people in the creative sector are often asked to work for, you know, 'exposure' and those sorts of things, it's just easier to manage. I think people are abused easily, or let's say taken advantage of easily in the live space... Also for health reasons... it just starts to really wear you down. And so now my live performance thing is really focused on... really putting an emphasis on well put-together shows in terms of the production, the venue and that sort of thing. Rather than, you know, just any old gig.

Losses during Covid: "What the hell are we gonna do?"

Even though prior to Covid I had a balance of studio work and live work, [2020] was [going to be] entirely dedicated to performance, to being on stage, to playing gigs. It was going to be, at the time, my biggest touring year of my entire career. I had five international tours lined up that year with different projects, as a sideman as well as a collaborator...It was a very fortuitous sum of various projects, over years of building to that point, coming to fruition in one beautiful year.

And then as the pandemic lockdowns sort of started to take effect, it was creating uncertainty...They had to shut down a string of gigs that were immediate, and then that would obviously create a domino effect... So within about two or three weeks, all five of those tours

were cancelled. For that year, my main revenue stream was completely obliterated in two to three weeks. ..What was going to be a pretty lucrative year (because a lot of it was abroad so you're earning Euros and that sort of thing, which often can be helpful because the gigs pay better as well) was then completely gone....There was no certainty around any income at all because I didn't have a teaching job that could translate to Zoom. I didn't have any studio projects lined up then... it was completely gone. ... I had no stability with regards to paying bills, with regards to paying rent, with regards to paying any of my contracts… cell phone contract, all that stuff...Ya, it was pretty scary. I just immersed myself immediately into like trying to create stuff for Bandcamp to sell online. I just didn't know what else to do.

I just sat in front of my computer and made as much stuff as I could. Found live recordings to release… like anything that I had available just to try to make a few dollars on Bandcamp. There were small amounts... I mean, it's never really anything significant with online sales unless you're really famous...And I did it as a community thing. So I would work with some friends remotely. I'd send them a little sketch, say 'can you add stuff to this on your computer at home….' We release it and we share the money evenly on Bandcamp, that sort of thing.
So I made a few bucks here and there for myself and some friends that would just go towards our bills, basically. Nothing significant, but any little bit counts cos at that point I was completely like 'what the hell are we gonna do?' And most of my colleagues in my immediate musician circle didn't have a job, didn't have a regular teaching gig...most of the guys I worked with were completely dependent on live… some people tried some livestreams. I was invited to do a couple of them with some organisers that had got into partnership with big camera crews and little spaces where they had all of the equipment to do it. But you would walk home with around R300… people tried but it didn't really work, you know?

The Jazz Relief Fund

I think I probably heard about it because I follow Pro Helvetia online, on social media, all of their sort of emailers and stuff. So it could have been through that or they might have sent it, you know… I would have to just go through records. It could have also been on a mailer that they sent out specifically to jazz musicians on their immediate network...I don't recall exactly now…

The first thing is that it was incredibly well run in terms of the application process, in terms of the administration of it. If I compare it to some of the governmental ones that were a little bit

more convoluted I think… in terms of the kind of things required in the forms to prove your validity for this, you know… I did apply. To every single thing I saw. I applied to a whole bunch of things that I saw from European organisations and things… that I didn't get as well. But ya, I applied to DSAC, I applied to NAC, all of those things. But [this] one seemed to be the most well-designed in terms of the application process, in terms of the administration of that. You know, I got the same sentiment from colleagues as well - it felt like it was created the way it should be, and in a way that wasn't overly difficult to navigate somehow, which is the way I think it should be. ...It was the saving grace for myself and many other musicians in the jazz sector because we didn't have any regular work or any way of finding it.

Impact of the Relief Fund on survival and psychological health

You know, until [the grant] came, I was in what I consider a kind of manic state of trying to create stuff online to sell, to make a living... which wasn't healthy at all because I wasn't sleeping much. I was in this constant state of sort of frantically trying to create stuff to sell in a world that was already like…. everyone was like in confusion. You're navigating something that doesn't have any real model, or any familiar format, in which you can engage in some sort of marketplace. The whole thing is sort of inside out, upside down.

That kind of manic state, I don't consider my normal state of practice. It was somehow overly forced in compressed states of being...And, as I said, that was anything from back catalogue stuff or live recordings that I had that needed to be mixed… that I was then trying to mix on my own… But it was not at all sustainable or viable, or could amount to anything that would be significant enough financially...

Getting the grant enabled me to focus on getting back to my practice ... I could actually work on my composing… because I wasn't really going anywhere. My expenses were minimal. I could pay my rent, I could put groceries on the table, and then continue my work. I work daily with or without a paycheck attached, so it's my daily practice. By having that [grant] amount, I could just get back to what I need to do in my work as a composer and as a musician...writing, practising, all of these different facets ... We all hoped that one day again we'd have live performances again...

To be in alignment with all of that, one has to be in shape as a musician, one has to be practising, be physically fit on the instrument... through daily practise. With the grant, I was

able to get back to that... and create things that ultimately would be able to find a home once the world found some sense of normality again.

If one was not able to do that, you would ultimately be left behind… because also the world started to open up in different places at different times. ..South African artists, you know, we're always trying to get gigs overseas and trying to work on stuff that can keep us in the international marketplace, international view, and that sort of thing... if you weren't able to keep afloat, but also keep moving in some sort of forward motion, you would've radically been left behind.

Two years, a year, three years of not working on your craft renders you in such an unfit state, not only physically on your instrument, but also your connection to the mental and emotional side of music, the sides of composition, the sides of performance, all of that.

So many people in the music industry weren't able to get some sort of relief, and they had to change careers. A lot of them didn't even have qualifications or skills in anything that was like an easy pivot. And so they had to find radically different lines of work just because there were opportunities there. Many of them weren't able to return to music because two years of that meant they had to just stick with that... cos that was their way of paying bills. So having a relief like that was, for me, the only way to actually have some sort of sense of calm and certainty, knowing I could weather the storm and stay afloat and be able to return when things started to find normality again.

We knew like, okay, if this grant ends who knows what's on the other side ... Fortunately then, there was a second call... Ultimately, I put it down to that being the thing that really enabled me to weather that storm and stay in the business of music. Had it not been for that, I don't know what I would've… I'm not sure how I would've weathered…

Learning during Covid

I had been very familiar with working in music software anyway, prior to Covid. But what I did a lot of during that time is working on recordings with people overseas, remotely...people have been doing sessions remotely with people abroad for a long time, but there's a certain way of preparing for that. Even though the core technology involved in that was something I was familiar with ...but the human part of it is a very specific thing to be able to work… because

this music I'm referring to is still very much in the jazz space, which is very human music. It's not a very formulaic, digital sound in terms of its fundamental elements. It still very much involves acoustic, analogue, human expression stuff that has a lot of flaws and faults, which are elements you want, right? These human imperfections... So a lot of what I was trying to understand and kind of learn about in that time is how to work with people remotely, but articulate my ideas and the way of producing the music in a way that still had this human connection...finding ways to communicate the ideas and how I wanted the music to still maintain some sort of connectivity and human elements that would feel like people were still working together in the same spaces. And a lot of that just came down to communication... It's not necessarily around learning technology, but learning more about the communication where the technology is still the tool… learning more about articulate communication from remote locations that can further close that gap of distance and isolation to create something that still feels human. And for me, that was a learning thing… because it was out of necessity that I had to work on things with people remotely.

[One thing] that's quite specific to Covid… more and more remote studio opportunities have really become possible because of the technology that ramped up during Covid. Things like Zoom, this website called Audio Movers where people can record with musicians overseas and hear high-definition audio without any of the compression you get on things like Zoom and WhatsApp. So there's a whole bunch of technology that improved as a result of all this remote working ...[resulting]... in more work opportunities for musicians around the world. So a lot of the stuff I'm doing post-Covid is now more possible...

I was working with guys in Switzerland, for example, who hadn't done a lot of this but had a microphone and an audio interface and a computer, and a few of the basic elements - maybe not as fancy as the expensive studios they had recorded most of their albums in - but they had a core setup in their studio that they could do something with. So it would be bridging this gap, bridging this divide with people who were as eager as I was to find a new solution. And so not only was it confronting a challenge around how do we keep working together, but also it created opportunities where you were able to see, okay, this is actually really cool because if I were to meet in the room with this person, it would be very expensive, actually. They would have to come here or I would have to go there... overseas. You know, you're talking about the

travel costs, but also like per diems and all those things that come with that sort of engagement, are now rendered not necessary. So there's this huge saving...

Mobility and connection

I know a lot of guys who are used to just sort of having access to things because of geolocation, let's say. So, people in Europe - is what I mean - where most of the countries in Western Europe are much smaller and much closer, and there are affordable flights, it's kind of more viable for artists within those regions to go, 'Oh, there's this person I wanna work with. I can get a cheap flight on a Ryan Air Air or easyJet, go to this other country, there's no visa issues, we have a European passport, land there, we can collaborate on something, I can go home.' And we come from countries where the languages are wildly different… When you come from South Africa, infrastructure in Africa itself is too difficult to do that. So the area that we try to do these sorts of things mostly, because of infrastructure, is Europe, but there's no way to do that affordably. There's no way to do that viably in terms of time either. It's all a mega, mega operation. So for us, for me, the opening of this remote potential was a real beautiful kind of opportunity to suddenly collaborate with people in a way that would've been a much bigger, a much more difficult hoop to jump through to just get there and work with someone. And furthermore, people on that end who are used to more kind of accessibility and easier travel, without restriction, were open to it more so because they also had no option. For me, it opened up a lot of opportunities and a lot of these relationships...It's a very significant thing… I always talk about this, you know, in… I sometimes give workshops on composition and production and stuff like that. The number one goal in any kind of recording setting is to spark excitement and energy in the participants and maintain energetic excitement throughout the day. That's how you yield the best results. As soon as people dip in interest or excitement, which can happen for a variety of boring reasons, like not eating at the right time… as soon as that happens, you can lose three hours because people aren't concentrated enough. So because studios are expensive - all of this stuff costs money - my number one thought is optimizing the communication from my side so that I can get people engaged, the whole time. So the learning was around that… how to feel that same level of intimacy and connection over a massive geo-divide. And that does speak to a few technological aspects, but somehow this overarching, holistic thing was the biggest if I reflect on it… which has gone on to feed into probably other aspects of life now that aren't remote, as well.

And are we now "back to normal"?

It's taken longer for us because … there were these sort of two years of rebookings of acts overseas and the international touring market, rebooking bands that were canceled in 2020 and 2021...the first period of rebookings was more concentrated on acts that had been cancelled from 2020/21, and the priority was always given to more famous acts. I'm what I consider a non-famous artist, but I'm very much a part of the ecosystem. And there're so many artists in the world, so everyone has a place. ..We were very much, you know, at the bottom of the pecking order where the really famous acts and the big record labels and big booking agencies were getting priority, and then localised acts. So if we're talking about international touring opportunities… us coming from South Africa were really even further pushed down the pecking order and had to wait. So from my perspective, only now, really, are opportunities starting to come back for the artists like myself from South Africa. Some were evident last year, but a lot of people just couldn't get inside that bubble? And I think it's only starting to balance out now. I think a lot of the rebookings have happened and now we can start looking again. The international relationships I have are still there and certainly have expanded through these remote collaborations.

[But] it's a different paradigm, but for reasons governed more by the green responsibility of festivals, of booking artists from afar and those sort of things… which are all important things. So for other reasons to pandemic-related things, it's a kind of different world now. But that was going to happen regardless.

The changing landscape and the future

I'm trying to reflect on before, during and after to see where to spot the differences. Without thinking it necessarily from that perspective, the fact that a lot of my emphasis is stronger on the studio side or composition is perhaps also because the live world of music was completely destroyed and had to be rebuilt, effectively… many venues closed down, that sort of thing. It was clear that that's something that is always going to be the most vulnerable. Not to say I expect something like that to happen again... who knows? But the world is… as was very evident then… one must expect the unexpected, right? ...[the live music space] is also a luxury good. It's not… I mean, I think it's an essential. I think live music is an essential part of society, but it's gonna be cut before food and healthcare, you know? So it's incredibly vulnerable, and it's incredibly vulnerable in South Africa, very vulnerable… So to some extent, I think there's definitely an underpinning in the fact that I've now tried to lessen the extremity of that part

of my income to make it more stable. Without even thinking, because as I said it was metamorphoses over this period, you know?

And the cost of working crisis – especially re mobility – is biting hard

Locally, I'm still working with the same people. What I do notice is that it seems like local touring is less at the moment, and I think the impact of the pandemic on SA, socio-economically, was so profoundly negative, that has ramifications for the local touring circuit that we still haven't recovered from.

It wasn't easy before Covid either. It's not a cheap country to travel in. The distances are great. Flights and petrol and all of those sort of things make it somewhat prohibitively expensive, sometimes, to be able to tour. The distances really are large between the cities that have infrastructure for a touring circuit. But it feels like it's more difficult post-Covid, and I think that's because of the larger ramification, socio-economically, on the country. So that is something to mention, you know, so in that way, really does tie into this question. ...before, there were also artists in Cape Town that I would get opportunities to work with and it would be sometimes viable to fly a band member from a different city to come work with a specific project that maybe had members in disparate parts of South Africa. Now those things aren't really happening as often, and I can see this across many bands [including] that I'm not a part of. A lot of bands that were made up of specific players that were key to that collaborative project, where it wasn't just a session musician on guitar, bass, piano… it was really the collection of four members who were gathered together for their particular strengths, but could make it work with a guy in Durban, a guy in Cape Town, a guy in Joburg... you just don't see that now, and that's really tragic. So as much as I am still working with the same people, there are certain projects that I've barely played with post-Covid because local travel is just not viable with local gig fees being so bad these days. And that's quite sad. And also the loss of certain venues that were quite key to filling a certain space with a certain amount of people and the costs being offset for putting on an event. A lot of that's changed.

My own project, Mabuta, you know, which is my quintet… we would do shows prior to Covid, and for the majority of its existence since 2017, it's usually had at least one member who's lived in a different city but we've made it work. Currently I have a member who's living in a different city and it's just not financially viable. We don't play. The only way we could play is if a festival booked us that has that sort of capital. But we used to be able to put on a gig at a

venue, you know…. like it's just not viable anymore. So that's really sad. And I do see it in a lot of projects… unless they're getting an injection of cash from a sponsor or a festival, which is very rare... A lot of those sort of things have changed. So everything's extremely localised. Unless a band's really famous, they're mostly only playing in their cities locally. Touring has really been heavily affected by post-pandemic economic factors.

Zodwa Mabena: interviewed 5 September 2023

Zodwa Mabena originates from the village of Allemansdrift-C in rural Mpumalanga. She's been working in music for 20 years, primarily as a vocalist and songwriter. Her first band was Ladies in Jazz and she has worked as a soloist since releasing her debut album in 2015. Zodwa also teaches, and established her own music school in 2014- the South African School of Music - working out of the State Theatre in the capital, Pretoria.

Income, expenditure and opportunity costs

The school is solely depending on fees...you have to pay the teachers… And with performances, it's the same. Because you are an artist, you're performing with a band that you have to pay. You know, sometimes you even sacrifice, but you have to perform and take the money to the band so that they come and help you. Cos we're always building our names, we don't want people to forget about us. So we do sacrifices like those. It's only here and there that you get a commission and say 'Ya, I can live out of this'. It's a hand-to-mouth thing...Do this, pay with coffees, do everything, the household things, you know?

Impact of Covid

It was very difficult because we had to close the school because of the social distancing thing, and even the space that I work from, the State Theatre, closed down for six months. And for that six months, I couldn't even tell students to pay their fees because they were not getting any lessons. Everything had to come to a standstill.

And it was very difficult with the family that you have to support, that is depending on you. It was very, very difficult and there were no other means… that I could do until the Jazz Relief Fund came in.

Jazz Relief Fund

Someone sent me the ads ...I don't know if you'd put it on social media or web, but someone sent me and then I opened the website, found the form, filled it in. And fortunately I got the Covid Relief and it was indeed a relief!

When people are depending on you, it becomes a bit otherwise. When you are no longer earning anything, people become scared. What are we going to eat tomorrow? What does the future hold for musicians in the next coming years? So that Fund really brought hope… not only to me, but to the family.

It was, you know… somehow I thought, no, no, no, this is not legit. How can it be so simple? The questionnaires were very easy, and the people were communicating with us as if they know us… you know, they've seen us before, and they know who we are. I thought: 'But guys, how can this form be so simple?' The form that we were filling in didn't have many challenges like all the funds that we're getting… you have to go run around, they're looking for taxes, they're looking for company numbers, they're looking for things that we don't have...some musicians that struggle to get that. Some musicians don't even know where to start, you know? But the form was user-friendly, I can say that.

I even asked someone is this thing real because the questions are just simple; questions that I can be able to respond to at any time of the day. You can wake me up at any time of the day and ask me these questions and I'll be able to respond, you know? And I got so much excited when you guys extended and I said, 'Ooh, where are these angels coming from?'

[As for other funds], these government things, I don't know…. I think they have their own people. They need you to know them or they should know you. It's a 'know-someone' process. It's not easy to get the funds from the government and those people don't communicate, I don't wanna lie. You stay in darkness because if you don't get the funds, they don't tell you 'No, we regret… your application has been declined or whatever…' They just keep quiet. Then you'll hear other people saying, 'We got the funds.'

At least I was able to pay some of the things that were lagging behind, like school fees. I was able to do that for my kids. I was able to support the families, even though it wasn't like before… But I was able to do some things like those because at least there wasn't much of movements during Covid, so one was not using much of fuel, so we would at least minimise on that. And then most of the things I was able to do, especially when the Covid Relief Fund was extended… The school was now open, I was able to record two singles with the Relief Fund from you guys. I actually recorded three... I've released two. And it didn't only help me because

I had musicians that I worked with. With the money that I got, I was able to share it with other musicians because I had to pay them during that time, the time of recording. It has helped us so very, very much. We went through Covid not even thinking about anything else. We were only worried about our health, but financial wise, I think we were okay.

Learnings and pivots during Covid

I started conducting classes virtually. And doing some shows virtually. And then it propelled me to actually do some podcasts. Like perform with the band, put it on my YouTube account so that people can watch, because you know what they say….'out of sight, out of mind'. If you're not doing anything, people tend to forget about you. I've now started doing things virtually. If there are no gigs, I call the band, we do the rehearsals, we record them, and then put them on YouTube.

Changes in the landscape post-Covid

Things have gotten worse now. I'll come to the issue of gigs. Do you know that promoters are still talking about Covid? They're still telling us, 'We're still recovering from Covid so we can't give you that amount: the amount that you were charging.' So it's negotiations left and right. So we have taken the fees down, meaning artists are no longer earning like before. That's why I'm saying things have gotten worse.

Most of the gigs that we are doing are backing track gigs. We no longer do most of live performances because they'll tell you, 'We don't need a large group. Can you take it to a three-piece band? … while you are using a five-piece band. And then it compromises the sound. I think they're getting used to this notion of using backing tracks, which is killing us, you know. It is killing the industry. It is killing the spirit of the musicians that we work with. It's very difficult, and the spaces, the venues… they're expensive. During Covid, I would say mid-Covid, when...the venues were starting to open up, they said they can only allow 50% of the audience. And you book your venue with 50% of the amount, and looking at the 50% of the audience, does not even cover the costs that you are going to incur… like paying the venue and paying the band, the lighting, the sound. If the venue takes 200 people, you have to accommodate only 100. Ya, so it has been difficult. Now, you're able to book a venue and accommodate a hundred percent, but the venue booking fee has gone high, which makes it very difficult for musicians, you know, considering that we're no longer getting gigs like before. Things have changed.

Some of the people I'm working with are new, some are the ones that I've been using before Covid. These new ones are the ones that want the backing track thing that we were talking about. You know, I was talking to some guy who is doing a festival in Bronkhorstspruit here in Gauteng… He wanted me to do a backing track performance. I was telling him: 'But you said the title is Jam and Jazz. How are we going to jam using backing tracks? You got funding. Why are you not using it for artists? Because when applying for funding, you said this is for artists. Now you want to use it for your own benefit. Give us this money so that we give you music!'

Are things going back to "normal"?

Everything I do is surrounded by music. I teach music, I play music. Actually, I live music. I am hoping for change in the future. I'm hoping things won't stay this way, you know. I'm very much optimistic.

I'm not saying things should go back to normal because I don't even know what normal is, but I'm hoping we'll go back to conducting more workshops. I'm hoping for the government to make it easier for us to get funding so that we can continue to train up-and-coming musicians. And no one is going to give us a chance to become promoters, but I'm hoping to be a promoter in the future. Yes, do my own festivals and pay musicians what they deserve.

Most of the people are still hungry… or how can I put it… I'm not seeing any developments, you know, at the moment. What I'm hoping for is for music to go to schools as a subject, our kids to be taught music as a subject… like they are doing with mathematics, like they're doing with any other subject at school. So that this thing can become broader and better… for posterity, you know.

Looking towards the future

All is not lost. Let's pick ourselves up and create, you know. You never know what's gonna happen tomorrow. Let's not give up today. I wish you could understand the relevance in Zulu… shortly, it's all is not lost because someone died.

I wished this Relief Fund doesn't end, you know… Even if it's not the same as it was, even if it was lesser. Because artists in our country are struggling a lot and they've worked hard on their art, on their craft...But our government needs to be educated about the arts. They need to understand the arts more; that artists are creatives, we are… I don't know how to put it... We contribute a lot to the economy and I don't think they are aware of that. And we are even the

voice of the country, you know? There wouldn't be this freedom that we have if it wasn't for musicians. We have a universal voice. We have a broader voice than anything else, you know, and we contribute a lot to the economy. And then compared to other countries, they take their musicians more into cognisance than South Africa.

[We need] more concerts, and if an artist puts a price, they should at least check their profile before negotiating. Because they negotiate up to the last cent. And you're thinking, 'This is the government. How do they negotiate without even checking my profile?' They don't even request my profile to check. How far have you worked? What have you done in the industry that brought you to that fee that you are charging? They press us down to negotiate up to the last cent, you know, unlike other countries. If you perform out of the country, the fee that you put on the table… they take it and give it to you because they know you deserve it.

Menyatso Mathole: Interviewed *7 September 2023*

Guitarist, composer and teacher Menyatso Mathole has *"been in the music business forever, man!"* Born in Bloemfontein in 1956 and raised in Thaba 'Nchu in the Free State, he was taken to Johannesburg as part of a local bandleader's outfit and then developed his own career, first sitting in with a Diepkloof band, then working as a sideman with stars of the era including penny whistler Lemmy 'Special' Mabaso and bandleader Zacks Nkosi. He later became part of the house band at the first Black jazz club in the city: Lucky Michaels' Club Pelican in Orlando.

Earnings and expenditure

I don't do anything outside music, you know? My main source of income… it's performance. I do write as well, but I mainly survive on my gigs and applying for funding here and there to push other projects like the one I just did earlier this year, funded by Goethe Institute.

...all my works are notated, documented, but they're not yet recorded in a studio set up. So I do have a book that I want to print now and record it. I'm working on the concept with Andile [Yenana, pianist]. All I'm waiting for is the budget to print the book and record the music in the studio and take it from there, you know? It's a songbook, some of my compositions… I've notated twelve of them. I'm just waiting to get funding to print the book and then go in to the studio.

Impact of Covid

It was just terrible. All I had to do was to sit down, practise, and notate by hand, you know, because I didn't have a computer. And it takes a lot of time with the pen and the paper. It chows time.

The Jazz Relief Fund

[I heard about it on] social media and word of mouth from other friends. I'm a member of a few pages on social media, LinkedIn, Facebook. So some friends… We do share these links when there are opportunities.

So I saw it on social media then I applied, you know… And it was really helpful. That's the only grant that, really, I cannot compare with any: a huge help, really. Because if it wasn't for Pro Helvetia, I don't know how the majority of us would've survived that period. I just can't imagine…. Also, that budget didn't just help me to survive as an individual. It also assisted me to help people who depend on me. My daughter just lost her job during that time, so I could manage to help her. And expand on my songbook. I also managed to buy this laptop here… because my laptop was done… and a new phone. So I could continue notating my music. It really helped me a lot. Through that budget, I managed to do a lot of things that I would've never done.

I've been applying and applying and applying to National Arts Council, to the Lottery. [With government funding], you'll be shocked when I show you the email that I got. You'll be surprised. You'll think maybe it was change from gambling ama-dice or something like that. I got a thousand bucks.

And my applications were declined, all of them. The last one is now in April or something like that. Everything has been declined. Declined, declined, declined… it's more than five years now. Hence I'm saying if it wasn't Concerts SA, if it wasn't Goethe Institute, if it wasn't Pro Helvetia, I wouldn't have survived this. Never! I would be just a dead cabbage, you know what I mean?

The changing music landscape: digital activities are central

It's more of a digital type of business which makes it harder because now you really need money to get… Like you've been trying to get hold of me for the last couple of days and you couldn't find me cos I didn't have data. It's those type of things, you know. Some of my live

recordings are on YouTube, Bandcamp, DistroKid… but to manage those apps you must have money to get in there and conduct the business properly. It's difficult to keep the business running smoothly because of a lack of self-funding. When I say self-funding, I mean organising your own gigs, gigging at the clubs, be able to get yourself data and manage your apps properly. You end up depending on applying for funding. With funding, it's not guaranteed, you know… But if there were regular gigs to perform, you would be able to manage to get by… Where I'm situated now in my province, the Free State, that is really out of the question...if I wanna gig, I must go to Joburg, Durban, Cape Town.

It's quite challenging and it's quite tricky to say it's better or it's worse. Because remember, we come from the Apartheid system, then democracy, then Covid 19. So I mean, looking at it really, from my experience, I wouldn't say any era was better than any other because the struggle still continues. It's still the same pain, you know what I mean? People still can't afford to buy.

The musicians [I used to work with] … we are tight. I still work with all the musicians whenever I have the chance. Andile just called me the other day to say he's also applying for funding maybe. We didn't have enough budget when they came here to Vredefort… we didn't have enough to expand the project. So he's also trying to raise funds to bring me down there and get the very same guys, you know... The guys just can't believe that these are the times we are going through. And everybody is still on board. We're as tight as ever, even if we don't communicate that much because of lack of means. But we're very tight whenever we speak. It's positive vibes all the way.

Learnings during Covid and through the support of the Jazz Relief Fund

Now with these softwares today, it's so quick. Even when you're preparing for a gig… you can prepare with the guys, you can send the guys MP3s, charts, you know, lead charts to work on...The work that would've taken you two/three weeks, you just crack that within a week's time, a couple of days, because the guys are familiar with all the stuff, you know what I mean? That's the advantage of this technology. Hence I'm saying, if it wasn't for Pro Helvetia, I wouldn't have managed to get this and push things as fast as that.

Here I'm talking to you. I'm with you on face-to-face now…. I have picked up a lot. And then I was communicating with a friend of mine, Professor Geoff Mapaya… we were at UCT

together. And he recommended this software that I used for notation. It took me like less than a month to get around that new score and I can't stop thanking him. I said 'Amen, Prof!' It's amazing what I'm doing with this software. And imagine me, my generation, bru…. These things were not there. It's a miracle. Even my saxophone player, Leon Scharneck from KZN… when I brought him here with Andile, he was so impressed, 'Hau, bra Menyatso, you! Hey hey hey, I'm so impressed. Your stuff is now documented. You can send us… jirre.! And then I said something about my stuff on the Cloud. He said, 'You even know about Cloud now!' And we were laughing, laughing, laughing. I've learned a lot, you know, in a very short space of time.

New activities

It gave me the opportunity to…. Now I'm also trying to work with the youth here, with the boys... very classically trained because that's all the opportunity they have with this Free State classical programme running in Bloemfontein. But I work with the boys now and then, here, so that's what I'm trying to establish here, you know… with the help of Andile as well, because he's also at Port Shepstone TVET College in the music department. So we're also trying to link up these kids… to grow up a little different than us. You know, it shouldn't just be about looking for gigs. It should be broader than that…

Hence, we established an NPO called South African Instrumentalists and Singers House. The page is growing on Facebook. It's not an agent or a management company or a promoter or a school. It's just a family type of a thing where we just brainstorm things. You know, if one has challenges, or still new in the music industry, there are people you can go discuss with and stuff like that. If you are out of gigs, there are people that you can talk to… basically that concept. It's not a commercial… to make stuff. And also organise communal events like workshops and symposiums and stuff like that. Now I'm planning to go to Thaba 'Nchu where I was born. I am talking to our traditional leader there to see if maybe next year we can't bring the concept at home. I need to do that...Hopefully this will spark something besides just gigging in the Free State… because people here just depend on gigging, which is not really healthy for the minds of the young. Even us, you know, can't just think gigs, gigs, gigs all the time. From gigs, there's no income, it's just stressful.

Cost of working crisis

It's far from the big cities here. If you have an instrument here and your frets get wounded, you need money… number one, for taxi - 3 taxis from where I am - to go to Joburg. When you get to Joburg, these places are not in the city. You must get to Randburg or what-what… where

they've been moved to now. So now by the time you get to the workshop, you don't have money to fix your instrument!

I don't know what to say when it comes to [touring]. I am looking forward to that, you know? ... so I've been trying to apply based on that with the National Arts Council...and with SAMPRA ... I'm waiting for the results. … If that works, that will also help me to expand the marketing. I'll be able to send proper production to people maybe in Europe, the States... So it's just a matter of access to the most important… Budget, you know – not handouts: budget to be able to go to people and call people, make the things happen… That's what I'm waiting for.

The need for a jazz history archive

I want to go back to my roots there in Thaba 'Nchu... the main thing for me there is to honour people who brought us up here who were never honored, and who will never be honored if we don't do so. You know, there were artists there where we come from. We were built, we were groomed by people, not trees or…. We've just lost Spencer [Mbadu, bassist]. So if we're now really being honest, how much of Spencer has been documented, except sessions… playing with other people… how much did we utilise him before he left us? Is it on purpose? No, it's not. If I was empowered, I would say 'My brother, here's a ticket. Come here, stay with me for a week, talk to the kids here, engage with the community here artistically.' In that way it would be another way of documenting him, formally/informally… so that he can live, you know? Those are the kind of things that are still very, very much lacking.

All the help we need, we need… to be able to document now. We are at a stage where we should be now really documenting, interacting with the young and the communities more… but without any support from the community itself, financially and otherwise. Else we're just gonna be the next Spencer, the next Mankunku, the next Bheki Mseleku, the next Jonas Gwangwa, and you just leave with everything, you know. And we have the stuff. We have what we can share and document for references… and archive it properly. Donate into the schools, libraries and stuff. We have material that we can donate to the education institutions and the community centres, libraries, and stuff like that. We have that material now. We don't have to wait for recording companies. We have it ourselves. What we need are resources to get into the studio and do the thing…. to print, publish, go out there with the material. Talk about it today, and show them how you came about creating this stuff, you know? We are not

that handicapped anymore in terms of thinking, advice… we are well-conscientised, you know...It's just the support that we need.

And I don't hear the people on top there talking about such things… Now we're going for 2024… people talking about the positiveness, the importance of collaboration in terms of building the country. But when they're talking about all these things, building the country and stuff like that, the culture, the arts… it's not building the culture. We are just a gimmick around everything that is. That's the thing. So how are we going to motivate the people that we see potential in? The young people that I'm talking about. And it's only us, with the little opportunities that we have, who can make sure that they are remembered, recognised. If they were not there, we wouldn't be here; I wouldn't be talking to you as a professional artist. The only difference was that they couldn't all go out of the Free State, you know? I was just one of the very, very, very few lucky ones in the '70s.

Future

Me inside… I'm very optimistic. There is hope. When I look at some of the young boys from these institutions… the positiveness and the spirit, just continuing where it needs to be… there is that. Definitely the music, in general, it's in good hands. We have very focussed, young, music and arts practitioners. I work a lot with these young boys, and some of them are at my level, no doubt about it… artistically, behavior, and stuff like that. It's just the obstacles, you know?

As an arts practitioner, you have to surround yourself with the people who are practising exactly what you're doing... That doesn't mean now you must forget your upbringing...We are not saying leave your beliefs... the family foundation you got… But to help them out as artists, as practitioners, you have to advise them to surround themselves with the arts world… the practitioners, other stakeholders in the industry, administrators, you know… It's just getting together, respect one another, respect your art form, surround yourself with art practitioners… but don't forget where you come from. Don't forget your family values.

Thandi Ntuli: interviewed 5 September 2023

Soshanguve-born Thandi Ntuli is a pianist, vocalist, composer and leader. She has been working in music for 15 years, beginning her performance career while she was still studying at the UCT College of Music and releasing her first album as leader, The Offering, in 2014. She has since released three further albums. Although Ntuli is often written about exclusively as a jazz musician, she stressed in the interview that confining the scope of her work within a single genre category isn't accurate.

Income and expenditure

[My income is] mainly from music and music-related work. If it's not performing, it's also writing music … commissioned by either advertisers, or for visual artists. I would say that the writing music got more frequent after the lockdowns, because it wasn't actually the work I was focusing on. I was usually doing live performances and making money from that. It's hard to measure because it's not been happening simultaneously, under normal circumstances. I think my writing work started happening a lot more after the lockdowns, which, obviously, was a time when there was a massive interruption with live performances. It's difficult to compare which is really bringing in the most, and, with the commissions, it [also] depends on the commissioner.

Impact of Covid

I had a lot of touring that was lined up that was cancelled. And initially it was postponed, but then….. I was also working with Brownswood for a [compilation] album as co-curator ...towards the end of the year...I was mainly supporting myself with savings. I had also, in 2020, just bought an apartment. So there was also the anxiety of having a mortgage. There was, I think, one South African grant that came through, and also the work from [Brownswood] that I was working with… which wasn't really like significant and life-changing, but it was some work...

My level of certainty was not such that I felt okay with the idea of touring… I didn't wanna find myself in a position where I go and perform in France and then I have to stay locked down there because another variant has come out and now everything's closed. There were people that I knew... who were stuck in a country because of the lockdowns. I felt safer to just be at home. And it obviously also affected me creatively. I felt very un-nourished because I thrive off

travelling and doing things out of the norm, going to places I don't know, and hearing languages I don't know. I thrive off that. Ya, it has been really disruptive.

And I also remember that there was a musician who I know who was at some point considering selling his guitars. And he posted the guitars on social media, and I was like, 'Wait, no, don't sell them!' And then I sent him the link for the Fund. He later then told me, 'Thank you so much, 'cos he almost sold his lifeline. So he did get the grant...a lot of musicians do have stuff that they can sell, and very expensive stuff, and you would see people put on the online markets that they're selling whatever instruments. But to not have had to do that is something very helpful. Because once things opened up, you would be starting from ground zero again...

The Jazz Relief Fund

I don't remember [how I heard about it]… I must have gotten it from the Pro Helvetia mailing list because I have worked with Pro Helvetia quite a bit. It's either that or it's from a friend who also is locked into that network, but I think more likely it was via email.

Then this came through and I really was very excited about it, obviously, because I was very anxious about living on my savings, but grateful that I had savings to live on. And then it came through, which gave a huge relief in terms of digging into those resources.

Then when things started opening up a bit, there were a little bit of gigs towards the end of December, the fund was still supplementing that... I was putting things back into savings as well. And then I think they renewed it in March when it was supposed to expire. They said they're going to continue for another six months, which was huge, huge, huge relief. But ya, it really made a difference because I think, had I not had that year of support, I would have probably depleted my savings. I think the fund really just carried me over to when live performances were coming in again and one was able to start earning money, as well as the writing work that I was starting to get. So it really was a net that gave me more time.

Funds were always on time. It was like a salary. And I actually remember a lot of my peers… we were talking about it, saying, 'Wow, this is how it feels like to have a salary, it's quite nice!' It was always same time, same date. So it really helped with planning and budgeting and because the actual application was based on your own expenses…. I limited mine to my real basic expenses, so I didn't cover like, you know, medical aid and all those things. Well, I didn't

have medical aid at the time, but I just kept it to food, to the mortgage costs, to things that I would absolutely die if I were not able to pay.

And it just gave me a sense of peace of mind as well, because thinking about the fact that the work that I do is creative, I don't think I would have had the peace of mind to actually be able to do the writing work that I did get without knowing that, okay, there's money coming in, it's fine. Let's keep going. That feeling for me… it's more than the actual money, it's the ability to just be settled in a very uncertain time, which for me was what I was most grateful for.

For me, there wasn't really anything that I felt I would've done differently in terms of how the actual fund was administered...It was a very easy application and they didn't make it gruelling. I think sometimes gruelling applications can be very dehumanizing, in a sense, where it's like: prove to me in this period where there is no work that you need work or that you need support, you know? So I think that there was that level of humanity as well in just the whole process being very straightforward and all that… There's no one I know who had issues with it. There's no one I know who felt that it should have been different. I think we all just felt, 'Whew, breath of fresh air!', and that's what I got from it.

I didn't really expect it to solve my problems and make me a millionaire or anything, but I think it did what it was meant to do for me, which was to just give me a little bit more space to figure things out as well. And just give me a bit more time to be creative and expand myself so that I don't come out on the other side of the pandemic worse off ... I mean, to some extent everyone is worse off because it was a traumatic period, but I don't think we would've been okay. I think a lot of people would've quit music if that fund didn't come through. I really do. I think I'm one of them. I might have just been like, no ways... I do think it would've gotten to breaking point.

Learnings and changes during the Covid period

Other than becoming brilliant at Zoom, I did quite a bit, you know. I did a yoga teacher training at the beginning of 2021 which I'd never had the time to do, and always wanted to do. And towards the end of 2021, I was also part of an online cohort of musicians from different parts of the world. It was done by an organisation in the US called Mutual Mentorship for Musicians... I met a lot of online friends, musicians... it was female or non-binary-identifying people. So, it was really nice to experience a community of people that I didn't know,

particularly women, cos I didn't really have those kind of encounters in the day to day. And we did collaborations with that. Part of that was also a writing workshop, which I really loved… and I also did a reiki thing, which I'm still busy with.

I did a lot of things, but a lot of it was very beneficial in terms of… my mental health, good for my physical health, just keeping me grounded and mentally in a good state. I mean, people have gone through a lot... I had an injury in 2022, in my lower back, which took me some time… It was a terrible injury, but in hindsight, it was very fascinating to see how my body works. But not at the time! It was not fascinating at the time.

There were two [other] government funds that I got. There was first the Department of Sports, Arts and Culture one which I think came in 2020, around June/July. And then there was the Gauteng one, the local government one, which was towards the end of the same year. But I didn't find… particularly the Gauteng one… I didn't find it very beneficial because it was like R6000 over three months. So I just felt like, yoh, that's a lot of paperwork for R6000 … I don't know if you've ever seen any of the government things, but it's like a lot of things to send … The DSAC funding was R20 000, once-off, which was a bit better.
But after that I decided that I'm not going to do too many. I don't want to be writing… grant applications. And I just decided to figure something out. But at the time as well, I was being supplemented by this [the Relief Fund].

Lessons I've learned is don't ever think that saving is a useless activity. It saved my life. Ya,definitely. I was very grateful to have saved money. And take care of yourself. Take very good care of yourself – your body, your mind, your spirit. Just always have yourself taken care of. Another thing I didn't realise was how tired I was when the pandemic hit. So really take care of yourself. And then I guess the third, always try and build community.

Changing landscape during and after Covid – are we "back to normal?"

The whole thing that did happen during Covid was that there was a lot of moves towards more digital platforms, and that has its downside for musicians. The first being it's an expensive thing. You know, if you wanna shoot very good quality live performance, you're gonna have to get a lot of money. There was the one thing that we got to do… Joburg Theatre happened to have money set aside for projects that are international and streaming related, 4IR related things... And so we managed to shoot. We had like a R100k between three bands, and there

were still a lot of things that we were like, 'Oh, this is like tight!', and we had to really negotiate with people. So it's a bit much to try and organise good quality things for digital things, and have to have so much money to get such little return. I think it definitely is a tricky time…

There are a lot more challenges to going back to the norm, so to speak. The influence of Covid and loadshedding has debilitated a lot of businesses… By businesses I mean venues that were places where we could perform. There've been many times when you do performances and budgets are smaller. So we are sort of in a recession. That's what I feel. We're in a recession, but things are very expensive. And I also think that the digital culture has really, really, influenced the day-to-day life a lot more. I find people at concerts are more about their phones and, you know, taking everything around them, instead of really physically being present and taking the whole thing in.

I just think it's been difficult to get started again. There've been things here and there that one tries, but it's been difficult to kind of go back and get into motion, and get back to the level of momentum that one was at before the pandemic. So it is a bit of a strange time… because I think also you are trying to make up for everything being more expensive. So ticket prices have gone up. You know, I think before the pandemic we didn't really see concerts with tickets for R400, which has almost become a norm now. So that will very naturally reduce a certain amount of people, especially in this economy. It's a very strange period...

I released an album last year… wasn't really able to perform any of the album's music simply because it felt too big for what budgets were available to have that. It's been like: Wow, ok, my band is way too big'. And that's never really been how I've felt in the past.

So I'm kind of changing direction, moving into a more solo kind of thing. The thing that I love about jazz is the fact that you're making music with other people, and there's a certain communal, spiritual, emotional benefit from just that act of making music with other people, and not just yourself, your ideas… And I feel like out of necessity, there's been more of a need for me to do more solo things. Not just necessity, cos artistically it's also something I've been interested in. But the challenge with that is that it's very isolated and it's perpetuating or continuing the isolation… It's almost metaphoric of the isolation we come from, and then continuing that in an artistic sort of setup. Ya, there is a lot more uncertainty and just trying

things out and adapting to what's available… people not being sure when things are gonna happen. I mean, I think changes are always good, artistically, if you apply yourself. It doesn't have to be a train smash.

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I'm working a lot [now] with visual art. ...The people that I have been working with in the past have become very busy...I think everyone's doing everything at the same time. So what I'm finding is that somehow my work is starting to mix with different disciplines of art, which is cool as well.

But I think, also, we talk a lot about the challenges of Covid. I think there were a lot of positive things that I got from it as well. With my back injury last year, I kind of also got very aware of my…. and very deliberate about my health and ways I take care of myself...And I think in the long run that will enhance my work. Somehow, I definitely think it will because it's been very important for me just to take care of myself.

I do have some touring coming up. It's not extensive yet… There’s a tour that I'm supposed to be going to with a quartet from Switzerland that I recorded with when I was there. That was one of the tours that got cancelled… so that's happening later this year, hopefully. Ya, it's happening later this year and I think things are moving in a direction where, in general, it's just feeling like we're gonna go back to things… It may not be happening as fast as we have thought it would… like lockdown stops, and then we go. But I think we will find our feet again. People are just finding their feet in many different ways. It's not just pandemic, it's whatever grief people are dealing with, whatever financial shifts people have dealt with. So it's a lot and I think it's just a matter of time... I don't mind that there's a bit of a change There's always opportunity for jazz musicians to do different types of projects, which is great.

Hilton Schilder: interviewed 4 September 2023

Born in Lotus River, Cape Town, 64-year-old pianist, bow-player, composer and visual artist Hilton Schilder is a child of one of the city's most distinguished jazz dynasties. Because of that family background, he's been playing instruments since he was a toddler and, by his own estimate, "in the business" for 45 years. His first album as leader, No Turning Back, was released in 2003 and he has featured on more than 40 recordings so far, as leader and instrumentalist. He continues to perform, but less frequently; increasingly, he works as a composer. Visits to his home for performances are a regular feature of the Jazz Safaris organised for tourists. He describes himself as playing "music from the Cape ... I compose music from here.... jazz is only one of the genres. There's goema, there's rock, there's mbaqanga... jazz is one facet of it."

Income and expenditure

[my main source of income is] live performances and travelling. The composing… there's still a lot of things to be sorted out with SAMRO and that, you know. {Even if our music is registered, there is still [money] owed. We are still not getting our money that we were supposed to get. You know there's this ongoing battle for money. … If it wasn't for these odd Jazz Safaris that we do at home, I would be starving as a musician... I still get to play my own music, and I get to educate people from around the world about our music. Yeah, I've been doing it for about 18 years.

My wife, Tesna… was in the printing industry. And I mean, that was my kind of backstop in my… she used to carry me a lot, you know what I mean, in times of… She didn't ever tell me to go and work. She knew what my 'ding' was, just composing and that… through the hard times... I mean she supported as well, you know, with the 'dinges'. I mean, I made quite a comfortable living out of music over the years; we managed to put our kids through school and college. And then Tesna [had to retire] was also without work, and we started doing these Safaris. And that was kind of providing an income for her as well... You know, since I live in Parow [20 kilometres away from Cape Town] I don't do much gigs, just the odd thing I do at Touch of Madness, the Brass Bell… and that's about all, and now the Jazz Safari.

Impact of Covid

Of course, during Covid [the Jazz Safaris] stopped. So that was my main source of income, apart from the travelling. And then I was also ill, so I couldn't really travel. We couldn't do anything. We were indoors…. but then, along with Jai and a couple of other musicians, we managed to get some stuff together, food parcels and that, just to distribute among the ouens, you know?

The Jazz Relief Fund

[Information about the Fund] got shared by Veit Arlt from Switzerland, and that's how I got to know about it. It came at a time when I didn't know what I was gonna do. But Pro Helvetia really sorted us out. That was brilliant what happened there. We got a [regular amount] a month for that entire time. It was almost a year, you know? It really helped us out. It helped us out fantastically. I even saved some money to buy a car. It was a secondhand car, but ya… I sold the other one as well, and then I got a more reliable automatic, something that I'm more comfortable with.

I tell you, it worked out fantastically, man, because it came at the right time. And everything was the way they said they're gonna do it. It was done exactly like that. And I must say, for me it was a great help. I dunno what the other guys are saying, but it was really a great help. Because to earn money, like… I've never worked for a boss in my life, you know? So I don't know what it's like … There was no waiting: when they said the money was coming, say on the 3rd, it arrived on the 3rd, exactly on the 3rd.

[I didn't get government funding] It was such a mission, you know? Gabi le Roux's organisation [TUMSA: The Musician's Union of South Africa] also pointed us in the direction of getting funding, you know? But ok, that didn't happen. None of that happened, only the Pro Helvetia one.

Honestly, it's the first time in my whole music career that I've had that kind of opportunity. And I've been in music very, very long. We've never had… unless I did like workshops in Switzerland… when I was an artist in residence… And doing something like in New York and that… That's the only time that we… But like this? To get paid while you're not doing anything is fantastic. I think we should have a regular thing like that, you know what I mean?

Even it's not that that amount… but just something so that we know, ok, there's at least a five or six or seven grand waiting for you at the end of the month. You can cover a lot of holes with that if you're not working. So you don't have that anxiety. I mean we're getting old now, I can't still be worrying about how I'm gonna pay certain things. I have no debt, but there are things that I pay. I don't owe money on a car or a house, but I pay rent. We pay rent, we buy food... That's just the basics. That's not even like the shopping. You know you go to the shop, you just buy a couple of basic items, it comes to a thousand Rand. At least end of the month, you're getting something. You can cover your rent and whatever's gotta be covered, you know? Because I've also got other expenses... well, I've got medical expenses. – stuff that I don't wanna go to the hospital for. I'd rather buy it myself. Take my [urostomy] bags… I go through about a box a month, which costs about R1600.

I just wanna say, once again, I can't express enough thanks for helping us out at that time of need.

Learnings during the Covid period

[Getting the funding] gave me space for more art… my art. I'm a [visual] artist as well, and I was just looking now at my stuff that I did during Covid… Also, I started composing more things and I started revisiting stuff that I did from the '80s. I actually did an album, which my son produced, and I'm gonna release it in the next few months or so… as soon as I've got some money to print: solo piano and guitar...

*[Covid and the grant just gave me a little bit more time] … the room where I sleep, I've got a piano there… So it was Covid, not being able to go out, I find that I would concentrate more on rehearsals, on sitting and playing. Because it became that time, you know? And I'll tell you once that money came through from… because it was basically, for us… it was just like a two-month struggle and then this money came through from Pro Helvetia. And all of a sudden, I check 'F***, I don't need to go and hustle to go play now!' I can play here at home. There's money coming in at the end of the month. It helped a lot.*

The changing music landscape post-Covid

Well, the nice thing that I see is there's more venues, right. Not enough, but there's more venues. And the kids are playing very lekker. I mean they're not kids anymore, but the young adults. There's more of that than when I was around.

In the past I charged quite high for my services because I knew this is what I make my money on, you know. And I noticed recently that, especially in Cape Town… Joburg's a different story… but in Cape Town, they still want to pay the prices (if it's not a door deal) they gave you years ago in the 2000s...And when you ask what they think you're worth, then they say, 'Nah, okay, we'll get somebody else.' ...I make my insistence that we're gonna be playing original music. I've stuck to those guns all the years, you know what I mean? So there's a couple of gigs that are coming up for Heritage Day… gigs like that where we're actually earning something decent... But I make sure that the guys in my band get paid properly. I'm never one of those 'ouens' that take a big, big whack and give the ouens so much… making sure they're getting more than what they expect. And it's a two-hour gig, from 3 till 5.

*I used to make money from selling my own CDs, but now people don't buy CDs anymore. All downloads… And I mean, what they give us on these platforms is sh*t. They give us shit money. Spotify don't even… You get your thing played a hundred times on Spotify, then you see like 10 cents, you know, 10 American cents, if you're lucky. And there's one 'ou' making a lot of money from Spotify. You've got to hunt for it… And yet there are people making money off of social media and on the internet...You've got to do stupid things to get there, to get the millions of followers.*

I haven't toured for a long time, but I feel now I'm ready to do something. . I wanna go to Switzerland as well ... show them the new thing.

Preparing for the future

[The advice I'd give is] Practise and check out the music business. Make sure you're covered. Don't let people take you for a 'aap'. You know, there's a lot of corporate people that take people, you know…. So you've gotta practice, you've gotta get your music business together. I mean I'm guilty of [that too]. But at least I've come to a flow where I can negotiate the waters and don't need people doing that for me. I've always been my own manager. Practise the right stuff. Compose, and don't let people get in your way. I mean don't let the corporates and that… dictate to you.

I think the earth needed that Covid thing to just replenish itself. Because in that time, in that couple of months ...there wasn't any toxic stuff in the air, the plants flowered, everything happened in that time. If it wasn't such an imposed thing, if we can just take a break once

every 10 years or so, just shut everything off and go to back to that vibe. It's actually heading that way because people are not going out anymore.

Sakhile Simani: interviewed 6 September 2023

East London-based trumpeter and music teacher Sakhile Simani began on his instrument in the Salvation Army Band and later joined the Field Band Foundation. He enrolled at the University of Kwa Zulu-Natal in 2008, and since graduating has been an associate teacher at Stirling High School in East London and other schools. Simani performs nationally, both with outfits he leads and in the ensembles of players such as Sibusiso Mashiloane, Salim Washington and Nduduzo Makhathini, among others, and is working on material for his first album as leader.

Income and expenditure.

[My income is a hundred percent from music], yes.

Impact of Covid

When COVID started, some of my teaching was continuing during that time because I was doing more online lessons. The other way completely stopped: no work, no pay situation. Also the performances were stopped. We were actually doing some online, but it was not as effective as before where you get to travel… to play with an audience. ... I think I did like two performances in that situation. I was [also] teaching privately, but it stopped at some point because the parents were not getting income as well.

[My siblings] were not working during Covid, but they were getting something from their work; something extra to feed us as well. And I was getting something myself. So the situation wasn't that bad at home, but from my side I'm used to teaching… it was a bit disturbing for me, but I had family to cover those expenses that I was missing out.

The Jazz Relief Fund

Then the Relief Fund… I still remember getting the forms from Alan Webster [at Stirling High School and organiser of the National Arts Festival Jazz Festival in Makhanda]. He said, 'Ok, this is the form. If you have any difficulties, come to me then we can fill out the form.' But I saw the form. I was like, 'Ah, no, this is pretty straightforward.' I mean this is easy. Then I filled up the form, I applied. Then I started to share the form, that link, to musicians around the townships. The older musicians… I started to help them to fill the form, I started to…. because

I still remember that form had something that you have to download, or you have to showcase your playing that you're actually a jazz musician. So I had to help most musicians with that. Yes, as I said, I started to share it. Most of the musicians got it, actually. It really helped lots of musicians. Even myself as well, I got some revenue there for 12 months and I appreciate that. I'm really, really thankful for that. So it really helped a lot in terms of my costs, my expenses during that time.

I think they really got their thing together. Actually, I didn't have any complaints regarding the payments because I knew that month-end… they were not missing the month-end in terms of the payment. It was spot-on, it was on time. I didn't really have any struggles when it comes to that. Even the forms, the applications… I didn't get any feedback saying, 'please reply on this, we are not getting any full information about you.' It was pretty simple, pretty straightforward...I didn't know any of the [other] fundings regarding jazz or music or art.

I was just really grateful for the Jazz Relief Fund to actually fund most of the musicians around that time. And most of the people are still talking about that, up until to date. They are very grateful… those that I helped and most of my guys from the field. They are still talking about it. So I'm really, really grateful that I got that, and thanks to the Jazz Relief Fund.

Learnings during Covid with the support of the Jazz Relief Fund

I was really excited about getting that relief fund. It motivated me, actually, to do more with my craft. And I still remember coming up with an idea, or with a thought…. that actually I'm sitting at home, doing nothing, only… I practice, I read… So I come up with a thought of 'let me pay tribute'. Let me just pay homage to where I'm at, at my community. So I came up with an idea of writing music for my people.

I called that project 'People of my Community', and I presented that to the Standard Bank National Youth Festival, and they accepted that during that time. So that funding motivated me to write music more. And I wrote the music. If you go to my YouTube, the concert is there, in 2020… that I actually presented to people of my community because I was paying a tribute, I was paying homage to them. So it really gave me a drive to go further, further, further, and more.

Some of the revenue that I got from the Relief Fund, I saved up. I split it into half and saved up some of the money. In 2019, unfortunately, my trumpet got stolen from my car. So the whole of 2019 and beginning of 2020, February, I was using the school's trumpet. I had no trumpet, so I saved up some money for that. Then I bought my Yamaha trumpet in 2021, March – I bought my silver Yamaha trumpet from that money.

From my point of view, I like to be safe. That's why I am actually doing performances and teaching at the same time. So I have to like divide myself into two. If this one's working…. definitely this one has to work… or I'm lucky I'm balancing the two. I don't want to take risks in my life because I really don't know what will happen. I don't know what tomorrow holds if I'm taking a risk. So it's taught me to actually care about myself and look after myself because no one will look after me. So as a result of that, I bought something out of that money that actually I was putting aside, right?

I've learned a lot of things in terms of myself during Covid. Actually, who I am… like, who's Sakhile Simani? Who do I want in my space? So I got to be actually thinking about…. It's not about me at the end of the day. I'm an artist, I'm just a vessel. It's about the people. The music that we are doing, we are doing for the people… because most of the people out there are not okay. People of today… They're going through a lot. So us as musicians, we really have to heal those people. So I got to think about that during that time…. to think, actually, what is my purpose in life as a musician? As Sakhile, what can I bring to the table? ...it's not about me anymore. It's about the person who's next to me.

Changes post-Covid

I'm very sad to say what I'm gonna say, actually. Us as musicians, as performers, we rely on performing, right? And within South Africa, we as musicians know that performing is not sustainable. And regarding that, most of the venues have been removed from the people. Most of the venues are closing down, right? As performers, we no longer have spaces. We no longer have venues to express ourselves... to perform for people. Even going on tour… South Africa is expensive because you…. Most of the musicians, I've noticed, they're doing the tours from their own pockets. So that's a bit difficult to do. It's not sustainable. It's not something that you actually can carry on with. So with venues being removed from people, it really affects the musicians.

And as you can see now, most of the musicians when they record, they go independent. They don't go with the record label. They don't go with any of those things, they go independent. So that's a risk, and also bravery as well. Most of the musicians are brave to do this. It's not easy to go independent. We have to pay everything - you have to pay from musicians to studio, go and print the CDs and stuff like that. It's really, really not easy. And I'm taking my hat off for those who go independent when they record their music.

So most of the musicians now, we're only playing on festivals, right. We're only playing on Makhanda Festival, Joy of Jazz, Macufe, and that's it. It's only three big jazz festivals that you can find in the country. The Cape Town one is closed down; there's nothing going on with that. So it's a bit of a struggle, but we'll get it right one day.

Some of the musicians that I've been working with are the same musicians that I've been working with before Covid. And now I'm starting to collaborate with new musicians that are coming on the scene. So it's building, it's a continuity. It's the continuity where we left off before Covid, and during Covid as well.

Herbie Tsoaeli: interviewed 2 September 2023

Langa-born bassist, composer and bandleader Herbie Tsoaeli has been working in jazz for more than 30 years. As a tot, he listened to music, including lots of American jazz, on his grandmother's record-player, hiding under the bulky piece of furniture to get closer to the music and dodging school to listen to traditional musicians at the neighbouring workers' hostel and devotional drumming from the Zionist church. His uncle was a bass player. Though Tsoaeli had dreamed of being a horn player, he couldn't afford an instrument, and developed his teenage musical ideas on an oilcan guitar. Someone who heard him encouraged him to go to the Nyanga Community Arts Centre, where he could access a real instrument. At one point, he also took up saxophone for a klopse (Cape Carnival) band. Of his genre affiliation, he says "I'm growing out of the sound of mqashiyo, mbaqanga, jazz, pop. ...I can't be just a jazz musician: I'm a sound musician – with generous genre genes."

Income and expenditure

Not every parent wants her daughter to want to be a musician. I've been growing up on those words all the time. Music is like a devil thing, Satan, you know. Even the guitar, they used to call it 'bones of the devil'...Now for me, I'm one of those who don't have something to fall back

on. Others have got something to fall back on. Me, I have to fall forward, you know. Falling forward, meaning that, in the music… there's nothing else I opted to do. These sounds just called me, you know?

The income from music comes from performances. Actually, to be calling it an income would be…. If I were playing festivals ...that's an income. But now club gigs, I don't think I wanna put it as an income. I'd call it temporal sustenance for you to hang in in there. That's not an income. It shouldn't even count as an income because you get R500, R1000, and get another one after another month, depending… Or you may be running around in 10 gigs for that R500 to meet your income. You have to calculate it like that. That's just sustenance... anyway, I don't get much, you know? I don't get much. Sometimes you get the support at home from your wife because she's got an income… whatever little things she can do for the children and stuff. So at that time I was in the same mode...accept the lives we live as jazz musicians, as artists...

The Jazz Relief Fund

I heard it from friends. Musicians say 'Hey, have you heard that there's this sort of stuff', you know, word of mouth… emails roaming around, messages kind of thing…That was a godsend kind of relief when it came, because what was happening…. Ya, Pro Helvetia… I think Andile said 'Hey, 'sbali, there's something'.

... That income actually created space for me to think, you know, because whatever needs and necessities of the households were needed at the time… there are many… that fund helped me have my own state of mind because there was no problem with me being asked money… When are we gonna pay this, there's no food, you know?

It changed the whole me, you know, because now it was like, 'Oh man, this is how at least a human being should live as an artist.'... We don't want too many things. We just want to live a better life, you know, that every other human being will enjoy. So that we carry on and be humble and ignore…. because when it's like that you don't even think of riots, of being violent, of being involved in arguments. It's just a normal way… people should be living in this kind of state, this situation, because you are able to continue with your brain, and thinking ahead of other things. This one is taken care of… Because imagine, as a musician, you may not have a gig for three months. There are famous artists, there are young ones. The old ones sometimes get forgotten. So that funding played a very, very, very major role in my life. People were more

relaxed in my household. You know, there was no need for that disturbance, resistance… it was not applicable at that time.

You know that process made me feel like… how would it be to be having that funding for many years to come? Just like the old ladies' grants… just sustain them. Can you imagine how, if that grant came before… let's say 10 years or from when we got freedom… if we started there. I don't know. Maybe I'm just saying it's not an easy thing because of economic situations, you know?
...So that money really played a very, very great role in my life. It gave me a relief.
So with Pro Helvetia, the process was very smooth. No delays. Professionalism. No calls in… just when they give you a deadline that it's gonna end.

[I didn't apply for any other government funds] Thank you Pro Helvetia for that gesture of thinking of a human life. Maybe I didn't know how to write proposals because I've never… sometimes… getting a response from those kind of proposals. NAC, all of them... That's why I have the young ones now... I have an office now of four young people who are helping me. You know, I've tried some funding. I also had the funding (…) [from] Concerts SA.... So my proposal is never passed in the spaces for grants. I don't know. Maybe it's writing or the way we say things, because it's got a language as well. And at the same time, some get lucky, some don't. So it's one of those things... life, you know.

[I did get to stream a gig from the Blue Room from the Digital Mobility Fund] I got to stream that one. I'm so grateful to have had that at least in my life… Pro Helvetia and that one… because those are the ones I can still remember, you know?

Learnings from the fund

Now I was able to think my terms and thoughts. I also thought I would save something so that this big band… all my dreams come true… I'm gonna save it for later, you know what I mean? Because whatever I do, it has to involve all provinces because I've just started to establish with musicians in KZN who know African Time music. I have the other ones in Joburg who played it all the time. I have the ones in Cape Town, the young ones who played it, and I have to have the ones in Limpopo in the future or in Free State. Because to play this music… that those are my terms and thoughts, not terms and conditions – because terms and conditions… they come take your car when you owe R10 000!

I was trying to save that funding because, you know, sometimes they say you do the things for your own… I was trying to save, whether it is a little half of it, you know… so that when it ends, at least I have some monies in savings so that I can start doing what's in my mind, you know… in terms of mixing the old, the youth. I have a big band that is instilled in my thoughts… to have African Time Big Band with all the young ones I've played with, they know that school. So ya, I was trying to save, but hey, the money was not save-able because of needs at home…

Thank you Pro Helvetia for that moment, for that time. We all felt special as musicians.

Changes in the post-Covid landscape

There are more young musicians now than the old ones. I think there are more venues now… [but it] depends on… you know, who gets more gigs and stuff like that. That's the amount I was telling you about…. that sustainment kind of amount. Not an income, but just to sustain, you know, your running around as well…. petrol and stuff, rehearsals, and this and that. ... In Joburg, of course, there are some spaces… Niki's, Untitled Basement and Doppio in Rosebank…. There's some little vibrancy coming, going on…

It's more or less the same for me as before Covid. It's the same cycle. There are more gigs, but you can't [always] be playing gigs around, you know… for me. Let me talk for myself. I don't wanna run in cycles in the same space, you need different spaces. Just to keep the momentum, you go to another space, Joburg… you know, if the spaces were like that… jazz club in the Eastern Cape, you take a Kombi… you go next to the Eastern Cape, somewhere around PE, you go to Cape Town… just cycling cycles, you know?

But now festivals and big concerts, they make a kind of a difference to one's life. If it comes five times a year, then why should you… you know? But sometimes it just comes once. Hence when we do certain projects that speak to the elders, heritage and stuff like that, we have to really consider these kinds of events very seriously and deeply...

I haven't toured in the last while. This is the first major show I'll be having at the Joy of of Jazz now, and probably something in Durban as well if it comes to the fore. I would love to tour… in all the spaces, Europe and here and wherever. I would love to do that with trios, quartets, big bands and stuff like that. And those are the thoughts, you know… if someone can say 'what

do you wanna do?' Then that is what I wanna do. Create a big band in a province, playing this music that I've learned from the elders. Because this music comes from the elders whom I call the majors up there and the majors down here, you know? There's bra Stompie Manana here, he's a major… He'll tell you about Hugh Masekela… So the stories… Bra Louis will tell you about Johnny Dyani. I'm around those spaces, you know? And Bra Tete will tell you about this… I'm around those spaces. The young ones will tell me about this... and I'm around all those spaces. It's good when you get those kinds of breaths, kind of information. For me, that's beauty, you know.

Thoughts towards the future

I'm seeing people doing good things, man. I mean, there are very great things there. {But when you do any project] just be true to yourself. It must have impact and meaningful repercussions when you do a project. I'm not an interview man. I'm not good at speaking. … Even my kids at home would say, 'Papa, when they ask you a question, you move away from that. You go somewhere else.'

Because really, record companies… we're coming from there. We used to share our music for record companies. The record company was there to… what's the word? Exposure. I don't like that word 'exposure'. I had that word when I was young. I'm done with that exposure. Exposure was supposed to be at 19… Sometimes some [photographer] will take your picture and post it and then you find his or her name in your heart, written in big number here… and then from there you'll find a writing saying, 'Copyright, me!' Like without… he never even asked me, you know. I wanna be asked. I've seen beautiful pictures of me around. I would've loved to make a t-shirt like Miles Davis kind of t-shirt… a Herbie t-shirt. Then 30% is mine as well, you know what I mean? Like record companies do as well. Just to be involved in that business-ness, [as I call it].

6.1 The pandemic and its long tail

The data reveals that consonant with their international peers, jazz musicians play across multiple genres – in the case of South Africans, genres include Afro-soul, traditional music and pop. Again, as their international peers do, they generate income from multiple activities.

Survey respondents were located mainly in urban centres across the country (Johannesburg, Cape Town and eThekwini) and were predominantly musicians with substantial experience who they had been professional musicians for 6 or more years.

The most common activities respondents report are performance-related (on instruments, vocals etc), reinforcing the established research finding that live performance pre-Covid was the single most important source of earnings, and explaining why the impact of the pandemic was so devastating on musicians. A substantial number also report income from composing. All respondents indicated a significant drop in income and changes in their earning activities during and post-Covid. Consistent with various reports by SACO in 2020 and 2021, in their grant applications musicians reported losing over 90% of their income, and that secondary income streams from teaching and digital work were not able to compensate adequately for the loss of performance-related income.

While government grant funding increased in the COVID-19 period, and 30% of applicants reported that COVID-19 relief mechanisms were available to them, the value of these, as low as R6,500 in the case of grants from the Department of Sport, Arts and Culture, could not sustain the livelihoods of the bulk of musicians.

Most respondents indicate that they engaged in new activities to generate additional income including teaching, working in different or additional genres, and creating new partnerships. 11% report earning income outside the music sector.

While there are variations in proportions of expenditure incurred by survey respondents based on their years of experience, in the main, respondents reported that transport to rehearsals and gigs, paying other musicians and purchasing and caring for equipment were

the most important expenditure items in 2019, and that these costs have risen to a damaging extent, impacting current activities and future growth.

As noted in prior South African research, and in common with much international research, there is a distinctly gendered experience of the music industry. Not only is the number of female respondents low (23%), women are largely represented in performance-related activities, particularly vocals. The gendered stereotype has long been that women can only be singers. Far fewer women report other (particularly instrumental, band leadership, technical or industry management) roles.

Of grave concern is the decrease in the number of musicians reporting music as their main source of income, the slow recovery rate of income levels after the pandemic, and the fact that 45% of respondents express a negative outlook for their career prospects in the music industry. In the face of the massive losses in income due to the pandemic, this is not surprising.

Overall, respondents were overwhelmingly positive about the experience of applying for and receiving grants from Pro Helvetia, indicating that it had saved sanity, saved lives, kept homes and families together and made music development activities possible. Respondents appreciated the respect, trust and efficiency with which they had been treated.

6.2 The changing landscape for working jazz musicians

The secondary analysis of grant application data submitted by South African jazz musicians awarded Relief Fund grants allowed the research team to understand considerably more about the income and expenditure patterns of musicians. In the genre of jazz, musicians with experience have earning potential consistent with median monthly income across the South African economy's salary landscape; similar to an intermediate-level skilled worker in a technical trade such as, for example, engineering or construction. Even for experienced performers at the top of the jazz profession, and despite popular stereotypes, it is no higher than that. The bulk of the musicians who participated in the survey were also not poverty-stricken - a common impression created in the media.

Expenditure trends for the group of recipients are fairly consistent with national averages. However, more is spent on communication, dependants and insurance. Of substantial

concern are the low levels of expenditure (3%) on retirement planning which is significantly below the 15-17% of monthly income recommended by financial institutions and retirement funds.

As discussed earlier (Chapter 4), survey respondents are now operating in a context of dramatically rising working costs, particularly the cost of transport. The survey provided open items for respondents to elaborate on this; they could discuss costs that had risen and any that might be falling or staying unchanged– to which the responses were, consistently, "everything" and "nothing" respectively.

Some respondents did mention single instances of costs that have reduced or remained unchanged. A third of these have very specific and individual reasons: they have purchased their own equipment, completed a course so no longer have to pay tuition fees, or similar. Two-thirds, however, cite their ability to leverage established relationships with other role-players, such as studio owners, equipment suppliers or fellow musicians, to control costs through negotiations or offering quid pro quo payments in kind. Such tactics are, of course, far less available to younger music entrants who have not yet grown their networks.

Respondents noted that audiences are now smaller and gigs fewer, as are the numbers of music 'hubs' – venues, rehearsal spaces and studios – that service multiple musicians, significantly slowing recovery. In this context, there is detailed discussion of how hubs in more affluent areas seem to have recovered more successfully, contributing to higher transport costs for musicians seeking to use or perform at these facilities.

The concept of "catching up" dominates many responses: paying debts, re-purchasing or hiring music equipment that has been sold, or simply re-establishing a firm financial and career footing. There is also explicit appreciation that music hubs face the same task, and that this is a reasonable element in their raised – even if now unaffordable – costs. Catching up also impacts working relationships. In response to the pandemic, musicians and their colleagues have changed roles and playing styles, necessitating a need for new or different working partners. Some previous co-players are said to have dropped out of music; some, tragically, died during the pandemic.

The pivot to digital has caught up with many musicians under conditions of lockdown isolation. Many now mention data or "online costs" as a music-making expense: a category the survey item did not originally name.

However, by far the most frequently discussed contextual factor – taken together with increased costs – is that gig fees have not increased and in many cases have fallen. As well as an absolute reduction in fees, respondents mention "a long waiting period before they pay you" and a growing tendency for booking agents or venues to request much smaller ensembles: "duo or trio, not a full band".

Figure 23: Wordcloud: the changed professional landscape.

(Source: survey responses)

6.3 Policy implications

6.3.1 For grant-makers

It is clear from both qualitative and quantitative responses that many of the problems encountered by recipients relate to the nature of music work as an activity (intermittent and project based; reliant on face-to-face interactions) and to the contextual constraints of the Covid and immediate post-Covid period. Both are problems shared by all musicians, almost everywhere in the world. In addition, the sometimes very moving anecdotes shared in qualitative responses reflect South Africa's specific socio-economic context: extreme inequality, a significant digital divide, and almost no alternative forms of social security.

In such contexts, grant-makers may believe that they have limited power to achieve anything beyond short-term mitigation. However, interventions at a contextual level, better integration between funding silos – for example, between funding for inner-city development or transport projects and music projects – and shifts in funding emphasis could make an important longer-term difference. Most importantly:

- Acknowledge "cost-of-working" elements – particularly project overheads, costs of rehearsal space and the opportunity costs of time spent in preparation for performance – in how budget heads for funding are defined and supported. Better supporting overheads helps sustain the artist for future projects, avoiding the situation described by many in the survey of constantly paying debts retrospectively.

- In particular, acknowledge the impact of transportation costs – the most prominent recurring theme in both South African and international research – and make artists' mobility, including local mobility, a focus.

- When performance projects are funded, develop benchmarks to ensure that funding takes account of rehearsal time and costs, and setting minimum standards for performance fees based on agreed industry benchmarks as a proportion of project income.

- Pay attention to the gender impact of projects: not by mechanically counting female or LGBTQIA+ heads (which, in the case of women, often has the stereotyping impact of swelling the chorus of female vocalists), but by encouraging projects to offer more gender-diverse opportunities and mentorship in non-stereotypical roles such as composing, instrumentalism, ensemble leadership, technical stage support and more.

- Develop more sustainable and targeted grant-making instruments beyond projects that can be implemented within a 12-month grant cycle, and consider developing instruments for enabling activities such as rehearsal spaces and equipment hire.

- In this context, only after very careful investigation, apply funding conditions demanding the short-term achievement of financial self-sustainability.

- Consider established models such as small grants for equipment refinancing and/or hire purchase schemes with suppliers to assist musicians to rebuild their assets.

- Note how the successes of the Jazz Relief Fund grants were supported by its simplified, transparent application processes, which minimised bureaucracy and dealt in forms of documentation more relevant to how the music industry operates.

6.3.2 For other policy-makers

- **Bridge the digital (and power-supply) divide**. This has been mentioned in multiple recent research reports[42]. It is the factor most heavily impacting on musicians in low-income and poorly resourced areas, constraining them from participating in the modern music economy.

- **Reform the tax regimes around musicians' tools of trade**. "Stringed instruments" (including guitars) and their accessories carry no import duty into South Africa: a remnant of past tax regimes favouring classical music endeavours. They are, however, subject to VAT at current rates. Other instruments, supplies and electrical/digital music and amplification equipment are all subject to both import duty (if imported) and VAT. The diverse and flexible uses made by musicians of their home rehearsal spaces make them difficult to reconcile with 'home office" tax provisions, and specialist advice may be required to achieve any benefits[43]. Given the importance allocated to tools of trade expenses by respondents, clarifying and easing the tax regimes applicable to musicians' tools of trade could support musicians' cost of working while – given the relatively small national population of professional musicians[44] – not causing significant damage to the fiscus.

- **Foster local instrument repair, tuning and manufacture**. In addition, providing incentives/ support for local enterprises manufacturing musical instruments and equipment could create employment and ease musicians' cost of working, as well as – albeit minimally – impacting on import/export balances.

- **De-silo transport planning.** Many of our respondents noted the rising costs faced by venues and other music hubs located in cities, as well as the costs of transport. This

[42] eg https://www.concertssa.co.za/digital-futures-two-taking-music-online-in-south-africa/

[43] https://www.sars.gov.za/wp-content/uploads/Ops/Guides/LAPD-Gen-G09-Tax-Guide-for-Small-Businesses.pdf

[44] SACO (2022) estimates that creative economy employment overall makes up 6% of South African employment overall, and does not disaggregate music jobs out of its UNESCO-defined 'festivals and celebration' category.

opens multiple policy options related to urban infrastructure and city planning: reforms related to zoning, rates, transport provision, urban planning, the night-time economy and more. These were fully discussed in an earlier Concerts SA report[45], which, from respondents' comments, remain pertinent to current dilemmas.

- **Support musicians' mental health.** One recurring theme in respondents' feedback was their own feelings of desperation and despair in the face of the 'cost of working' crisis. One noted, "Suicide feels like an option". This adds to a growing body of evidence - local and international[46] and including frequent news reports of artists' suicides - about the high cost of neglecting musicians' mental health. Facilitating access to psychological support and counselling forms another contextual plank for building sustainable music careers and merits funding in its own right.

6.4 Areas for future research

Retirement planning

Rather than simply proposing a "musicians' pension scheme" – a project that has DSAC support but has had no significant traction in recent years and at least two previous unsuccessful implementation attempts[47] – it would be useful to investigate the causes of musicians' lower-than-income-cohort spending on retirement planning. Setting up a scheme will have limited value if its intended beneficiaries do not enrol or are unable to contribute consistently. At present, the causes remain unclear. If spending on retirement simply represents too high an opportunity cost against other elements of expenditure, then the policy changes discussed above might make more income available to invest in retirement without establishing a special programme.

Gender exclusion

A consistent need in South African music research is to understand issues of gender exclusion in music, specifically as they impact on South Africa. This is a profoundly under-researched area. The Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) has already completed Phase

[45] It Starts With a Heartbeat, CSA 2016

[46] eg https://musiciansunion.org.uk/career-development/career-guides/musicians-wellbeing-guidance-pack/musicians-and-mental-illness-what-is-being-done-to-help#:~:text=The%20survey%20concluded%20that%2073,unpredictable%20nature%20of%20their%20work.

[47] https://www.sowetanlive.co.za/news/2006-11-10-social-security-fix-for-artists/

One of its own Women in Music Research[48] (a series of exploratory conversations) and, at time of writing, had just launched Phase Two: a more extensive survey. There is a need for proactive networking between music and gender researchers, data-sharing outside research silos, and intersectional conversations.

Geographical exclusion

Likewise, multiple studies have pointed out the uneven development of South African music between metropolitan, urban and rural areas. Research could illuminate and detail the causes of these inequalities; at present, the state of knowledge rests largely on a generic evaluation of cities as "better resourced". In what respects, and what specific interventions could make a difference, have not been investigated.

Opportunity costs and time

Only the MIA survey has so far considered time and opportunity cost as elements of music work, and that in a one-line – albeit useful – item. Disaggregating time spent/opportunity cost of different professional activities – practice, rehearsal, promotion, work-seeking and more – by different music populations (e.g., genre) would yield knowledge useful for refining the construct of a South African music career.

[48] https://www.musicinafrica.net/magazine/women-sa-feel-marginalised-and-unsafe-samro-study-finds

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