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FURTHER RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NATIONAL ARTS CONVENTION MUSIC REPORT

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INTRODUCTION:

The issues I would like to raise are not unique to music - I am not an academic, so please forgive the language: I'm a working musician who has been fortunate enough to have had more than 25 years experience in almost all aspects of SA music except formal education - I work with the technical, performance and production of 'alternative' music and organise for community associations and also commercial productions.

Traditional, academic interests seem to be reasonably covered in the NAI Music Working Group Report - I wish to include the following points which I believe need to be articulated and form part of the lobby:

- (1) Development of an 'own' SA music culture and the problems of 'imported pre-packaged culture' - ie: no clear distinction between Records and Music, Audio and Visual etc;
- (2) Technology - the profound changes that have/are taking place, especially in the area of digital technology;
- (3) Protection of musicians' rights, in relation to the new technology ie: broadcast, live performance, recordings, copyright etc, etc;
- (4) Training - not only in music appreciation, education etc, but in technical, administration, management, legal etc.
- (5) Performance - the perception that to 'make music' one has to invest in tons of equipment or have access to equipped venues;
- (6) Musical instruments - manufacture and development of an own industry, NOT all technology based; re: arts and crafts;
- (7) SA Music Archives - data base to collect, protect and catalogue all forms of 'popular' music performances and experimentation;
- (8) Funding - Subsidies, tour taxes, tape levy; record company and musical instrument and equipment importers' tax and their lack of direct involvement;
- (9) Piracy (related to the new technology, culture and education) - the 'industry' spends millions on targeting the cause and not the symptoms;
- (10) Exchange - between country's - not just academic or cultural - ordinary working musicians from both rural and city.

FURTHER TO THE WORKING GROUPS REPORT:

There seems to be two distinct extremes of (so called) 'music culture' in South Africa - the 'academic' schooled music approach on the one hand, and the 'industry' on the other - neither of which, in my opinion, is addressing the problems related to contemporary music / popular music and SA musicians becoming part of the international music community.

Music is the most popular of all the arts - certainly the most accessible; it is also the most exploited and least represented; it generates the most money; it draws the biggest crowds; it is wide open for abuse by politicians who sell policy and business who sell product.

In terms of current SA law, a musician is a vagrant at worst and a contract labourer at best. There is almost no 'public respect' for 'local' music or musicians - academic and industry interests have an appalling top-down attitude - the musician is as much to blame as anyone for this confusing and unacceptable state of musical affairs.

The RADIO and RECORD INDUSTRY has been part of this country's problem/fusion that now exists - not only for their failure to see music as anything other than a 'product'

They should now be investing some of their massive pastto music for all the profits they have made at our expense.

The irony of South Africa's popular music industry, is that we have been one of the few countries (some say the only country) whose (so called) 'traditional' or 'ethnic' music is it's most popular commercial music ie: since the 30's/40's our (so called) folk music has been the most commercially viable. This ofcourse did not reflect on the 'hit parades' which were the exclusive domain of imported and/or eurocentric forms/styles of music.