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2010-09-06
http://hdl.handle.net/10539/8614

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WIRED FOR SOUND: AN INVESTIGATION INTO SOUTH AFRICAN LIVE MUSIC PERFORMANCE AND THE JOHANNESBURG LIVE MUSIC SCENE

by Kristel Birkholtz (MMUS Thesis)

ABSTRACT

The Development Works Report (2004:28) described the role played by live music performers in the sub-Saharan region as a military force, a 'musician corps' of foot soldiers out in the field of the music industry. Musicians have a vital role to play in defining the industry in which they work. The phrase 'musician corps' (2004:28) implies a well-trained, well-informed body of musicians, prepared for the terrain of the music industry. Locally this corps was unfortunately a fragmented body of soldiers, often ill equipped for its task. As a means to better understand how the South African musician corps was performing this vital role of growing the local music industry, research was conducted via interviews and surveys among local musicians in order to collaborate the experience of local performers. Other sources consulted in this research process included local music business conferences and reports and literature sources relevant to live music studies.

This research aimed to uncover the state of the local musician corps, to assess the level of industry-relevant skills and knowledge that are required for effective troops and to reveal the attitudes and activities of local musicians. Through this process of data gathering, the question that this research aimed to uncover was whether or not local live performers were sufficiently skilled to develop the live music sector.

The majority of the research findings were based on interviews and surveys conducted in the city of Johannesburg.