

**FOREWORD TO *DIGITAL FUTURES TWO: TAKING MUSIC ONLINE IN SOUTH AFRICA*
MARK ROSIN CEO OF SAMRO 2022**

Shortly after assuming my role at SAMRO in 2020, I started working with Concerts SA. This was a month before COVID 19 shook the world, uprooting our lives and dreams with its awful impact. Live events were banned as the citizens of our nations were placed under lockdown restrictions. South Africa's live-music sector was simply shut down, and the professionals in the sector were left to fend for themselves. A great number of our composers, who are also performing musicians, battled to eke out a living, let alone survive. Our industry is still battling, with many having sold equipment, surviving on the generosity of family and friends, and this is where Concerts SA played a catalytic role.

Concerts SA could not, and would not, abandon its mission to encourage live music in southern Africa and, like so many projects, investigated hybrid models for its programmes. Together with funders, SAMRO and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Concerts SA pivoted its activities. It was shortly after the lockdown embargoed live events when Concerts SA published a newsletter that brought hope and some pointers to artists, showing them a way to continue their work, and fix some administration while stuck in their homes. Before long, Concerts SA published its research report *Digital Futures? Live Streaming in South Africa (2020)*. Although a snapshot survey, it offered a trapdoor to escape the lockdown, and ushered in the Concerts SA Digital Mobility Fund (DMF).

Through the DMF, Concerts SA offered micro-grants to music professionals to get up, get creating and get online. This initiative helped them better understand the value of documenting their work and placing it online. It also helped them better understand how they could generate incomes from streams. Over the past two and half years, well over 3,000 musicians, technicians and music support staff benefited from Concerts SA's injection of micro-grants into our ailing sector. This played an important role in keeping some momentum in the live music industry through the debilitating impact of COVID-19. As SAMRO, we benefited from the research and have applauded Concerts SA's continuing effort to stimulate and grow the live music circuit in southern Africa. We increased our investment into CSA projects and programmes, helping Concerts SA to continue to play a vital role in the initiative to keep the SA live music industry operating.

I am both impressed and proud of SAMRO's contributions and our association with Concerts SA. More than 70% of all CSA grant recipients were SAMRO members and the project has made considerable inroads to helping the live music sector improve its levels of professionalism, compliance, and resilience. SAMRO money was used to fund only SAMRO members, while the Norwegian funding was used to facilitate a broader music community.

This second volume (2022) of *Digital Futures* research is an analytical look at the complex industry of South African music rights in the context of the digital domain. It expands on already important findings and helps us to project a way forward in the fast-changing world of music. It also provides insight and resources to SAMRO and the broader music industry. This ties in with our corporate social investment objective to improve the knowledge base of the music business in South Africa.

In 2023 SAMRO celebrates 10 years of the Concerts SA programme. As the main source of

income for many of South Africa's composers, we consider live music an essential component of the music ecosystem. Without composers' works being performed, there would be no way for their work to be heard, and without performance of their works, there would be no royalties for SAMRO to collect. Therefore, it is strategic and not just socially responsible for SAMRO, as the leading collector of music performance licences in Africa, to continue to encourage the performance of our members' works.

This year, we celebrate CSA's success, and to continue SAMRO's high impact corporate responsibility and social investment to our sector, we have committed to a continued three-year partnership in support of the Concerts SA project, building on our decade of investment alongside the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Mark Rosin,
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