

## In tough economic times, jazz comes to the party.

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For the past 7 years, the Cape Town International Jazz Festival has played to full houses - no mean feat when capacity is 33500 people. And according to research into the festival's economic impact since 2009, the event has contributed more than R2billion to the Western Cape's GDP.

According to the latest research undertaken, the Western Cape economy enjoyed benefit to the value of R457 million in 2012. Nationally South Africa's GDP saw benefit to the tune of R860 million. The study also indicates that many of the festinos who attend the festival return year after year. And as a direct result of the festival, jobs were created for 2714 staff and numerous service providers, both short term and fulltime.

The Tourism Research in Economic Environs and Society (TREES) at North West University, conducted research to determine the economic impact of the festival through the spending patterns of the visitors. They found that festinos travel to Cape Town mainly for the festival and spend most of their money on flights, accommodation, followed by food and restaurants, and transport to the festival.

Developing markets internationally are one of our focal points and therefore the strategic importance of a mega event like this cannot be overstated. The research shows an annual trend of visitors attendance from the US, UK, Canada, Portugal, Netherlands, Brazil, China, Nigeria, Kenya, Mozambique, Lesotho, Botswana, Congo amongst others. Cultural tourism plays an important role in our host city.

Of course, this is all the more significant and surprising since the festival's economic success actually bucks the generally negative trend within the global economy. And encouragingly, the economic research also indicates that the quantifiable benefits of the festival extend beyond the city's metropolitan and provincial boundaries to the country as a whole.

The CTIJF has been a runaway success since the first festival in 2000 but it was when the event moved from the Good Hope Centre to the much larger CTICC that attendance figures surged.

espAfrika CEO and Festival Director Rashid Lombard says, "Thanks to the incredible support of our audiences, the festival has sold out in advance for a good few years now. And as festinos know, the CTICC just cannot accommodate more people at the moment. Fortunately plans are being finalised for expanding the venue's capacity. And this means many more festinos will be able to join in Africa's Grandest Gathering."

Along with opportunities for musicians, the festival's media coverage offers a level of exposure rarely seen in a single event in South Africa. In fact, with 350 accredited journalists from 17 countries covering the festival, the event is global. espAfrika's marketing efforts in collaboration with 10 publications, 8 channels and 9 radio stations has seen media recovery at R328million in 2012. And of course within the venue itself, the stimulating festival atmosphere provides a genuinely inspired marketing space for brands.

"Like any worthwhile endeavour, The CTIJF takes ongoing investment," says espAfrika director Billy Domingo. "Now 13 years down the line we have a festival that has evolved into a powerful entertainment brand - with a solid developmental character. And with the expansion of the venue, the evolution continues."

On the question of future growth and investment, Minister Alan Winde says, "The Western Cape Government is proud to be a supporter of the CTJIF. We would like to see the festival grow even bigger, attract more tourists to the Western Cape and increase its music offering for the public. The Western Cape Department of Economic Development and Tourism will allocate R161.7 million over the medium-term to aid in the expansion construction costs for the CTICC. This is money well invested that will benefit the Western Cape, and the country as a whole."

Cape Town Mayor Patricia De Lille believes that "The Cape Town International Jazz Festival is a national treasure that creates thousands of jobs for local people and attracts tourists with diverse backgrounds from different countries. These jobs and the amount of money spent by jazz fans during the weekend of the festival are a major boost to the economy of the city, province and country. The success of the CTIJF over the years, as witnessed in its R2billion contribution to the Western Cape's GDP since 2009 is a testament of its significant contributor to the region's economic prosperity."

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