

Bad Weather Rocks the Daisies

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Thanks to rain and floods in the Western Cape, the much-loved Rocking the Daisies music festival, normally held at Cloof Wine Estate in Darling and Supersport Park in Centurion in the first week of October, was postponed to November 17-19 last year. Pulling off this shift was no small task, but the dynamic team at Bad Weather and their technical partners secured equipment amidst the peak season and once again ensured an amazing event.



Rocking the Daisies came into existence in 2006, and although it might seem like just yesterday, the brand is now 18 years old with only two missed years due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Back in the day, Andrew Bosman and Jonathan Bandli from Bad Weather worked on the festival in various roles. However, the real magic began in 2016 when the festival organisers approached them to launch the Twos Up Hip Hop Stage.

Reflecting on the unique name - Bad Weather - Jonathan fondly recalls, "We simply wanted a name that would stand out as a conversation piece and lead to dynamic discussions, avoiding anything too literal or overly technical. We aimed for something that piqued curiosity and intrigue, opening the door to more meaningful conversations and interest in what we have to offer. Since our company is rooted in creativity, we sought a name around which we could build interest and a distinctive brand identity. The name emerged during a brainstorming session, and we ran with it from there."



The name Bad Weather not only stuck but weathered both fair and rainy days with equal charm. What began as a modest stage at Rocking the Daisies has, over the years, blossomed into the festival organizers entrusting them with more stages to oversee and produce. Since 2018, Bad Weather has been the go-to technical production and design studio for the entire festival, spanning four stages in Cape Town and the fifth in Johannesburg, held on the Sunday of the

Daisies weekend.



Their role involves designing stages in collaboration with brands, selecting and managing all technical suppliers, coordinating technical elements for every artist on every stage, and staffing each stage with carefully chosen key personnel such as project managers, lighting directors, visual jockeys, stage managers, and audio teams. Jonathan notes, “We have an incredible production team that helps oversee suppliers and crew. It’s a tall order, but with a great team, it’s not only achievable but often a lot of fun.”



There wasn’t much choice but to postpone the festival. Jonathan explains, “The site was already under construction when the storm hit. I returned from another event in Johannesburg, and Andrew and I immediately went to the site straight from the airport, two weeks before the scheduled show, to assess the damage.” He continues, “The site was in no condition to accommodate a crowd, let alone build any stages. Roads were washed away, arenas were submerged, and the land damage would have made it impossible to ensure a great and safe experience. Thankfully, our suppliers were fantastic and did their best to help us rearrange the new dates. While all technical vendors could accommodate the change, we lost some freelancers to other bookings and had to rebuild some of the teams. Honestly, the most challenging aspect of the move was securing gear due to the industry’s high demand, especially since the new date fell in the midst of busy season rather than at the beginning.”

The technical companies overseeing the different stages at the Cape Town leg of the festival (kindly refer to acknowledgements at end of story) featured Bad Weather Productions, The Gearhouse Group, Ultra Events, Eastern Acoustics, Extreme Events, CCPP Group, Intello Acoustics, Ampere, and S-LED. In Johannesburg, the companies commissioned included The Gearhouse Group, Stage Effects, Blue Array, and Bad Weather.



Every stage at the festival featured MA Lighting, with a line-up that included a dot2, grandMA2-full size, three grandMA2 lights, a grandMA2 onPC command wing, two grandMA2 ultra-lights, and a grandMA3 full size. Jonathan is thankful to Patrick Manicom from DWR Distribution, the distributor for MA Lighting in South Africa, for his presence on-site. “This was a massive peace of

mind as the elements out on the farm are often so hard on the gear, and to know that we had technical support, direct from the distributor was just amazing. It went a long way with the international teams and gave our operators peace of mind knowing that someone was around to assist if needed.”

These days, when it comes to audio, DiGiCo is always on riders at Rocking the Daisies and was the standard FOH and monitor console for the Johnnie Walker Jungle Stage in both cities. “Adding to the fact that Stormzy’s engineers needed dedicated hardware with their ask being an Avid S6L at FOH and a Quantum 338 at Monitors, we had to have even more consoles around, and with the date change and the number of consoles used during that time period, we had to provide them with a Quantum 338 in Cape Town and an SD5 in Johannesburg.”

The right gear is extremely important. “We have to provide our operators with the right tools to deliver the standards we ask, meet international rider requirements and balance that all within a budget! These often conflict, so making sure we choose wisely and focus on necessary tools first and the ‘nice to haves’ after, gives us a good balance,” Jonathan explains.

Despite working on Rocking the Daisies year in and year out, Bad Weather never just goes through the motions. “We’re in a constant battle to achieve excellence, aiming to try to improve all areas each year. We feel a great responsibility to represent South Africa in a professional and capable light to all the international teams who come to the festival. We take the feedback of crew, suppliers and the festival seriously and ensure we are making a better experience for them while also trying to improve on stage design, gear optimization, festival site layout for user experience and better festival noise isolation. Something we keep top of mind is how it will look in the photos and on Instagram. This is how the festival will gain more sponsorship and grow, so we lean into that and do our best to help the festival and sponsors achieve their goals.”



It’s all about the right man (or gal) in the right place to deliver top-notch performances, and in between the friendship and kindness towards one another, there’s a professional approach that ensures everyone has the same vision and that people such as the touring international lighting designers want to return to South Africa.

From day one, Bad Weather initiates a production share folder for every artist on every stage. This includes details on pixel rasters for video, connection types, resolutions, PSR files and detailed paperwork with patch info and console versions for lighting and detailed audio specs for

the festival stage as well as a personalized backline and rider response document per artist.

Creating something on this scale requires an entire army, but it's not just about having the numbers. "Everyone needs to see and believe in the vision and direction we're striving for," says Jonathan. "While this holds for every show, I truly believe that our team invests their heart and soul into Rocking the Daisies. Each team member and supplier consistently goes above and beyond, collectively working towards the shared goal of success, and I cannot express my gratitude to them enough."

The sunshine on Rocking the Daisies is the student intern program run by Bad Weather, for audio and film students, in collaboration with SAE in Cape Town. "We provide real working experience to students who not only work on some of the biggest festival stages but work under the leadership of the best crew and stage managers in South Africa," Jonathan beams. "We are so proud to see so many students from previous years get picked up into work placements because of the network formed on site. We even brought some students back from last year's team as paid crew at Rocking the Daisies to lead this year's students. We believe in creating a real valuable experience for them and hope this can funnel passion and more skilled labour into the live events sector over time."



Technical Supplier Acknowledgements:

Cape Town Stages

Johnnie Walker Jungle CPT

Structures, Rigging and Lighting: Gearhouse Group

Audio: Eastern Acoustics

LED: S-LED

Cameras and broadcast: Bad Weather Productions

Maybelline Station

Structures: Extreme Events

Rigging and Lighting: CCPP Group

Audio: Intello Acoustics

LED: S-LED

Heineken House

Structures: Gearhouse Group

Lighting and Audio: Ultra Events

LED: S-LED

Savanna Beach Club

Structures, Scenic, Lighting, Audio: Ampere

LED: S-LED

Johannesburg Festival

Johnnie Walker Jungle JHB

Structures: Gearhouse Group

Rigging, Lighting and LED: Stage Effects

Audio: Blue Array

Cameras and broadcast: Bad Weather Productions

Photos courtesy Rocking the Daisies