

TODAY

EL STAR TAKES ON MALE DOMINATED MUSIC INDUSTRY

■ Sheree O' Brien's passion the key to her success

By Sisonke Labase

Sheree O' Brien is Ms Giggs Superstar to many but she is also a household name on her own. With her sharp wit and savvy attitude she has made a mark in the South African House music industry.

Born in East London, she learned her love for music from her father and his mean vinyl collection.

"Every Sunday morning my dad would wake up and take out his vinyl's, play them loud and sing along. I would always join in. I saw his pure joy and later realised that I felt the same," says Sheree.

She got into the music industry as a dancer and started doing events promotions in East London and before she knew it her career in the music scene fast tracked.

"I started out dancing in a group and took over the management and promotions of it.

"Strangely, promoting talent came very naturally to me. I approached a local club owner to start bringing artists to EL and that's

when I basically created an entertainment industry in the EC where it was non-existent,"....

Sheree was head hunted by Africa's biggest house music recording company Soul Candi Records to become a marketing manager after her artist management and events management company Splakavellis Management made waves in the Province.

"Of course joining the company was a massive career boost, I was the first female marketing manager of the biggest house label in Africa! It was a big deal," she beams.

Sheree has left Soul Candi Records and is solely concentrating on her company Splakavellis Management managing artists such as Giggs Superstar and RJ Benjamin. She has been in the music industry for a decade and has held her own in a male dominated scene.

When asked how she's done it, she answered: "Pure passion!"

The industry is cut-throat and it takes a special person to actually succeed and have longevity in this

industry. I honestly would have bailed on it a long time ago if I didn't love it as much as I do," she says.

She isn't just a business woman she is also a mother to her son Taylor. She manages her busy career and being a mother thanks to her supportive family.

"I am fortunate to have an awesome support system with my son. His dad is very hands on and so is my entire family so it is a huge help. It's always been a juggling act," she laughs.

Sheree recently celebrated her birthday in East London right here at home at the Buffalo Park presidential suite.

She's inspired by God and her son Taylor.

"My biggest inspiration to succeed is God. I feel like when He blesses you with a talent you owe it to Him to use it and use it positively.

"My son, who inspires me to just be the best version of a human being," says Sheree.



SHEREE O' BRIEN

Spreading the word through music

By Pozisa Majavu

God loving Skhulu Base from Ziphunzana, East London aims to empower the youth and spread the word of God through his debut album, *Ndipheleke Mkhululi Wami*.

In this 10 tracked album, the 30-year-old features Siphe Mditshane as well as Siyamankela Mbangi and he produced it together with Mlungisi Mgonele.

The gospel star, who is originally from Xobho, KwaZulu Natal grew up in a poor God fearing family, "when my father passed away in 1999 I had to grow fast as the first born and look after my family.

"Life was difficult and we did not have shoes and would wear shoes we made on our own from old ones."

Skulu's way to success has not been a bed of roses as he dropped out of school in grade two at Hill-

top Primary School and could not further his studies as life became difficult after his father's death.

He started singing in 1999 at the age of 15 and as a boy he played sticks and did Zulu dance (indlamu).

Skulu's music is inspired by his own life experience, the hardships he had been through, and he uses it as a way to communicate and praise the Lord.

The gospel singer found out that people are inspired by his music as they could relate to it and he wants to spread the word of God and touch people's hearts.

"I want it to change people's way of thinking and give hope to the hopeless, even if one wanted to commit suicide to change their minds.

"In future fans should expect more as God worked miracles in this album," said the star.

He did not study music, before singing he did karate. He plans to move forward with his career until Jesus returns.

Skhulu speaks Zulu, Sotho, Xhosa and a little English and believes it is of high importance to be multilingual as an artist because music is a message that has to be delivered to people so it is important to pass it in one's language.

The coarse voiced singer wants to tell the youth that life has challenges and without God there is going to be more hardships and they need to come to Him.

The father of one was married in 2007. He had been challenged in getting funds for his music and musical instruments.

He promotes his music on the streets and music shows when there are South African music giants like Hlengiwe Mhlaba.

