



## Press Release

### **AND SO A STAR IS BORN!** **WESTERN CAPE'S JASON SCHAAP IS THE WINNER** **OF** **THE BACKSTAGE EMI SUPERSTAR SEARCH 2005**

The votes are in! Last week e.tv viewers acted as the fifth judge and they helped make the crucial decision via a public vote line about who should win the Backstage EMI Superstar Search 2005. The funky finale was screened last night, and 21-year-old Jason, of George, has won the half-a-million-Rand 12-track CD exclusive artist recording agreement with EMI.

"I'm speechless, blessed, and happy. This competition is the first brick in the foundation of building my dream," said Jason, who will record the CD over the next three months and who will also perform at next year's live Backstage AIDS benefit concert.

The runners up were Malika Davids, 19, from Gauteng and Sibusiso Mthembu, 19, from Kwa-Zulu Natal. The red-carpet ceremony featured MC Ziggy (Charl Timotheus) and a dream dance team of Backstage dancers, headed by Lorcia Cooper (Charmaine Jacobs from Backstage).

Jason's interpretation of "Sondela", by Ringo and "She's The One", by Robbie Williams were the songs that won him the viewers' final vote. He sang these two songs on the finale night, as well, backed on stage by the band, Voodoo Child.

Voice coach Nicholas Nicolaidis (who has performed as a soloist with the Symphony Choir of Johannesburg, Bach Choir of Johannesburg and Drakensberg Boys' Choir School) worked intensively with the nine semi-finalists and final three. "Jason has a wonderful vocal range. I saw in his eyes that he takes his singing very seriously. He's not scared of putting in work and effort into preparation and this will pay off for him." (Jason, if you remember, hitch-hiked from George to Cape Town to take part in the auditions).

Nicholas added: "I thought the contestants were very inspiring and enthusiastic, and it was an interesting mix across the board. We had a wonderful spread from around the country, and it was great to see the diverse talent this country has to offer.

"They're passionate about their singing. I think many of them have wonderful talent and should be proud of their South African heritage. Some of the contestants shouldn't rely so much on overseas/western influences. Sibusiso really expresses himself well, and I was struck by Malika's energy. She also has a wonderful ear, and good intonation."

Fact File on Jason:

His Motto: "Always be yourself. Always do things your way. Share with those who don't have anything, and love your friends and family."

The Most Famous Person He'd Like To Meet: Nelson Mandela.

His Greatest Ambition In Life: To provide for those in need.

Musical Instruments He Plays: Guitar and Piano

Favourite Music: Pop music

Favourite Musician: Zola

In August, e.tv and EMI announced the launch of the competition and the call for entries for Hip Hop, Kwaito or Pop singers. Over 2000 entries poured in and for nine weeks the Superstar production, technical and events crews travelled by car, by bus and by plane, to every province in the country to hold auditions.

Says Heather Gordon, the director of the Superstar Search, "In every corner of the land we discovered true, talented musicians hungry for a chance to be noticed. And Backstage's Grace Mahlaba (Vulindela college principal, Ipeleng Theledi, who was one of the competition judges) was welcomed and embraced with open arms wherever she visited, proving that her practical, warm and wise TV character has struck a chord with entire communities.

"EMI/CCP's Marketing and Promotions Director and competition judge, Mike Maswanganye, found artists he would like to sign independently from the competition (as they fit a specific niche within his recording market). It was a grand opportunity for him to put young talent in contact with the network of producers that he has scattered throughout the country.

"Some people drove hundreds of kilometres to get to the venues. We kept the format informal and friendly - it was about encouraging and nurturing the talent - not crushing it before it has time to grow. In auditions we generally allowed all the contestants to watch one another and give encouragement, and family and friends were also allowed to sit in if there was space in the audition venue."

Malebo Phage (Head of Local Productions, e.tv and competition judge) says he was humbled by the sacrifices individuals made to be at the auditions. "My wish is for the music houses to recognise their blood, sweat, and sacrifices, and reward the country by investing more money in upcoming talent."

And in chorus, Monde Twala, Superstar Search executive producer, says: "It's been great to have been part of a drive to unearth new talent. The show has highlighted the need to develop those areas around South Africa, which never get much exposure and opportunities."

**For exclusive on stage and behind-the-scenes photos of an emotionally overwhelmed Jason, please contact:**

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