



## Press Release

### **THE BACKSTAGE EMI SUPERSTAR SEARCH 2005** **CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR CAPE TOWN CONTESTANTS!**

We're getting closer and closer to the semi-finals of the Backstage EMI Superstar Search, and last night we flighted the seventh episode of this exciting show, profiling the talent we found in the Mother City. The Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal are the remaining two provinces we have yet to visit, and then the nine regional contestants will come together in Johannesburg to take part in the nail-biting semi-final which will screen on Sunday, December 4 at 6.05pm.

The winner of the Northern Cape auditions is Andrea Van Der Merwe, and this is what she had to say when she spoke to us this morning:

"I am completely overwhelmed and I hope that my being in the semi-finals will be an inspiration to the other aspiring singers in the Northern Cape. I want to thank everyone who voted for me - my parents, my colleagues and my friends. I didn't expect anything, but I was nervous before the show last night... I was so excited when I found out I'd won, and now it's time to start practising!"

The Capetonians were more than ready for our visit, and approximately 400 contestants and their family and friends crowded into the hotel, where we had the auditions. Most of the contestants sang original hip-hop, rap and R&B (specifically Alicia Keys, Whitney Houston and Mariah Carey).

The judges made it clear that this was the toughest round yet for them to judge because of the number of talented, brilliant young singers who'd entered. All in all, it was a very long day for everyone involved - the crew started work at 6am, the auditions began at 9am and the final three regional semi-finalists were announced only at 4.30pm. The camaraderie, however, amongst contestants was unmistakable.

Unfortunately, two contestants with good voices were disqualified because of their age - one was too young and one too old. Sonja (whose beautiful voice almost brought Ipeleng to tears) is 45, and Bentley is 16. (This competition is only for an individual performer aged between 18 - 28).

Some contestants came from Atlantis (one hour away from Cape Town) and others from as far away as George, all of them eager to win the ultimate prize - a recording deal from EMI worth half a million Rand.

And without further ado, here are the three Cape Town semi-finalists: Jason Schaap, Tammi-Leigh Swartz and Taariq Mohamed. When Taariq found out he was one of the three semi-finalists he said, "I just knew I was going to kick the script." Jason hitchhiked from George to Cape Town to make the auditions, and Tammi-Leigh Swartz said that if Hollywood were to make a movie about her life, she'd want Pam Andrews to play the part, because "in a weird way we look alike".

All about Jason:

Age: 21

Studying: Matric

Favourite Music: Pop music

Favourite Musicians: Zola

Hobbies: Playing soccer, practising his vocal skills and reading books

Quote: " I used to sing in church and at home in the bathroom. One day I'd love to drive my dream car, manage my own studio, and develop young talent. In the music industry, my ambition is to get a recording deal and becoming a best-selling artist."

All about Tammi-Leigh:

Age: 18

Studying: Matric

Favourite Music: Jazz, R&B, Hip Hop and Gospel

Favourite Musician: Marques Houston

Hobbies: Dancing

Quote: "My greatest ambition in life is to be a successful choreographer and actress, and I'd love to build an arts centre in Cape Town. I learnt to sing at church and at school. If I had three wishes they would be to win this competition, to dance and to be happy."

Fact File on Taariq:

Age: 19

Favourite Music: Hip hop

Favourite Musician: 50 Cent

Hobbies: Rapping

Quote: "My greatest ambition in life is to be the biggest hip hop star in South Africa. I'd love to build a studio, and go double platinum."

This coming Sunday's Superstar Search show (November 20) will reveal whom the judges - and the viewers at home - chose from Cape Town as the regional representative who will go through to the semi-finals. Then watch our Port Elizabeth auditions.

**Remember: Viewers act as the "5th" judge and can vote any day, any time, directly after the Sunday show until the following Friday evening, after which there's the final count.**

**Watch the Backstage EMI Superstar Search and you could be a winner. Each week DVDs and CDs are up for grabs. The weekly winner's names go into a draw, and at the end of the competition, one lucky person will win a trip for two, to a South African destination of choice. You just have to SMS your favourite contestant's name to this number. BSS... then the contestant's name... followed by 35171.**

**For more information and photos of the Western Cape regional winners, please contact:**

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