



Press Release

WE HAVE THE THREE FINALISTS! **THE BACKSTAGE EMI SUPERSTAR SEARCH 2005**

They came from far and wide, by car, by plane and finally, by limo to Johannesburg...

The nine regional finalists arrived last week at Sandton's Balaika Hotel for the semi-finals of The Backstage EMI Superstar Search 2005, which aired last night. In a hard-core round of briefings, technical and production rehearsals, vocal classes and costume fittings and grooming, the contestants, all competing for the EMI recording contract worth half a million Rand, came together to compete for a place in the finals which will air on Sunday December 11 at 6.05pm.

The judges also brought back a wild card contestant from Durban, Sibusiso Mthembu, and so ten contestants battled it out last night, for that coveted final three spot.

And here are the three finalists: Malika Davids from Gauteng, Sibusiso Mthembu from Kwa-Zulu Natal and Jason Schaap from the Western Cape.

The judges, Grace Mahlaba as Ipeleng Theledi (In character as the principal of Backstage); Malebo Phage (Head of Local Productions, e.tv) Mike Maswanganye (Marketing and Promotions Director EMI/CCP), and guest judge Vusi Leeuw - artist and repertoire manager for EMI, were highly impressed by the performances and had the following to say:

Grace: "The contestants have blown me away right from the start."

Malebo: "They're very talented, and all ten have a bright future ahead, but three had to be chosen."

Mike: "It's going to be very difficult to choose a winner out of the final three. For EMI, any one of those three will be a hit for us."

Vusi: "They are brilliant. And it's proof that South Africa is full of talent. As author Chinua Achebe said, 'Every day there is one star that is born, yet the beautiful ones are not born yet.' "

This is what the three finalists had to say upon hearing that they'd made it to the finals:

Sibusiso: "I'm very excited and surprised... what can I say? Everyone was good."

Malika: "I'm shocked and overwhelmed. When they made the announcement, I felt dizzy. I felt like I was in a dream."

Jason: "I'm happy.... of course! I'm excited and I can't wait for the finals. Only then are they going to see the real Jason."

The judges have made their selection of the top three contestants, but the viewing public has the final say in who will win this exciting talent show. Viewers can vote any day, any time, after the show until this Thursday (December 8), after which there will be the final count. The winner will be announced on Sunday, December 11, during the final episode of this popular series.

All viewers have to do to vote for their favourite contestant is this: SMS BSS... then the contestant's name... followed by 35171.

This is the last week that viewers can win DVDs and CDs, simply by participating in the Backstage EMI Superstar Search. The weekly winners' names will go into a draw next week, and 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 show shots and behind-the-scenes photos of the three finalists, please contact:

Alissa Baxter
e.tv Publicity Writer
Tel : 011 537 9496
Fax : 011 537 9380