

White Star steps in to keep the local beat alive!

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Iconic maize brand launches ground-breaking campaign to support local music and artists



Bongeziwe Mabandla

White Star, South Africa's favourite maize meal brand, has collaborated with the South African music industry to keep the beat alive during the ongoing Covid-19 lockdown. With large public events and gatherings – including concerts and gigs – having been prohibited, musicians are unable to perform and the music industry is buckling under the strain.

Enter a unique initiative called Shay'na ngeWhite Star (Shine with White Star), a campaign specially designed to enable local artists to shine their light into the lockdown gloom and beyond. It's also intended to give South Africans an opportunity to sing and dance wherever they find themselves – in the lounge, in the kitchen, in the yard or even when they're out doing essential shopping.

"White Star has a long and joyful relationship with local music," says marketing manager, Mokhele Makhothi. "So, as the impact of the lockdown on performing artists – especially emerging artists – has led to artists having little or no opportunities to perform, we wanted to do something meaningful that would create opportunities for them to earn a living through performance and at the same time lighten the mood among South Africans in this uncertain and stressful time."

The Shay'na ngeWhite Star experience kicked off with a performance of artists at the Metro FM's annual *I am Woman* event on 28 August. The collaboration with Metro FM has been revved up with a 13-week series on the Sunday Soul Therapy with Msizi Shembe, which started on 6 September at 1pm, where the station plays strictly local music for an hour. Listeners will also have the opportunity to download and stream music for free, as well as enter competitions and win fabulous prizes.

The hour-long show not only features a uniquely South African playlist, but will also give local musicians an opportunity to perform live on-air and to re-connect with their audiences. Some of the top-charting and hitmakers to benefit from this include the likes of **Langa Mavuso, Ami Faku, Bongeziwe Mabandla, Simmi, Encore, Soul Kulture** and many more who're still to come.

“Most importantly, musicians and singers will benefit from being featured on the playlists as well as from the streaming and downloads of their music,” says Makhothi. “The idea behind the campaign is that the more South Africans listen to and support local music, the more local content will be played on radio and TV, helping all our favourite artists to ride out the Covid-19 storm.”

White Star has been a supporter of the local music industry right from the start. In 1999, the very first White Star TV commercial was shot in the style of a music video and its jingle is now entrenched in popular culture. Since then, music has become integral to White Star’s identity, with the brand being aligned with popular music shows such as Macufe, DrumBeat and the Moretele Park Tribute Concert.

“Food and music go together naturally,” says Makhothi, “so it’s natural for us to launch an initiative like this and to make a real difference to both individual artists and the music industry as a whole.

“We are also taking this opportunity to appeal to other stations to add more South African content to their playlists and for TV shows to feature videos and live performances by local artists. Music is woven into our culture and every show, every streaming and every download will contribute towards keeping our vibrant and exceptional music industry afloat.

“Shay’na ngeWhite Star has been created to bring the beat back into our lives and we call on all South Africans to move to the beat and shine. Local is lekker. Let’s celebrate that.”

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