

■ SOUNDBITES

ASHLINN GRAY

Singer Songwriter & Actress



“Courage is the most important of all the virtues because without courage, you can’t practice any other virtue consistently.” – Maya Angelou.

“When life throws you lemons, coat them with sugar.” – Ashlinn Gray



South Africa is abundant with talent, but oftentimes many don't get the chance to showcase their talent. It's not necessarily a lack of trying, but rather a lack of opportunities. What makes Ashlinn Gray a diamond in the rough, is not only her impeccable talent as a singer songwriter but the fact that she never gives up trying, risking it all to make her dreams come true.

“Time is my biggest enemy,” she says. “It really is a struggle to keep my school work up to date as well as find time to grow my career. I work seven days a week but even then I battle.”

Not only is it a struggle between music and school, but the ability to balance time spent with family and friends and ensure a “normal” life. A dedicated friend, sister, daughter, Ashlinn treasures the people in her life, whom without she wouldn't be where she is today.

Enlisting the help of close friends and fellow musicians Greg Jorden and Wesley Ayliffe, the three began to write songs together. Undeniably persistent, Johannesburg-based Ashlinn is finally seeing the fruit of her works come to life. At 17, the young and inspiring songstress has released her self-titled debut EP, along with first single Battleships, currently making its way onto local radio.

That doesn't mean it's been an easy road though. Growing up in an artistic family, her mother a marvel in the performing arts, along

with a bevy of talented sisters, Ashlinn had to fight for her chance in the spotlight. She began drama, singing and piano lessons in Grade 4 and unlike her acting ability, singing didn't come naturally.

Instead of being a deterrent, it became her motivator. Working closely with Adele Strombeck and Gerrie Durheim, she practiced her vocal exercises day and night in order to get her voice into shape. In doing so, she proved anything is possible if you set your mind to it and continues to capitalize on this philosophy to this very day.

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Slowly making her way into the hearts of music fans across the country, the singer has a distinct ability to communicate emotion through her songs, achieving a sound that's both heartfelt and specifically satisfying to the ear.

From up-tempo folk tunes to distinguished power ballads, Ashlinn flaunts the vocal prowess of some of our most celebrated interna-

tional divas. Throw in her lyrical masterpieces together with her band of sophistication and you've got yourself a winning formula.

Through fulfilling her purpose of being a leader through her music, she hopes to inspire and influence the younger generation of today.

She says, “I'm just excited about life and love writing about it. Throughout my seventeen years on this crazy planet, I've always been fascinated by milestones and emotions, moments of frustration, love, hope and confusion that are game changers and path makers. I hope that by telling my stories and experiences through my music, and by recognising these moments, people are able to connect and see the value of life and all that comes with it.”

She concludes, “As a young woman to other aspiring artists I would say concentrate on being real, be determined, practice technique, believe in yourself because you need others to believe in you.

Nothing is worth selling yourself short of high morals and ethics. It takes hard work, you need to pick yourself up and try again in order to succeed. You are only as good as your last performance so you can never give your second best.”

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