

White Star Newcomer of the Year Award debuts at #Sama27

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New award to recognise the hottest new music talent on the South African scene

Everyone's favourite maize meal brand, White Star, has announced its newest sponsorship of the #Sama27, the 27th annual South African Music Awards. Called the White Star Newcomer of the Year Award, this category of the #Sama27 recognises the freshest talent to emerge from Mzansi in the past year. This sponsorship is an extension of the brand's hugely successful Shay'na ngeWhite Star (Shine with White Star) initiative, which was launched in September 2020 to enable local music talent, particularly emerging artists to continue to shine their light into the lockdown gloom and beyond.



White Star steps in to keep the local beat alive!

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The pilot season of Shay'na ngeWhite Star-added its voice behind the clarion call to air more local music on the airwaves, while at the same time providing opportunities for artists to perform on Metro FM. The response from Mzansi has been great, with the campaign garnering over 39 million impressions across social media platforms, with a reach of more than 4.6 million adults on radio alone in its first year.

The 2021 season of the #ShaynangeWhiteStar campaign, which began in April, is again a collaboration with the broader music industry and Metro FM. As it did last year, the campaign is scheduled to run for 13 weeks on Metro FM, with White Star supporting playlists of local music and live on-air performances. At each weekly recording of the show, lucky fans will have a chance to be part of the exclusive in-studio audience and to meet with their favourite artists (all Covid-19 protocols will be observed).

The White Star Best Newcomer of the Year Award is definitely a step up to recognise and celebrate hot new music. The artists and groups that have been nominated for the award are Xolly Mncwango for her album, *Jesus is Enough*; Reign Africa for *On the Frontline*; BandaBanda and The Crocodiles for *Africado*; Azana for *Ingoma*; and Bucy Radebe for *Spiritual Encounter*. All are gathering both accolades and legions of loyal fans.

Hailing from Richards Bay in KwaZulu Natal, Xolly Mncwango epitomises everything that is good about the contemporary gospel scene, capturing hearts and minds with her worshipful recordings and passionate live performances. Songs like "Ungukuphila" and "Healing Power" are shining examples of her vocal power and personal presence. Another gospel artist on the ticket is Bucy Radebe, from whom many draw joy and inspiration. Her 2020 studio album, *Spiritual Encounter*, comprising 17 songs such as "Thuma Mina" and "Worrier's Medley", is attracting attention far and wide.

On a different note, reggae artist Reign Africa was a breakout hit at the Reggae Rocking My Roots Lockdown Online Festival in August last year. Hosted by DJ Mystikal Ebony, the festival was held to celebrate International Reggae Day 2020 and Reign certainly made her mark.

In a very different territory again, the pan-African group, BandaBanda and The Crocodiles fuses colourful overtones of world music, popular music, jazz and traditional folk to navigate the complex issue of identity through storytelling and transcendent sound. They'll be setting the stage alight at the Market Theatre throughout Africa Month.



Azana

Finally, Azana is one of the artists who has been featured in this year's Shay'na ngeWhite Star campaign. The 19-year-old, who hails from Durban, says she was "weird and shy" when she was growing up, but there can be no doubt that she's on the road to stardom as she enchants audiences with her resonant voice.

White Star has been a supporter of the local music industry right from the start. Since 1999, music has been integral to the brand's identity, with it sponsoring popular music shows such as Macufe, DrumBeat and the Moretele Park Tribute Concert, among others.

"For over 20 years, music has been embedded in White Star's DNA," says marketing manager Mokhele Makhothi. "Our brand has always enjoyed a long and fruitful relationship with local artists and the music industry, and we're particularly proud of Shay'na ngeWhite Star, which has given promising young artists opportunities to perform and to earn a living during the pandemic. The White Star Newcomer of the Year Award sponsorship represents another opportunity for us to demonstrate our commitment to supporting the local music industry.

"It gives me tremendous pleasure to congratulate all of the nominees in this and other categories, especially those who've

featured on Shay'na ngeWhite Star over the past two years. We can't wait to hand over the inaugural award," added Makhothi

About White Star:

The White Star brand was launched in March 1999, introducing the quality, nutritionally enriched White Star Super Maize Meal into the South African market. This was later followed by the introduction of the convenient White Star Quick variant. The brand entered the breakfast segment in 2017, adding White Star Instant Porridge in five different flavours – original, chocolate, vanilla, strawberry and banana – to its range. Today, White Star is one of South Africa's top food brands and the leader in the maize category.

For further information about White Star and its products, visit pioneerfoods.co.za or join the conversation [@WhiteStarSuperMaizeMeal](https://www.facebook.com/WhiteStarSuperMaizeMeal) on Facebook or [@WhiteStarMaize](https://twitter.com/WhiteStarMaize) on Twitter.

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