

Sterling EQ wins a SAMA!

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Instrumental pop group Sterling EQ made history on the weekend, when they became only the second all-girl band to win a coveted MTN South African Music Award (SAMA) in the past 8 years, following female pop group Jamali's award in 2009. The SAMA was awarded for the production Sterling EQ Live in Concert, a live DVD conceptualised and executive produced by Carina Bruwer.

Despite the obvious attraction of an all-girl band, very few female groups reach the top. According to Sterling EQ's members Carina, Eriel, Renate and Ariella, the exhilaration of performing with Sterling EQ outweighs any challenge that being part of a girl-band may present. "We don't really see ourselves as a 'girl-band'. Yes we are 4 females and of course it's important for us to look great on stage, but essentially we are just four musicians who share a love for the instrumental pop genre, and who have found the perfect outlet in each other and in this band, to live this passion. We do sometimes get stigmatized by the media or by other musicians, but that is power for the course; as long as our audience enjoys our music, we are happy."

Sterling EQ won the SAMA in the Best Jazz / Instrumental / Popular Classical DVD category, for their "Sterling EQ Live in Concert at the Artscape Opera House, Cape Town" DVD. The DVD recording took place on 13 February 2010 in front of a live capacity crowd of more than 1200 Capetonians, and was filmed by 7 cameras. Sterling EQ performed songs from their debut album, as well as other instrumental favourites, accompanied by a small orchestra and tracked rhythm section. Songs from the DVD have been made available on youtube, attracting thousands of views and comments from across the world, many of which are favorably comparing Sterling EQ and the release to international exponents of the instrumental pop / crossover genre like Bond, Vanessa Mae and Andre Rieu. Sterling EQ's fanbase on Facebook has also reached a whopping 14,500 – a very impressive statistic for any instrumental artist, and very high compared to other South African artists across the board.

The instrumental supergroup is headed up by flautist Carina Bruwer, who also owns and founded Five Seasons Entertainment Agency which manages the group and acts as label for its releases. Carina was the executive producer of the DVD, and said "When starting the band a couple of years ago, we could never have dreamed of boasting a SAMA award! We'd like to share this award with the more than 70 people who worked on the Artscape event, in particular stage director David Bloch and musical director Albert Horne, and to Jacques Coetzee for an amazing editing job, and Dave Subkleve for the sound recording and mixing. And last but not least, to the fantastic audience – not only the 1200 people who attended the concert, but all our fans and supporters across the country and beyond. Thanks for embracing our somewhat unconventional style, and allowing us to share our music on a larger scale than we could have ever hoped!"

Sterling EQ's 2nd album, Sterling Speel Afrikaans, was also nominated for a SAMA, under the category "Best Instrumental Album". This, together with last year's nomination for their debut album Nova, means that all three Sterling's releases have been nominated, which is something most local artists can only aspire to. Further to this, Sterling EQ also performed live at last year's awards ceremony at Sun City Superbowl, sharing the stage with other local celebrity musicians.

Sterling EQ will make their European debut in December this year, with performances in Germany, while they are also currently finalising negotiations around shows in the USA in October this year.