



BRAIN 4 BUSINESS

Alison Dewar knows the struggles involved with chasing a lofty goal all too well. Genuine success in the music industry is hard to come by and the competition is rife, yet Dewar is making steady progress. She's been making it happen by tackling not only the art of jazz, but also the business and management elements involved in public relations and marketing. She was able to take some time to talk about her career, goals and life in London.

Did you study after school? Did it assist you in achieving what you have done?

Funnily enough, everything I have studied and worked in has helped me in some way with my career today. In South Africa I completed a year of BComm (and then dropped out), studied Marketing and Public Relations. In Switzerland I studied my first love, music – specifically jazz.

What drives you to succeed?

Passion drives me to succeed. I believe 100% in what I am doing and the benefit it can bring other people as well. On a bigger scale, I am driven by the desire to enrich the world and make a difference in people's lives through music. On a personal level, I have an overriding need to express myself through music, through jazz singing. As I believe with any artist, the only time we ever really feel totally connected to ourselves, totally 'whole' is when we are performing our art.

What has been the hardest part or biggest challenge of your career?

At different stages along the way, there have been different 'big challenges'. Initially it was taking a 90-degree turn in my life, being prepared to risk all, in order to fulfil my dream. Now, the biggest challenge is dividing my time between being an artist and being a businessperson. In general I would say, the hardest of all, having to do other things when all I wanted to do was focus on music and singing.

How did you start your career? What got you into it?

As a child I sang at school and performed in musicals etc. I won an inter-school talent competition when I was 15 years old, which encouraged me to pursue it. After school I sang with a professional pop cover-band in Pretoria, full-time, then joined another band in Johannesburg. Later on, in Switzerland, I went back to vocal lessons in Zurich and was introduced to jazz singing. I fell in love with it and decided to study it and to study music formally.

Can you tell me about your career and what your role is?

There are two sides to my career – an artist (jazz singer) and a business person (co-director of a record label). As an artist, I am a live performer, recording artist, composer and bandleader. As a director, I am involved with all aspects of running a label and artist management – public relations,

marketing, sales, distribution etc.

Where do you see yourself in five years time?

I aim to be an established, respected, international jazz singer with two more albums recorded and launched.

What's the most important lesson you have learnt in your business/line of work?

Apart from the obvious, 'trust your instincts', I would say I have a new motto, which has come about through experience - "Take every challenge, obstacle, set-back, as an opportunity to grow, to learn and to stretch yourself"

Do you feel there are more opportunities in London for people starting a business or career than in South Africa, Australia or New Zealand?

I am no expert on such a topic but logically I would say there are more internationally orientated opportunities in London. London being a world capital and a world centre for several industries, it attracts talent in those fields from all over the world. I think everyone can benefit from the exposure and experience of living and working here, even for a short time.

What would your advice be for a South African, Australian or New Zealander wondering whether to come home or stay in the UK?

Most importantly, listen to your inner voice, what is it telling you? At different times of our life we have different needs and this may play a huge role in your decision. What are your needs now with regards to family, career, and travel? Where's the best place for you to fulfil that need?

Do you plan on returning home?

I go back to SA every year and keep in touch as much as possible; in fact I will hopefully be touring there in December. Both my and my husband's immediate families live in SA. I don't know if we would return home permanently at this stage, a lot depends on our careers and right now we need to be based here in London.

A pearl of wisdom for your Aussies/Kiwis/Saffas out there?

Enjoy every challenge you are faced with. You wouldn't be presented with the challenge if you weren't capable of resolving it. Aussies, Kiwis and Saffas have a lot of value and spirit to offer the world, don't ever underestimate that.



DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WITH A BRAIN 4 BUSINESS? IF SO, EMAIL SOME INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR SUCCESS TO : INFO@BLUESKYGROUP.CO.UK