

harry sideropoulos

BIOGRAPHY

Hailed as the man who is “changing the face of South African theatre” by The Citizen Newspaper in October of 2005, Harry Sideropoulos has been producing and performing award-winning theatre in South Africa and abroad for the past 8 years.

Born in Johannesburg South Africa in May of 1974, of Greek decent, Harry was first thrown into the media spotlight in 1998 when by absolute chance he was asked to join the ranks of the morning team on Johannesburg’s biggest breakfast show, The Rude Awakening on 94.7 Highveld Stereo. He soon developed his own unique style of presenting with his infamous, instantly recognizable chocolate like voice and within a couple of months had cemented himself as an integral part of Johannesburg’s number 1 breakfast show.

During these 6 years on radio, Harry simultaneously pursued his career on the stage and in 2000 he launched what was soon to become his signature one man show ‘No Sugar, Canderel Please!’ which he co-wrote with Sam Cowen, a play about the battle of the bulge. The show celebrated 6 sold out seasons in Johannesburg and is now about to hit the international circuit next year.

With over 1.5 million daily listeners to the breakfast show, Harry’s high-profile radio status provided him with a platform for making theatre more accessible to the broader public.

In June of 2003 he produced and starred in his next major theatrical triumph, the musical spectacle Big Band Blast, a show which he conceived with Ian von Memerty and Charmein Weir-Smith, paying homage to the music of the Big Band era. The show celebrated 2 sold out seasons at The Nelson Mandela Theatre before walking away with 5 Naledi Theatre Awards in February of 2004 including Best New Musical of the Year. This was Harry’s first foray into the world of singing and musical theatre which proved to be very successful for him as he was soon approached by Sting Record Label to release his debut CD ‘My Favourite Swings’ with musical direction by Graham Scott and Musical Arrangements by Bryan Schimmel.

In September of 2004, he resigned from the radio to focus full-time on his theatrical career as a performer and producer and has been creating unforgettable moments in theatre both locally and abroad ever since.

In October of 2005 he returned to the Johannesburg Civic Theatre with a new musical offering, Songs from the Mediterranean, a musical tapestry celebrating the music of all the various Mediterranean ethnic minority groups of South Africa before returning to the Civic again in June Of 2006 for his sixth season of ‘No Sugar, Canderel Please!’.

2007 was a very big year for Sideropoulos as he took a year's break from producing and focused solely on performing. In March he took to the stage, in his first collaboration with The Barnyard Group of theatres, in the smash hit Broadway musical 'The Buddy Holly Story' directed by Ian Von Memerty. The 6 month-long show was performed in Durban and Johannesburg to capacity houses.

Simultaneously, after an absence of nearly five years from where it all began, with his one man tour de force **No Sugar, Canderel Please**, Harry returned to The Liberty Theatre on the Square in April, for six shows only, with his new musical offering, **3 minutes past love**.

Sideropoulos, joined forces with acclaimed South African musicians Dan Selsik and Kevin Davidson and introduced audiences to **Harry Sideropoulos and The Nu Cool in 3 minutes past love**, a captivating, moody, late night 'wooing' kind of show performed with his 8-piece band ensemble - The Nu Cool - with original jazz tracks penned by Selsik and Davidson especially for Harry including the title track, '3 minutes past love' and 'I want to dress you in chocolate'. Harry, the man with one of the most distinctive, chocolate-like voices is currently working on the release of his second Jazz CD based on the songs from this show.

Harry has also included, re-worked interpretations of some of the world's most beautiful jazz standards, like Leonard Cohen's 'Dance me to the end of Love', 'Ol' Devil Moon', Nina Simone's 'Love Me or Leave Me', 'Save the last dance for me', 'The very thought of you', a jazz version of 'Viente Annos' originally performed in Spanish by Omara Portuondo of 'The Buena Vista Social Club' fame and 'Fevgo', a haunting melody by Greek composer and singer Haris Aexiou.

In April of the same year, Harry Produced and Directed The **Star Tonight's Annual Bollywood Festival** at the Rand Easter Show with a cast of 45 performers and was attended by 25 thousand people.

But it doesn't end here! When his not on stage, Harry Sideropoulos is cooking in your kitchen! Yes, cooking in your kitchen, in your home! Now one of South Africa's most colourful celebrities will vacate you from your own kitchen and cook for you and your guests in the comfort of your own home. It's entertainment on a different level...from the stage to your kitchen. "It's the best alternative to owning a restaurant" says Harry "without the hassle of running one." Harry who has been a connoisseur of fine Mediterranean cuisine launched this exciting new concept in October of last year and together with his team of professionals' tailor-make packages according to their clients' specific needs; including singing, story telling, poetry and musical appreciation. "I'm not a caterer and I don't work per head" say's Harry, "I'm selling a premium hedonistic experience in the comfort of your own sofa".

If all this isn't enough, in October of last year things started to heat up with Harry as he took to the stage in the new 1100 seater Lyric Theatre at Gold Reef City Casino, performing the role of Edna Turnblad in the Tony Award Broadway musical **Hairspray** produced by Richard Loring. Harry was nominated for two Naledi Theatre Awards this year, in the category of 'Best Male Performer in a musical' which he walked away with as well as 'Best Male in a Comedy' for his portrayal of Edna Turnblad.

Harry can also be booked as a motivational speaker, where he incorporates his language of theatre into a 45 minute corporate spectacle; exploring avenues of releasing ones personal potential within the work environment; understanding the emotional intelligence of a brand, changing customer service dynamics and how to translate passion into sales. With his focused command of the stage Harry explores the various corporate angles of how to surpass your goals in your business, making your brand the consumers preferred choice. Harry will have audiences screaming in the aisles, transforming any conference into a sensory theatrical experience. The talk is titled "How to change your life and still make it to lunch".

In July of this year Harry premiered his new one-man show titled '**Happy Shabalala - The artist formerly known as Harry Sideropoulos**'. This show, a political satire, send the audience into cardiac arrest... long before interval. The show is scheduled for a return 8 -week season in October of 2009 as well as a national tour.

In February of 2009, he starts rehearsing for The Civic Theatre's 50th Anniversary staging of a show that changed the face of British Musicals **Fings a'int wot they used to be**. He will be sharing the stage with Fiona Ramsey, Robert Whitehead and Michael Richard. The show will open at the Civic in March before transferring to London's West End.

In September of the same year he starts Pre-Production for the long awaited West End Stage Thriller **The Woman in Black** to be directed by Sandra Prinsloo and staged at the Johannesburg Civic Theatre, starring Sideropoulos and John Whitley. This show is not for the faint hearted.

Harry is also in pre-production for his new musical **Mediterranio** which opens for a 4 week run at The Nelson Mandela Theatre at The Civic theatre Complex in February 2010.

Before 2008 wraps up, Harry flies to Toronto to visit good friends for Christmas as well as to perform the world premiere of his new Greek stand-up show, **O Ellinaras**.

With his Mediterranean penchant for large, expansive gestures, his comic savvy, his larger-than-life personality and his gift of the gab, Sideropoulos has cemented his reputation as one of South Africa's most

talented and progressive entertainers...and with a voice like that, who needs a lover?

Christina Kennedy
Artslink

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