

Making music at Midem

It's all systems go in Cannes as delegates forming part of the South African Pavilion at Midem swing into action with only one goal in mind: putting the spotlight on South African music.

Close to 60 individuals, representing 36 companies from the South African music industry, arrived in the French city of Cannes this weekend to immerse themselves in the world's biggest music international market.

Midem takes place from 22 to 26 January and sees professionals from all over the world undertake five days of business and networking as well as attend conferences, workshops and shows.

One of the participants of the South African Pavilion, Ghetto Ruff CEO, Lance Stehr is among those delegates who is solely focused on securing deals for the independent record label's many artists, among them DJ Cleo (whose album Es'khaleni Ext. 2 has sold triple platinum in South Africa), Pitch Black Afro and RJ Benjamin.

Stehr, who reports that RJ Benjamin will enjoy a release in France in 2007, says Ghetto Ruff is not looking to license produce into South Africa: 'We are here to export our artists and get them distributed into the rest of the world.'

Stehr's strong independent focus is echoed by all the participants at the South African Pavilion which is located in the Palais des Festivals.

The Pavilion is being funded by the Department of Arts and Culture and the project is being implemented through Moshito Music Conference and Exhibition. The French Embassy in South Africa has also joined the SA Pavilion this year, funding the attendance at Midem of Kaya FM DJ Nicky Blumenfeld who is at the event in her capacity as part of the Embassy's NEMISA (National Electronic Media Institute of South Africa) which is headed by project manager, Mathieu Fournet (also at Midem).

Another company benefiting from the DAC's funding is Cape Town's Mama Dance Records which is attending Midem for the first time.

Owner Craig McGahey says: "I am very grateful to be invited by the DAC to Midem. It's a great initiative that will definitely pay dividends for the SA music industry. It's great that we are finally being legitimised as a profitable export industry."