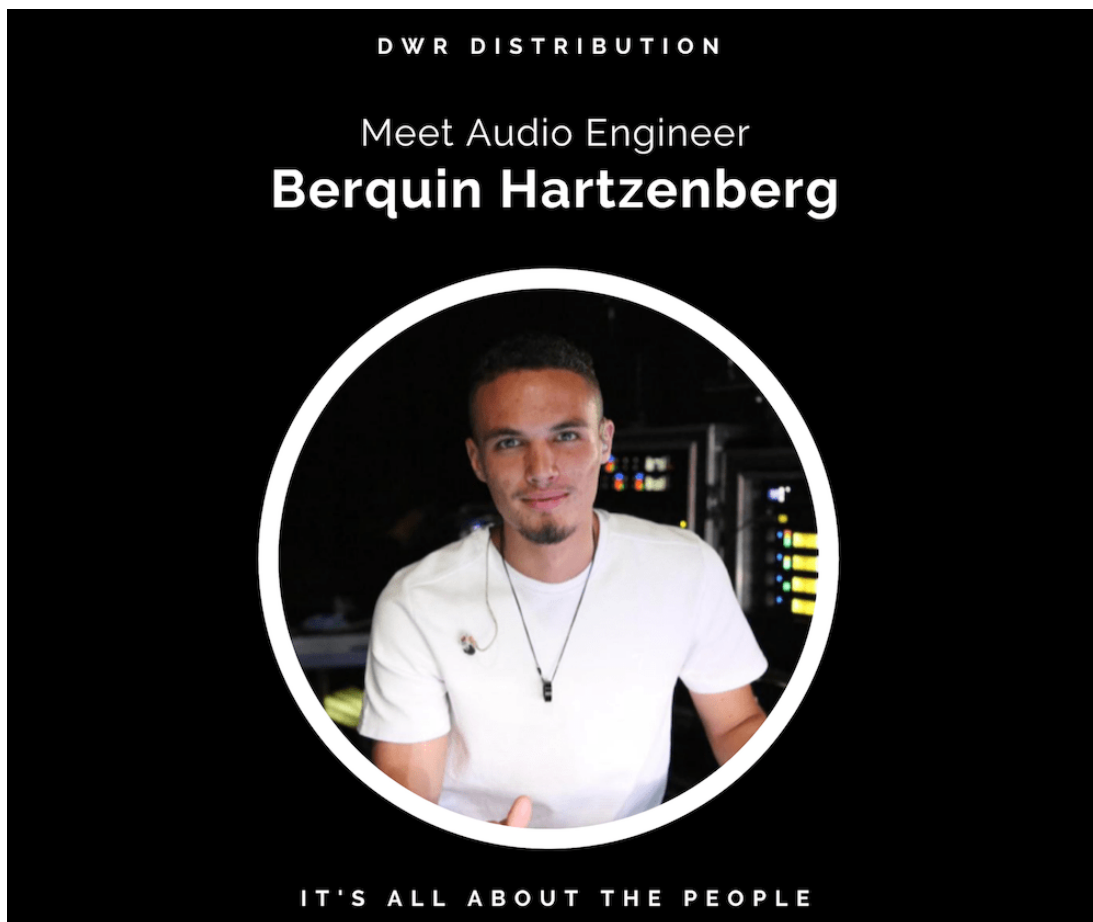


It's all about the people – Meet Berquin Hartzenberg

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Young, energetic, and passionate about audio engineering, Berquin Hartzenberg was born and raised in Johannesburg. DWR asked him a few questions about his career and how he has managed to overcome the past 15 months.

Were you always interested in audio engineering or what led you down this path?

I used to build mini houses in my yard with leftover cement and bricks and I initially wanted to become a building contractor. As I grew older, I found a small HiFi system at home that I used to disconnect and connect and move around – I figured that maybe I'd go into the electrical field. As a teenager I volunteered at church. I also joined the sound team at my High School (Glenvista High) and our responsibilities included setting up for assemblies and providing sound and lighting for school functions amongst others. I also worked for some companies while at school. After matriculating I furthered my studies at the Academy of Sound Engineering (ASE) where I learned the fundamental concepts, content, and the practical skills I needed to start my own company Popular Audio Group.

How long have you worked in the industry?

I have 13 years of experience in the audio industry – I started very young!

What do you love most about your job?

This is a difficult one, I love everything from the load-in to the load-out but one thing I love the most is when I am able to successfully connect the artist to the audience and the audience to the artist.

How have you managed to work around the Covid-19 pandemic?

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It was extremely tough to get by and some weeks I wasn't sure if we would make it. I then had to find a balance between working in the audio industry as well as exploring other sources of income to survive. I'm very grateful to say that God has kept me and still allowed job opportunities to be sent our way.

What gigs have you worked on during his time?

I have been fortunate enough to be part of some TV productions such as Telkom Monate Vibes with David Mashabela Creatives. I worked alongside Mr Red Mic Donald on shows including the Metro FM and SABC1's Get2Gether Experience, an Ayepyp performance that Aired on Trace Music, Shimza Lockdown House Party, and the recording of a mix live stream for #Donaldcares production. I was afforded the opportunity to record a session of Africa Rising with Beyond Vocal where we did their first acapella show! I was able to do a full band live recording for Lady Zamar at Universal Music and was afforded the opportunity to do a live stream for Lady Zamar at Sun City. I did two live recordings for Bongzi Mvuyana. I was able to Do Co.fi Brooklyn with CiCi as well as Co.fi Polokwane, with Donald. I was also fortunate to do a live broadcast on a TV show called Homeground for Donald and CiCi. I was afforded the opportunity to do a recording at SABC M1 Studio for White Star with my family at Bass Mechanics. These are but a few of my highlights during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The best show you've ever worked on?

I think it would be a show I did in Sierra Leone for around 150 000 people, the energy was fantastic, adapting to the sound system, the crew and the audience. The show was part of a tour called "Building Bridges" by Mufti Menk and Zain Bhikha. The crowd enjoyed every moment of the performance and in my opinion, the experience was so surreal especially the HEAT! One of my challenges with this production was that each cluster of speakers was different, however, we managed to get a similar tone on each cluster and somehow GREAT audio coverage! I've adapted this principle and it helped me on all my shows – go into a production willing to learn! There is always something someone can teach you.

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Any activities or hobbies you enjoy?

Fixing cables, setting up sound systems for fun and listening to how they react was my hobby until I found out that Go Karting gave quite an intense adrenaline rush! It's a good escape from the pressure after an intense show.

Anything else you'd like to mention?

I'd like to offer some motivation to the individuals in our industry. It's tough when we can't put food on the table and more often than not, we feel helpless, but I think we need to continue holding on to hope. The hope to see thousands of hands raised at a festival, thousands of smiles when the bass drops and for us to remember that this is a season and this too will pass and we WILL return to our former Greatness and EVEN BETTER! Hang in there.