The story behind Remember

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Remember Chaitezvi

Zimbabwean born Remember Chaitezvi has a dream to build an online educational platform for up-and-coming audio engineers, especially those living in remote countries within Africa who don’t have access to training facilities. He defeated all odds to become a prominent and vibrant audio engineer on the African continent and is someone who loves people in the live events industry and who regularly records videos to showcase their stories. For his studio and to create content for his website and social media platform as well as an online platform he co-founded called Enstages(www.enstages.africa), he recently invested in a DiGiCo S21, an L-Acoustics PA System and a KLANG:immersive personal monitoring system supplied by DWR Distribution.

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In a high rise building in the bustling street of Johannesburg, Remember has created an intimate office space lined with books, photos and event lanyards showcasing productions he has worked on over the past two decades. The studio is equipped with a DiGiCo S21 48 channel-mixing console, and an L-Acoustics sound system comprising two X8s offering a big PA sound in a compact box, two SB15m compact subwoofers and a LA4X amplified controller. A KLANG:immersive personal monitoring system includes one KLANG:vokal Immersive in-ear mixing processor that offers 12 mixes of 24 mono or stereo inputs at 48kHz and 96kHz, and six KLANG:kontrollers allowing six musicians to each control their mix. Remember is also creating an immersive streaming solution based on a blluDMI-KLANG card which is housed in a DiGiCo Orange Box and fed by a second DMI-Dante card coming in from the system. The DMI-Dante card has 64 inputs. For DWR’s Richard Smith and Kyle Robson, it has been inspirational to see someone so excited about using this substantial investment as a tool to share knowledge and insight with others.



Growing up in Chitungwiza, located just outside Zimbabwe’s capital Harare, Remember recalls his father sitting him down after he had completed his schooling to ask what he planned to do with his life. “The whole thing was that you had to be a doctor or civil engineer, but I hadn’t done so well in Maths,” Remember shares. It was not unusual for school leavers in the area to become

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soldiers, policemen or teachers but Remember's imagination raced with career options like becoming a chef, actor, fashion designer, model or even a singer. He was in a choir, often as lead vocalist, despite stuttering as a child.

"What triggered my mind and brought joy was the thought of becoming a producer to help singers," he says. "I decided to meet with a producer who explained that to be excellent in this role, I would need to have a good ear and become a sound engineer." Not long after, Remember turned on the telly, saw singer Ringo Madlingozi performing with Oliver Mtukudizi and was instantly reminded that his uncle was a bass guitarist for the latter. A phone call to his uncle, and he found himself at his very first live production.

Suddenly, surrounded by people enjoying success in the entertainment world, Remember was inspired and dive into a range of mentoring books. To date he has purchased over 400 books of which he has read at least 300, learning from individuals and companies like Toyota, Microsoft and Apple. "I realized that it doesn't matter what industry you are in," he said. "It's a matter of how you do things. I decided that I wanted to be one of the most influential sound engineers on the continent and thereafter, internationally."

He approached sound engineers in Zimbabwe who took him under their wings, and soon he was one of the top three audio technicians in Zim. His hunger for knowledge led him to be mentored by professionals in South Africa by people like Andreas Furtner, the former head of the Audio Department at Gearhouse South Africa, and international audio engineers like Andrea Taglia, the front of house engineer for tenor Andrea Bocelli. The professionals would take his long phone calls, discussing a range of topics and even basic questions relating to microphones. Remember came to the conclusion that it was a tiny margin that differentiated a great sound engineer from an average sound engineer, and it was all about paying attention to the little things that gave people the edge.

In 2010 Remember relocated to South Africa. He initially had a vision board with all the countries

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he wanted to live and work in ranging from the United States (top of his list) to Germany, and at the very bottom, South Africa. Because it was expensive to get to the US, he flipped the vision board around to kick off in Johannesburg, a bus ride under 18 hours from Harare. “Once in South Africa, I saw an opportunity to work in the whole of Africa. In Europe, I would be one of the thousands doing my craft, but in Africa, I was one of a few. With so many opportunities, I knew I could make an impact.”

His journey has included freelancing and also regularly working with technical company Gearhouse South Africa, providing sound engineering services for both analogue and digital equipment set-up, operating digital mixers and configuring digital signal processors. He has worked in Zimbabwe, Botswana, Kenya, Nigeria, Tanzania, Mozambique, Ghana, South Africa, Mauritius, Mexico and the USA for artists and celebrities too many to mention but including U2, Lionel Richie, Bryan Adams, Bill Gates, Barack Obama, and Oprah Winfrey, and work covering international conferences and house of worship events.

“Most people see me on a job and think I’m some lucky guy who got the gig, but when they look me up, they realize that I’ve been at it for the longest time and have worked on some of the biggest projects on the continent,” he says. At Estadio Azteca Stadium in Mexico City, he was the head sound engineer for Pastor TB Joshua, an event which included various international artists and a 400 piece choir. “I had the final say when it came to the audio, not because I had the power but because I could explain how things should be done thanks to learning from the ones who went before me.”

It’s a new season and Remember is passionate to empower sound engineers in Africa and thereafter expand his platform to include disciplines like lighting and AV. “When I was in Zimbabwe, I didn’t have the money to study at an institution. I know that there are guys like me, somewhere in Africa, who are going to make it anyway, but if I’m part of their story I can help accelerate the process. For me, it’s easy to have access to someone like Kyle Robson at DWR Distribution when I have a problem. When I was in Nigeria recently doing an event for Cardi B, a mixer failed when our power supply died and Kyle could explain what I should do over a phone

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call.” Remember’s heart is to empower people and provide the access they need to troubleshoot, a training segment and the knowledge to fly.



Remember has already created a website, www.remember.africa, and slowly but surely he has invested in cameras, lenses and equipment to deliver a professional yet upbeat product. He has started recording interviews and podcasts with leading South African sound engineers like Johan Griesel and created small video clips where he shares information from signal processing to equalization and live multitrack recording. A new section of his website includes DWR Distribution Training, with various topics focused on DiGiCo.

To take the website to the next level, Remember will need a professional team of developers, content creators, translators and copywriters. The idea is that people in Africa will subscribe and

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pay a minimum fee per annum to have access to the online tutorials. Initially presented in English, he plans to ultimately include French, based on a large number of French speakers in Congo, and Portuguese.

Remember is a testament of someone who sometimes battled to put food on the table to become an influential audio engineer. He knows how to savour the simple things in life, like visiting art galleries on his off days or enjoying his favourite meal of pap, veggies and meat, but as he embarks on this new quest, he hopes to educate others and make the road a little easier for them just as mentors have done for him.



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