

“Get your hands dirty” – an interview with DJ, stage/tour manager and booking agent, Kobus van Rooyen



[Photo courtesy of Kobus]

Q: Since graduating from the drama department in 2008, you have been involved in exiting projects and have worked with prominent figures in the South African music industry. Tell us about that journey and your current working life.

A: It's been great so far. As a student I started getting involved in the music industry. I did everything from building fences at *Oppikoppi* to bartending at as many events as I could. I landed a job as the tour manager for Prime Circle in 2010 and after that I became the booking agent and tour manager for The Killers and events like *Ramfest* and *Oppikoppi* which, which I stage managed. I worked with amazing bands such as Buffy Clyro, Deftones, The Foals and one of my heroes, Kris Kristofferson. I became the first stage manager in the history of *Oppikoppi* to run the stage on time in 20 years, twice in a row. I'm a stage manager at heart and I've been lucky enough to manage events like STRAB and the South African super group, The Blood Brothers. I'm currently the tour manager for the metal band Boargazm and blues rockers The Black Cat Bones.

Q: You walked from Pretoria to Mozambique to attend the STRAB Music festival. Some said you did it because you are nutcase, some said you had a death wish, and some said you did it because you are a really good person deep...very deep...down. Why did you do it?

A: I mostly did it for STRAB's charity, The Mamoli Mission, which the festival supports as much as it can. I also did it to show people that there is no excuse not to get to an event. People love complaining. I was, and still am, tired of weekend and couch warriors who like to mouth off and take no action. I also like a challenge. Testing myself mentally and physically has always been a way I like to live.

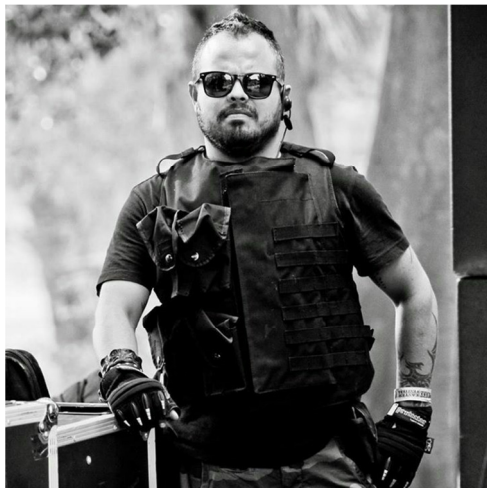
Q: What aspects of your drama studies did you enjoy most?

A: I really enjoyed almost everything. I learnt a lot. I loved delving into film and everything behind it. I loved learning about Marxism, Feminism and other concepts like that, that I would never have faced in other fields of study. I think that what kept me there and helped was that there was always a great balance between academics, practical work and fun. Also, the male to female ratio was fantastic for me...

Q: Tell us about some of your most memorable moments during your studies.

A: The drama department's student arts festival was always great for me. I especially enjoyed assisting with the technical aspects. Plotting lighting in The Masker in to the early hours of the morning will always be one of my favourite memories.

My favourite production I was in (and also did technical for) was Peter Shaffer's Amadeus with Eddie De Jager as Mozart. We had such a great time working on that show. I also loved being on campus during the holidays to rehearse when no one else was there.



[Photo courtesy of Kobus]

Q: What did the drama course offer you that you have applied in your working life since graduation?

A: I definitely learned how to apply my confidence in order to get jobs, set up interviews and run myself as a business. The practical work I did in the technical aspects of Drama like sound, lighting and stage management makes the tour/stage manager I am today. The theoretical aspects I learned in subjects like DFK helps me to engage in almost any conversation, think critically and helps me write funny jokes which means I get a lot of work as a writer as well!

Q: What future projects are on the horizon?

A: Some things I can't talk about yet, but we have several tours coming up next year, both locally and internationally. Boargazm and I are heading to South America for a tour with Nervo Chaos, a famous band from Brazil. I might walk to STRAB again, and we're busy planning a motorcycle trip from Cape To Cairo with bike riders who also happen to be musicians. If all goes well I'll be on tour for 6 months of next year then on holiday for 6... We might also be doing a type of MMA fighting competition next year where I am going to get to beat up famous people. Which I would love!

Q: What advice would you give to aspiring young entertainment specialists who would like to follow in your footsteps?

A: I would say, learn when to speak and learn when to keep your mouth shut and listen. Also, do everything you can. Get your hands dirty. Learn from anybody in the field you can get your hands on. Finish your studies and join a band as a roadie for a year. Go into the trenches. And make sure you have an image. There are few things as powerful as an image along with a great work ethic.

Q: What is your personal slogan?

A: I'm going to go with Meatloaf and say "I like my music like I like my life. Everything louder than everything else".

