

KZN 'Idols' trio hope country will take note

SIHLE MLAMBO

HOPING to sing their way to fame in the *Idols* competition are three KwaZulu-Natal contestants – and one has even dropped out of university in a bid to become the next South African Idol.

Erin Fourie, 26, Sibusisiwe "Miss J" Jali, 20, and Phakamani Mngomezulu, 20, from Empangeni are in the remaining top 15 hopefuls, who will be cut to 10 tomorrow night.

But for Miss J, from Inanda township, her journey in the reality singing competition has seen her drop out from her mechanical engineering course at the Durban University of Technology to pursue her life-long dream to become a performer.

She described her journey and love for music as a "calling", saying she was "born for this".

"Nobody is your biggest threat, everyone is talented, and it's up to you to compete with yourself, not other people," said Miss J, commenting about the contestants' competitive nature.

Last weekend, Miss J did not put on a convincing performance, with judge Randall Abrahams criticising her vocal control, but the singer has since explained that it was a technical issue, saying the en-



CALLING: Miss J gave up university for a music career.

ergy she portrayed on stage was sufficient and she "killed" the performance.

Miss J was among the top 100 best performing students in the province for the 2007 matric academic programme, but says the only thing that has ever really made her happy is performing.

Pursuing a career in engineering was a decision that she took to please her mother, "but now I have to do my own thing, this is my dream and I am happy".

Against her mother's wishes and without her knowledge, Miss J has worked with the Catalina and Playhouse Theatre during her time at DUT, and

says she only comes alive when on stage. "Sometimes you have to follow the heart; other people have callings for other things, this is my calling."

Friends have likened her to Tina Turner, a similarity she is happy to accept. On her chances of winning the competition, she said: "The competition is tough, everyone is amazing here, there's so much variety, but hell yeah, I can win this, it's been a long time coming."

Meanwhile Fourie, from Pietermaritzburg, has been receiving rave reviews from judges throughout the competition, but remained modest about her chances of winning,



RAVE REVIEWS: The judges and viewers love Erin.

saying: "My chances are 1/15 at this point, it depends on who the people like."

On the judges' positive response to her performances, Fourie, who is also a qualified teacher, said: "It's stressful because of the high expectations, which are constantly high. I need to consistently work hard to prove them right."

Fourie said she has enjoyed every moment of the competition, and that the contestants get along, which makes being on the show "all the more special".

Being a full-time musician, although unsigned, Fourie is part of a band, Good Tragedy, and performs at clubs and

pubs in Pietermaritzburg. She added taking part in the competition was to have fun.

Mngomezulu could not be contacted for comment.

All three KZN contestants have done well so far, wowing viewers and the judges with their styles.

Although it has been hard at times for them, confidence is high and any of the trio could follow in the footsteps of previous *Idols* winner Jason Hartman and bring the glory back to KZN.

To vote for Erin, SMS "13" for "Miss J", SMS "03" and for Mngomezulu SMS "10", all to 37400 on Sunday.

E-mail your views on the KZN *Idols* to satmail@inl.co.za