

CD Baby expands international artist services team to Africa, appoints Sakhele Mzalazala

CD Baby has appointed music business manager and independent music advocate Sakhele Mzalazala to lead its expansion into southern Africa.

Reporting to the VP of international development, Heli Del Moral, Mzalazala is CD Baby's first hire in Africa where he will be responsible for growing CD Baby in South Africa and other markets across southern Africa, including Lesotho, Zimbabwe, Botswana, Swaziland and Namibia. Based in Johannesburg, Mzalazala will spearhead strategic partnerships both locally and internationally, building networks with young and established artists in the process, as well as developing and implementing several programmes to increase visibility and adoption of CD Baby services, and establish strategic industry relationships in the region.



Sakhele Mzalazala

"African artists have impacted music around the world, and we're thrilled to find the right representative to help them understand how CD Baby can support their careers and creativity," says Del Moral.

"This step is part of our overall vision to bring the best artist services and rights administration to independent creators worldwide."

Mzalazala has more than 20 years of music industry experience, including roles with Yourself Management, Xhentsa and Koloni, working directly with artists Mahlatse Vokal and Lisa Good, and overseeing the publishing team at the prominent South African label Mathaland/Ghetto Ruff, where he worked with Zola 7, DJ Cleo, Pitch Black Afro and Morafe. With his roots in the music industry as an artist before transitioning to the business side, Mzalazala has a strong track record of supporting independent artists' work, including a double platinum-release from Zonke Dikana's *Ina Ethe* to the late Sfiso Ncwane's multiple award-winning gospel album *Bayede Baba*. He has also worked with Sizwe Zako, Tshepo Tshola, Lawrence Matshiza and many more, experiences he has distilled into a guide book for independent musicians.

"Working for an international organization like CD Baby has been a dream of mine and I am very excited to have been

given such a big opportunity, which in turn comes with bigger responsibilities,” Mzalazala says.

“ I look forward to impacting positively on the careers of independent artists and labels, where they will have full control and ownership of the works. I have always strived to do what is best for my artists and clients and CD Baby is just that and more. I am excited and cannot wait. ”

Though international music continues to dominate the market (80% of market share in South Africa), the independent sector is growing as the entire music market expands by 5-9% a year, according to data reported by Music Ally.

“Independent artists' biggest challenges in our region are the lack of information or knowledge, lack of income from their works, and the long-term agreements they sign,” explains Mzalazala. “But artists are becoming independent by owning their masters and getting access to most digital platforms. There is a lot of reason for optimism now.”

Mzalazala joins the 22-person CD Baby international team active in markets across Europe, North America, South America, East Asia and South Asia.

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