

Jeremy Loops talks headlining a virtual concert & working with Ed Sheeran

By [Nadim Nyker](#)

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After months away from centre stage due to the nationwide lockdown, Jeremy Loops is excited. He was doing what everyone else was, he says: "Probably too much Netflix and a few home workouts for the first weeks." But come Sunday 11 October at 5pm, he will head music app [Joox Big Live performance](#).

The performance is virtual and available to thousands of Joox VIP subscribers, who will stream Loops and band performing live. The moment marks the beginning of the industry opening up again for the artist in a time where musicians have been hard-hit.



"For most people in the music industry, (lockdown) was just a lot to get through," Loops says. "It was a lot for everyone to get through, but the music world was just entirely shut down with no vision for when it might start up again."

But the 36-year-old also saw lockdown as a chance to redefine the difficult position he was in. Loops, who is used to live on planes and hotel rooms and is usually out of the country, saw lockdown as a chance to have the difficult conversations he normally wouldn't be able to.

"I've used this lockdown to have some really difficult conversations with people I was meaning to have those conversations with. I've done things I never wanted to do, like remove my tonsils finally," he adds.

But Loops didn't only do the talking, he took action. When the nation went under lock and key, desperate to get away from

the coronavirus, he started The Big Food Drive to raise funds for soup kitchens in the Western Cape. To date, his efforts have raised almost R1m.



Helping his community

“The Big Food Drive was just born out of the fact that it needed to happen. We were heading into lockdown and into winter and people were struggling, man,” he says. “With the lockdown, the virus and so many people not being able to work, it was just a real catastrophe and it remains a catastrophe.”



Jeremy Loops's Big Food Drive aims to serve 70,000 meals to poverty-stricken South Africans

4 May 2020



“We funded upwards of 45 soup kitchens with weekly deliveries of fresh produce and it was a beautiful thing to be part of.” Now the musician is putting his efforts into something more long term; building public vegetable gardens.

“Our first garden build starts at the end of October. The first food garden is in Masiphumelele, close to where I live,” he says. “It’s linked to a school which is one of the beneficiaries of The Big Food Drive. We were sending food packages there every week for the children. It’s a primary school with about 200 learners and they desperately needed assistance. So the vegetable garden will be going straight into the kitchen for the children.”

Taking action

The Kommetjie-born muso also took action in the way he knows best, through music. Loops released the song “By The Way”, featuring rapper Motheo Moleko. The song is a call to arms, says Loops, for society to be better.

“By The Way’ was the first song that I wrote during the lockdown, it was a lockdown baby. It was right at the beginning of things; the world was already going crazy,” he says. “The idea behind it is that we all are going to need to dig incredibly deep to not just survive this new world, but to thrive in the situation that we’re all in now.

“We’re in a situation because the world is in a situation and it’s been going that way for years. I remember talking about this when I was on tour years ago in the States. I was saying to crowds that it’s crazy to live in a world where fascism is on the rise, racism is on the rise and insular behaviour is on the rise – people are worried about migration. We have to be better than we’ve ever been (before).”

Working with Ed Sheeran

2020 saw Loops sign with Universal Music. It’s all about taking the music further than he’s been able to before as an independent artist, he says, with the artist set to release his next album in 2021.



Jeremy Loops signs global deal with Universal Music

22 May 2020



“We wanted to launch the album this year, but we had to hold it back because of Covid,” he adds. “I really want to launch the album and be able to go and tour it and play those songs and reinforce it all over the world.”

Fans are eager for the release, with Loops having worked with music giant Ed Sheeran on the album.

“*For this album, I did a few songs with some really big people,” he says. “I did a co-write on one of the songs with Ed Sheeran and it was super cool, man! He’s a lovely man, it was an absolute honour to work with him.*”

“It nearly threw me off my feet the day that he wrote me an email and said, ‘do you want to come and join me in the studio for a couple of songs?’”



“It happened very organically, we met each other out one night, we had a few drinks together, I went to one of his shows and then he invited me to come and work with him. It really was as simple as that, just two people connecting.”



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Jeremy Loops’ advice for up-and-comers

With every Joox Big Live in-app concert, one aspiring artist who performs in the music app stands the chance to open for the Big Live performer. For Loops' Big Live performance, local artist Nonzwakazi won the Joox #OpeningAct competition and will open for the renowned musician.

“Get ready for lots of hard work and enjoy the process,” Loops says to up-and-comers like Nonzwakazi. “There is no way to get into the music business unless you love it and have something to offer. Try to have a clear picture before you start on what you want to offer the world and how you’re going to create some value, and just start doing it.”

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