



# NEVER HEADING FOR THE HILLS

If the name Heidi makes you think of a meek and mild youngster roaming the Swiss Alps, think again. The feisty and devastatingly funny Heidi Mollentze is something of a shooting star, blazing a trail across the South African entertainment industry. Get It's **Lindsay Batterson** got to share this acting, singing and teaching dynamo's headspace — and found out she's not one to run from a challenge. If anything, she runs towards them.



**"I'm always turning 29. Always."**

Who could have guessed that a simple detour to the UFS drama department would spell career success for a young girl with a seemingly natural flair for languages and a searing passion for performing? Originally enrolled to become a physiotherapist, fate stepped in and steered Heidi Mollentze in the right direction. Heidi's decision to make her detour a permanent one is a choice she has never regretted. With a résumé as impressive as hers, who would?

Heidi thinks back on her varsity days in Bloemfontein with extreme fondness, recollecting the many hours spent watching rock bands at the Loch Logan Waterfront. "I loved going there and cheering the bands on. This, however, was before the waterfront was built...aaaah, but now I'm giving my age away, am I not!" she adds with a melodic laugh that originates from somewhere deep inside, something that appears to come naturally to this fiery raven-haired beauty.

The daughter of two prominent figures in our city's medical community, Heidi was born and raised in Bloemfontein. "The one thing I was always aware of, and felt blessed to be a part of, was the friendly spontaneity of the people around me," she confides. Often returning to her hometown, Heidi relishes spending time with her parents in the shade of their lush green garden, sampling her mothers home cooking and discussing everything from opera to the Springboks with her father, a professor in Internal Medicine at the UFS.

Matriculating from Fichard Park High amidst a flurry of A symbols, she initially chose to follow in her parents medical footsteps. However, she could not deny her insatiable love for language and the performing arts. After completing her BA

(Ed) Drama, she completed her Honours, graduating cum laude. Heidi was also the exception to the drama student rule - where most battle to find their big break, Heidi's talent ensured her a stellar acting debut. "I sort of fell with my bum in the butter," she whispers covertly behind a theatrically raised hand, mischief dancing in her eyes. Returning to a more serious tone, she adds "My first gig was a farce at

the state theatre  
- Hoe Later Hoe  
Kwater - directed  
by Pierre van

Pletzen. At the time, I didn't realise how big that really was! It certainly opened many doors for me."

When it comes to her television career, she is best known for her role as the deviously resourceful Helen Patterson / Sally Smith in Generations. Her extensive list of acting experience includes: Suburban Bliss, Die Vierde Kabinet, Voet van Goud, Die Casper Rasper show, Haak en Steek, Jozi Streets, Dit wat Stom Is, Villa Rosa, Isidingo, Om-i-Wereld, Angel Song and Egoli. However, three in particular stand out for Heidi. She relished her role in Generations due to the fact that it was a meaty, challenging part. She also holds Frans Marx in high regard, and thoroughly enjoyed her part as Isabelle in Dit Wat Stom Is. "Few people create human drama on that level," she adds with sincerity. And, of course, a favourite is her spot as Bitch Du Toit in Casper de Vries's Haak en Steek. Beginning to chuckle, she says: "Where else would one get the opportunity to play such an intrinsically bad person and still be loved for it afterwards?"

Being, in her own words, a "sucker for variety," Heidi hasn't just stuck to one genre. Her striking features, singing talent and flair for accents make her a popular choice for theatre productions. Some of her more notable lead performances include: Kringe in 'n Bos, The King and I, the Buddy Holly Story, Skilpoppe, Little Shop of Horrors, Whore and My Boetie se Sussie se Ou. She also acted in the film Swansong for Charli, as well as the short film Parys se Moses.

However, Heidi's talents extend far beyond the stage and screen. A highly esteemed drama and voice coach, Heidi takes on everyone - from varsity acting hopefuls and aspirant presenters to people just wishing to improve their language skills. She was the performance coach for the second season of Pop Idols as well as Zing 1 and 2 - a job she loved. She has been a voice and speech lecturer at a number of tertiary institutions, and

currently runs Homebound with Heidi M - a communication skills workshop aimed at empowering those at the grassroots level, assisting them to communicate with confidence in English.

In her 13-odd years operating in the entertainment industry, Heidi's biggest lesson has been that everything happens as it should. However, she warns: "Always, without fail, you have to give your level best. Then, be grateful if your efforts get you somewhere. By the same token, if your efforts are not rewarded, you have to get over it and move on." This seasoned actor's stress busting secret is finding humour in the everyday mundane. Insisting on laughing aloud at least once a day, humour is a quality she looks for in the people she surrounds herself with. She also often finds herself laughing at the lack of service delivery in our country - from post offices to banks, everything offers up a potential belly laugh.

Heide Mollentze lives her life according to this sensible motto: "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change the way you think about it." So, what is the one thing that she could not change, the one that lead to a change in her thought pattern? "My age" she states stoically, her mouth set in a straight line. "I'm always turning 29. Always." And just when you think she's serious, the loaded atmosphere is once again broken with that infectious laughter, the kind that stays with you long after the sound is gone.

### Heidi's hotlist:

**Favourite perfume?** Opium.

**Favourite movie?** The green mile.

**Favourite beauty product?** Regima facial gel cleanser (I simply refuse to go without this one.)

**Favourite snack?** Salticrax with mussels.

**Favourite song?** I have two currently - may be clichéd; but these songs make my world a wonderful place.

*Hanging by a moment* (Lifehouse) and *Battlefield* (Jordan Sparks).

