

LIKE MOTHER, LIKE DAUGHTER

Club speaks to stylish performer **Lindiwe Suttle** and her mother and talk show host **Felicia**, about what drives them and how they've inspired each other

LINDIWE SUTTLE

In an interview with *Vogue Italia*, you mentioned that growing up, your mom was your style icon... Yes, since I can remember she has always been impeccably dressed. My mom taught my sister and I the importance of image and stressed that a positive attitude helps your outer style shine even brighter.

What's one of your favourite memories of her? I spent my teen years in the USA and so it was hard not having her around but I loved watching her making a change in South Africa. Post-Apartheid, *The Felicia Show* had such an impact on the nation: it opened communication between all cultures.

What's the best advice she's ever given you? Get an education; it will open doors.

In what ways are you alike? We're both determined, fashionable and fearless.

Do you see each other often? My mom lives in the US now but she loves SA and can't stay away for long. She visits often and we speak on the phone almost daily.

Have you always had a unique sense of style? When I was just five, I begged my mom for a pair of cowboy boots – I was born a fashionista.

How important are your fashion choices when it comes to performing? Music is the core of everything I do and fashion is the icing on top: I want to stimulate my audience visually too.

You've worked in fashion and now music – how did it all happen? I studied business but after I graduated, I went into fashion marketing. Later, I started styling celebs. My most memorable moment was styling Beyoncé for a film. I accidentally poked her with a safety pin... Twice!

When did you decide to pursue a music career? After having worked as a fashion buyer, I moved to Germany where I recorded a few demo songs. On returning to SA, I joined a jazz/hip-hop band and two years later I launched my solo career.

What have your career highlights been so far? Performing at Cape Town's FIFA World Cup Grand Parade, in Moscow for an *InStyle* magazine fashion show

and for my tennis heroes, Venus and Serena Williams. Backstage, it was hard to keep my composure.

What can fans expect from your latest album, *Kamikaze Art*? It's rooted in soul and infused with electronic sounds from Berlin. The tracks are open and honest – I gave this album my everything.

What are your plans for the rest of the year? My new album is being released in SA and Germany. I'm also involved in Rock Girl, an initiative aimed at curbing rape and violence towards women, [visit rockgirls.org]. The official launch date of the song I wrote for the campaign, 'Rock Girl', is set for 16 June, Youth Day.

“We are both determined, fashionable and fearless”



FELICIA MABUZA-SUTTLE

Are you and Lindiwe alike at all? I taught both my daughters, Lindiwe and Zanele, to be confident and self-assured. In that sense, yes, Lindiwe is a lot like me. She moved to South Africa alone to launch her music career. In the mid-'70s, I moved to the States on my own to study

and work, a young woman from the dusty streets of Soweto. I was determined to pursue my academic dreams that the Apartheid system had deprived me of.

Were there any tell-tale signs that she would grow up to be a musician – and such a stylish one at that? I remember her pleading with me to let her be a cheerleader. I told her, “You don't have to be cheering guys; they should be cheering you.” Then she participated in her high school's singing contest, though I missed it because I was in SA doing my talk show. She was also voted best dressed at high school: I recall a teacher once calling to say Lindiwe was wearing one of my glitzy evening jackets to school.

How would you describe Lindiwe? She is highly independent and knows exactly what she wants. When she decided to pursue a singing career, I told her I would give her my blessing only after she received an MBA. And she did.

With a long list of achievements behind you, what drives you to succeed? My passion to prove wrong those who always told me I would never amount to anything. A teacher once recommended that I drop out of high school. When I got to university, I worked hard to prove him wrong and ended up graduating with top marks.

What has been the greatest moment of your career? Responding to Nelson Mandela's clarion call during his historic visit to the US in 1991, when he called on all South Africans living abroad to come back home and help to build a new democracy. I did just that.

What's the hardest part of being a mother? Being there with and for her, simply because I live so far away. We are a trans-Atlantic family. Having done that myself, I know that it can be damn lonely.

If there's one lesson you could pass on to your children what would it be?

The importance of *ubuntu*: the virtues of gratitude and acknowledging that someone helped you get to where you are, so help someone else as well.

What's your advice to other mothers out there? Allow your children to dream, and nurture their dreams – big or small. **Q**

INTERVIEW: VANESSA MCCULLOCH. PHOTOGRAPHY: MARGUERITE DELOESE. CREATIVE DIRECTOR: EMMA JORDAN. HAIR AND MAKE-UP: KEVIN EPSTEIN. LINDIWE'S DRESS BY STAAIN LOUW. BRACELET BY PHILIPPA GREEN. ADDITIONAL IMAGES: GALLO IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES.