

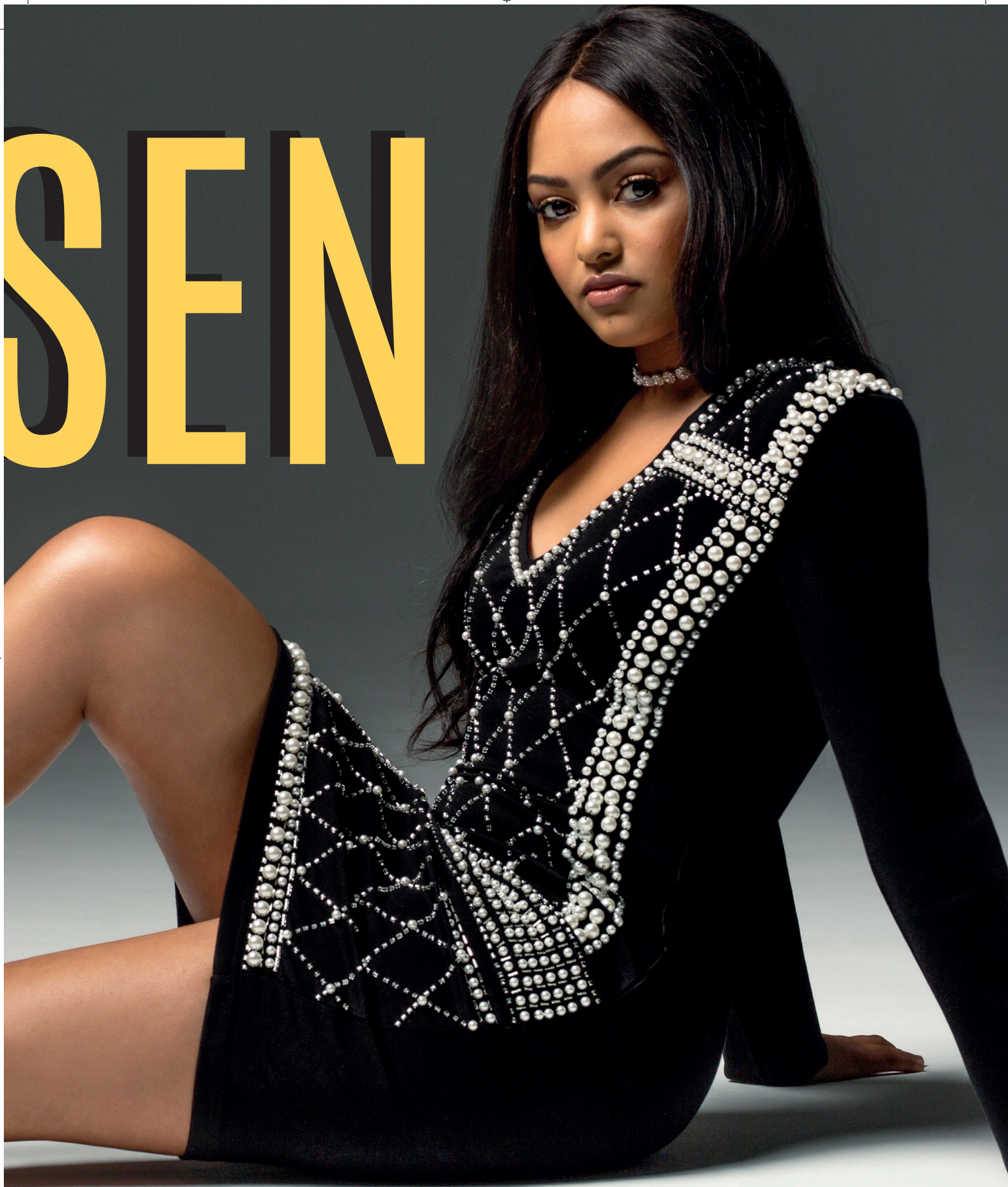
cover story

THE CHOS ONE

Paxton Fielies is determined to
prove she's more than just a
home-grown favourite



SEN



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cover story

'AS SOON AS I REALISED I HAD SOMETHING SPECIAL, I NURTURED IT'

Numerous *Idols South Africa* winners in the past have had lacklustre careers that didn't stand the test of time, so it's not uncommon to ask the question: Will any winner stick around for the long haul?

Enter Paxton Fielies, who has definitely hit the ground running since winning the singing competition last year at just 17 years old, one of the youngest to do so in the show's history. Paxton has made sure that her name remains on everyone's lips since then, achieving some personal milestones that include performing overseas.

The fame, the fortune, the country's support – these are the fruits of her labours, available for all to see, but don't let social media fool you. Behind all the glitz and glamour is just a shy young girl who dared to follow her passion.

Born and raised in Bishop Lavis, Cape Town, Paxton has always been pretty content in her own company. 'I didn't have a lot of friends growing up, because I was always indoors, so I played by myself in my own time,' she says.

Like many famous singers such as Jennifer Hudson and Whitney Houston, Paxton discovered her voice at a young age in her local church. It is there where she would not only challenge herself as a singer, but also share the knowledge that she gained with those around her. 'I used to assist the choir leader and I would teach other kids new hymns or harmonies. As soon as I realised I had something special, I nurtured it,' she

FAST FACTS:

Full name:

Paxton Fielies

DOB:

17 September 2000

POB:

Bishop Lavis,
Cape Town

Favourite movie:

Frozen

Favourite food:


I love Italian cuisine, so
all things pizza, pasta
and lasagne!





recalls. And nurture it she did. Fast forward just a few years and Paxton decided it was time to take singing seriously. It was no longer a hobby at this point, but had turned into something that she couldn't do without. 'It was in grade 10', she says. 'That's when I realised I wanted to do this for the rest of my life. I knew that singing and music was a passion of mine'. It was a decision that would change the course of her life.

Paxton was still a high-school student when her mother convinced her to give *Idols SA* a try. Although very shy and timid, the young singer now had to commit to

the decision that she had made. It was a risk, one that would either make or break her, but then again, she had been unknowingly preparing for this her whole life. With her first church solo at the age of seven and every other one thereafter, Paxton had been building up to the moment where she would sing in front of an audience larger than her community – and what bigger stage than that of *Idols SA*? Paxton pressed pause on her schooling and took the plunge. Then came the golden ticket, the Top 10, and eventually, she won the competition. Paxton's climb to the top was an inspiring one, but not an easy one. 'Being away from home for four months was really hectic. I called my mom every day. She gave me the strength that I needed and always encouraged me,' she reveals. It was the support of her family that helped Paxton through the highs and lows of the competition – and she would need it again, sooner than she realised.

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Having started her career with a plagiarism scandal involving her debut single 'Demonstrate' (she didn't do anything wrong), it seemed that Paxton had the odds stacked against her, yet she powered through. The pressure that came with the title of *Idols SA* winner definitely put the young singer to the test, but she's been rising above it all with her family in tow.

'They keep me grounded. They're basically my escape and always remind me of who I am and who I am destined to be,' she reveals. With career highlights that include a feature on Craig Lucas' hit song 'Smother', and an invitation to perform in Mariefred, Sweden, for Sweden's queen Silvia, as well as being awarded the title of ambassador for World's Children's Rights, Paxton is keen to prove she's the real deal.

Her debut album *This is Me*, which released earlier this year, was a personal project for Paxton. 'There is a track on the album called "Innocent" – it's basically my life story and my journey in a song. I chose songs I felt connected to. I wanted to be diverse and authentic, but also challenge myself as an artist,' says the singer.

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Paxton!

The life of a recording artist is a full-time job, but Paxton seems to have adapted quite well. Between promoting her album, live performances and finishing matric (yes – she’s technically still in high school), Paxton tries to make the most of her downtime.

‘I try and get at least 10 hours of sleep, binge eat while watching my favourite YouTubers and, if I’m feeling creative, then I write,’ the teenager says. She’s come a long way, this young girl from Bishop Lavis. From media scrutiny to a royal performance, an album and back-to-back performances ... considering the work that she’s put into the past year, 18-year-old Paxton might just be that one winner who will stick around. ✕

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