

A S H L E Y P A R K E R

PERSONAL PROFILE

Ashley was born in South Africa on 16th November, 1949. Being a member of a musical family he sang as a choirboy soprano for five years and at the age of 15 taught himself to play the guitar with the aid of various books. He joined a couple of bands while at high school and continued to play in one during his three years at the University of Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, where he obtained a BSc degree majoring in Maths and Maths Stats. By this time, he was writing his own songs.

After completing his degree, Ashley joined a computer programming company but in 1972 his musical talents were brought to the attention of the Autotours Group in South Africa and he was invited to compose the music for a promotion film to be shot in Europe by Autotours as well as to take one of the leading roles in the movie. As a result of his contributions, Autotours produced a very successful film which is still today used worldwide to promote their tours.

This venture gave Ashley the confidence to leave his 8 to 5 job and concentrate on a musical career. He landed himself a residential gig at a popular hotel in Johannesburg, the Crest, and during his 1½ years there he built up a very large and demanding following. By now his repertoire was vast and versatile ranging from his early material of Cliff Richard, Elvis, the Shadows, the Beatles and Mersey sounds to contemporary Bob Dylan, Cat Stevens, Rodriquez, Simon and Garfunkel and Neil Young.

It was inevitable that Ashley should then become involved in TV shows and during the next four years, while playing various highly paid, hot spots on the South African entertainment circuit in Johannesburg, Durban and Cape Town, he appeared on ten different TV programmes singing mostly his own song compositions.

In 1975 Ashley had teamed up with a British Oxford graduate, Nick Alexander, and their resulting joint song writing successes led to a recording and publishing contract with E.M.I. in South Africa. On the E.M.I. label, a seven single "Close Up/Laughter" was released and because it was given so much air time by the disc jockeys of South Africa's commercial music station, Radio 5, it easily made number 18 on the charts.

Ashley's next major and most recent success was in February and March 1979 when his popularity earned him a part on the coveted Spike Milligan Show brought to the country by South Africa's top impresario, Ronnie Quibell. Ashley's talent gained him both the respect and affection of Spike Milligan, who asked him to take part in his new British TV series, Q9.

Because of this offer, which is currently being negotiated with TV officials, and because Ashley felt his future in the music industry in South Africa had become limited, the decision was made to move to the United Kingdom and attempt to break into overseas markets, either by having his songs published or by playing live to English and European audiences. To date, since his arrival in London in August 1979, Ashley has become involved in producing material for E.M.I. and Sunbury Music and has been signed up for a highly paid cabaret act in an Oslo hotel for November and December by a top international London agency.

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