

Music journalist, podcaster Tecla Cioffi on unapologetically taking up space

By Ruth Cooper

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When it comes to championing the South African music scene you get no better cheerleader than Tecla Cioffi. From her formative days as an *LMG* music journalist to founding and managing her music news website *Texx and the City* to now hosting a number one music podcast series, *Texx Talks*, this powerhouse of a woman is the definition of hustle.

We got in touch this Women's Month to chat career highlights, podcasting through a pandemic and taking up space.



Tecla Cioffi - Photo by Leigh Groenemeyer - Image: Supplied

📌 ***Congrats on all your recent success and recognition! What have been some of your ultimate career highlights?***

Being featured on *Bizcommunity* obviously! Yes, I like to flatter. But I've also got all the love in the world for your team because you've always supported every venture that I've undertaken, whether it's a failure or a success. One of my recent successes, however, is my number one music podcast *Texx Talks*, which has become like my proverbial child and every season I watch it grow and grow and it's a real thing of beauty.

I think my recent cover of the *Mail & Guardian's* Art section, in light of *Texx Talks* being something that people like to listen to, is also pretty great.



Texx and the City to launch 'Texx Talks' music podcast in April

10 Mar 2020



📌 ***Can you give us some background on why the decision to start a podcast and how you made this happen?***

My producer bugged me until I made it happen, that's legit the story. We had two gin-fuelled 'meetings' about it and then before I knew it, I was in the studio and season one was done. I had no idea that we would go into our first lockdown as we launched season one though, so the snowball of its success really caught me by surprise but also provided us with a unique set of challenges as to how to record season two. But with the help of TOMS, we navigated that and even now as we

begin the planning of season seven. Through our continued lockdowns, *Texx Talks* has given me a sense of purpose and renewed creative spirit. Can you tell I'm mildly obsessed with my podcast?

🔱 ***What do you attribute your success to?***

The hard work of everyone involved. It takes a village. But over the years I figured out that my strength as a journalist and an interviewer lies in my ability to connect with my subject when I'm sitting in front of them. Remote recordings obviously presented a bit of a challenge on this front, but I've been able to adapt my interviewing style where I'm still engaging enough and ask the right questions to get the goods. I like to make people feel comfortable like they're having a chat with a good friend. I'm not out here trying to ambush anyone or be controversial for the sake of.

🔱 ***What advice would you give to women wanting to work in the media and music spaces? My answer to this type of question has changed so much over the years, but my advice would be to take up as much space as possible and to stop apologising. Men never apologise and it's time that we claim our voice and our space in every workplace because we deserve to be there as much as they do.***



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🔱 ***What still needs to change when it comes to supporting women in the local music industry and industries in general?***

I think that change really does begin at home, and in the classroom and at a grassroots level. There need to be more community-led projects that invest in the future of girls from an early age - whether it be through after school programmes where they can learn various skills or different extracurricular activities where they can hone talents that might not appear automatically in the classroom.

🔱 ***Are there any female figures who have had a particularly positive influence on your life?***

My answer to this will always be my mother because she taught me how to navigate this life thing and she's still my go-to for every important decision that I make on a day-to-day basis.



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🔱 ***What do you love most about being a woman?***

The ability to totally baffle a man.

🔱 ***What's your hidden talent?***

I can fold my tongue into very weird shapes so naturally I'm a hit at all the *jols*.

ABOUT RUTH COOPER

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