

How Etania becomes the life of a party

Party gal. Etania evolved from the high-energy MC who kept the crowd locked in, to now spinning the discs.

BY TONY MUSHOBOROZI

Etania Mutoni is a Ugandan dancer, DJ, TV host, MC, and social media influencer whose magnetism knows no bounds. The 27-year-old is so good an entertainer and so popular that people are willing to pay to see her perform. Her upcoming concert, *"Becoming Life of the Party"*, slated for April 4, marks a historic first for a female DJ. This moment is, in her eyes, a victory lap for an entire community that refused to let her story end before it began.

To understand the woman preparing to make history, you have to rewind past the blinding disco lights, the glittering decks and fancy footwork she is now known for.

Before she commanded those stages, she gained her street cred while working the nightlife of Kampala with the events and marketing outfit, Muchachos.

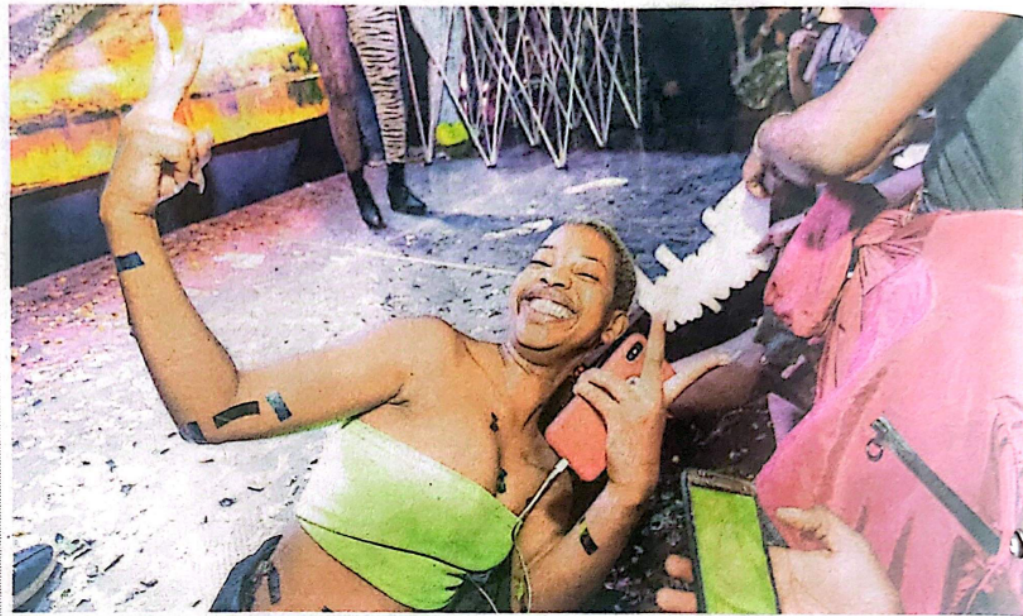
As a hostess, she learnt how to read a room, how to hold a space, and make people feel seen. It became clear to her that a party is as much about the energy you give the person standing next to you as it is the music you are listening to. So, she knew she had to become a master of both.

And then along came Covid-19. When the world paused during those 2020 lockdowns, Etania's career exploded. To those who knew her, this was not surprising at all. She had had the oomph all along. It is true what they say. Luck finds the prepared, and Etania was ready for her next chapter.

NTV's Dance Party

With the nightlife now silent because of the lockdown, her personality found a new frequency on television. She became a part of NTV's Dance Party that ran every Saturday night. The show caught fire almost instantly. The bars were closed at the time. Party hunters were thirsty for alcohol and starved of music and vibes.

People were drinking from their houses, others were looking around dusty backstreet shops in their neighborhoods for one that might sell alcohol far away from the prying eyes of the police pat-



Etania gets playful at a music event. PHOTO/COURTESY OF ETANIA.

trols. Flouting the lockdown rules could land you in the cooler for the night. The vast majority of people stayed indoors surfing through the TV channels for something fun, and NTV Dance Party was where most people landed and it was probably because of Etania's vibes.

The show would soon become ritual for a locked down nation in need of an escape. While others were forced to fit into the traditional media molds, Etania brought her authentic self with the biker shorts, sneakers and the confidence to walk into a space and instantly make it come alive. She was the antidote to lockdown blues.

When government officials and students alike were dancing in their living rooms to her energy. She was proof that when someone dares to be unapologetically themselves, it gives everyone else permission to do the same.

Life of the party

Her ascent has always been about that magnet-

ic energy that pulls others in. Right around the time her image exploded because of that televised dance show, a powerful synergy began to brew. The world had seen her authenticity, her audacity and her vibes. She had main character aura. And brands dig that. It was only a matter of time before she got pulled into the world of brand ambassadorship.

The brand that came calling was Smirnoff when she was named brand ambassador. Today, Etania is a permanent fixture at Smirnoff Fiesta.

"I love that this allows me to be myself," she says. "In other spaces, you lose your aura to fit in. Here, the aura is the point."

The position has turned her into a full-fledged "Life of the Party". She evolved from the high-energy MC who kept the crowd locked in, to the DJ now spinning discs. Smirnoff has been the fuel to her fire, so to speak. Etania is the ultimate personification of the "We Do We" spirit as she oozes unapologetic self-expression.

Two cents

Tips to nail it. As a hostess, she learnt how to read a room, how to hold a space, and make people feel seen. It became clear to her that a party is as much about the energy you give the person standing next to you as it is the music you are listening to. She had to become a master of both.



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