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interested youngsters for special sessions introducing them to the world to pop.

The consultation periods offer a glimpse into almost every aspect of music and are aimed at channelling new talent into its best suited and most productive area.

At the helm will be producer Tony Matthew, who worked on Soul II Soul's hits of the 1980s, including the smash Back to Life.

Matthew has also worked with Whitney Houston and Beverley Knight, as well as with Kylie and James Brown.

Business

Possessions director Malissa Whitehouse said: "Over the next five or six weeks we shall be offering the services of some of the top people in the business to those with untapped talent.

"They will be able to advise them on all aspects of the music industry – from songwriting to performing to dealing with the media.

"Our staff have years of experience which is available to those who want to make a start in the world of pop, singers, musicians, songwriters – the whole range."

Former girl group member Malissa – whose current favourite acts include Lily Allen, Gnarls Barclay and The Streets – said the studio was responding to changes within the business.

She said: "What we can first offer is a consultation period in which we really see if a person has got talent. Of course they have to be serious – there's no point in timewasters coming here.

"But our staff can spot it if a person has got what it takes.

"The music industry is an ever-evolving thing and it needs constant attention to keep track of the latest trends – downloading MP3 players or whatever else.

"Some people who come to us just don't have a clue what it entails. They are so green it's not true. But that is where we can help."

Reckless

Recent acts which have been working with Possessions include Reckless Abandon, a group of 15- to 17-year-olds from Medway who won a talent competition before the studio started moving them forward with a publishing company.

Diva Lisa Musk – who has been compared to Joss Stone – is a 17-year-old who has half an album recorded and is negotiating deals after playing a show with ex-Blue star Lee Ryan, while songwriter Sam Powell is also getting her work noticed.

Whitehouse said: "Lisa was actually going to X Factor but came to us instead and we managed to get her going.

"She has a lot of talent – a great voice and stage presence and she is a hard worker, too."

While TV talent and reality shows explore some parts of the music business, Malissa is keen to emphasise the dedication needed to reach the top.

She said: "People know about all the glitz and glamour of the industry, but there is much more to it than that.

"Watching a few out-takes from the X Factor is not going to make someone a success.

"So we explain the directions people must take in our consultation sessions.

"It's a package, really – giving people a taste of what the business is all about.

"It's true that since the shows more and more people want to get involved and we are not Simon Cowell – we don't do the whole cutting down people and making them cry – but we do point out people's limitations.

"Of course some people have no idea of the talent they possess – or lack of it, for that matter.

"But we always try to put forward the positive.

"For instance we had someone come through the door who looked amazing – but couldn't sing a note.

"So we suggested they get into modelling – and maybe then use the fees they get for singing lessons.

"Then there may be some people with songwriting talent and we can say we have publishing contacts who are looking for their sort of material.

Practising

"There can be guitarist, keyboard players or drummers coming in and we can put them in touch with fellow musicians.

"It's quite common to hear some say 'I feel like a bit of a geek – practicing guitar in my bedroom – what I really want is to be part of a band'.

"So that's where we can help – by putting them in touch with someone we feel may be compatible.

"It's all about bringing someone's skill out." Whitehouse – whose band was called Morgans – said her own involvement in the business gives her a fellow feeling for aspiring artists.

Soundtrack

She said: "I've been on that side of things, so I can empathise. Then I have worked with some top writers on film soundtrack projects, so I can draw on that.

"Tony has gained a huge amount of knowledge of the business from working alongside Jazzie B with Soul II Soul as well as on other million selling singles.

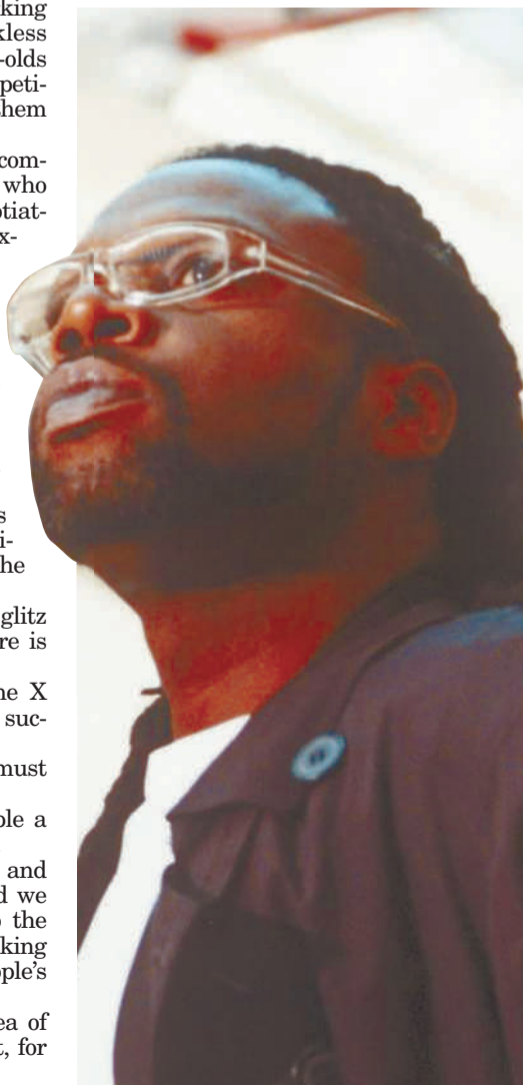
"So we really can help.

"We know our approach is different to the attitude of many record companies, where it is all about quick returns, but we know there is talent out there that we can work alongside to the benefit of all parties.

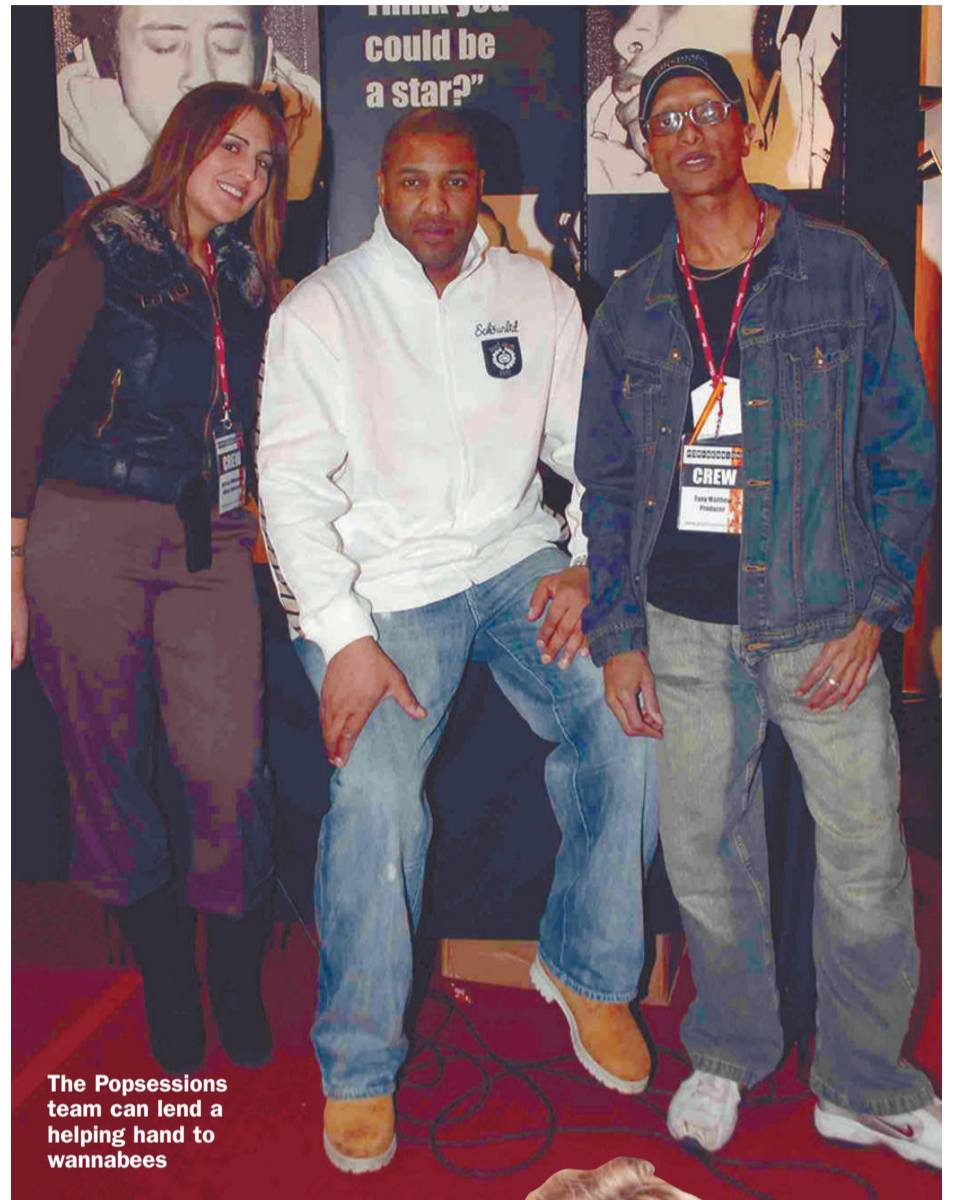
"For example Will Young has achieved a good deal of longevity as an artist as he has grown with his audience. Meanwhile, Gareth Gates's fans seemed to be more fickle.

"So a company that works alongside its artists can develop them.

"We are taking risks – but it's worth it because we know talent is out there."



Tony Matthew's work with Jazzie B (above) has been hugely valuable



The Possessions team can lend a helping hand to wannabees



Possessions producers have worked with pop princess Kylie Minogue