

PROGRAM DATE: 2018-02-08

PROGRAM NAME: WOMANITY – WOMEN IN UNITY

GUEST NAME: MS WANDA BALOYI – AWARD WINNING MUSICIAN

SPEAKER	TRANSCRIPTION
DR. MALKA	Hello, I'm Dr. Amaleya Goneos-Malka, welcome to 'Womanity – Women in Unity'. The show that celebrates prominent and ordinary African Women's milestone achievements in their struggles for liberation, self-emancipation, human rights, democracy, racism, socio-economic class division and gender based violence.
DR. MALKA	Joining us in studio today is Award Winning Musician Wanda Baloyi; welcome to the show!
MS BALOYI	Thank you, thanks for having me.
DR. MALKA	It's a great pleasure and to begin with we'd like to track back a little bit on history. So your music career started almost two decades ago with the all girl group Ghetto Luv in the 1990's; you evolved into Solo Jazz Vocalist and more recently you've been incorporating DJing. You earned a KORA Award for Best African Arrangement in 2004 along with two SAMA Nominations and a Channel O Music Video Nomination in 2005 and 2006. Please can you share with us a few of the landmarks in your career?
MS BALOYI	Mmm, there's been a couple. I think for me the most important landmark is my beginning of entering the industry which was the group Ghetto Luv, for me if it wasn't for that group, if it wasn't for that opportunity I don't think I would have evolved into the many stages that I am today, you know, or where I get to; where I am today and just sharing stages with so many phenomenal artists, learning from so many people every day as we go. Any opportunity I am given to express my gift is a highlight for me so for me those are endless highlights, so I cannot say this is better than the other or whatever because no matter what size it is, it's still an opportunity to share.
DR. MALKA	But Ghetto Luv really gave you that launch pad; put you into your....
MS BALOYI	...absolutely....
DR. MALKA	...the trajectory and starting your career...
MS BALOYI	...absolutely, absolutely.
DR. MALKA	And I know that your family is musical background..
MS BALOYI	...yes...
DR. MALKA	...how did that frame and shape you?
MS BALOYI	Oh it definitely did. My dad is my most favourite, if not the best male vocalist I have ever heard. I'm not – I always have to emphasise I am not being biased 'cause he's my dad – he is literally the best vocalist I've ever heard, I've never heard anything better than him. Unfortunately he's not the biggest in terms of everybody knowing who he is but in his craft and what he's done, oh my God, he's my biggest inspiration; my biggest influence. I grew up with him taking me to his rehearsal spaces where he would rehearse with Loading Zone, you know, the bands that he worked with back then and just watching that whole process, without knowing, it left something within me. I didn't know as a young girl, I had no idea, I was just accompanying him like she's accompanying me so I didn't know that one day I would follow in his footsteps.
DR. MALKA	It's almost like this osmotic effect that...
MS BALOYI	...exactly...
DR. MALKA	...you're exposed in this environment and just soaking it up...
MS BALOYI	...exactly, absolutely.

DR. MALKA	And in music...we mentioned a little bit offline....what's really important is about reinvention, staying relevant; can you tell us a little bit about your style of music genre's and that sort of evolution?
MS BALOYI	I know, oohh you know I always have this....it's not an argument but it's a kind of discomfort if you can say, when labelled a specific genre. I'm labelled as a jazz singer. I'm not a jazz singer; I'm not a jazz singer. I have elements and influences of jazz, I'm not a jazz singer, you understand what I mean? I...I'm...I look at people who are a 100% purely jazz people and I'm not that; I'm elements of that. Everyone who creates a certain craft has influences from different things and those are the influences that I have and unfortunately I have to agree to that because that's how I'm perceived to be but at the end of the day I am not a jazz singer, I'm not actually a labelled singer. I'm a singer, I'm versatile, I do what feels right and what feels good to me at that moment but my influences are definitely rooted in jazz, my influences are definitely rooted in soul and definitely rooted in ethnocentric sounds. So I have elements of every piece of sounds that I love from across the world and those are the influences that make my sound.
DR. MALKA	So we've got your dad coming through, we've got jazz, we've got soul, we've got Afrocentric, so almost creating a bit of an eclectic mix to form your sound, your persona and your own genre.
MS BALOYI	Absolutely.
DR. MALKA	Music's always been a tremendous inspiration to people and occasionally it's been exploited to influence political and social agendas around the world; how to do you see the role of musicians in this regard and is there a fine line between what would be regarded as positive or negative influence on people's lives?
MS BALOYI	I think both are important. I think the influence that musicians play or the role rather that they play in society is important. Whether it is good, wrong or bad, it's there, you know, because as people we are different and whatever message that I'm giving through sound, through voice, is received differently, whether good or bad. So the second medium, if not the most....if not the first medium used to get through people is music; politicians after. If someone ones to send a message the first way is through music, so how you perceive it is your decision, but the message was sent to you. So to answer your question; whether if it's good or if it's bad the fact that there is a poss....there's an opportunity for you to send that message through music; that's the important thing.
DR.MALKA	And it's up to the interpretation of the listener.
MS BALOYI	How you take it, yeah.
DR. MALKA	And on that note, have you got particular topics that form part of the lyrics or when you're making your songs?
MS BALOYI	I'm a very personal kind of writer; I write what relates to me. I write what I'm experiencing in my life. Most of my albums are very personal so my last album is called Love and Life, that's my love life and my life, so I talk about things that resonate with me that I experience because I feel I can tell the story better if it's coming from me.
DR. MALKA	And how does that make you feel, putting yourself out into the public domain?
MS BALOYI	It shows the level of comfort I am with being naked. I put myself out there naked to the world and how you perceived it doesn't matter, as long as I have said this is who I am. So if I walk down the road and however people will be like oh no but that's who she is, so I want my music to have a reflection of who I am so I don't have to explain who I am; it speaks for itself. So people always say oh wow, she's so humble; I'm not humble, I'm just who I am, you know what I mean? I don't have to put on a cape or put

	on anything that says okay now I'm moving into this artistry world, no, I flow as I am.
DR. MALKA	So it's authenticity; it's expression of own values?
MS BALOYI	100%.
DR. MALKA	And that's a bit of a challenge sometimes because we live in this world which is becoming more and more public; social media is prevalent in every sphere and there's opportunities and also issues in terms of how you navigate and negotiate and it allows, I would say from a person in the industry you're in on the entertainment side, an opportunity to resonate and reach out and connect to fans and also have that....
MS BALOYI	...pull out....
DR. MALKA	...reciprocal feedback....oh yeah and pulling out as well; how do you navigate?
MS BALOYI	I think I decide how I want to control myself first and how I want to portray myself in the public. So I throw myself in as real, as I said before, as I am and I sometimes feel I'm being so pulled into this world that I'm now no longer me, then I pull out, you know, so I have a balance of in and out, you know, I know when to come in and when to come out, so I enjoy that balance and I control it in a way that it works for me, ja.
DR. MALKA	And that's important because it can be all-consuming...
MS BALOYI	...yes it is...
DR. MALKA	...at times and the more people that are connecting with you....
MS BALOYI	...absolutely...
DR. MALKA	...the harder...
MS BALOYI	...it is...
DR. MALKA	...it becomes to navigate. We've spoken a bit about you as an individual and your musical influences and how you project and the type of content that you discuss within your lyrics, now I'd like to ask you a little bit more of I suppose a broader based picture of what it means to be a woman in the entertainment industry. We see a lot of artists performing but in some of the conversations I've had with other ladies they still say that when you look at the production elements or some of the behind the scenes on who's pulling the strings, that there's still a strong element of male domination; what's your view?
MS BALOYI	My view is this; when I first started the industry back in the days of Ghetto Luv it was predominantly male dominant, overall industry, performance and behind the scenes and I come from a mind-frame of understanding that there is no excuse for whatever and wherever you are. Looking back then and now, things have changed. We find more females in the front, more female artists, we find females producing, we find females doing music, directing, females doing camera. I don't like to use the term...I don't like to differentiate male/female. I like to think of things in a way of what can I do? What skills do I have to add onto the lack of thereof in terms of the female if we're talking gender base. How can I bring forth that addition to add on the scale of expertise in that field? So from when I started, definitely there was a lack there of females in the industry and now it's flooded, you know what I mean? So I don't like to speak that tone of male/female, I don't like that. I like to look and say okay this is where we are, this is what I have, what can we do?
DR. MALKA	I also think what's important though is about making sure that the opportunities are open; that there aren't barriers to allow people to choose whatever skill set they want or what type of career they want to pursue.
MS BALOYI	I don't think we are in that time where there are barriers; I don't think so, unless I'm not living in this world. I don't think they are, I'm sitting with a whole doctor right here, you know what I mean? I have an opportunity to get on stages with various people, young and old. No, I don't think so. If

	there is then there is an opportunity to fix it because I don't believe that we are living in a time of it's difficult to a, b, c, you know what I mean?
DR.M ALKA	And the more women that are involved it creates almost for me this role modelling effect and mentorship view that people see physically, that this can be a reality.
MS BALOYI	Yes and we have so much of it. We have so many women organisations; we have so many women inspirational places. I mean this month, this month, coming month alone is a woman's month and it's flooded with so many powerful women doing so many amazing things so the sound of it's impossible doesn't sound possible to me, you know what I mean? There's just so many opportunities for females out there if we're going to categorise it in a gender base.
DR. MALKA	But I think that's one of the positive benefits; that's why when we have these types of discussions it's so refreshing to see this tangible evidence of change that has taken place.
MS BALOYI	Exactly...exactly, exactly. I think it's our role to show the...we need to give them a list of here...what you can, there's a list of what you can and there's a list of where you can go, who you can speak to. We don't need a list of how can, you know, we don't need that, we need of the how can's to know you can, they're here, there's solutions, we need solutions and if there's problems we need to give them the answer. We can't sit and....there are issues that we don't have....let me not use the word solutions but that there are issues that we are dealing with like the abuse issues; these are things that we cannot control, you understand what I mean? These are beyond our control, we don't have the I can list answers because that's beyond us but in terms of what we can do with our given skills, we have answers for that.
DR. MALKA	And I think it's about using the power that you have...
MS BALOYI	...exactly....
DR. MALKA	...to effect the change that you want to make and in many cases or in many instances, listening to this conversation today with you, you have become a role model to other women, particularly younger women that are coming up through the ranks; how do you feel about that?
MS BALOYI	I love it. For me...the thing is when you start something you never know what the end result of something is going to be. All you know is that you're following something that you truly believe in and you're energised every day to keep doing and pushing whatever it is that you have and what you do and you look back you're like...damn....it's been over 30 years I'm doing this thing or over 20 years or however many years you've been doing it and you have people like wow, we acknowledge, we respect. For me I look it as...it's like giving God back His gift that He gave to you, that's returning His favour by saying yes, okay these are my babies, these are my children, this is how we do it, this is how....use me. Use me. In the same way the Lord died for our sins use me; I made the mistakes. The reason we have the laws or maybe the reason we have the way things are, they way things run now is because of the mistakes that were done before so people say no don't follow this, get more education in terms of the music industry, understand your contracts, royalties, you know, blah blah blah; there's so many things to it so I'm like guys listen, you have a gift, you have a talent, nobody can come into your house and steal it. They can steal your TV, they can steal your bed, they can steal your couch, they can steal your car, they can steal anything; they cannot steal your gift. They can never steal that, it's unstealable, if there's such a word, but what you can do to protect it is to fill yourself with knowledge, fill yourself with knowledge, know as much,

	ask as much, read as much, do all that you can to fill yourself with knowledge so you protect your gift.
DR. MALKA	I think that's such an apt expression and it also reminds me of our current ethos and movement in the political space of "send me."
MS BALOYI	Yes ".....", absolutely.
DR. MALKA	You are listening to 'Womanity – Women in Unity' on Channel Africa, the African Perspective, on frequency 9625 KHz, on the 31 meter band. Also available on DSTV Channel 802. Today we're talking to award winning musician Wanda Baloyi. We would love to receive your comments on Twitter:@WomanityTalk.
DR. MALKA	Still with a little bit of a focus on you Wanda; we mentioned earlier that you've got this musical background that comes through from your family influences; you also have a multi-cultural background, including South Africa as well as Mozambique; what opportunities have you had to work in the continent and collaborate?
MS BALOYI	Oh my God, I always love to call myself a cocktail African because I am one of those very lucky people who have a pool of influences in terms of sound. I was born and raised in South Africa with Mozambican parents and family, so, sjoie it's crazy. So at home we speak Portuguese. You go out, you go to school there's the Zulu's, Sotho, there's English, there's all that so there's this kind of switch-switch and then when you go home you're listening to your...like when I speak about Djavan from Brazil, who's like someone I've listened to forever and I'm like oh my God I love him, that's a Brazilian influence. I love Brazilian music so much, like it's in my blood, like I love that music and then you come back home and you listen to, Letta Mbulu, Miriam Makeba and it's like in your blood so you know I have a privilege of having my blood spread through parts of Africa and through parts of the world through sounds and I find myself very blessed to be able to share pieces of me throughout the world 'cause I travel and I sing in Portuguese, I sing in Zulu, I sing in English, I sing in...people go like but what do you speak? I'm like I speak anything like really, so there's just this vibrance and this beautiful opportunity to just share who you are with...at the same time being who you are and expressing that yes, I'm South African, yes I'm Mozambican blood, yes I'm African and I'm not afraid and I don't have to choose pieces of it, I can share who I am. So I'm currently working on my fifth album and that's one of the things that I'm so excited about and this question answers exactly what I'm working on; it's called "My Roots"...
DR. MALKA	..."My Roots"...
MS BALOYI	...yes, so its elements of who I am.
DR. MALKA	Well listening to you, you sound so enthusiastic and passionate with Africa in your blood, literally in your blood across the continent plus now with this fifth album "My Roots"; can you share with us a few lyrics or
MS BALOYI	...no....
DR. MALKA	...give us an inside scoop on anything...?
MS BALOYI	...I cannot share with you anything unfortunately because it's so baby, baby, baby, baby brand new. I'm working with the amazing Sipho Sithole; I've always wanted to work with him. I think he...when thinking about who I want to work with it took a while, it took about a year of doing my research in terms of what I want and the sounds and the traditions and de dah, dah, dah. We do research – pre-production, so anyway, when I thought about who do I want in production there's no other person that I can think of than Sipho Sithole because he comes from a background of understanding root music and he's got people evidently that he has worked

	with; Thandiswa Mazwai, Siphokazi, Pu2ma, The Soil, so many people that have root music and he..he..whew five star..five star and I went into studio with him to give it a test and see how, you know, put your toe in the water, see if it's going to work or not and you know when they say "God's timing is everything" and I do believe that and that is definitely God's timing and I think I'm at a point in my life where I'm ready to unleash my roots and me.
DR. MALKA	Have you got any expectations of when you anticipate it coming out?
MS BALOYI	It's definitely going to be something...a project that we wanted to release this year but we're not sure at this point if it's going to be a full album out this year or we'll probably just release a single leading into next year because what I do believe is there's no rush and time to creativity because you can't rush creativity. There's just....there's no law...it's not paperwork, it's not office work; it's creativity.
DR. MALKA	Well you have a privilege to be in that space, truly.
MS BALOYI	No really it's....I mean I know record labels work with time, we have deadlines...we need an album, dah, dah...and you're like..
DR.MALKA	It's a process; I do understand that; creativity is a process.
MS BALOYI	How are you going to sell it if it's not good enough, you really need to...and it also depends on the genre of work that you do, so there's the yearly albums, there's the five year albums, there's the two year...so it depends on the artist and the craft that you're doing so we'll see as it goes.
DR. MALKA	So this definitely the next element of things for you....
MS BALOYI	...absolutely....
DR. MALKApost this or is it too early to tell in terms of what other milestones are next on your agenda?
MS BALOYI	...I don't even know what I'm doing tomorrow (laughs). I'm excited in every moment, I get excited in the moment and I give my all for everything that I'm doing in the moment so I mean I was sitting one day and I was performing at an event, dance, I mean I do dance music – house music – and I was sitting and I'm like but I want to DJ. I didn't plan it, it just...it was a thought that came at that moment and I was excited and I jumped in it with toes and everything and I went to a DJing school and I learned how to DJ and I created this brand and blah blah blah blah, so that's how it came about and the only thing is why I wanna work on my fifth album is because if you listen to my interviews with Queen Choco I want them to co-exist and people are like oh why did you stop singing, now you're a DJ. I didn't stop singing, I would never...I can't stop singing you know what I mean? Wanda Baloyi is my foundation, it's who made me with anything, whatever I want to do you know me because of what I've done,so...
DR. MALKA	...it's your primary brand...
MS BALOYI	...that's my primary brand so this is just an addition to who I am and what I do but it doesn't eliminate that. So the reason I want to do the album and the project is because I want the two brands to co-exist.
DR. MALKA	So it's adding more depth and more dimensionality. Now one of the questions that I ask all my guests on this programme who've made tremendous achievements in their respective fields of disciplines is about some of the factors of success. So some people speak about hard work, others talk about perseverance; in your opinion what have been some of the key drivers to your success?
MS BALOYI	I think my success is defined by my ability of waking up and always having the gift to do what I love, that's a success for me. Being able to travel the world, being able to share stages, being able to recreate and at the same time being able to sit with friends and family and enjoy the space and time, that's a success. I think success is a balance, you know, I think success is

	not forgetting the other. Success is being able to work hard, have great work ethic, push and believe in what you do but at the same time take a step back.
DR. MALKA	And you also sound to be someone who it's important to give back to.
MS BALOYI	Oh yes.
DR. MALKA	So it's not only about I have achieved but it's also about who else I've helped along the way.
MS BALOYI	There we go...so when you take a step back you're able to analyse, you're able to see, you're able to listen, you're able to share, you're able to give and be given to in return so it's like a reboot. Giving is receiving; it doesn't take anything away from you.
DR. MALKA	I know your dad has been instrumental in your life as a strong influence; can you tell us who have been some of the strong women though in your life?
MS BALOYI	Oh my mom (laughs). No doubt about that, my mother 100%, no other way. She is and will always be my biggest everything. My biggest everything, literally. She's a strong woman, I was raised by her. My parents were separated from a very young age. She was a street vendor. She sold in the streets, I remember when I was very young, oh God, I remember she used to sell fat cakes. Do you know fat cakes?
DR. MALKA	Yes.
MS BALOYI	She used to sell fat cakes on the street corner and I remember some mornings I would have to help her sell the fat cakes before the catch the train to go to school so it was very early like a bird for...because people go to work at very early hours....
DR. MALKAso this is like their breakfast lunch pack....
MS BALOYI	...the first train is at 05:10 am if I'm not mistaken so we have to be there in our school uniform and I'm selling fat cakes and then she moved like...my mom was a....she is a hustler. I went to school, my education was paid off from her selling vegetables in the street corners of Braamfontein and I was still in high school. I remember while I was in...I started singing while I was still at school and my first royalty cheque from Samro, I think it was about back then maybe about R10,000, I don't remember, I gave it to her. I gave it to her and she opened her first shop. She opened her first little shop, I'll never ever, ever, ever forget that so I respect any woman that takes off the mask of pride and does anything to support and sustain her family and that's what I come from.
DR. MALKA	Shew, well mom's love and when you say that your mother really is everything I think you epitomise....
MS BALOYIshe is everything...
DR. MALKA	...and I'm sure you've learnt some of those skills....
MS BALOYI	...absolutely...
DR. MALKA	...hustling, entrepreneur....
MS BALOYI	...absolutely; hard work, work ethic, respect; respect the next person. I learnt so much from her, without her even knowing what she's fed me; she doesn't know how big she is to me.
DR. MALKA	And it's so wonderful that you gave back in a way which actually has given her even more opportunities. Please can you share with us a few of the pivotal moments in your life growing up?
MS BALOYI	Wow, one of the moments I spoke about earlier was when my dad used to take me to the rehearsals when I was young and that was my first experience of watching music and musicians you know, band rehearsals and stuff and I'm like wow this is so cool. We were a very nomadic family so we moved quite a lot so there wasn't a stable like home base so we were constantly hopping from one place to the other. I remember beautiful

	<p>moments at home, my dad would play his guitar and sing to us, it was just my brother and I and beautiful moments of ...my mom.....I think I'm a great cook and I don't know about you or anything like that, I really think I'm a great cook because of her. So back then we didn't have the like the machines to whatever, bake and all that, so she would make us....</p>
DR.MALKA	<p>...oh gosh, hand whisking...</p>
MS BALOYI	<p>...sjo, sjoe, sjoe like I really exercised (laughs) like you move, you turn the butter and sugar into cream, you know that, so she taught me how to bake, she taught me the cooking experience like mom used to make ice cream and like she's a great....but now she's just lazy and tired, I don't know if it comes with age but she's like whatever but all those skills she gave to me so when I visit her – she stays in Dublin right now – so when I visit her I always cook for her, she always like what are you cooking....so now she enjoys me cooking for her, it's like now I'm the mother. So all the things that she taught me she's enjoying it. So I absolutely enjoy cooking for people, for friends, for her, you know for anybody, I absolutely enjoy cooking but I don't....surprisingly I don't enjoy cooking for myself interestingly so.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Well I think it's about the generosity and seeing the appreciation and other people enjoying.</p>
MS BALOYI	<p>Yes absolutely, I think so too.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>Now lastly as we close out today, it's in commemoration of women's month, could you please share with us a few words of inspiration that you'd like to pass onto young ladies listening to us?</p>
MS BALOYI	<p>Whew, I just got like a chills. You know, let me tell you, we're living in a time where it's a bittersweet moment for women because yes, we have amazing women, powerful women doing amazing things but at the same time we have women who are being abused, who are silenced by abuse because they feel they can't support themselves so they accept the abuse because what are they going to do, where are the children going to go, whatever..dah dah dah dah. My mother once said...and when I really say she is everything, she's really everything, she once said to me when I was young, before I even understood it, it's important for a woman to be independent because once you become independent you subconsciously have a voice, you can say no.</p>
DR. MALKA	<p>And it's social independence and financial independence.</p>
MS BALOYI	<p>Exactly, exactly. So that independence comes with a lot, so when you don't have anything to sustain yourself you fall into any hole and any trap so I'm speaking to the women who are forced with silence that there is an opportunity to be heard and being heard starts with anything that you like to do. It starts with anything. I said my mother sold vegetables in the street. You take off the mask of shame and fear and all these things and think about yourself, think about you. Another thing is women shouldn't be afraid to say no. They shouldn't be afraid when it's time to say no, I don't want this, this is not for me and you walk away from it because you are the most important person to yourself first. So women have all the power to become anything that they want, to do better at the same time, become mothers, become wives, become sisters, become anything that they want to do but have an independent voice, have that. It doesn't mean because you have a voice, you have a career you can't be a wife, you can. It's just that comforting pillow to know that whew, I can walk and say I want that dress and I can buy it for myself, I don't have to ask anyone to do that for me and I can do it with what I love to do. I love sewing, I love singing, I love dancing, I love helping people, I love whatever; start with</p>

	whatever you like; start there. You can. You can.
DR. MALKA	Thank you, I think that is a wonderful message of finding your voice, don't be afraid to make your own decisions, seek out your independence and become the woman that you were destined to be.
MS BALOYI	Absolutely.
DR MALKA	Thank you so much it's been lovely having you on our show today and we wish you all the very best in the next steps of the future, we look forward the release of My Roots and hope you can come back and tell us how it's going.
MS BALOYI	Absolutely, you'll be the first to know.
	PROGRAMME END