

Power To the Woman

Post-task: What God wants, God gets

In her story-telling classes, Bonny loved to tell the story of the girl who played the mbira. This girl was in love with a boy from a poor family but a marriage had been arranged for her to marry a prince. This girl expressed her sadness by running away from people and playing her mbira by the river. That is where she found her peace. One day, playing Lakutshonilanga, she closed her eyes and, when she opened them again, she found the earth was beautiful. Birds were flying all over and people were surrounding her. Nobody had known this girl had such talent. She had hidden it. Even her father, who had been very sick, suddenly woke up when he heard the music. He was healed because of the sound of her playing and singing.

Music is a great healer. The power of healing goes in all directions. “If God wants to prove a point, God will make sure,” says Bonny. After growing up sucking her thumb, not talking, not singing because of the way her voice sounded to her family, Bonny worked hard to fight her low self-esteem and to prove herself. Just as a butterfly frees its wings by struggling out of the cocoon, she worked with the challenge wholeheartedly. Bonnie’s spiritual faith was her rock and she jumped into the unknown, with the knowledge that God and the universe would catch her. People often call this: “Letting Go and letting God.” Bonny says, “Know yourself. Know your purpose. Know your quality. Know your passion. And you will be fine.”

Bonny knows her passion is music. She loves to entertain. She loves her audience. Seeing the people to whom she sings get happy or heal from heartbreak or illness, gives her a profound sense of purpose. When passion meets purpose, that inspiration leads you to the silver lining where your talents can miraculously manifest through God.

“When God blesses you, you may suffer for many years but, within a twinkle of an eye, you will have everything that you wanted,” said Bonny. Once she had found the trust of herself, she began to express all her multi-talents.

One day she was performing with Nomcebo as a backing singer for Mzwakhe Mbuli and Nomcebo said to Bonny, “You need to stand up for yourself, girl. Me, this is my last gig here. I’m leaving.” Nomcebo was tough. She knew what she wanted and she had decided to go for it, whatever it was. She didn’t know how it would turn out but she knew she wanted to be happy and to be herself. Then, as soon as Nomcebo followed her highest joy and excitement, the universe provided for her. Today, she’s a well-known singer, someone big.

It was this kind of courage that finally inspired Bonny to start her own band. She was singing in an all-female acapella band, Sweet Aroma, an all-female isicathamiya crew. She was in theatre and musicals, touring three continents. But, like Nomcebo, being a backing singer was not making her happy any more. She

knew she could do better.

Bonny has all the music within her. In Jazz, she knows how to improvise and to play with the notes and the scales. Having grown up with African music, she is able to use these sounds to experiment and play with, to enhance the tones of voice. With natural musical styles like Maskandi, she allows her voice to follow the guitar. And with gospel and spiritual music, she just sings for God, opens herself up and lets it all out.

Like all the music styles can go together, so all the aspects of stage performance can go together. From singing to dancing, theatre, storytelling and acting, it is all one single and natural expression of the same God-given talent.

South Africa's female vocalists are typically multi-talented. Our first movie star was the wonderful vocalist and magazine cover girl, Dolly Rathebe. Miriam Makeba broke onto the international scene as an actress in the film *Come Back Africa*. The Light of Africa, Tu Nokwe has taken to the screen with her role in a television series and as a singer. Abigail Kubheka has played a number of starring roles.

And now, Bonny Zulu, who once hid herself behind other people, is a lead singer and a queen of the stage. She has taken starring roles in *Generations*, *Moja Love* and *Mbali*. Her band sweeps the stage in live performance. Before taking to the stage, Bonny encourages herself by talking to herself. She says, "This is me, there's no other Bonny Zulu. God created me. This is who I am. Let me do this! God gave me this talent."

Now for some exercises:

1. A self-esteem issue is the 'I am not good enough' attitude.

- What song can you sing or play to show that you are good enough?

2. Recording Experiment: The Warm-up

Music is built on seven whole tones. These tones mirror the seven systems of colours and the chakras: 'Do' (Red), the root chakra; 'Re' (Orange), the sacral chakra; 'Mi' (Gold), the solar plexus chakra; 'Fa' (Green), the heart chakra; 'So' (blue), the throat chakra; 'La' (Purple), the third-eye chakra; and 'Ti' (violet), the crown chakra.

Through breath, we translate energies, feelings, emotions into sound. Now, sing, or play, through the energy points of the solfeggio scale and turn your attention inward, to the chakras and their colours. This will help nurture yourself and your voice or playing.

- A good warm-up technique video could go viral online.
- Why not try and make one?

- But remember, this is just a guide: always do it in your own style.

3. Self-reflection

When you have been given gifts, you must protect those gifts. That is why Bonny talks to herself before she goes on stage. Some of the most famous performers do prayers, rituals or meditations.

- What do you do before performing on stage, to tap into the primordial creativity?

4. Self-analysis through movement

- On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you rate how you feel in terms of confidence and self-esteem?
- Perhaps you can stand up and position your body like a statue, to portray exactly how you feel now?
- Now, imagine yourself at full confidence, at exactly where you want to be in the power of your creativity and your best possible self.
- Now, remould your position. Take a new stance and create the new statue of yourself?
- Is there a difference between your first body posture and your second body posture?
- How are you going to be mindful of being your best possible self at all times?