

Grammy-nominated Wouter Kellerman

By  Martin Myers

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More than a decade after the release of his debut album, Wouter Kellerman is recognised as one of South Africa's foremost musicians - with an extensive and growing global following.



Image supplied: Wouter Kellerman performing at the Dubai Expo

Over the course of nine albums, Kellerman has steadfastly built on his classical training, to create a signature sound that's earned him praise and numerous awards.

Winds of Samsara, a collaboration with Indian composer and producer Ricky Kej, was named winner in the Best New Age Album category at the 57th Annual Grammy® Awards in 2015.

In less than a month, Wouter and David Arkenstone will find out if they are the recipients of another Grammy Award for the album *Pangaea*. The award will be hosted by Trevor Noah on 3 April 2022.

The album is themed around *Pangaea*, which is the name of the supercontinent that existed before it broke apart to form the existing continents. The music calls for unity in these divided times and for a culture of nurturing the earth and nature.

I caught up with Wouter last week...

■ ***The new decade means...***

Exciting opportunities.

■ ***Fame is about...***

Generally, fame is not desirable, in many cases leading to loss of privacy and illusions of grandeur – luckily I have no chance to become famous, being a flutist.

■ ***Retirement will happen when...***

Not anytime soon, I am loving working.

■ ***I don't do...***

Hate

■ ***What does music mean to you?***

Travelling on a shared road of passion and love.

■ ***My music is about...***

Expressing passion and love.

■ ***I would love to co-write with...***

Norah Jones

■ ***Where do you go for inspiration to create?***

I listen to beautiful music or jam with people who make beautiful sounds.

■ ***What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work?***

I love rehearsing and creating new music.

■ ***The song you must do in every show?***

We usually start with one of the first songs I wrote called *Wind*.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

When Phresh (the singer/percussionist in my band) took his shirt off and did an impromptu drum solo on his tummy.

■ ***My heroes are...***

Elon Musk, Sam Harris, Lila Downs

■ ***Which living person do you admire most and why?***

Elon Musk, because he is making such an incredible and positive difference to the world and our future.

■ ***What is your most treasured possession?***

My flutes.

■ ***It's your round, what are you drinking?***

Whiskey

■ ***Dream gig to do?***

A set with Lila Downs and Norah Jones for a week at Radio City Music Hall in New York.

■ ***What makes you stand out?***

Doing my own thing I guess – being unique.

■ ***Nicknames?***

Wouts

■ ***If you were not a musician, what would you do?***

A software engineer or angel investor

■ ***Who would play you in a Hollywood Blockbuster and why?***

It will have to be someone with no hair – perhaps a young Ben Kingsley!

■ ***Pick five words to describe yourself?***

Positive, caring, passionate, even-tempered, curious

■ ***Five favourite SA albums?***

Miriam Makeba - *The Many Voices Of Miriam Makeba*

Johnny Clegg & Juluka - *Scatterlings*

Johannes Kerckorrel en die Gereformeerde Blues Band – *Eet Kreef*

Mafikizolo - *20*

Brenda Fassie - *Memeza*

■ ***Greatest movie ever made?***

Too many good ones to choose - personal favourites include *Lost In Translation* and *Run Lola Run*

■ ***What books are you reading?***

Erich Fromm – *Art of Loving*

■ ***What song changed your life?***

Jacqueline du Prè – *Haydn Concerto in C*

■ ***Who do you love?***

Kind people

■ ***What is your favourite word?***

Expected Value

■ ***Favourite fashion garment?***

Jeans

■ ***Top of your bucket list?***

Being a table tennis olympian

■ ***Your greatest achievement?***

Raising my kids

■ ***What do you complain about most often?***

Incompetence

■ ***What is your fear?***

My kids not being okay

■ ***Happiness is...***

Love

■ ***On stage I tend to...***

Get lost in the music

■ ***The best life lesson you have been taught?***

Perseverance

■ ***Do you get worked up whilst watching a sports game on TV?***

If Roger Federer is losing!

■ ***Where would you like to be right now?***

Right here.

■ ***Do you do charity work and if you do –what do you do?***

I support the SOS Children's Villages.

■ ***Wishes and dreams?***

For kindness to rule.

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