

Jennifer Ferguson

 By [Martin Myers](#)

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The sensational Jennifer Ferguson's songs for healing comes to the Baxter for four performances only, from 4 to 7 April 2018.

JENNIFER #wetoo will feature special guest artists Zolani Mahola and Tina Schouw, both of whom have been activists in their own rights.

Some of Cape Town's best musicians will play with Ferguson, including Mark Franzman, Ronan Skillen and Shaun Jacobs, plus a very special appearance by the Cape Town Youth Choir's Vocal Ensemble. Renowned choral conductor and co-script-writer of the Swedish Academy-award nominated film *As it is in Heaven*, Anders Nyberg will share the musical direction.

The concerts will feature the joyful and the introspective, but will mostly be an articulated celebration of the human spirit. "It's a song-communion of a kind for all of us who have been hurt, somewhere, sometime. Men and women. So hopefully we can rise again with a matured vision of a more courageous and authentic life. After the storm we rise and sing again... Together," says Ferguson.

I caught up with Jennifer last week to find out what music means to her and more...



Photo in Thys's garden in Joburg, by Suzy Bernstein

When are you the happiest?

When I am surrounded by the ones I love. When I am surrounded by nature, and I can rest in her miracle. When I am singing, especially surrounded by other singers in a total embrace of song. When I am dancing in the joy of my being. When I am silent within and without me the universal mystery.

❑ ***What does music mean to you?***

It gives meaning and sense to my world. It gives me a conduit for my tears, my joy, my longing and my wonder. It is a never-ending teacher and inspirator. It helps me to stay alive.

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

It gives me a deep feeling of connectedness, not only to the people who listen and play and co-create with me, but with the universal wholeness of being creative. I feel so alive in these times.

❑ ***What drives you – ego or humility?***

Who is the driver? When ego takes over a crash looms. Surrender is a beautiful space of non-doing and trust in the flow. I am committed to the latter, though, like us all, I do a daily dance with the former. It's called 'being human'.

❑ ***Have you experienced any funny moments on stage?***

When I missed my footing, in the dark, as I mounted a bar-stool in a cabaret called *Kentucky Fried Chickies* at The Black Sun. As I felt myself begin to slowly fall into the audience, a monkey-spirit entered and I landed on all fours, in the jungle-memory of my DNA. It was a memorable fall into my primate being.

❑ ***Your heroes?***

Sheroes... Our country has birthed so many extraordinary beings to inspire us, many of them unwritten in the books of 'history'. I would need to write a long, long list of people who faced enormous challenges and turned them into gifts.

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

Impossible to choose. So many extraordinary beings amongst the seemingly 'ordinary'. We are all born as exceptional beings. Only to realise it.

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

My life, which is mine for now. My family, whom I do not own.
My freedom which is mine to choose. My song, which is given me to sing.

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

I have taken a conscious decision to abstain most of the time, out of respect for those who need to remain sober. I come from a family where alcohol and substance abuse caused much suffering. As a parent, I need to walk my talk when I say the need to remain clear is really important for these times. Alcohol makes me stupid.

❑ ***What would be your dream gig to do?***

Every gig has something of value to teach me. No one is more important than the other. The castles or the school hall – to me are the same.



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■ **What would you say makes you stand out?**

I have had to learn to blend in. Invisibility has power.

■ **What are your nicknames?**

Jen.

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

Music opens the road to a thousand other adventures. Music is part of life and I do life.

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

Sea
Fire
Breath
Forest
Wood

■ **What would your five desert island discs be?**

JS Bach- all of his music
Dagar Brothers Dhrupad
Joni Mitchell – all of her music
Moses Molelekwa - *Finding Oneself*
Stevie Wonder, all of his music

■ **What you say is the Greatest Movie Ever Made?**

Wings of Desire by Wim Wenders

■ **Which song changed your life?**

Joni Mitchell – *Amelia* on Springbok Radio midday when I was 13 years old.
Stevie Wonder – *Innervisions* - when I made love for the first time at 17 years.

■ **Who do you love?**

I truly believe love has no borders or separation. My daughter, Johanna, who is born with an extra-chromosome has been my greatest teacher in unconditional love. My husband, Anders has been my greatest teacher in endurance, forgiveness and surrender.

■ **What is your favourite word?**

Epiphany.

■ **What is your favourite fashion garment?**

Irrelevant. I love clothes that have texture and feel good to wear.

▣ **What is at the top of your bucket list?**

To live every day as fully and fearlessly joy-filled as I am able and to let go into the now.

▣ **What is your greatest achievement?**

I am alive.

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

When I am getting distracted from what I know, is where my happiness lies J

▣ **What is your fear?**

A life unlived.

▣ **What is happiness is?**

A life fully-lived.

▣ **If you are walking on stage for a keynote speech à la' Barack Obama, what song would you use and why?**

A powerful invocation that beckons in the four centres of the earth and the Ancestral Spirit.

▣ **What has been the best life lesson you have been taught?**

I am responsible for my choices. Forgiveness heals me and heals the world.

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

I am where I need to be right now. But the sea...

▣ **What are your wishes and dreams for 2018?**

Universal peace, justice and equality and the end of suffering on all planes.

Awakened to the miracle of all of this.

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ABOUT MARTIN MYERS

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