**Nunu Ntshingila**: **Head of Africa for Facebook**

A veteran of the South African ad space, Nunu Ntshingila helped turn Ogilvy & Mather South Africa into the formidable agency player it is today. In her (relatively) new role as Head of Africa for Facebook, she’s charged with building the social network’s commercial presence in South Africa and the continent as a whole.

During her more than 20 years in the agency world, Ntshingila worked her way up from trainee account manager to chair of the WPP-owned Ogilvy & Mather. Along the way, she picked up numerous awards, including nominations for Businesswoman of the Year Award (2003), being a finalist for the Shoprite Checkers/SABC Woman of the Year Award (2004), becoming Financial Mail’s Advertising Leader of the Year, and winning Business Personality of the Year at the Top Women in Business and Government Awards.

**Josephine Buys: the Interactive Advertising Bureau**

In 2014, the digital marketing and media association [rebranded as the Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) South Africa](http://memeburn.com/2014/02/breaking-dmma-rebrands-as-iab-south-africa/), bringing it under the umbrella of the international advertising and publishing business organization. Since June 2014, Josephine Buys has been at the helm of the organization as it looks to nurture, challenge, and spread the gospel of the South African digital space. Under Buys, the organization has set a much clearer transformation agenda, launching a dedicated transformation council in 2016, and has aimed to foster better relationships with the people in charge of corporate marketing departments. Prior to joining the IAB, Buys worked in marketing and brand consultancy, having previously worked as a marketing manager for Cape Town’s much-vaunted City Improvement District (CID) and as an advertising director in the magazine publishing space.

**Koo Govender — CEO Denstu Aegis Network: South Africa**

Currently heading up Dentsu Aegis’ South African operations, Govender was previously the CEO of brand experience agency VWV Group SA. Prior to that, she spent a number of years in the M-Net and Multichoice folds, where she held a number of high-profile positions.

**Jenine de Klerk — Portfolio Head: Digital and Direct Marketing at Standard Bank Group**

The big banks are among South Africa’s biggest businesses and Standard Bank is one of the most resilient, having been around [since 1862](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Standard_Bank). Helping the bank stay resilient in a digital age is Jenine de Klerk. She’s been with the banking group since 2010, having previously worked for the Automobile Association of South Africa and natural bread company Yethu Bakery.

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**Helen Zille: Politician**

Helen Zille attended school at St. Mary's Waverley in Johannesburg. She obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of the Witwatersrand.

A prominent journalist and anti-apartheid activist, Zille was instrumental in voicing protest to government atrocities. As a political correspondent for the now defunct Rand Daily Mail, Zille's journalistic skills helped her uncover the true story behind [Black Consciousness Movement](http://www.sahistory.org.za/topic/black-community-programmes-bcp) (BCM) leader, Steve Biko's death in 1977, which she discovered were due to police brutality and not natural causes as the government had claimed. The Apartheid government’s reaction to the article was to threaten the Rand Daily Mail with banning and called Zille and her editor, Allister Sparks, before the Press Council. The Presiding Judge of the Council, Justice Oscar Galgut, found both Zille and Sparks guilty of “tendentious reporting” and forced the Rand Daily Mail to make a correction. In the 1980s, Zille was involved in NGOs and was a member of several anti-apartheid organisations such as the Black Sash, the Open Society Foundation and the Independent Media Diversity Trust. During this time, Zille was also the press officer for the University of Cape Town

In the 1990s, Zille joined the [Democratic Party](http://www.sahistory.org.za/archive/democratic-party-dp), [which changed its name to the Democratic Alliance](http://www.sahistory.org.za/dated-event/splinter-groups-np-result-formation-democratic-party) and served as the Party's Technical Advisor. In 1999, she was elected the MEC for Education in the Western Cape, and was invited by the Party to draw up a draft policy for education for the Province. In 2003, Zille was a finalist for the Shoprite Checkers Woman of the Year Award, due to her endeavours in promoting equal education in the Western Cape. In 2004, Zille became a Member of Parliament with the [Democratic Alliance](http://www.sahistory.org.za/organisations/democratic-alliance-da) (DA). In 2006, the DA became the largest party in Cape Town, and Zille was elected mayor of the city. As Mayor of Cape Town, she has fought against drug abuse, and sought to improve economic growth, and create employment, in the Western Cape. On 6 May 2007, Zille was elected as the party leader for the DA. In September 2007, Zille was arrested in Mitchells Plain for protesting against drugs, under the Regulation of Gatherings Act. Zille and her co-accused were found not-guilty four weeks later.

Zille speaks fluent English, Afrikaans, Xhosa and German. Zille was awarded the Mayor of the Year Award in 2008, for her efforts to eradicate drugs and violence, and to improve service delivery. On 5 May 2009, Zille became the Premier of the Western Cape, being in control of the only province not run by the [African National Congress](http://www.sahistory.org.za/organisations/african-national-congress-anc) (ANC). On 12 April 2015 Zille announced that she would not stand for re-election as the DA's leader in its 2015 elections. Zille is married to Professor John Maree, and together they have two sons, Paul and Thomas.



**Patricia de Lille: Politician**

**Patricia de Lille** (born 17 February 1951) is a [South African](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) politician and [Mayor](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayor_of_Cape_Town) of [Cape Town](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cape_Town). She was the founder and the leader of the [Independent Democrats](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_Democrats_(South_Africa)), a [South African](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) political party which she formed in 2003 during a [floor-crossing](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Floor_crossing_(South_Africa)) window. On 15 August 2010, the ID merged with the [Democratic Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Alliance_(South_Africa)), South Africa's official opposition, and de Lille took on dual party membership until her party was fully dissolved in May 2014.

On 14 March 2011, De Lille beat [Grant Pascoe](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Grant_Pascoe&action=edit&redlink=1), [Shehaam Sims](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Shehaam_Sims&action=edit&redlink=1) and incumbent [Dan Plato](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Plato) to become the DA's [mayoral candidate in Cape Town](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mayor_of_Cape_Town), ahead of the [2011 local government elections](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_municipal_election,_2011). She was declared the mayor-elect by the IEC on 20 May 2011. De Lille was voted 22nd in the [Top 100 Great South Africans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SABC3%27s_Great_South_Africans), and is noted for her role in investigations into the country's controversial [Arms Deal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Arms_Deal). De Lille was born in 1951 in [Beaufort West](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaufort_West), and attended [Bastiaanse Hoërskool](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Bastiaanse_Ho%C3%ABrskool&action=edit&redlink=1). In 1974 she became a laboratory technician at a factory. She remained involved with the same company until 1990. During this time, she became involved in the [South African Chemical Workers Union](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=South_African_Chemical_Workers_Union&action=edit&redlink=1), starting off as a shop steward and then becoming regional secretary, before being elected to National Executive Member in 1983.In 1988 she was elected as National Vice-President of The [National Council of Trade Unions](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Council_of_Trade_Unions) (NACTU), the highest position for a woman in the trade union movement at that time. In 1989 De Lille was elected onto the National Executive Committee of the Pan Africanist Movement (PAM). In 1994 she led a delegation in the constitutional negotiations that preceded South Africa's [first democratic election in 1994](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_general_election,_1994), and was then appointed the position as Chairperson of the Parliamentary Committee on Transport from 1994–1999. She also served on various portfolio Committees including Health, Minerals and Energy, Trade and Industry, Communications, the Rules Committee and the Code of Ethics.

Later, she made use of parliamentary privilege to be a [whistle-blower](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Whistle-blower) on the [South African Arms Deal](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Arms_Deal). De Lille led the call for an investigation into [alleged corruption in South Africa's purchase of weapons](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Arms_Deal) costing £4bn from British and other European manufacturers (that cost has soared on the basis of foreign currency collapses to more than its original cost although the Rand £ and Rand $ exchange rates have now reduced the costs to almost the same level as the original cost.). The government rejected De Lille's calls for an independent inquiry to be led by Judge [Willem Heath](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Willem_Heath&action=edit&redlink=1). De Lille said she was accused of being unpatriotic and embarrassing the country as a consequence of her efforts to investigate the Arms Deal."

On 5 April 2009, the Independent Democrats confirmed De Lille's attendance at the announcement of the [National Prosecuting Authority](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/National_Prosecuting_Authority) the following day regarding its decision either to drop or to maintain its case against ANC President [Jacob Zuma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacob_Zuma), who had been implicated in the Arms Deal. In an op-ed for [*The Sunday Times (South Africa)*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Sunday_Times_(South_Africa)), De Lille predicted that the charges would be dropped: Am I angry? Of course I am angry. I am angry because the majority of our people are not seeing the warning signs that are coming from the ANC, a liberation party that has no respect for the [Constitution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_South_Africa) and the rule of law and is prepared to erode both just so that one man can become the leader of our country. By letting these ANC crooks off the hook we are sending entirely the wrong message to our people. Government is saying that there is a way out for those who break the law.

On the morning of the NPA's much-awaited announcement, De Lille was turned away from proceedings, being told that, as a member of the public, she would have to find a television set. Leader of the [Democratic Alliance](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Democratic_Alliance_(South_Africa)) [Helen Zille](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helen_Zille) met with the same fate. De Lille was awarded the Freedom of the City of [Birmingham, Alabama](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birmingham,_Alabama), and in 2004 was awarded the honor of being one of the Top 5 Women in Government and Government Agencies. She was also awarded the 2004 Old Mutual South African Leadership Award in the Category of Woman Leadership. In July 2006 she was the first woman to be recognized as an Honorary Colonel in the South African National Defense Force. In August 2006 she received the City Press and Rapport Newspaper award as one of top 10 women in South Africa. At the invitation of Mr. Kofi Annan, former Secretary General of the United Nations, Ms de Lille was the only South African Member of Parliament who attended the United Nations Millennium Project hosted by the [Earth Institute](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Earth_Institute) at [Columbia University](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Columbia_University). This high level meeting was convened on 17 September 2006 in New York.

A Markinor survey conducted in 2004 also found that De Lille was South Africa's favorite opposition politician at the time. During the [2004 general election](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_general_election,_2004), disgruntled former members of the Independent Democrats accused her of running the party in an "undemocratic" manner - in direct contrast with the image of transparency and accountability that she grounded her party on. De Lille told reporters that the dissenters had been fired from the party for fraud and corruption. As Mayor of Cape Town, de Lille has been perceived to have had a conflict of interest regarding the private sector developments by friends of hers in Clifton. On 13 August 2010, after meetings with both the DA and ID executive, it was decided that the ID would indeed merge with the DA. On 15 August 2010, de Lille and DA Leader Helen Zille announced to the public that the ID would join the DA.

#### Arts, culture & communications (and overall winner)

**Janet Buckland** –

Known simply as "Mama J" to the communities she works with in the Eastern Cape - has been responsible for the initiation and creation of a significant number of successful arts and culture projects in the province.

She combined her understanding of the value of the arts, particularly theatre, in the lives of all South Africans with her skills as a performer, director, fundraiser and administrator to direct these projects over a number of years.

The most notably project is Ubom! the Eastern Cape Drama Company, which was the first full-time professional drama company in the province. It brings theatre presentations and drama workshops to thousands of people in schools and communities all over the Eastern Cape.

#### Business: Thabang Molefi

Thabang Molefi is a qualified ethno-medical practitioner and beauty therapist who, with the little savings she had at the time, opened the first health spa in Soweto six years ago.

Today, the Roots Healthcare Centre business has branches in three South African provinces and a neighbouring country and boasts a multi-million rand turnover.

Molefi's pioneering centres introduced affordable health care to black communities through the use of the different but effective technique of iridology for diagnosis and herbs as prescribed medicines.

The centres also offered beauty and detoxing services for the first time in these areas, all contributing to a "feel good about yourself" lifestyle in previously disadvantaged communities.

Besides the seven other centres she established in Gauteng, Kwazulu-Natal and the Free State, Molefi set up a mobile unit to visit communities in remote rural areas in the rest of the country.

#### Education: Roslyn Narain-Mohan

Roslyn Narain-Mohan, a teacher at the New West Secondary School in Durban, has become the "Mother Theresa" of her community, launching campaign after campaign to tackle virtually every form of social injustice affecting them. Narain-Mohan's community is a microcosm of a broader community affected by HIV/Aids, crime, racial conflict, poverty, age and individual suffering. Deciding not to sit back, Narain-Mohan began using her skills as an educator to teach her community how to engage and seek answers for their social problems.

#### Health: Lorna Barbara Jacklin

Professor Lorna Barbara Jacklin, principal consultant paediatrician at Wits University's faculty of health sciences, has dedicated her life to improving the lives of children with mental health problems caused by physical disabilities or abuse.

Untreated, mental health problems rob such children of a fair chance in life, translating into developmental and social problems as they grow into anti-social adults incapable of functioning independently. Consulting to the pediatric department of the Johannesburg Hospital, Jacklin acts as an "ombudsman" for such children, who do not fit into mainline education and struggle to fulfil their potential as they tend

#### Science and technology: Claire Penn

Professor Claire Penn was awarded South Africa's Order of Mapungubwe in 2007 for her contribution to the field of speech and language pathology - especially in linguistics, sign language, child language and aphasia - and for groundbreaking research into the complexities of human communication.

#### Social welfare: Veni Naidu

Ten years ago, Dr Veni Naidu gave up a high-powered and lucrative career in the corporate world in order to make a meaningful contribution to South Africa's development.

Naidu has received a doctorate for her groundbreaking research into the impact of HIV/Aids on businesses, families and communities. While most studies at the time focused on the medical aspects of HIV/Aids, Naidu investigated the economic and social impacts of the pandemic, completing the first study in South Africa on the impact HIV/Aids on income-earning urban households. Other researchers have expanded on her work, and some of her micro-economic studies have been used in macro-economic modelling.

#### Sport: Sherylle Calder

Professor Sherylle Calder is a visual performance skills coach and world authority on the subject who has received back-to-back World Cup winners' medals after training both the triumphant Springboks in 2007 and the English World Cup winners in 2003. With a PhD degree in visual performance training, Calder is a pioneer in this field and has created an exciting new sport science that is sought after by international coaches looking to bring an extra dimension to their game. The new science is based on the thinking that nothing happens in sport until the eye tells the body what to do. Calder first developed the technique she calls "Eyethink" in order to improve her own hockey game. She represented South Africa in hockey between 1982 and 1996, gaining 50 international field hockey caps and 15 indoor caps. In 1995 she was selected to a team comprising the top 11 players in a pre-Olympic qualifying tournament.

# **Natalie du Toit: Ability of mind**

Brad Morgan

When Natalie du Toit announced her retirement from competitive sport on completing her programme at the 2012 London Paralympic Games, she did so not only as the most successful South African Paralympian of all time, but as one of the most important figures in the history of disability sport. She was a trailblazer, who raised the bar and showed what was possible for people with disabilities by also competing successfully against able-bodied athletes.

**Accident 'only increased my determination'** Back in 2001, still a teenager, Du Toit was one of the rising stars on the South African swimming scene, having narrowly missed out on qualifying for the 2000 Sydney Olympics, when she was involved in an accident on her scooter when returning from a swimming practice. Her left leg was amputated below the knee, but that didn't keep her down, and she ended up encouraging tearful family members while recovering in hospital - and within a few months of leaving hospital was back in the swimming pool. In an interview with William Rowland published on Disability World in early 2004, Du Toit said that her accident had only served to increase her determination. Back in the pool within four months after her operation, she spent the first week swimming alone.

#### 'It's important to swim your own race'

"After a week I started with the squad, but in the first lane", she told Rowland. "It was not nice seeing little babies beat you; so I just had to train harder ... get up with the guys ... get up with the seniors ... get back to the level I was swimming at before."

Du Toit switched to longer events - from 200m and 400m individual medley to 800m and 1 500m freestyle - to make up for her loss of speed with only one leg. She especially struggled with starts throughout the rest of her career, but she made no adjustment to her mental outlook. "There's really no line between able-bodied and disabled swimming ... I treat both of them the same. They're your opponents and you've got to race the way you train. It is important to swim your own race and not someone else's," she said.

#### 2002 Commonwealth Games

The year after she had part of her left leg amputated, Du Toit was back in action and participating in a major event, the 2002 Commonwealth Games in Manchester, England. She was 18 years old at the time. She qualified for the 800 metres freestyle final - the first time in history that an athlete with disability had qualified for the final of an able-bodied event - and also won gold in the multi-disability 50m and 100m freestyle, both in world record times. At the closing of the Games in Manchester, she was presented with the first David Dixon award for the Outstanding Athlete of the Games - a unanimous choice ahead of Australia's Ian Thorpe, despite his winning six gold medals and setting a new 400m freestyle world record. After the Games, she was also awarded the Western Cape Golden Cross. During the awards ceremony, then Western Cape Premier Marthinus van Schalkwyk said she had gone "beyond gold and swam her way into the hearts of not only South Africans but the whole world". In 2003, she swam in the All-Africa Games against able-bodied swimmers and won gold in the 800 metres freestyle. At the Afro-Asian Games in the same year, up against able-bodied swimmers once more, she took silver in the 800m freestyle and bronze in the 400m freestyle.

#### 2004 Paralympic Games

The following year she took part in the Paralympic Games in Athens. South Africa won 11 medals in the pool, six of them gold, four silver and one bronze. Du Toit was responsible for five of those gold medals and a silver medal. Swimming in the S9 class, she raced to victory in the 50m, 100m and 400m freestyle, the 100m butterfly and 200m individual medley. She also took second place in the 100m backstroke. In a television series aired on the national broadcaster, SABC, in September 2004, she was in 48th place on the list of 100 Greatest South Africans, four places ahead of 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games double gold medallist Penny Heyns. In 2005, she won three gold medals at the Paralympic World Cup in Manchester. The following year, at the 2006 International Paralympic Committee World Swimming Championships in Durban, Du Toit won six gold medals, including an incredible third place overall (men and women) in the five-kilometre open water event.

#### 2008 Olympic Games

While she had conquered the world of disability sport, she still had a burning desire to compete in the Olympic Games, which she had first dreamed of as a young child. In August 2008, Du Toit achieved her goal when she became the first amputee in over a century to compete in the Olympics. She booked her place in the Games in May of that year when, needing to finish in the top 10 to qualify for the Olympics, she finished fourth in the 10-kilometre race at the World Open Water Swimming Championships in Seville, Spain. She crossed the finishing line only five seconds behind the winner, Larisa Ilchenko, who went on to win gold in Beijing. Despite a disadvantage that some likened to a kayaker paddling with a single-bladed paddle, she earned her place in the biggest sporting event of them all, where she went on to finish 16th. She made more history in Beijing by becoming the first athlete to carry her country's flag at the opening ceremonies of both the Olympics and Paralympics.

#### 2008 Paralympics

At the Beijing Paralympic Games that followed, Du Toit won all five events she entered - the 100m butterfly, 200m individual medley, 50m freestyle, 100m freestyle, and 400m freestyle.

She was also awarded the Whang Youn Dai Achievement Award, which is presented at every Paralympic Games to one male and one female who best exemplifies the spirit of the Games and inspires and excites the world. Du Toit's selection for the award spoke volumes about the inspirational role she had taken on, not just for disabled people, but for able-bodied people also, throughout the world. In 2009, she was accorded the highest honour her country could award her with when she received the Order of Ikhamanga in Gold "for her exceptional achievements in swimming."

#### Laureus award

In March 2010, she became the second South African after Ernst van Dyk to be named the Laureus World Sportsperson of the Year with a Disability. "It's people like Natalie that provide the incentive for the youngsters to aspire to greatness", said South African Sports Confederation and Olympic Committee president Gideon Sam. "She fully deserves this acknowledgement."Later that year, she was the most outstanding athlete in the International Paralympic Committee's Swimming World Championships in Eindhoven, The Netherlands. She won six gold medals, one silver and one bronze medal. Only three countries bettered her personal haul of six gold medals in women's events. To put an exclamation point on her excellence, she ended on a high by dominating the five-kilometre open water swim, finishing six minutes and 26 seconds ahead of the second placed Elodie Lorandi of France. Not only did she finish first among the swimmers in classes S1 to S10, she also bettered the best time swum by a man in the event: one hour, one minute and 13 seconds, which was posted by Australia's Brendan Hall!

#### 'I gave everything'

The 2012 London Paralympics were Du Toit's swansong. She admitted she was not at her best, but she remained classy throughout despite taking on a big programme of seven events. Even then, she emerged as the most successful South African athlete of the Games, winning gold medals in the 400m freestyle, 100m butterfly and 200m individual medley. She also added a silver medal in her last race, the 100m freestyle. After that last event, she told reporters: "I look back and realise I gave everything in the pool and gave everything as a person. It's time to move on. I've no idea what's next." Would you like to use this article in your publication or on your website? See: [Using SAinfo material](http://www.southafrica.info/community/using-sainfo-material.htm)

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For more information: http://www.southafrica.info/about/people/women08.html

**Yvonne Chaka Chaka : South African Singing Artist**



**Yvonne Chaka Chaka** (born **Yvonne Machaka** in 1965) is an internationally recognised and highly respected [South African](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_Africa) singer, songwriter, entrepreneur, humanitarian and teacher. Dubbed the "Princess of Africa" (a name she received after a 1990 tour), Chaka Chaka has been at the forefront of South African popular music for 27 years and has been popular in [Zimbabwe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zimbabwe), [Kenya](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kenya), [Gabon](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gabon), [Sierra Leone](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sierra_Leone) and [Ivory Coast](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ivory_Coast). Songs like "I'm Burning Up", "Thank You Mister DJ", "I Cry for Freedom", "Makoti", "Motherland" and the ever-popular "[Umqombothi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umqombothi_(song)" \o "Umqombothi (song))" ("African Beer") ensured Yvonne's stardom. The song "Umqombothi" was featured in the opening scene of the 2004 movie [Hotel Rwanda](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hotel_Rwanda). As a young performer Yvonne was the first Black child to appear on South African television in 1981. Since then, she has shared the stage with persons such as [Bono](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bono), [Angelique Kidjo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angelique_Kidjo), [Annie Lennox](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Annie_Lennox), [Youssou N’Dour](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Youssou_N%E2%80%99Dour), the classic rock band [Queen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Queen_(band)) and South Africans [Johnny Clegg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johnny_Clegg), [Miriam Makeba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriam_Makeba) and [Hugh Masekela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Masekela), to name a few. She has performed for HRM Queen [Elizabeth II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II), US President [Bill Clinton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bill_Clinton), South African President [Thabo Mbeki](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Thabo_Mbeki) and a host of other world leaders. Yvonne is a champion for the Global Fund to Fight [AIDS](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/AIDS), [TB](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuberculosis) and [Malaria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malaria), the [United Nations](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/United_Nations) MDG Envoy for Africa, and the Goodwill Ambassador for the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. She was chosen by [Nelson Mandela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela) as the first ambassador for his children's fund, and has also established her own charity, the Princess of Africa Foundation, using the name first given to her in Uganda. The Princess of Africa Foundation is a partner of the ACTION global health advocacy partnership. In 2012, she was the first African woman to receive the [World Economic Forum](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Economic_Forum)'s Crystal Award. She teaches [literacy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literacy) part-time at the University of South Africa, sits on several boards of charitable organisations and NGOs, and serves on the board of the Johannesburg Tourism Company. Chaka Chaka was born in [Dobsonville](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dobsonville) in [Soweto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Soweto). Chaka Chaka had it tough growing up. Her father died when she was 11 and her mother, a [domestic worker](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Domestic_worker), brought up three daughters on her meagre 40 [Rand](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_rand) a month salary. Chaka Chaka started singing at 19 in 1984 when Phil Hollis of Dephon Records discovered her in [Johannesburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannesburg). Dubbed the Princess of Africa,” Yvonne experienced a meteoric rise as a music star of infectious pop melodies and dance music during the height of apartheid. Her début album was called "I’m in Love With a DJ'. Songs like "I'm Burning Up", "I Cry for Freedom", "Sangoma","Motherland" and the ever-popular, "[Umqombothi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Umqombothi_(song)" \o "Umqombothi (song))" immediately ensured Chaka Chaka's status as a star on South Africa's [mbaqanga](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mbaqanga) music scene. Releasing hit after hit, Chaka Chaka's subsequent award winning albums include "Burning Up", "Sangoma", "Who’s The Boss", "Motherland", " Be Proud to be African", "Thank You Mr DJ", "Back on my Feet", "Rhythm of Life", "Who's got the Power", "Bombani ( Tiko Rahini)", "Power of Afrika", "Yvonne and Friends" and "Kwenzenjani". Throughout her illustrious career Chaka Chaka has met people like [Nelson Mandela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela) (singing at his 85th birthday party), the [Queen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Elizabeth_II_of_the_United_Kingdom) and [Oprah Winfrey](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oprah_Winfrey). "Mama Africa", [Miriam Makeba](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Miriam_Makeba) said of her "She’s my baby!", [Hugh Masekela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hugh_Masekela) adds that Yvonne is "my mad niece". Legends [Dolly Rathebe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dolly_Rathebe) and [Dorothy Masuka](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dorothy_Masuka) describe Yvonne's music as "something that all should listen to". When asked who she admired most, Chaka Chaka said,

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| **“** | My mother because she has always been there for me. My mother raised three daughters single-handedly on a domestic worker's salary. That took great courage and strength. She is my mentor and hero. When I was born in 1965 in Soweto, it was during [apartheid](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Apartheid), and those were extremely difficult times. My dad was a great musician who could never realize his dream. He died when I was 11 years old. I inherited my talent from both parents, so music has always been in my blood. When I was little I would strum an empty tin and blow into a broom stick pretending it was a microphone. I sang in [church choirs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Church_choir). I loved singing. I am blessed that I achieved my destiny, and been able to accomplish what my father could not. | **”** |

Of the numerous world leaders Yvonne has met, she says her favourite is mentor and father figure, [Nelson Mandela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nelson_Mandela). He called her his “dear daughter.” “Madiba,” as he is affectionately known, recounted that it was Yvonne’s music that helped sustain him and others while confined as prisoners on Robben Island. He said,

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **“** | It is what we make of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another. Yvonne, you are a testament to my belief. Your generosity has benefited untold numbers of families and orphans facing the challenges of AIDS, terminal illness, abuse, poverty and illiteracy.” | **”** |

South Africa. Yvonne has four sons with her husband Tiny Mhinga, who is related to Mavivi Myakayaka Manzini and is the uncle to Lebohang Manzini. She has two diplomas from the [University of South Africa](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_South_Africa), one in adult education, another in local government, management and administration. She also studied speech and drama at [Trinity College, London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trinity_College,_London), qualifying in 1997. Yvonne is a champion for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the United Nations MDG Envoy for Africa, and the Goodwill Ambassador for the Roll Back Malaria Partnership. Chaka Chaka is also a board member of Information Technology Companies, Human Resource Development and Sandown Motors. She became the face of First National Bank (FNB) in 2001 and in 2006, she founded her own charity called The Princess of Africa Foundation. The Princess of Africa Foundation is a partner of the ACTION global health advocacy partnership. In 2012, she was the first African woman to receive the World Economic Forum's Crystal Award. Recently, the launch of her documentary film, A Motherland Tour — A Journey of African Women, filmed over five years of travels around Africa, took her on a world tour to promote the grassroots successes of those engaged in the battle against HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria, supported by the Global Fund. Yvonne also serves as Ambassador for Nelson Mandela’s 46664 Campaign which raises global awareness of HIV/AIDS. She has also been ambassador to the University of South Africa (UNISA), City of Johannesburg Tourism, and South Africa’s Mpumalanga Province Tourism. Yvonne has taught literacy in South Africa’s townships, promoted the rights of women and works to protect children everywhere, and she is a Trustee of Tomorrow Trust, which educates orphans and vulnerable children. She served as an Honorary Colonel in the [South African Air Force](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/South_African_Air_Force). In 2015 she signed an open letter which the [ONE Campaign](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ONE_Campaign) had been collecting signatures for; the letter was addressed to [Angela Merkel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angela_Merkel) and [Nkosazana Dlamini-Zuma](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nkosazana_Dlamini-Zuma), urging them to focus on women as they serve as the head of the G7 in Germany and the AU in South Africa respectively, which will start to set the priorities in development funding before a main UN summit in September 2015 that will establish new development goals for the generation.

# **[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/0/08/Mimi_Coertse_-_1959_%281%29.jpg/220px-Mimi_Coertse_-_1959_%281%29.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Mimi_Coertse_-_1959_(1).jpg)Mimi Coertse**

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## Early life

Coertse, born in [Durban](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Durban), KwaZulu-Natal, matriculated at the [Helpmekaar Girls High School](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helpmekaar_Kollege) in [Johannesburg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannesburg). She began vocal studies in South Africa in 1949. In July 1953 she married the broadcaster and composer [Dawid Engela](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dawid_Engela). She left South Africa in September 1953 for London, and then went via [The Hague](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hague) to [Vienna](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna). In January 1954 she started training with Maria Hittorff and [Josef Witt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Witt).

## Opera career

Coertse made her debut in January 1955 as the First Flower girl in [Wagner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Wagner)'s [*Parsifal*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Parsifal) at the [Teatro San Carlo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teatro_San_Carlo) in [Naples](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naples), [Karl Böhm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_B%C3%B6hm) conducting. She also sang in [Basle](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Basle) at the Teatro San Carlo. On 17 March 1956 she made her debut at the [Vienna State Opera](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna_State_Opera) as the Queen of the Night in [*Die Zauberflöte*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Zauberfl%C3%B6te) by [Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart) and remained with the Vienna State Opera until 1978. Her [Covent Garden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Opera_House) debut was in 1956, in the same role. Coertse sang the soprano part in [Bach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Sebastian_Bach)'s [*Matthäus-Passion*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Matth%C3%A4us-Passion) at [Fritz Wunderlich](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fritz_Wunderlich)'s first appearance in Vienna in 1958, when he performed the tenor arias with [Julius Patzak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Patzak) singing the [Evangelist](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Four_Evangelists). In 1958, Coertse and Fritz Wunderlich again worked together at the [Aix-en-Provence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aix-en-Provence) festival in *Die Zauberflöte*. In 1965, she sang Konstanze in [*Die Entführung aus dem Serail*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Entf%C3%BChrung_aus_dem_Serail) at the Vienna State Opera which also featured Fritz Wunderlich as Belmonte.

Her repertoire also includes:

* [*The Magic Flute*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zauberfl%C3%B6te) ([Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart)) – Queen of the night
* [*Il Seraglio*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Entf%C3%BChrung_aus_dem_Serail) ([Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart)) – Constance
* [*Ariadne auf Naxos*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ariadne_auf_Naxos) ([Richard Strauss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Strauss)) – Najade, later Zerbinetta
* [*Rigoletto*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rigoletto_(opera)) ([Giuseppe Verdi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Verdi)) – Gilda
* [*The Tales of Hoffmann*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Les_contes_d%27Hoffmann) ([Jacques Offenbach](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Offenbach)) – Olympia, Antonia, Giulietta, Stella
* [*Palestrina*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestrina_(opera)) ([Hans Pfitzner](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Pfitzner)) – the Angel
* [*Carmen*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carmen) ([Georges Bizet](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georges_Bizet)) – Frasquita
* [*Martha*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martha_(opera)) ([Friedrich von Flotow](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Friedrich_von_Flotow)) – Martha
* [*Mignon*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mignon) ([Ambroise Thomas](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ambroise_Thomas" \o "Ambroise Thomas)) – Philine
* [*La traviata*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_traviata) ([Giuseppe Verdi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Verdi)) – Violetta
* *An Irish Legend* ([Werner Egk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Werner_Egk)) – female lead
* *Unverhofftes Begegnen* ([Joseph Haydn](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Haydn)) – female lead
* [*I Pagliacci*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_Pagliacci) ([Ruggiero Leoncavallo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ruggiero_Leoncavallo)) – Nedda
* [*Arabella*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arabella) ([Richard Strauss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Strauss)) – Fiaker-Milli
* [*Bastien und Bastienne*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bastien_und_Bastienne) ([Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart)) – Bastienne
* [*The Merry Widow*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Merry_Widow) ([Franz Lehár](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Franz_Leh%C3%A1r)) – Hanna Glawari
* [*Lucia di Lammermoor*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lucia_di_Lammermoor) ([Gaetano Donizetti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gaetano_Donizetti)) – Lucia
* [*Die Fledermaus*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_Fledermaus) ([Johann Strauss II](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johann_Strauss_II)) – Rosalinde
* [*L'heure espagnole*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/L%27heure_espagnole) ([Maurice Ravel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maurice_Ravel)) – Concepcion, staging [Otto Schenk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Schenk)
* [*Don Giovanni*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Giovanni) ([Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart)) – Donna Elvira
* [*La bohème*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/La_boh%C3%A8me) ([Giacomo Puccini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacomo_Puccini" \o "Giacomo Puccini)) – Musetta
* [*Norma*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Norma_(opera)) ([Vincenzo Bellini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincenzo_Bellini)) – Norma
* [*Così fan tutte*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cos%C3%AC_fan_tutte) ([Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart)) – Fiordiligi
* [*Falstaff*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Falstaff_(opera)) ([Giuseppe Verdi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Verdi)) – Mrs. Alice Ford
* [*Turandot*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turandot) ([Giacomo Puccini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giacomo_Puccini" \o "Giacomo Puccini)) – Liu, a young slave
* [*Angelique*](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Angelique_(opera)&action=edit&redlink=1) ([Jacques Ibert](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jacques_Ibert)) – Angelique, staging [Axel Corti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Axel_Corti)
* [*Don Giovanni*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Giovanni) ([Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wolfgang_Amadeus_Mozart)) – Donna Anna
* [*Die schweigsame Frau*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_schweigsame_Frau) ([Richard Strauss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Strauss)) – Aminta, Timida 1968 Premiere Vienna State Opera, staging [Hans Hotter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Hotter)
* [*Die ägyptische Helena*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Die_%C3%A4gyptische_Helena) ([Richard Strauss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Strauss)) – Aithra
* [*Daphne*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Daphne_(opera)) ([Richard Strauss](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Richard_Strauss)) – Daphne
* [*Don Carlos*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Don_Carlos) ([Giuseppe Verdi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Verdi)) – Elisabeth von Valois

Coertse has sung in theatres at [Aix-en-Provence](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aix-en-Provence), Athens, [Barcelona](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Barcelona), Brussels, [Covent Garden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Royal_Opera_House), Düsseldorf, [Glyndebourne](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Glyndebourne_Festival_Opera), [Graz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Graz), Hamburg, [Linz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Linz), London, [Melk](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Melk), [Naples](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Naples), [Palermo](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palermo), Salzburg, [Stuttgart](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Stuttgart), [The Hague](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Hague), [Turin](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Turin) and [Wiesbaden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wiesbaden) and with conductors like [Karl Böhm](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Karl_B%C3%B6hm), [Vittorio Gui](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vittorio_Gui), [Alberto Erede](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alberto_Erede), [Heinrich Hollreiser](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinrich_Hollreiser), [Herbert von Karajan](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Herbert_von_Karajan), [Joseph Keilberth](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Joseph_Keilberth), [Jascha Horenstein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jascha_Horenstein), [Rudolf Kempe](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Kempe), [Josef Krips](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Josef_Krips), [Rafael Kubelík](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rafael_Kubel%C3%ADk), [Erich Leinsdorf](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Leinsdorf), [Wilhelm Loibner](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Wilhelm_Loibner&action=edit&redlink=1), [Lorin Maazel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorin_Maazel), [Dimitri Mitropoulos](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dimitris_Mitropoulos), [Edouard van Remoortel](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Edouard_van_Remoortel), [Rudolf Moralt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Moralt), [Heinz Wallberg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heinz_Wallberg), [Nello Santi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nello_Santi), [Giuseppe Patane](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Patane), [John Pritchard](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Pritchard_(conductor)), [Argeo Quadri](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Argeo_Quadri), [Mario Rossi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mario_Rossi), Sir [Malcolm Sargent](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Malcolm_Sargent), [Hermann Scherchen](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hermann_Scherchen), [Georg Solti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Solti), [Hans Swarowsky](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hans_Swarowsky), [Horst Stein](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Horst_Stein), [George Szell](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_Szell), [Silvio Varviso](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Silvio_Varviso), [Anton Hartman](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_Hartman), [Antonino Votto](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Antonino_Votto) and Berislav Klobučar.

Among the famous singers who have partnered her were [Eberhard Wächter](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eberhard_Waechter_(baritone)), Jean Madeira, [Giuseppe di Stefano](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_di_Stefano), [Alfredo Kraus](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alfredo_Kraus), [George London](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/George_London_(bass-baritone)), [Walter Berry](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Walter_Berry_(opera_singer)), [Rudolf Christ](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Christ), [Renate Holm](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Renate_Holm&action=edit&redlink=1), [Boris Christoff](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Boris_Christoff), [Anton Dermota](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anton_Dermota), [Otto Edelmann](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Edelmann), [Cesare Siepi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cesare_Siepi), [Giuseppe Taddei](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Giuseppe_Taddei), [Ettore Bastianini](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ettore_Bastianini), [Luciano Pavarotti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luciano_Pavarotti), [Aldo Protti](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aldo_Protti), [Simon Estes](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Simon_Estes), [Hilde Gueden](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hilde_Gueden), [Johannes Heesters](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Johannes_Heesters), [Sena Jurinac](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sena_Jurinac), [Waldemar Kmentt](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Waldemar_Kmentt), [Peter Schreier](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Peter_Schreier), [Gottlob Frick](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gottlob_Frick), [Paul Schöffler](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Paul_Sch%C3%B6ffler), [Erich Kunz](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Erich_Kunz), [Christa Ludwig](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christa_Ludwig), [Julius Patzak](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Julius_Patzak), [Murray Dickie](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Murray_Dickie), [Luigi Alva](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Luigi_Alva), [Helge Rosvaenge](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Helge_Rosvaenge), [Rudolf Schock](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rudolf_Schock), [Birgit Nilsson](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Birgit_Nilsson), [Teresa Stich-Randall](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teresa_Stich-Randall), [Gwyneth Jones](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gwyneth_Jones_(soprano)), [Otto Wiener](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Otto_Wiener), Heinz Holecek and [Giuseppe Zampieri](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Giuseppe_Zampieri&action=edit&redlink=1).

She is also well known in South Africa for Afrikaans [art songs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Art_song).

## Later years

Since returning to South Africa in 1973 she has been a regular guest on South African stages and also a frequent broadcaster on radio and television. In recent years she has devoted her time to exposing young South African singers to the neglected art of [Lieder](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lieder) singing which can be artistically even more demanding than opera singing. Her support for her fellow South African musicians has been outstanding – as may be witnessed in her *Debut with Mimi* and through the *Mimi Coertse Bursary*.

In 1998 Mimi Coertse and [Neels Hansen](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Neels_Hansen&action=edit&redlink=1) founded The Black Tie Ensemble, a development project which enables young, classically trained singers to bridge the gap between training and professional performance. This project has developed into the most exciting classical singing ensemble in South Africa, and is now on the brink of becoming a vibrant, new, young opera company. A project for future stars of Africa! The Ensemble, sponsored by [Sappi](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sappi), performs operas at the State Theatre ([Pretoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pretoria)), Walter Sisulu Botanical Gardens (Johannesburg) and the Civic Theatre (Johannesburg).

## Honours and awards

* 1961: Medal of Honour of the [South African Academy for Science and Art](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=South_African_Academy_for_Science_and_Art&action=edit&redlink=1) (*Suid-Afrikaanse Akademie vir Wetenskap en Kuns*
* 1966: Title of [*Kammersängerin*](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Kammers%C3%A4ngerin)
* 1985: [Decoration for Meritorious Services](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Decoration_for_Meritorious_Services) (South Africa) in recognition of her contribution to the Arts
* August 1996: [Austrian Cross of Honour for Science and Art](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Austrian_Cross_of_Honour_for_Science_and_Art)[[3]](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mimi_Coertse#cite_note-3)
* 2002: Golden "Rathausmann"
* 2003: Honorary Doctor of Philosophy (h.c.) from the [University of Pretoria](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/University_of_Pretoria), South Africa
* In 2004: Voted 45th in the [Top 100 Great South Africans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SABC3%27s_Great_South_Africans)
* In 2008: Mimi Coertse Museum van Afrikaans opened at [Huis vir Afrikaanse Poësie](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Huis_vir_Afrikaanse_Po%C3%ABsie&action=edit&redlink=1) in Capital Park, Pretoria.
* 2012: 1. July – 30. Sept. Special exhibition in [Staatsoper](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vienna_State_Opera) museum Vienna: "Mimi Coertse, a Viennese woman from South Africa"