

Wendy Oldfield

BAND STORY

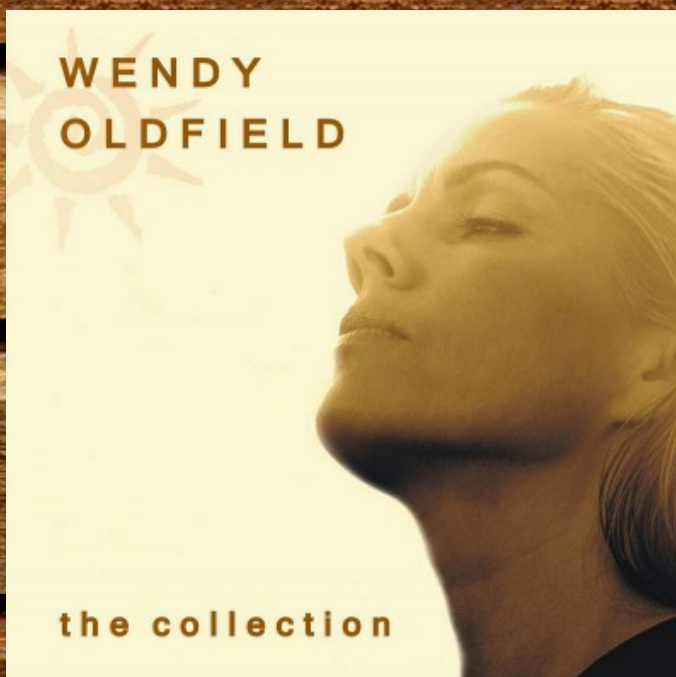
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Wendy Oldfield –Enigmatic and at home in the Garden Route.

We're sitting in the studio listening to a pilot track for her forthcoming album; it features a simple groove with rich atmospheric vocals which Wendy has created to explore concepts for the unique project she calls In The womb. I've doubled a droning sine wave synth track she's just put down, panned it left and right in the mix and then pitch shifted one channel so the waves of both channels are offset but synchronize at recurring intervals of 4 Hz. Setting it up is more maths than music but the effect stimulates brain wave synchronization and creates feelings of calmness and wellbeing, a worthwhile ingredient in this recipe.

Wendy is a celebrated artiste, she's graced the pages of South African Music & Entertainment Magazine won more awards than we can mention here, and true to form she's been conspicuously busy over the last few years. Amongst other things she's remained an important part of the engine driving Old Mutual's Encounters program providing effervescent musical direction that's helped make the event the success it is. Encounters brings celebrated South African artistes together in likely and unlikely combinations. Arno Carstens teaming up with Gloria Bosman for example, FreshlyGround with Sipho 'Hotstix' Mabuse and Karen Zoid with Celeste Seleke.



STATS

Visits	Plays
4,457	318
Streams	Downloads
309	9

Featured Songs



duwayo

Other



holy water

Other

Serafino Serota.

Earlier this year she wrote and produced a children's album for African Dream Records, titled Sing along Africa, and more recently she produced The Collection, a collage of hits and some new tracks. Wendy has fingers in a variety of musical pies and she gigs regularly as well. I asked her a few questions about the first part of her career.

HOWARD BUTCHER –You started out as a teacher, where did the detour occur and was there a plan?

WENDY OLDFIELD - For sure, I was planning this from about the age of five so its definitely something I wanted to do however I studied teaching as an interlude while I was trying to find a band. Teaching was never really a direction for me, you couldn't take a course in rock band singing in those days. (although you can now). I joined the Sweat Band when they found me through auditions; I was studying with a girl whose boyfriend was the brother of the drummer. The band's success just fell into place; we never really tried too hard to make it happen. In some ways I find the harder I work at something the less successful I am. Anyway, the Sweat Band's debut album was produced by Kevin Shirley and it realized our first hit, This Boy. (Subsequently Kevin went on to grand things producing for super groups like Led Zepplin, Aerosmith and a host of others.)

We're interrupted as Wendy's cell rings and she takes a call from guitarist Brent Kozak. They chat about setting up the back line gear for a gig she's about to play and it's apparent that Wendy is all hands on.

HOWARD BUTCHER –The early days of the Sweat Band...?

WENDY OLDFIELD –Yes, we were the first band booked by Southern Sun to run a residency for three months. We played four sets a night, five nights a week doing all our own stuff. We rehearsed during the days and developing a huge repertoire of original material.

Another interlude; Maddy steps into the studio clutching a bunch of make up goodies we need for the garden photo shoot I plan near the pond. Apart from being a close friend of Maddy's, Wendy has been her manager for a time in the 90' s and she, like Wendy, has relocated to the Garden Route to enjoy the tranquility and inspiration it offers. She comments enthusiastically about the Sing along Africa album and how much her children like it

HOWARD BUTCHER - How did you come to move to the Garden Route?

WENDY OLDFIELD –We were living in Joburg and I was breeding ferociously whilst trying to perform but not really getting where I wanted to be. I needed to spend more time with my children so it was a catch twenty-two of sorts, then I fell pregnant with Lilah (the last of three) and that was the catalyst for me. One day Ray and I decided it was the right time to go. We sold up everything and moved down to the Wilderness... it has a Woolworths near by, airport and school. Ray' s folks were here too and that was helpful. We made the move with our long time friends (the Smarts) we have a sort of symbiotic relationship; we share the property we live on with them.

HOWARD BUTCHER –Could it have been elsewhere?

WENDY OLDFIELD –Sure, it could have been the Natal Midlands or perhaps Ficksburg near Rustlers

valley. We thought about that too, but this proved to be the best decision we ever made.

HOWARD BUTCHER—You're a proponent for green-living consciousness, how far have you taken that?

WENDY OLDFIELD—I used to live on a farm in Simons Town that had no electricity, so the farm girls would put make-up on with candle light. We would run a TV and stuff like that from a battery system charged by photo-voltaic cells. Our lights were paraffin lamps and the hot water was from a donkey I

used to pump water. Although we were more conventionally equipped when we lived in Joburg, we would recycle our gray water into the garden to feed veggies and so on. Ray is very into permaculture and we had a thriving garden that couldn't have existed had we complied with local bylaws to dispose gray water into the sewage system.

In the Wilderness we have our own arrangement of utilities. We collect and recycle rain water, we have septic tanks to process waste, solar panels to produce electricity and an indoor fire hearth burning alien timber that heats water and is used for cooking. Our Land Cruiser runs on recycled cooking oil and my double-cab has a hydrogen supplementer to augment combustible gases in the engine. We try and be independent of municipal utilities but we have grid power and water as a back up if we need it.

I think that most people are too busy trying to survive these days to be aware of the contribution they can make by being conscious of these sort of things but its starting to spread into the main stream now. Our children are far more sensitized than we were at the same age

HOWARD BUTCHER - Can you tell us a bit about the two albums you' ve released this year, The Collection and Sing along Africa.

WENDY OLDFIELD –Well Sing along Africa was intended for children up to age five, its all about nature, smells, the environment and stuff. The songs were written with the intention that they would be sung by children for children. They' re fun and topical. The album

The Collection on the other hand is a compilation of popular songs off a number of albums and it features hits like Acid Rain, Duwayo and others interspersed with a few new tracks recorded recently at Peace of Eden. It' s released and distributed by Sting Music and I believe it hits the shelves about the same time this mag gets to your readers. On that note perhaps we should give some copies away.

* Howard Butcher is a recording engineer and producer for Peace of Eden Studio, Knysna. 0720181333

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