





Liso Gcwabe (1994) is an creative artist, (actor, singer- songwriter and dancer) from South Africa.

Born, Xhosa (one of four ethnicities of the Nguni people of of Southern Africa) and raised by a single mother (Bongeka Gcwabe) who did all she could to help realize a young boy's dream to share his gift with the world.

From a young age, Bongeka (mother) recalls witnessing a sincere appreciation for the arts and performing; she would sing to him often and organize any opportunity she could for Liso to be on a stage.

The school Liso attended offered choir from the third grade. This would be Liso's introduction to singing in choral settings from his primary school years to his first years of varsity.

In the 2008, Liso joined The Drakensberg Boys Choir School, which is a renowned boys choir here in South Africa and other parts of the world not only for its strong singing tradition but also the discipline in which the boys are taught in regards to singing, understanding and performing the music.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jFcbGe4aM4g>

This was Liso's first formal introduction to studying theory and history of music. He became a regular soloist in the choir and toured locally and in Europe in his second year.

Liso appeared in his first musical theatre production 'Captured By The Rainbow' about the life of Nelson Mandela and played the role of 'Justice Mandela'. The musical toured to Johannesburg, Cape Town and Amsterdam. (2009)

In 2010, Liso joined the South African Youth Choir. A choir consisting of various talented singers from around South Africa with education and accommodation provided for the choir and funded by choir management and sponsors.

In the same year Liso continued his High-schooling at Stelleberg High School and took drama as a subject under Petro Van Der Heerver.



He was a regular soloist in the choir and also arranged various sequences or medleys of traditional South African music for the Choir and then later for Stellenbosch University Choir and Stellenberg Girls Choir that are under the direction of Andre Van Der Merwe (SGC, SUC) and Phil Robinson (SAYC).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yPhMkrvmK88>

The Stellenbosch Choir singing my arrangement at the World Choir Games Champions Concert on July 8, 2012 in Cincinnati USA.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMUYezJC\\_k4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rMUYezJC_k4)

The South African Youth choir recording of "Welo" - won the title : Best traditional African Work at ATKV

Animato 2015 competition 4th October 2015

Two of Liso's traditional South African music sequence arrangements were used in choral competition settings by The Stellenbosch Universeity Choir (conducted by Andre) and the South African Youth Choir (conducted by Phil) in the folklore category in the World Choir Games and in a traditional African work category in a local competition and both did outstandingly well.

Liso's next musical theater production was 'Godspell' where he played the role of 'John The Baptist' in the Durbanville Catholic Church in 2010.

Throughout Liso's high school career he entered eisteddfods (Tygerberg and Stellenbosch) in numerous categories from dramatic poetry, prose, monologue and singing and was invited to the Highest achiever's performance and award ceremonies in 2011 and 2012.

In 2011 Liso was a finalist in the City of Cape Town Acting Competition.

In Liso's final year of high school he was awarded distinctions for both drama and music and received Stellenberg High School's award for diligent and consistent artistry.



In 2011, Liso played the principle role of Alex in the musical 'Lost in the Stars' with Cape Town Opera.

This musical was based on Alan Paton's Novel 'Cry the Beloved Country' which brought international attention to South Africa's tragic history of Apartheid.

In 2014, Liso attended his first year of varsity at the The South African College of Music as a classical voice major. During that year, (although feeling privileged to be studying music and pursuing his dream) Liso realized that continuing with his classical music studies was not quite the path he wanted to take.



Although having enjoyed his training throughout High School in the art of singing classical music, he was now seeking to expand his musical sphere.

In 2015, Liso went on to change his course of study and became a student of Vocal Jazz performance.

He joined the College's jazz choir/ensemble and started a band with his friends he was studying with, 'Motherland Jazz'.

MLJ was a group that sought to put South African jazz and African jazz to the forefront through their unique sound of combining old with current).

In 2015, Liso was chosen to be one of the young artists to be showcased as Artscape's Youth Jazz Festival; under the mentorship of Amanda Tiffin, (one of South Africa's pioneers in vocal Jazz education). This gave each of the chosen candidates opportunity for lessons with industry professionals and an chance share the stage with musicians with them.





Liso's opened his performance with his rendition of a well-known African love song, 'Malaika' (paying tribute to the legendary South African Songstress Miriam Makeba).

In 2015, Liso made his debut principal role performance in a short film directed by Herman Warnich, 'The Master'



In 2016, Liso joined The University of Cape Town's Big band as their vocalist and a 9050s Soul and Rock n Roll band 'Moonshine' (under the leadership of his former lecturer Dan Shout). These bands would perform at concerts and events.

Later that year Liso had the honor of Singing the anthem at a Rugby game between South Africa and New Zealand.

(He had been asked to represent New Zealand.)



2016 was also the year Liso began doing more solo projects and giving more attention to his songwriting and performing. This was a pivotal time for him as an artist because he was beginning the process of telling his stories through his own voice.



"In my music and artistry, I want to be free in my expression; not limiting myself to a particular style or genre but drawing from various artstries that have inspired (and continue to inspire) my artistic identity."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z6-8MzFmYmI>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RE\\_IGJpyFF8](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RE_IGJpyFF8)

2017 was Liso's final year at the SA College of Music. The following year would be yet another experience for him on the Musical theatre stage but this time with Disney's 'The Lion King'. A story that has always been close to heart for Liso from childhood.

Liso's primary role in the cast was the ensemble as well as the first understudy of the role of Banzai.

He toured the Philippines, Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and Thailand before resigning at the end of 2019 to further pursue his solo career.



In 2019, Liso was awarded the 'Doreen Nteta Indigenous African Music award' in the SAMRO (South African Music Rights Organization) Jazz singing competition.

This award's efforts are to conserve, preserve and promote South African indigenous culture.



While touring with The Lion King production Liso was privileged to meet, perform with and learn from many artists from around the world who've inspired him and have been instrumental in his growth and development as an artist.

In 2020, Liso graduated from Cape Audio College in an Electronic music production course on Ableton.

In 2021, Liso released his first body of work, 'The No Say EP' on all major streaming platforms.

Liso was awarded sponsorship and graduated from 1500 Sound Academy's Fundamentals Course which includes Music Production, Engineering, Mastering and Branding.







