

Mango Groove



By [Martin Myers](#)

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KDay, hosted by Kfm 94.5, returns to Meerendal Wine Estate on 7 March 2020 with a load of artists including Rowlene, Emo Adams Tarryn Lamb, Jimmy Nevis, Craig Lucas, The Kiffness, Timo ODV, Shekhinah, Youngsta CPT, Mi Casa, GoodLuck and headliner Mango Groove. I caught up with the iconic Claire Johnston from Mango Groove, last week...

■ *The new decade means:*

Hope? Possibility? Trepidation? Terror?



■ *Fame is about:*

Hopefully just having a platform to communicate to others what you love and what is important to you and, hopefully, to move them in some way.

■ *Retirement will happen when:*

When I die. I do what I love, so retirement doesn't apply.

■ ***I don't do:***

Topiary and personalised number plates.

■ ***What does music mean to you?***

Memories, moments, a soundtrack to your life? It's got to be about what moves you.

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

I love creating and performing, but it is very moving to me when someone tells me a particular song moved them or created a lasting memory.

■ ***Any funny moments on stage?***

We're a chaotic and spontaneous 11-piece on stage, so many funny and humiliating moments, and doubtless more to come.

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

Well, they are not possessions, they are wonderful beings who I am lucky enough to have gracing my life: my beloved fur-friends Sammy and Cloudy. We belong to each other.

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

Hmm...A good glass of SA Chardonnay?

■ ***Nicknames?***

Sadly not, or possibly too rude to mention?

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

I have always loved performing, so maybe acting, art or possibly to working with animals.

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

Difficult to speak for myself without sounding vain or p

■ retentious, so I asked John (founding member of Mango, ex-husband, best friend) to do a list. I take no responsibility for this: Anxious, self-deprecating (is that one or two words?), funny, kind, lateral.

■ **Five favourite SA albums of all time?**

A tough one: The first éVoid album, *Hugh Masekela & The Union of South Africa*, Lucky Dube's *Slave*, Brenda Fassie's *Memeza*(or others) and any of the early Miriam Makeba/Skylarks/Spokes Masiyane collaborations.



■ **What song changed your life?**

Too many to call. Ella Fitzgerald and Karen Carpenter made me want to become a singer, Debbie Harry made me want to be in a pop group.

■ **What is your favourite word?**

Sorry.

■ **Favourite fashion garment:**

Nothing glamorous, probably something comfortable and 'schlumpy'. If it had to be something more fashionable, probably one of my leopard-skin-pattern coats.

▣ ***Top of your bucket list:***

Career-wise, there are some very big Mango movie and stage projects that we hope to see realised soon. More personally, there are a few trips I have to make, all of them on this continent: a road trip around SA, seeing the gorillas in Rwanda, the Okavango Swamps in full flood.

▣ ***Your greatest achievement:***

We are all flawed and fumbling but, hopefully, I am learning to accept the parts of me that I love and to see the best in others.

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

Hmm...Load-shedding? Bad drivers? Myself? Don't we all.

▣ ***On stage, I tend to:***

I tend to feed very much off the audience: always a lot of nervous energy, not wanting to bore anyone and, in the midst of it, loving the thrill of performing and interacting with the band and the audience.

▣ ***Do you do charity work and, if you do, what do you do?***

Yes: Assorted initiatives, but more primarily animal welfare and conservation initiatives.

▣ ***Wishes and dreams:***

To be happy, kind and loved, and to feel secure enough to explore all my dreams.

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