

## HELENA HETTEMA CURRICULUM VITAE

Helena Hettema, actress, singer, established and award-winning cabaret artist, songwriter and voiceover artist, was born in Pretoria and attended Pretoria High School for Girls where she directed the winning house play in her matric year. She received a BA Drama from the University of Pretoria and was then chosen in her final year from among drama students countrywide to join the PACT Drama Company (Pretoria State Theatre) playing in productions such as “The Story of an African Farm”, “Ek wag op die Kaptein”, “Macbeth” and as a young actress, working with directors such as Dieter Reible, Alwyn Swart and Billy Egan.

As freelancer later, she worked under Anthony Wilson for PREPAC (Eersterust drama company) in “Of Mice and Men” and “Macbeth” and appeared as the Duchess Turomel in Stefan Bouwer’s TV production of “Arme Moordenaar”. She also sang the theme tune of the TV series, “Dot en Kie” and wrote and sang the lyrics for the popular TV series, “Sonkring” written and directed by Jan Scholtz..

She appeared in the musicals “Pirates of Penzance” (Civic Jhb) and “Sunrise City” (Market Theatre) and staged her first one-man cabaret of her own original music in “Free Spirits” and “Dream Scream Carousel” for PACT’s Windybrow Theatre Festival and appeared in “The Victorian Songbook” countrywide, directed by Doug Thistlewhite.

A highlight of 1989/90 was becoming the youngest member of Anton Goosen’s forward-looking alternative band, “Die Kommissie van Ondersoek” (also with Lucas Maree) which amalgamated Afrikaans and African lyrics for the disc “Winde van Verandering” released in 1990. Highlights were performing at the Jacaranda Festival, Houtstok and touring the Cape. Helena also formed two bands: Triple Fair (87) with Lizanne Barnard of Marimba fame and Evan Schoombie and her band Golden Fleece (91) with Hennie van Jaarsveld, Paul Greyling, Lindsay Liebenberg and Alwyn van Heerden (her pianist for 15 years now living in Miami, USA since 2014) performing on “Fools’ Gold”, her first CD released in ’95 by JNS. They also performed at festivals among others at the National Arts Festival, Grahamstown, the Whale of a Festival, Hermanus and in Harare, Zimbabwe for the SA Embassy.

As solo artist she appeared on two occasions with the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra in Symphonic Pops singing the music of Piaf and Brel under the batons of Gerard Korsten and Alan Stephenson respectively. Another highlight was playing the role of Alma Mahler opposite Jonathan Rands (Mahler) and Jana Cilliers (The Muse) in the Mario Schiess production of “Die Kindertotenlieder” (Roodepoort Civic) (93).

From ’97 to 2006, she released six CDs: “Jasmine Lament”, “Highlights” (nominated for a South African music award (SAMA), “Dreaming”, (nominated in “Beeld” under four best CDs of the year), “The Bridge”, “Divided Heart” and “Diva’s Divine- Inside Out”.

In 2007, she released a double French album – “Spirit of Piaf and other French legends” to critical acclaim (Sony BMG) – also featuring the Soweto String Quartet. In the same year she received a Laureate Award from her alma mater, University of Pretoria for excellence in her field.

In 2009 Helena was the opening act for Skouspel at the Sun City Superbowl for Senwes in duet with Tiaan van Ses Snare and a DVD of the song in English, Afrikaans, French and Dutch.

In 2010 she released a DVD and bonus CD of a live performance at the Centurion Theatre called “Helena Hetteema Alive” which was nominated for a SAMA (South Africa Music Award).

Other nominations and awards include: *Checkers Woman of the Year (2006)*, *2<sup>nd</sup> Best Album of the Year (Vonk –2006)* and the prestigious *Geraas SABC2 Award in the Best Female Vocalist category (2005)* for her CD “*Divided Heart*”(2004). Helena also was nominated by KykNet viewers in 2006 as one of the country’s top ten divas in the Huisgenoot Tempo Awards, and nominated for four *FNB Vita Awards for Best Performance in a musical review production, (twice) Best Production, Best Costume Design for “The Bridge”*( 2002 released as a CD) and “*The Legends and a Touch of Me.*”

In 2012, Helena released her popular CD “Rooiwynliefde” featuring her own music and that of other South African artists such as Karen Zoid, Eugene Vermaak and Philip Nel. It also features musical arrangements of the poetry of famous Afrikaans poets such as Eugene Marais, Toon van den Heever and I D du Plessis.

In 2014 she released “Woordengel” featuring the words of Azette Wiesner and music of Lieze Stassen and launched at the Atterbury Theatre.

She sings the French version of “Viva Madiba” on the CD “In Homage to the Mandela Legacy” (released in 2013) featuring Anton Goosen’s original Afrikaans version and several other prominent artists for the other nine South African languages among others: Dozi (isiZulu); Manuel Escorcio (Portuguese); Rebecca Malope (isiXhosa); and “Mammie” Ntshauba (Setswana).

As a cabaret artist and live performer Helena sings in French, Flemish, Italian, English and Afrikaans and renders the music of continental greats, (particularly renowned for her French renditions of Piaf and Brel), alternative, contemporary, alternative, folk, jazz and her own and other original music. Her own original music deals with universal themes such as the environment, social commentary as well as death, love and loss. Helena has performed in Holland Belgium, England, Turkey, New Zealand and Italy and in 2013 on invitation, and she performed at the “Festival voor het Afrikaans” in Den Haag, The Netherlands. In 2014 on invitation from the SA Embassy performed in Antananarivo, Madagascar to celebrate 20 years of democracy.

In April 2015, Helena appeared as a guest artist in the “Club” in the popular TV soapy, “7de Laan” and also did a 100-year tribute to Piaf the Atterbury Theatre.

Early in 2016 Helena performed in Harare, |Zimbabwe and began working on her latest CD “21 plus (2017) celebrating 22 years since her first CD “Fools’ Gold” was released and also 26 years in the music industry. Helena Hetteema 21 + was launched (with fellow musicians Marelize Koch,( pianist) and Con Grazia, amongst others at the Atterbury Theatre, Pretoria in September 2017 and distributed countrywide through Wow |Music.

Helena's videos may be viewed on Helena Hetteema Official YouTube Channel.

Her music may be downloaded on iTunes, Deezer and Spotify

[www.helenahetteema.com](http://www.helenahetteema.com)

**Some Press comment:**

“Helena Hetteema is one of South Africa's most accomplished cabaret artist. ...album can be commended for its superb quality of fine musicianship. Her Piaf playfully included an SA feel as the Soweto String Quartet add a delightful Kwela twist...” ***Classic Feel, Oct 2007.***

“And boy can she sing! Hetteema has a voice that ranges from crushed silk to wet gravel and she uses it with sensitivity and skill. It was a stirring performance...great opportunity to see one of South Africa's finest performers in action.” Peter van der Merwe – ***Pretoria News 22 Nov 2006***

“South Africa has its own folk poet in the form of singer/ songwriter Helena Hetteema. This child of the cosmos brings an ethereal, thoughtful vision to Divided Heart, her sixth CD. The result is an evocative, gentle, stirring album that will enchant the discerning listener.” Christina Kennedy – ***Citizen 21 June 2004***

“Sy sny dieper as die vel” – ***Beeld – Martjie Roos***

“Een van ons beste sangeresse” – ***Rapport***