

...NOT IN THISDAY STYLE? THEN YOU'RE NOT IN STYLE

# THISDAY Style

SUNDAY, AUGUST 7, 2022

## STELLA FUBARA

ADVANCING TOURISM

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**season 4**

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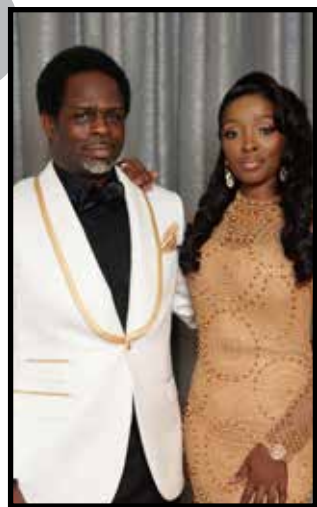
more than banking



COVER NOTE



As a little girl, Stella Fubara had big dreams of becoming an air hostess or a pilot. Even though she pursued a career in business and finance management, providence will eventually take her back to the travel and tourism industry. But this time as the Director of International Operations at the Dubai Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing, where she would bear the responsibility of promoting Dubai to the African market. In this interview with **KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR**, Stella talks about her career in tourism, Dubai's strategies for tourism growth and her thoughts on the Nigerian tourism sector.



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**50 HEARTY CHEERS FOR SIR KEN OKOLUGBO**  
Recently family and friends gathered together to celebrate the 50th birthday ceremony of Sir Ken Okolugbo at the Red restaurant, Eko Hotel, Lagos. It was a fun and relaxed outing with a comedian playing host and music performance from a live band.



THIS DAY Style

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EDITOR'S LETTER



EXECUTIVE EDITOR

On living intentionally

**D**o you sometimes wonder what you will be remembered for after you are long gone? Or generally, what would people say about you and your impact on their lives? It's been Twenty-five years since Fela Anikulapo Kuti's death, and we all still talk about his life and the impact of his music. How he inspired a whole generation of African artists and some of the biggest names in Western pop with the Afrobeat sound he created; and his heroic struggle against an oppressive military dictatorship. Yes, 25 years. Talk about a legend.

Now thanks to his relatively wild lifestyle, some might argue otherwise. But you also can't deny the fact that he is one of the most influential Africans the world has seen and a national treasure. So this is me picking the good from the bad and focusing on his creativity, courage, larger-than-life personality, and tenacity.

This, right here, tells the importance of living a life of purpose and building a legacy. I believe that legacies have a raw power for good and evil. Some people have positively changed the world and spurred others onto new heights. At the same time, some others have caused massive destruction for countless millions and left a wake of pain behind them wherever they went. Which is it for you? How do you affect the people you come in contact with daily? I never knew this, but I have learnt over time that our every move and decision impacts the people around us either directly or indirectly. Our lives have the power to create good or purvey evil. And I tell you, whatever the case, It is important that we choose to do good and speak up for what we believe in.

Remember that building that which will last beyond us is selfless. Again I ask, do you sometimes imagine how people will speak of you in death? It definitely won't be relevant to you at that point, but it will be to the people you leave behind. We are currently living in the craziest of times. Every day feels like a test. If there were a better time to think about your legacy, it is now. Take today to reflect on how you will use the lessons, information and skills you have acquired so far to build a life that will leave a tremendous and resounding legacy. While doing that, also take time to log on to our website [www.thisdaystyle.ng](http://www.thisdaystyle.ng). Do have a beautiful day, and best wishes for the rest of the week.

Konye



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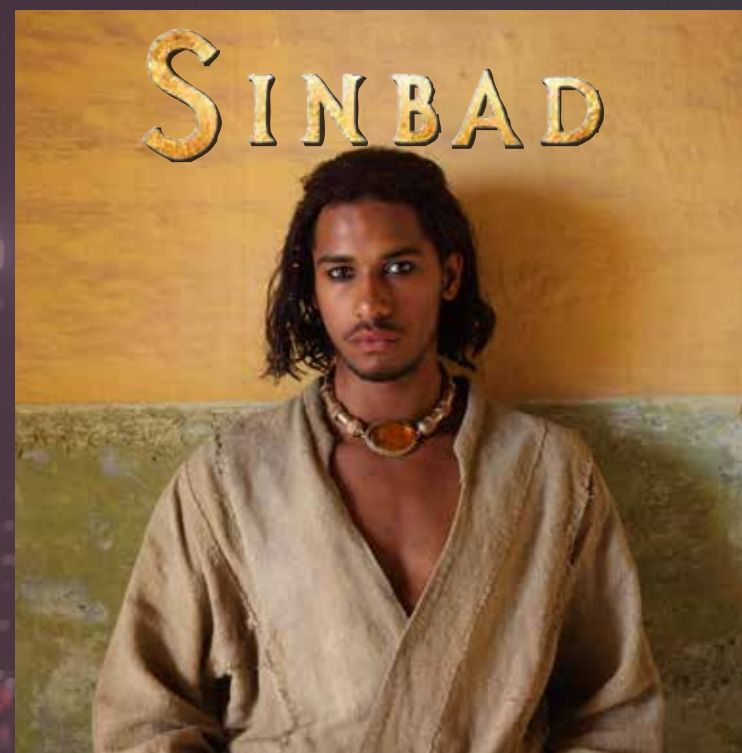
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## GIORGIO ARMANI HOSTS EXCLUSIVE SI (YES) BRUNCH

By Funke Babs-Kufeki

Recently at the exclusive GAIA Africa in Victoria Island, Lagos, Giorgio Armani hosted an intimate group of empowered Nigerian women to a 5-course meal curated by Chef Croffie of The Gaby Lagos. The brunch, which Bolanle Olukanni moderated, sparked conversations surrounding modern femininity, navigating life as dynamic and successful women, and how everyone in attendance works to prioritize love for self by Saying Si (YES) to the things that matter. The event's intimacy allowed guests to truly be themselves as they shared heart-warming stories that authentically resonated and connected with everyone in the room. These women wholeheartedly embrace their multifaceted lives and, in one way or another, make an intentional choice to #SaySi, to self and their passions. Si Fragrance by Giorgio Armani encapsulates the confident energy that characterizes the Si women. Empowered, feminine and free, she embodies irresistibly modern femininity.



BOLANLE OLUKANNI



BEVERLY NAYA



MICHELLE DEDE



ZAINAB BALOGUN



UEOMA BALOGUN & SIMI ESIRI



POWEDE AWUJO



LEONIE



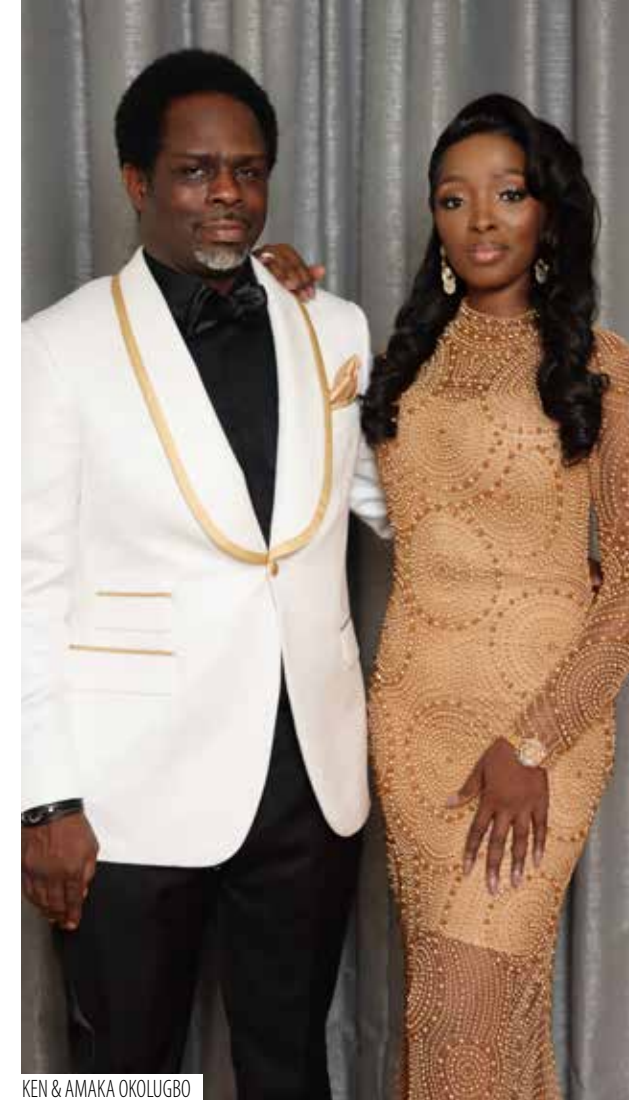
GROUP PHOTOGRAPH

## 50 HEARTY CHEERS FOR SIR KEN OKOLUGBO

By Isioma Usiade

Recently family and friends gathered together to celebrate the 50th birthday ceremony of Sir Ken Okolugbo at the Red restaurant, Eko Hotel, Lagos. It was a fun and relaxed outing with a comedian playing host and music performance from a live band.

Sir Ken Okolugbo is a political analyst and a former DESOPADEC commissioner.



KEN & AMAKA OKOLUGBO



MR & MRS STELLA OKOLI



MR & MRS VENO ONOKAH



SULEIMAN ALEDEH

IFY NWABOGOR



JULIE PINNICK, LADY FLORENCE ITA GIWA & AMAJU PINNICK



MR & MRS JULIUS EJKONYE



DERE OTUBU



JIMMY OMO-AGEGE



KEHINDE EBIE



TONABARA OKORIA



NEKWU OKOLUGBO

PAUL OSAJI



MR & MRS LEO ANOKA



EMEM NKERUWEM, MR & MRS TOSAN, KEDINUWA OKUDEI



MR & MRS MICHAEL COLE

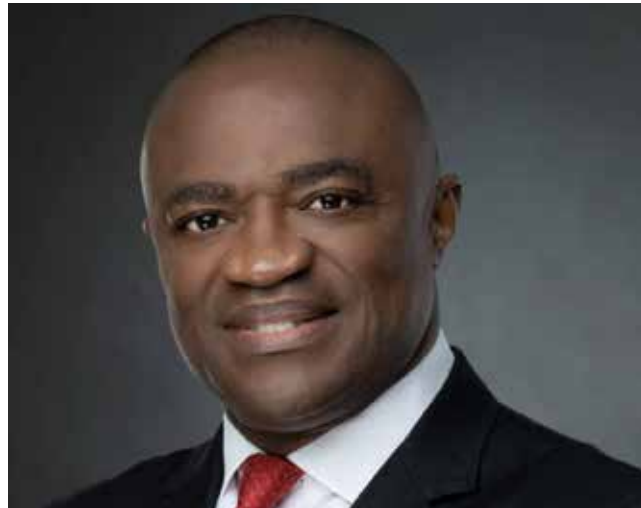


## Ten Things This Week

STYLE

DESIGN

### UBA ANNOUNCES MR. OLIVER ALAWUBA AS ITS NEW GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR



The United Bank for Africa Plc (UBA), Africa's global bank, has announced the appointment of Mr. Oliver Alawuba as its Group Managing Director. He is to oversee all the Group's banking operations across its 20 African country network and globally in the United Kingdom, the United States of America, France, and the United Arab Emirates. Alawuba joined UBA in 1997 and has held a series of senior positions, including the CEO of UBA Ghana, the CEO of UBA, Africa and most recently as Group Deputy Managing Director.



### BURNA BOY SETS NEW RECORD, SELLS OUT 21 000 CAPACITY STATE FARM ARENA, US

Grammy award-winning artiste, Damini Ebunoluwa Ogulu, known as Burna Boy, has sold out 21,000 capacity at the State Farm Arena in Atlanta. The entertainer becomes the first African artiste to sell out the arena. He is the only African musician to have sold out four arenas on his US tour.

### NIGERIA BANS SIM CARD IMPORTATION



Nigeria has banned the importation of subscriber identity module (SIM) cards. Minister of Communications and Digital Economy Isa Pantami made the announcement this week. He noted that Africa's biggest country should not be importing things that could be produced within. "Let me make it clear that the federal government will no longer tolerate the importation of sim cards. We are now producing them in Nigeria. Our aim is to increase indigenous content in the ICT sector so that by 2025, we will be self-reliant by at least 80 per cent."



### BALENCIAGA IS SELLING TRASH 'POUCHES' BAGS THAT COST \$1790.

Balenciaga has begun selling trash bags for \$1,790. The bag was initially seen at the Paris Le Bourget Parc d'Expositions. The bag has received both favourable and unfavourable feedback, but what has caught people's attention is the touted price.

### ASUU EXTENDS STRIKE BY FOUR WEEKS



The National Executive Council of the Academic Staff Union of Universities has announced a four-week extension of its ongoing strike action. It said the extension was to give the Federal Government more time to resolve issues raised in the MoA. Prior to this recent extension of the industrial action, the university teachers were on a three-month strike declared by ASUU after the expiration of the two-month warning strike.

### EMIRATES AIRLINES TO REDUCE FLIGHT FREQUENCIES TO NIGERIA OVER TRAPPED FUNDS.

Middle East mega carrier Emirates Airlines has announced that it would reduce its flights to Nigeria from August 15 2022, due to its failure to repatriate its revenue earned from ticket sales in Nigeria. The airline said it would be forced to reduce flights from Dubai to Lagos from 11 times per week to 7 times per week. Adding that it does not have any choice but to take this action to mitigate the continued losses it is experiencing due to funds being blocked in Nigeria.



### HAUSA FILM STREAMING PLATFORM KALLO. NG WINS INTERNATIONAL AWARD

The first indigenous Hausa streaming platform in Nigeria, Kallo. ng has won an international award just eight months after its launch. The platform won the Best New Streaming Innovation award, presented and organized by Marketing World Awards, MWA in Accra, Ghana.

### REMEMBERING FELA – 25 YEARS AFTER.



August 2, 2022, marked 25 years since the demise of popular Afrobeat legend Fela Anikulapo Kuti. His major works, including the album 'Zombie' (1977), The singles Coffin for Head of State and 'Unknown Soldier', were written in response to his mother's death at the hands of the military. We will forever remember him for his legendary personality of speaking his opinions on matters and issues that affected the growth and development of the nation through his Afrobeat music. Fela was the inventor of the enduring and influential Afrobeat music style, the composer of an enormous body of music, and one of the bravest political voices in 20th-century African music. It is fair to say that no African musician before or since has sacrificed more for the principles he believed in.

### GOV BELLO SHUTS DOWN BROTHELS AND BANS THE WEARING OF FACE MASKS

As part of efforts to combat crime, Governor Yahaya Bello of Kogi State has ordered the immediate closure of all brothels in the state. He has also banned wearing face masks in public places for proper and easy identification of persons and ordered the removal and demolition of shanties in Lokoja, Osara, Zango, Itobe, Obajana, and all other areas in the state.



### ONYEKWERE MAKES HISTORY, WINS NIGERIA'S FIRST COMMONWEALTH GAMES DISCUS GOLD.

Current African Games and African Championships champion Chioma Onyekwere has made history as the first Nigerian woman to win the Commonwealth Games gold in the Discus Throw event. Onyekwere, 28, threw 61.70m in her fourth attempt to take the lead from Jade Lally, who led from the start of the competition with her opening throw of 57.33m. Onyekwere has now become the second Nigerian after Adewale Olukojun to win the Discus Throw title for Nigeria in the history of the championships. Olukojun threw 62.62m to win in Auckland in 1990.



STYLE

DESIGN



# 5 ACCESSORY BRANDS TO KEEP AN EYE ON

With their distinct originality, these accessory designers have established themselves as go-to brands locally and globally. It will surprise you to know that some of their pieces are handcrafted, with materials sourced locally. We have a list of 5 accessory designers to keep an eye on.

By Usiade Isioma



## RAYA JEWELLERY

Raya jewellery is designed for maximalist fashion women who want to make a bold statement. The Lagos-based brand was founded in 2014 by Ivie Omenai and offers gorgeous unique semi-precious stone accessories that make one look and feel vibrant in any outfit. Raya's jewellery accentuates the beauty of every woman.

## SHOBIKAN WORLD

Esther Oyelese, Shobikan World's creative director, has a story behind each of her bag designs. Every piece is a fusion of African beauty and contemporary appeal. It's hard to believe these bags are handcrafted locally. The unique, simple, and art-inspired luxury products are at the heart of what the brand truly represents.

## UREZ KULTURE

Ijeure Ezebuike isn't called Ijeshakara for no reason. Her designs show how her colourful statement headgear can make a woman stand out in a crowd.

Urezkulture, an award-winning accessory brand, was founded out of passion and has graced the crowns of fashionable women who desire to turn heads in any event.

## ZASHADU

After developing a liking for handbags at eight, Zainab Ashadu turned her passion into the Zashadu brand. Its colourful, unique pieces are handcrafted in-house using leather from the north.

## FC ACCESSORIES

The first thing you notice when you arrive in Lagos is the yellow danfo bus on every street. Creatively using the danfo symbol in practically all of its accessories makes the FC brand distinct as an accessory brand in Nigeria. Tosin Olukuade, the creative designer, is out to steadily satisfy the rich taste of both women and men with its colourful patterned accessories.



# Access Bank raises \$1.7 million for education in Nigeria at 2022 UK Charity Polo Tournament

Access Bank in partnership with Fifth Chukker and UNICEF held a charity polo tournament at the Guards Polo Club, Surrey, United Kingdom. The charity event raised \$1.7 million which will be directed to building and equipping classroom blocks in the less developed areas of Nigeria.

We remain committed to contributing to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) by providing quality education for Nigerian children and impacting lives positively.



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COVER

# STELLA FUBARA

## ADVANCING TOURISM

As a little girl, Stella Fubara had big dreams of becoming an air hostess or a pilot. Even though she pursued a career in business and finance management, providence will eventually take her back to the travel and tourism industry. But this time as the Director of International Operations at the Dubai Department of Tourism & Commerce Marketing, where she would bear the responsibility of promoting Dubai to the African market.

Prior to her current role, the beautiful and cerebral tourism guru was the Chief Marketing & Business Development Officer of Wakanow.com, one of Nigeria's leading online travel companies. A position which she says prepared her for her current role. In this interview with **KONYE CHELSEA NWABOGOR**, Stella talks about her career in tourism, Dubai's strategies for tourism growth and her thoughts on the Nigerian tourism sector.

**You have had quite an accomplished career in the tourism sector; talk to us about the beginnings of your foray into the industry.**

I started with no clear idea of any industry to be in. In university, my first attempted major was Electrical Engineering. After 3yrs in this department, I knew it was the wrong career choice. I switched to Business Administration and graduated from Franklin University in Columbus, Ohio. Then I pursued a Master's in Business Administration and took a job with Deloitte & Touche as a Project Controller. This job allowed me to work on projects in various industries across the United States of America. In 2002, I was assigned to a project with Walt Disney World in Florida as a Senior Project Control manager. That was my introduction to the Tourism, Hospitality, and Entertainment industry. It was exciting, versatile and enabled me to use my finance and project skills outside of spreadsheets. I remained at Walt Disney World for 5yrs before being headhunted to join Wyndham Vacation Resorts as a Director. This role immersed me in marketing, sales, finance, and the operational side of hospitality. I enjoyed every minute of my time at Walt Disney and Wyndham Vacation Resorts, and I've remained in the Tourism and hospitality industry ever since.

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**With a background in finance and consulting, was it so easy to transition to the tourism space?**

Tourism is about the movement of people from place to place, for different reasons and at different times. For movement to happen, different forms of transportation and accommodation are involved, as well as gastronomy. These industry attributes require finance...to be planned, received, or spent. And, if you add leisure to a movement, you need adventure and relaxation activities. So, the translation of my skills was natural. I'm still planning, negotiating, marketing, budgeting, strategising, and spending. Add these functions to my passion for the industry, and its checkmate!

**What would you say was the main attraction in returning to Nigeria to join a web-based travel company?**

I had travelled to Nigeria for my father's 75th birthday, and while there, I kept getting calls from recruiters. This sowed the seed of possibility and became something to think about. Although I didn't get an offer during that visit, within 24hrs after I had returned to the USA, I got a call to come back for an interview.

I went. That particular interview and the subsequent job offer were not suitable, but another materialised. It was Wakanow and they gave me everything I asked for. Within a few months, I re-located back to Nigeria. My job with Wakanow was creative and

engaging and laid the foundation and the opportunity for the job I have now.

**Many industry watchers still feel Nigeria has not quite got it right with its tourism sector. What would you say are our main challenges?**

For any country to embrace tourism, it must have government support. Government must enable policies, security, and infrastructure to support private investment in tourism. Private investors and visitors must feel secure, physically and financially. There must be strong infrastructure, beginning with the airports and other means of entry. The roads must be drive-worthy, and crime must be under control. This is important to start laying the foundation for tourism. Creating tax relief for investors is also very good in encouraging tourism growth. A system of accountability and standards for hotels that adheres to minimum rating standards is also key. And, of course, clean water and constant power. All of the above, in stages, will help any country serious about utilising tourism as a stream of income and pride. Nigeria has the necessary human capital to run an effective and efficient tourism sector but needs to implement a sustainable roadmap to boost investment in the sector in order to realise its full potential.

**Let's talk about Dubai. This is a well-structured system with a thriving tourism sector. What can Nigeria learn from this?**

There is so much to learn from Dubai. Dubai is an amazing city built on the vision of its leaders, and their love for the happiness and comfort of their people. They realised early that a city dependent on one source of revenue would not have options for shifts in the economy. So, they wisely and lovingly invested time and resources to develop their city to attract foreigners as visitors, residents and investors. Dubai is in its 2050 planning stage, and the leaders hold all residents accountable for excellence. They create an environment that lets people thrive and excel in any industry. And the government ensures that the common infrastructure for any city to thrive is functional, enabling residents to focus on creativity and the future. Nigeria needs leaders who love their people more than they love themselves or money. Giving handouts without providing water, electricity, roads, and other basic amenities only teaches a person to beg for more.

**Since you joined Dubai Tourism, there has been a steady, growing interest in Nigerians going to Dubai, not just for shopping but as a holiday destination. What changed during the seven years since you joined?**

I can't take sole credit for the growth of Nigerians travelling to Dubai. It's been an amazing team effort all the way. The ruler of Dubai and his executive council laid the groundwork for this growth long before I joined Dubai Tourism. At Dubai Tourism, we are constantly challenged to plan and execute, and we are given the resources to carry out our plans. We create amazing awareness tools and develop relationships in each country to support the visitation of Africans to Dubai. I also went through a significant change process personally. I learned to think of and recognise that each African country has a unique way of processing information and reacting to stimuli. So, applying these context-based strategies, tools and communication for each country gave us the right results.

**Did the pandemic affect any of this?**

The pandemic affected EVERYONE. Dubai is blessed to be one of the countries that bounced back first. There were no visitors from anywhere for a while, and it was insensitive to speak about travel when people were dying. But in true Dubai fashion, the government

*. In 2002, I was assigned to a project with Walt Disney World in Florida as a Senior Project Control manager. That was my introduction to the Tourism, Hospitality, and Entertainment industry.*







protected its residents. The government provided support and relief for almost every industry while the pandemic took its toll. We worked from home, received full pay, and stayed engaged with the various countries and partners we work with. And as the world slowly reopened, we adapted to hybrid work options, incorporating office, Work From Home (WFH), and online activities. The pandemic helped us reset and create renewed energy to get back in the market with a bang.

**How do you deflect visitors' concerns about coming to Dubai, whether it's because of humanitarian rights concerns or equality issues in the region?**

Quite frankly, I'm not sure why or where the concerns about humanitarian rights or equality come from regarding Dubai. Most countries in the world have much worse living conditions and religious antagonism. In Dubai, all nationalities live peacefully and are free to practice their religions. There are mosques, churches, synagogues, etc. No one is disturbed by their choice of religion. Women in Dubai do what they are comfortable with. They drive and work; some are CEOs, Ministers, Vice-Presidents, etc. Honestly, I get asked more about the weather than I do about equality or humanitarian rights!

**As one of the fastest growing cities in the world, what does the next phase of tourism look like for Dubai?**

We have plans all the way to 2050! Dubai has positioned itself as the business hub of the world. It will continue to be innovative in attracting visitors for all movement purposes – leisure, business, education, health, investment, real estate, gastronomy, adventure, shopping, MICE.....and any other reasons why people travel. The great Dubai airports are constantly undergoing improvement. The city adds a new attraction every six months and gets a new hotel almost every year! The Michelin Guide was recently announced in Dubai, and it's the #1 most popular city according to TripAdvisor. It will be exciting times for many years to come.

**What destinations do you look to as a tourism development and marketing role model? Seriously? I don't think any country can be a**

"role" model for Dubai when it comes to tourism. A few countries are competent in select areas, but none have the complete package as Dubai.

**You have extensive experience with several African countries. Obviously, Nigeria has the biggest spenders of them all. What are the major proclivities you have noted among tourists from different African countries?**

It's amazing that even though all African countries speak numerous languages, there are several things they unanimously embrace, such as the love of music, the desire for home food, football, shopping, fashion, and partying!

**Seeing you host Nigerians in Dubai, it's obvious you love your job. What's the greatest attraction for you on this job and in the UAE, where you are now based?**

I find Dubai amazing, friendly, enterprising, safe and full of embrace for the future. I work for a government ministry that runs like a private company -always seeking a niche and a better way to do things. The benefits for staff in government help and encourage us to live a balanced life. I am part of an amazing team of individuals responsible for the growth of the African market, and we support and encourage each other to achieve common goals. I can honestly say that I've never been happier, and I hope to continue to receive encouragement in everything I do.

**Most conversations about you inevitably talk about your fashion sense and style. Is this something you pay particular attention to, or do you, as they say, look good in anything?**

I wish I could say I know about fashion and style.... the truth is that I wear what I think I look good in, regardless of whether it's in fashion or not. I have clothes I wear purchased 20 years ago, just because they are still comfortable. I don't understand why some women can't wear a dress twice. Who does it hurt? Why should anyone care? As for jewellery, I have no clue how to buy it. I wait for my friends to tell me what to buy and buy it for me! I can wear the same earrings every day for a year and feel good. I do not have the patience to shop, and I will purchase everything online if I can! One small weakness.... shoes!

I do pay attention to my size.... I try to walk 6km every morning. I eat once a day (usually garri and soup), drink loads of coffee, nibble on plantain chips and groundnut, and a snickers bar once a week!



*Nigeria has the necessary human capital to run an effective and efficient tourism sector but needs to implement a sustainable roadmap to boost investment in the sector in order to realise its full potential.*

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FUP applies to some of these plans



# YES, THAT'S A MAN BAG

By Usiade Isioma

Every fashionable gentleman understands that bags have evolved into a vital tool and a fashion accessory. It is no longer considered a female accessory solely. Men's bags are masculine, beautiful, and great for any modern, formal or casual wardrobe. As a stylish man, you should have at least one of these bags in your closet.



JOHN OBAYUWANA

## The Briefcase

The briefcase is the most popular men's bag and is ideal for formal wear. The new generation of the briefcase is sleek and light, with plenty of space for paperwork and other essentials. It will transform you into a True Stylish Boss.



BERLUTTI

refined design gives it a timeless appeal that can be utilised for casual weekend wear or business-casual clothes.



BRUNELLO CUCINELLI

## The Carryall Bag

Any travelling man requires a carryall for weekend excursions or three-day business trips. Bulky luggage can be transformed into elegant, fashionable carryalls with the help of this bag. It's stylish, functional, and elegant. Its primarily leather material and



ACNE STUDIOS

## The Messenger Bag

Messenger bags are one of the most classic and timeless men's bags. Good quality stylish messenger bags complement a great-looking attire. Depending on the size, you can carry anything from your laptop, books, and heavy work tools.



MODEL



TEMISAN EMMANUEL



MAI ATAFO



GUCCI

## The Tote Bag

The Tote bag is somewhere between a briefcase and a backpack. It can be your beach bag, work bag, and shopping bag all in one.



THE NORTH FACE GYM BAG

## The Gym bag

A sturdy gym bag is essential for get-

ting your towel, trainers, and protein powder from the workspace to the gym in one piece. Features like drink holders can come in very handy, and some options even have different compartments for your running shoes and sweaty clothes.

## Yankari Game Reserve.

If you want to experience wild-life, Yankari Game Reserve is your best bet. One of Nigeria's oldest and most popular vacation destinations, it boasts over a hundred chalets of various sizes and specifications to suit your budget and preferences. A fully stocked museum showcasing the culture and archaeological findings is also available in the game reserve.

## Obudu Mountain Resort.

Obudu resort is not new to a lot of you. Already a favourite holiday spot, the mountain resort is located in the Obanliku Local Government Area of Cross River State, in the town of Obudu. The resort features a tranquil mountain view as well as numerous other attractions. You can explore the view of the Cameroon border, cable cars, and a waterfall.

## Le Meridien Ibom Golf Resort.

The Le Meridien Ibom Golf Resort is an ideal vacation destination for those who enjoy golf, nature, peace, and quiet. This resort, located in Uyo, Akwa Ibom State, covers over 135 hectares of land and is set in a lush palm forest. The best place to be for a memorable vacation.



OBUDU MOUNTAIN RESORT

## Whispering Palms.

Are you planning a vacation with your lover? Whispering Palms offers an exotic vacation spot in the ancient town of Badagry, close to the coast. The white sand and palm trees create an ideal setting for a romantic getaway.

## Abraka Turf and Country Club.

A trip to Abraka Turf Club in Delta State is a good idea.

It is an opulent vacation destination that accommodates several exotic birds and horses on 100 acres of lush green land. It also has a lovely garden and a peaceful walkway leading to the Ethiopia River.

This spot, with its nice waters, allows you to go swimming, fishing, kayaking, golfing, deep water diving, horse riding and enjoy a tropical sunrise. This is the best place to enjoy some peace.



YANKARI GAMES

Planning a vacation with friends and family but also stalling because of the current high cost of travelling abroad? I have good news for you. You don't need to travel out of Nigeria before you experience a memorable vacation with your loved ones. Here is a list of some of our best vacation spots.

By Usiade Isioma



IBOM HOTEL GOLF RESORT



WHISPERING PALMS



ABRAKA TURF CLUB



# GYAKIE THE SONG BIRD

SOARING JUST AS  
HIGH, SOUNDING  
JUST AS MELODIC,  
LOOKING JUST AS  
BEAUTIFUL

Jackline Acheampong, known professionally as Gyakie (actually pronounced Jackie), is a Ghanaian afrobeat/afro singer. You probably know her from her smash hit “Forever,” which went on to top global music charts and later got a remix featuring Nigerian Superstar Omah Lay. As a 22 years old who went into the mainstream two years ago, Gyakie has established herself as a fresh voice whose talent and spectacular music are contributing to the impressive success of the underrepresented female end of the Ghanaian music industry.

The daughter of Ghanaian highlife legend Ernest ‘Owoahene’ Nana Acheampong - one-half of the famous Lumba Brothers, she literally has music in her veins. Her familial connection to a Ghanaian great had a strong influence on her love for music from a young age and on her becoming the fledgling musician she is today, but there’s more to the story.

Over zoom, Gyakie is getting ready for her performance at the Palladium in NYC but is still excited to talk to me. Our conversation is centred on her growing up around music, the pressure of having a legendary father, exploring life, her latest sophomore project - “My Diary” EP, being an Apple Music Africa Rising Artist, and the incredible run she has recorded since her debut.

Interview by **Ayo Lawal**

**Talk me through your music journey. From your first single, “Love is pretty”, to becoming this global superstar?**

Music started for me officially in 2019. I was in school at the time - The Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology (KNUST). This was when I released my first song, shortly followed by “Never Like This”, - which happened to be my biggest song in Ghana.

Fast forward to 2020, I released my first EP, “Seed”, - which is the project that housed “Forever.” Since then, it’s just been about growth - gathering a wider audience worldwide.

**Your EP is titled “My Diary.” Is there a specific reason for this title?**

Yes! Recording this was centred around what I say to myself, things I have actually written down in my diary. Listening to this project - especially the last song, “Waka Waka” - you’d realise I’m talking about the things I’m going through and the things I’m looking forward to achieving in the future.

**This is your second EP - the first was “Seed.” Do you genuinely think your music has evolved or ‘matured’ since 2020, when you released the first one?**

Most definitely! There’s a huge difference. I was very intentional about this project - From the issues to be discussed to the production to song selection. Furthermore, before the EP, I hadn’t released new music in a while. This afforded me to put it all into my next drop, and I think it paid off. It’s beautiful, and fans are really enjoying it.

**What’s the reaction like for you? It’s easy to look from the outside, see numbers, and say it’s a success. But is this EP doing exactly what you imagined and envisioned?**

Everyone is talking about how it isn’t easy to choose a favourite song

from the first to the last song. I’m very proud that what was intended for the people to fall in love with came to pass.

**Do you have a favourite track off the new EP?**

It’s very hard for me to pick a favourite, to be quite honest. If I had to, my top two would be “Flames” with Davido and “Far Away.”

**We see artists linger in the ‘upcoming’ phase for so long before getting their big break. For some, they never get the chance. Starting music in 2019, did you think it was going to be an instant success story for you?**

Deep down, I always knew they’d be a time when everyone around the world would hear my music and enjoy my sound.

**Where do you think this confidence came from? Would you say your Dad’s influence rubbed off on you? Were you feeding from his energy?**

My Dad is definitely one of the reasons I fell in love with music. I grew up listening to music. I grew up around music. I grew up experiencing his shows, rehearsals and recordings. I became a fan of music from a very young age, and this boosted my confidence in making music now.

**Ghanaian highlife legend popularly known as Nana Acheampong - one-half of the famous Lumba Brothers - is your Dad. Did you always know you were going to do this? Was he the inspiration? Do you feel any pressure to match up or be more significant than your Dad?**

I remember when I officially announced that he was my Dad, the pressure was a lot. The comments and side remarks about living up to the high standards by Dad had already set really got to me in the early times. Now, I’ve completely let it go. Now, I believe I’m on a different path than my Dad.

**What was growing up as a Ghanaian Gen Zer like - especially with who your Dad was?**

I practically grew up in Kumasi, in the Ashanti Region of Ghana. Throughout my education, I went to a school in Kumasi - primary, secondary & tertiary. Mostly because of Dad, I was always indoors and didn’t get the chance to go out as often - This made me an introvert growing up. It was just Me, my family, travels, and music most of the time. I just recently started going out more and exploring places.

**How did “Song Bird” come about?**

It’s actually a nickname that was given to me by my manager. Why? Because you can relate birds with music. It popped up in his head, spilt out from his mouth, and since then, it has stuck! The ‘song bird’ is the music lady. The ‘song bird’ is my alter ego. The ‘song bird’ is the other side of Gyakie.

**What do you think is missing from the Ghanaian Music scene that you’d love to see more of?**

I’d love to see more women! Women are underrepresented in the Ghanaian music industry, and that has to change. Besides that, it looks solid, and the future seems bright.

**What do you like to do for fun - when you’re not touring as such?**

I love the beach a lot! I love it so much. I also love to travel - meet new people, try different foods and experience new cultures.

## ADD THESE COLOUR COMBINATIONS TO YOUR WARDROBE

This week, we are taking you through various colour-coordinated looks that will excite and complement your style. These samples will teach you to wear colours without clashing, from bold green and yellow ensembles to subtle pink and grey combos.

By **Usiade Isioma**

**Orange and Blue**

Blue and orange are two of the most striking colours. Choose a piece that mixes the perfect blend of both colours to ramp up their effect. This combo feels sleek, fashionable, and fun. ▼



**Fuchsia & Red** ▲

When selecting colours to wear, opt for a cool contrast. Red and Fuchsia is a great mix that never fails to turn heads. It’s audacious and screams colours.

**Navy blue and Red**

You can’t go wrong with a dark blue and red combination. If you’re unsure if it’s for you, look for a piece that blends the two. ▼



**Aquamarine, Lilac & Purple**

Try aquamarine green, lilac, and purple when playing with a cooler colour scheme. When worn together, they look modern and street-savvy. ▼

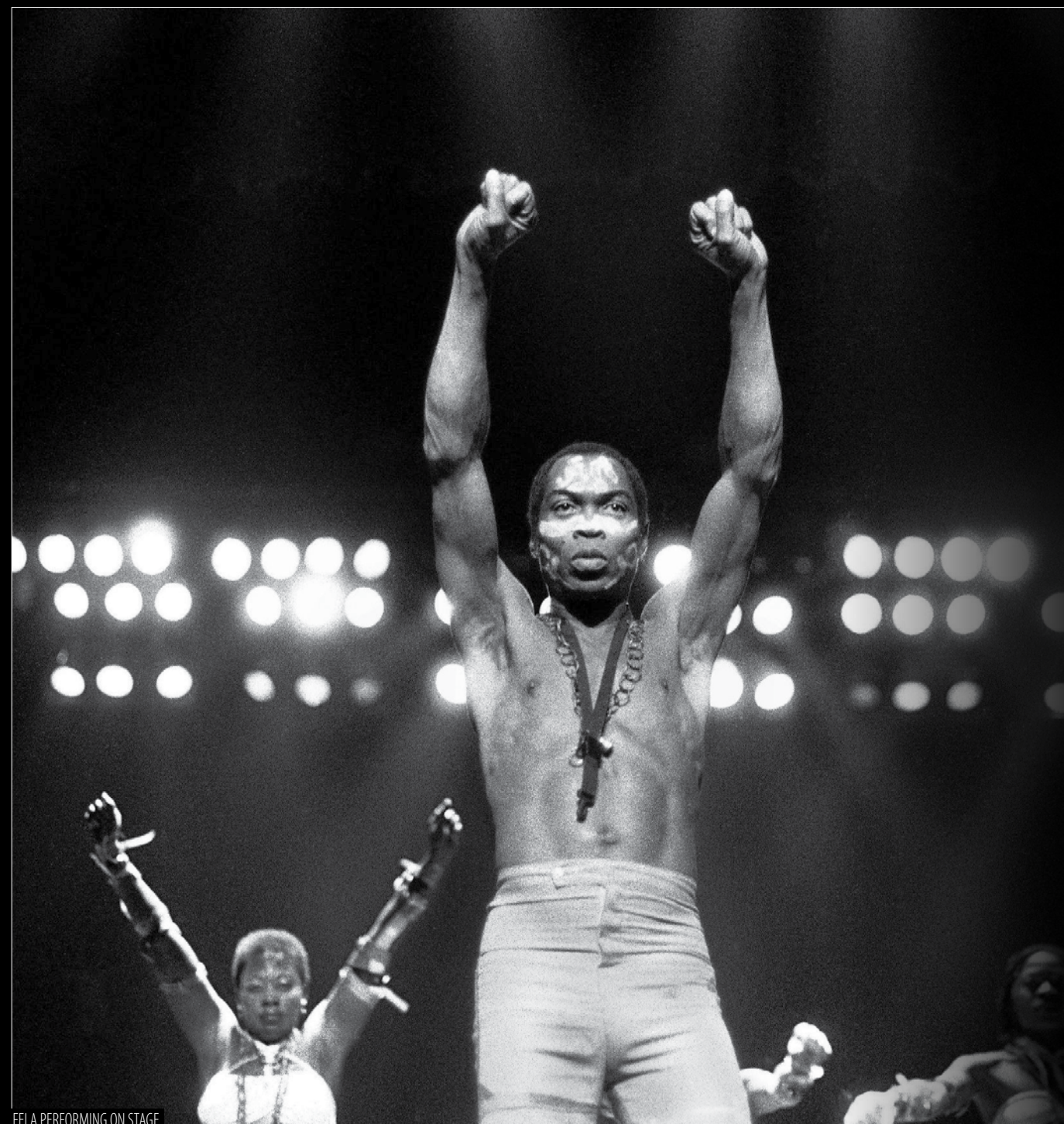




# REMEMBERING FELA, 25 YEARS AFTER

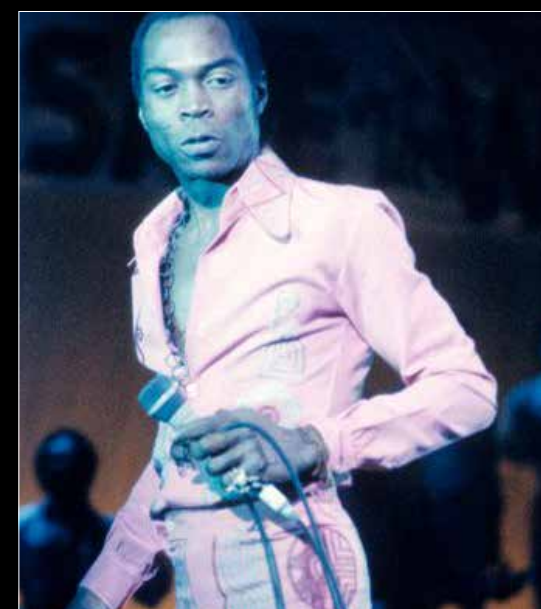
Twenty-five years after, Afrobeat legend Fela Anikulapo Kuti is still remembered as an influential icon who voiced his opinions on issues affecting Nigeria through music. Born on October 15, 1938, in Abeokuta, Nigeria, Fela was the son of feminist and labour activist Funmilayo Ransome-Kuti, the king of Afrobeat, an outspoken critic and a target of Nigeria's military juntas. He died on August 2, 1997, in Lagos, Nigeria, following a long illness.

By Isioma Usiade



FELA PERFORMING ON STAGE

As a youth, Fela took lessons in piano and percussion. He majored in classical music at Trinity College London. In the mid-1960s, he revived Koola Lobitos, a band he had previously played with in London. He combined traditional Yoruba music with American blues, jazz, and rock. Upon returning to Nigeria in 1967, he changed his middle name from "Ransome" to "Anikulapo" (meaning "he who carries death in his pocket"). In 1970, he founded the Kalakuta Republic commune, which declared itself independent from military rule. His band Africa 70 shot to stardom in West Africa. His biggest fan base was the poor, as his music addressed issues important to the Nigerian underclass. He was the voice of Nigeria's have-nots, a cultural rebel. Because of his social activism, he ran into trouble on many



## His words...

*A radical is he who has no sense...fights without reason...I have a reason. I am authentic. Yes, that's what I am.*

*With my music, I create change...I am using my music as a weapon.*

*My people are scared of the air around them; they always have an excuse not to fight for freedom.*

*When I was young, we weren't even allowed to speak our own languages in school. They called it 'vernacular,' as if only English was the real tongue.*

*To be spiritual is not by praying and going to church. Spiritualism is the understanding of the universe so that it can be a better place to live in.*

*A lotta continua... A lotta continua... No! It must not continue. The struggle must STOP!*

*Everything I did wrongly was for experience. That's how I see it. Once a man is looking for a better knowledge and he tries to be honest and truthful in all endeavours, then his life is just an experience. It cannot be a regret.*

*They say a fool at 40's a fool forever. I won't say that to my brother. Change if you're a fool at 20/30. Don't wait until u're 40.*

*"To be spiritual is not by praying and going to church. Spiritualism is the understanding of the universe so that it can be a better place to live in."*

*"I refuse to live my life in fear, the secret to life is to have no fear."*



FELA AND HIS FAMILY

occasions with the military regimes in Nigeria. The government-sanctioned attack on his Kalakuta compound in 1977 severely damaged his studio, destroying his master tapes and leaving him with a cracked skull and shattered bones. The government was determined to suppress Fela even if it led to his death. Following the Kalakuta tragedy, Fela went into exile in Ghana before returning to Nigeria in 1978. In 1979, he founded his political organization, MOP (Movement of the People), and renamed his band Egypt 80 at the start of the new decade. From 1980 to 1983, Nigeria was under civilian administration, and Fela was able to record and tour non-stop during this time. The military government was reinstated in 1983, and he was convicted to ten years in jail for money smuggling in 1984. With the help of Amnesty International, he was released in 1985. As the 1980s came to a close, Fela released searing recordings about the sufferings of African women. His musical output dwindled throughout the 1990s as he became physically ill until his death.

Fela Kuti, the legendary Afrobeat singer, reportedly married 27 women but eventually divorced most of them. They all resided with him in his home, Kalakuta Republic, which resembled a little village. Many of the women he married were fellow dancers, composers, and vocalists. His first marriage was to Remilekun Taylor in 1960, and he later married the other 27 different women in a traditional ceremony in 1978. According to him, the marriage shielded him from bogus accusations that he kidnapped them. The marriage was also a way of commemorating the anniversary of the attack on the Kalakuta Republic in 1977.

After Fela's death, his home and revolutionary headquarters were turned into a museum. A place where his fans can experience his life. The Kalakuta Museum now houses fascinating relics of this intriguing figure.

Fela Kuti is still regarded as a hero by millions of people for his contributions to society as the originator of Afrobeat, social critic, political activist, advocate of the oppressed masses, and philosopher of his political system. He is a great icon, and his music is still relevant today.

The themes of his music are still very much applicable to this day. He was a visionary. We are hopeful that society will continue to internalize the messages he left behind for much-needed change to occur. Fela was tremendous, and we will never forget him in Nigeria, Africa, or the global stage. Through his sons and his music, Fela lives.



FELA AND SOME OF HIS WIVES





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