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MARCH edition, 2015

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Letter from the editor

Whenever we interview and showcase either stars or upcoming ones, they all shine like the sun in the sky! In this month's edition, we profile Chelsea FC & Nigerian international football defender, Kenneth Omeruo who is currently on loan at Championship side - Middlesbrough. Also we interviewed Great Britain's triple jumper, Chioma Matthews who is preparing for the 2016 Olympics in Rio. Throw in a classic from award winning Sports broadcaster, Cecilia Omorogbe and a heart to heart chat with an Lilian Blankson & CEO of LNB Entertainment, you have an amazing edition. Enjoy.

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Kenneth Joasiah Omeruo



Kenneth Joasiah Omeruo (born 17 October 1993) is a Nigerian professional footballer who plays for Middlesbrough on loan from Chelsea and the Nigerian national team as a centre back.

Omeruo won the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations held in South Africa.

Kenneth Joasiah Omeruo



Kenneth Omeruo in action for Nigeria. Copyright owned by Kenneth Omeruo.

Kenneth Joasiah Omeruo

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D. Kenneth Omeruo in action for Middlesbrough FC. E. Kenneth celebrating Nigeria's win at the 2013 African Nations Cup with Coach Stephen Keshi. Copyright owned by Kenneth Omeruo.

PROFILING KENNETH JOASIAH OMERUO

At 19, he impressed enough in the Eredivisie to earn a call up to the Nigerian national team. Omeruo cemented a place in the starting line-up at the Africa Cup of Nations as it turned into a wonderful tournament for the Super Eagles and they emerged from the tournament victorious.

Kenneth Joasiah Omeruo was born on 17 October 1993 and is a Nigerian professional footballer who plays for Middlesbrough on loan from Chelsea. He is a Nigerian international centre back defender.

Omeruo signed for Chelsea from Standard Liege in January 2012 and upon signing went on loan to Dutch top-flight side ADO Den Haag. Then only 19, he impressed enough in the Eredivisie to earn a call up to the Nigerian national team. Now a regular international, Omeruo has represented Nigeria at the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations and the 2013 Confederations Cup in Brazil. Omeruo cemented a place in the starting line-up at the Africa Cup of Nations as it turned into a wonderful tournament for the Super Eagles and they emerged from the tournament victorious.

Omeruo had spells at Sunshine Stars and Anderlecht as a trialist before he was signed from the Anderlecht academy by Standard Liège. In January 2012, Chelsea signed Omeruo from Liège and immediately loaned him out to Eredivisie club ADO Den Haag. In May 2014 Nigeria World Cup-bound Omeruo agreed a new three-year contract with Chelsea.

Omeruo joined ADO Den Haag on an 18 month loan deal which kept him at the club until the end of the 2012–13 season. On 19 April 2012, in a game against FC Groningen Omeruo scored his first goal for ADO Den Haag. He is the only player in the Dutch league ever to score a goal, an own goal and receive a red card in one match (against VVV Venlo).

On 7 January 2014, Omeruo joined Middlesbrough on loan until the end of the 2013–14 season. He rejoined Middlesbrough for the 2014–15 season, making his first appearance against Birmingham in a 2-0 win. Omeruo has become a huge fan favourite at Boro and an ever present in defence. Omeruo is tipped to go on and become a future Chelsea regular.

PROFILING KENNETH JOASIAH OMERUO

Omeruo has been described as a "tall, rangy but strong centre-back" and a "level-headed and determined youngster."

Omeruo played for the Nigerian Under-20 team that reached the quarter-finals at the 2011 FIFA U-20 World Cup in Colombia.

On 9 January 2013, at the age of 19 he played for the senior team for the first time in a goalless draw against Cape Verde. He then went on to play in all of Nigeria's matches at the 2013 Africa Cup of Nations as Nigeria went on to win the competition for the third time.

Later that year he was selected for Nigeria's squad at the 2013 FIFA Confederations Cup and played in all of the three group games as Nigeria finished third in their group.

Omeruo was named in Nigeria's final squad for the 2014 FIFA World Cup and started in all four games as Nigeria finished second in their group and were eliminated by France at the Round of 16.

Omeruo has been described as a "tall, rangy but strong centre-back" and a "level-headed and determined youngster. His younger brother Lucky is also a footballer, who currently plays for Rangers International of Enugu and for the Nigeria national under-20 football team.

KENNETH OMERUO'S CAREER STATS

CLUBS

- 2012–2013: ADO Den Haag (loan). Played 36 games & scored 2 goals.
- 2014– : Middlesbrough (loan). Played 32 games & scored 0 goals.

COUNTRY

- 2009: Nigeria U17. Played 7 games & scored 1 goal.
- 2011: Nigeria U20. Played 5 games & scored 0 goals.
- 2013– : Nigeria's senior team. Played 19 games & scored 0 goals.

Senior club appearances and goals counted for the domestic league only and correct as of 30 March 2015.

Kenneth Joasiah Omeruo

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Kenneth Joasiah Omeruo



Kenneth Omeruo in action for Middlesbrough FC against Charlton FC in the English Championship League. Copyright owned by Kenneth Omeruo.

A vibrant, high-angle photograph of two women sitting on a wooden pool deck. The woman on the left, with long brown hair, is wearing a gold sequined dress and black high heels, smiling and looking towards the other woman. The woman on the right, with curly brown hair, is wearing a black top with a feathered skirt and a gold cuff bracelet, laughing with her mouth wide open. She is holding a can of Diet Coke. The background shows a blue swimming pool and a shimmering, sunlit water surface.

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Chioma Matthews



Chioma Matthews, (34) is a bronze Commonwealth netball medallist and competes for Great Britain. She is currently a triple jumper, and finished 8th with a personal best of 13.46m at the 2014 Commonwealth games in Glasgow.

Chioma is a former England international and Superleague player. She won Bronze with England at the 2006 Commonwealth games in Melbourne and played for England at all levels since the age of 14. The athletic Londoner is known for her elevation and agility on court and this has allowed her to be one of the few athletes to make an amazing cross-over to another elite sport.

Chioma Matthews



Chioma Matthews doing her triple jump trainings. Copyright owned by Chioma Matthews.

Chioma Matthews



Chioma Matthews at the 2014 Commonwealth games in Glasgow, Scotland. Copyright owned by Chioma Matthews.

Chioma Matthews



Chioma Matthews in the Team GB jersey at the 2014 Commonwealth games in Glasgow, Scotland. Copyright owned by Chioma Matthews.

“I compete in a solo sport, especially in such a beautifully technical event as Triple jump. I do enjoy relying on my own efforts and placing myself mentally as number one. Transferring sports has allowed me to discover so much more about myself.” - Chioma Matthews.

Having won a netball bronze medal at the 2006 Commonwealth games in Melbourne, do you miss playing netball now that you are a triple jumper?

Oh yes! But I miss playing with my friends the most - you create these bonds that can never be broken because of what you go through together as a team. However, now that I compete in a solo sport, especially in such a beautifully technical event as Triple jump. I do enjoy relying on my own efforts and placing myself mentally as number one. Transferring sports has allowed me to discover so much more about myself.

You are a fighter. A manager at a council support team, a former transport for London analyst and you train part time because you have to work round the clock. What makes you fight this hard for what you love?

This fight just feels right! Being selected for the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow last year and then becoming a finalist was a

massive indication that I must be doing something right. Ultimately all I am trying to do is be a happy, fulfilled person and get the most out of the body I have been given. I feel like I have been given tools with massive potential and it would be a sin not to use them! Sport makes me tick whether I'm watching or participating. It has always come very naturally to me and has often been my hiding place. I don't even have to think, I just participate and execute. Knowing all of this and feeling like i'm finally in the right place triple jumping, and seeing positive signs all of the time, that's what keeps me driven.

Clearly you are inspirational. One look at what you have achieved and it makes a person want to achieve too. Did you ever dream achieving this much?

I don't know to be honest! I liked a lot of things growing up - fashion & textiles, biology, history, music. My dreams were quite hazy and not very clear when I was younger. I remember watching things like the Olympics and Commonwealth Games with my mum and thinking, 'wow that's amazing, they are amazing' but I never fully pictured myself there until

“There is unwanted pressure on people trying to follow through with their sporting dreams. The thing is if it makes you happy and you are not hurting anybody else, then do it - negative people are normally unhappy themselves! .”

- Chioma Matthews.

much later. Some people are lucky enough to know exactly what they want straight away, and with others it takes a little longer and I am one of those. My journey has been so interesting so far, and I believe everything happens as and when it is supposed to - 'laissez faire'.

A lot of people trend through daily battles and many give up on their dreams. Growing up, what did you had to contend with before you could arrive at where you are today?

I think being a female in sport can be tough sometimes because to be successful you have to be aggressive, independent, and be physically, mentally and emotionally strong. Otherwise you cannot win, in addition to dedicating a lot of your time to train which sometimes people do not or cannot understand. But even though your exterior might appear tough you are still vulnerable inside and still want to be looked after and protected. I think often people don't think females should appear too strong and being a woman taking sport seriously, clashes.

So I'd say since I was young this was something I struggled with, like several of my school and university friends and work colleagues have - which does put unwanted pressure on people trying to follow through with their sporting dreams. The thing is if it makes you happy and you are not hurting anybody else, then do it - negative people are normally unhappy themselves!

You once said you were shocked when you got the call to represent Great Britain last year at the Commonwealth Games. You did not believe it! Looking back now, how was the roller coaster feeling?

I was so shocked because I just couldn't believe my first major goal had been achieved. It was no longer a dream it was actually a reality, in black and white, in history. I am not a complacent kind of person so it was not something I expected to come to me easily and I had to work really hard right up until the selections were made. It was such a rollercoaster because soon after the joy of the good news came, apprehension and serious nerves towards how I would perform

“Full support means I could work less and train more, which I know my counterparts do and is almost crucial to consistent elite performance. When I played netball, I did it full time & came out with a Commonwealth medal, so I know the impact of fully focussing on a goal.” - Chioma Matthews.

on my own with no team anymore, then once I got to Glasgow being overwhelmed by the whole occasion, the different athletes and the fact that I was part of it - it was definitely a very special period of time for me.

There are many kids around the world that dream of becoming an athlete. Some have parental support while others do not. From your experience, what would you advice them to do?

Along with my own drive I was lucky enough to have local facilities that I could access easily enough without having to disturb my mother, knowing she was a struggling single parent. Without these facilities I'm not sure how I would have accessed sport safely and in controlled environments. So I would say to ask around, talk to your PE teacher or google and find out what's around you. Take a friend with you if you are shy but otherwise just go like I did and join in, and also try as many different sports and activities as you can as you never know what else you could be good at or enjoy.

You are currently ranked 3rd in UK in triple jumping and have made the IAAF World Top List two years running. Your personal best is 13.50m. How far do you really think you can go if given the full support you need since you are not on sponsorship from Team GB?

Well, full support would mean I could work less and train more, which I know my counterparts do and is almost crucial to consistent elite performance. When I played netball I did that full time and came out with a Commonwealth medal so I know the likely impact and results of being able to fully focus on your goal. The ideal for me would be to train and compete fully. I made the final of a Commonwealth games and am in the top 3 in the UK by only training part time - it is so obvious that if I was fully supported my potential would be realised much much quicker. My goal is to be at the next Olympics in Rio De Janeiro next year, and compete for a medal.

Chioma is a Nigerian name. Were you ever tempted to represent Nigeria?

My mother gave me this beautiful name - did you know it means 'God is good'? It is only natural that thoughts of representing

“I have many role models from sport mainly football, tennis and of course athletics but; two people stand out - the great Michael Jordan. Arguably the best basketball player ever. So cool, calm and collected. So talented and highly respected.” - Chioma Matthews.

Nigeria have cropped up as whilst I was born and raised in London, and now have represented England in 2 sports, my heritage, my ancestry, my extended family lies in Nigeria so making my forefathers proud would also be a honour.

The 2016 Olympics in Rio is around the corner. How wonderful would it be if you are on the podium singing to the anthem of Great Britain?

Hang on I need to get selected first! The Olympics in Rio is only about 500 days away - not long, but long enough. My coach and I have been planning and hopefully things will come together. Once I jump the qualifying distance and get selected, only then will I start tuning my voice for singing any anthems!!

Everyone has someone they look up to. Who they feed off from. Who has served as an inspiration to you & why?

I have many role models from sport mainly football, tennis and of course athletics but; two people stand out - the great Michael Jordan. Arguably the best basketball player ever. So cool, calm and collected. So talented, highly respected and I loved how he executed his plays to perfection. His team trusted him and he never panicked. He was very inspirational to me when I was growing up. Second but not least important is my mother. She inspires me every single day. She is my star.

Thank you so much for an opportunity to inspire others through your experience, Chioma. You are a gem & we wish you the best in your career.

CONTACT Chioma Matthews

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A full-page advertisement for Diet Coke. Two women are relaxing on a wooden deck by a swimming pool. The woman on the left is wearing a gold sequined dress and black high heels, with one shoe off. The woman on the right is wearing a black dress with a feathered waist and a gold cuff bracelet, holding a can of Diet Coke. The background shows a blue pool and a shimmering gold wall. The text 'Regret Nothing.' is in a white script font, with 'no sugar, no calories' in a smaller sans-serif font below it. The words 'Diet Coke' are written in large, stylized letters on the right side, with 'Diet' in white script and 'Coke' in red block letters.

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Cecilia Omorogbe



Cecilia Omorogbe is an award winning TV Presenter, Producer, Editor and Radio broadcaster. Cecilia hails from Bini kingdom in Edo state, the 5th of 8 siblings. She Attended Idia College Benin and University of Benin where she obtained a Diploma in Social Works and BA; English and Literature.

Cecilia started broadcasting while in School with ITV Benin, specializing in news production, but was drafted to sports eventually. She worked with Silverbird TV, DBN, Galaxy, and Brila FM before joining Channels TV in 2013 as a Sports Anchor and Producer.

Cecilia won the Best Sports electronics Journalist at the 2012 Nigerian Sports awards in Nigeria.

Cecilia Omorogbe



Cecilia Omorogbe on set at Galaxy TV's Sports Edge. Copyright owned by Cecilia Omorogbe.

Cecilia Omorogbe



Cecilia Omorogbe. Copyright owned by Cecilia Omorogbe.

“I went to ITV in Benin, and was lucky to meet the General Manager on entering the gate. I told him my aim, that I just want to learn the basics and was ready to do any work assigned without pay. So I was drafted to the newsroom after convincing him I wasn't looking for a job.”- Cecilia Omorogbe.

You are simply one of the women's success stories in Sports broadcasting especially in Africa. How did you get drawn into broadcasting and eventually Sports broadcasting?

I was already in the University when the appeal came. A group I joined in school then "Achievers Consortium" nurtured it. It was all about looking inward and thinking beyond what you are right now and what you are really good at. We read lots of biographies and I guess in the process I fell in love with Oprah Winfrey's humble beginning and success story. So in my third year, during one of those holidays, I went to ITV in Benin, and was lucky to meet the General Manager on entering the gate.

I told him my aim, that I just want to learn the basics and was ready to do any work assigned without pay. So I was drafted to the newsroom after I was able to convince him I wasn't looking for a job. I blended and eventually, he placed me on little stipends. I joined the Campus Life crew & then the foreign desk.

The sports thing came when one of the presenters was suspended and they asked me to cast the sports news bulletin. Since I was already used to the camera as I was presenting the news segment of the campus life then, I wasn't keen about it and I told the Manager the news. He confirmed that the head of sports unit (Eghosa Agbonlahor) already told them in management meeting that I usually help him record matches and write scripts for him, hence he requested I be drafted to sports to assist with the production.

That's because we used the same office for the dubbing of visuals in the foreign desk. I wasn't going to let that happen, because that would take me away from the campus life show. I really enjoyed the show and my dream then was to host a talk show. I felt sports will take me away from that part. With time most of the senior managers (Sunny Duke Okosun, David Emeya Okhide now Silverbird news manager Benin) talked me into accepting it. So I accepted the challenge and I am glad I did. I was not really passionate about sports but had to learn on the job.

“For a female to excel in a male dominated profession you just have to be better at what you do. You need to work twice as hard. To show you can be taken seriously and as good as the male folk if not better.”- Cecilia Omorogbe.

Knowing how efficient Brila fm is in Nigeria, how easy was it for you leaving the TV broadcasting scene for the radio world?

It was a tough decision. But I love exploring and taking bold steps. I wanted to know what it was like being on Radio, the invincibility. The thrill and just talking, being yourself without the listeners seeing the facial expressions or what you are wearing. It was a great experience. Specially having to work with the “Popular side crew” anchored my Murphy Ijemba and Ladies Night. I still cherish the memories.

You come across as a dedicated workaholic! How do you focus and work as hard as you do?

For a female to excel in a male dominated profession you just have to be better at what you do. You need to work twice as hard. To show you can be taken seriously and as good as the male folk if not better. It's not a choice thing. It's what you have to do to be recognised and appreciated. Not because you are a woman, but because you are good at what you do.

A lot of undergraduates tend to study a different discipline to their professional destination. You actually studied English and Literature. What admonishment would you give to upcoming undergraduates or students who might be following this stream?

Just think of what you are good at. Look inward; think about what you enjoy doing and just focus. That's the key. There are too many distractions and discouragement. I remember how I was actually offered a job after my Diploma at Oceanic Bank courtesy my brother In Law. I just didn't take it. At that time I just couldn't see myself as a banker. It takes patience, discipline, confidence to achieve what you really want. Just go for it.

Share with us that glorious moment a couple of years ago when you were crowned the best Nigerian Sports Journalist.

Wow. It was the biggest shock of my life. I didn't even know I was nominated and actually attended the event for coverage and interviews. I was interviewing Mary Onyali Omagbemi a former sprinter and bronze medallist at Atlanta Olympics

“I wouldn't be where I am if not for God's grace. From the little girl in Benin, to a sports anchor in the best TV station in Nigeria and Africa! Lagos is one state that can make or break you. ”

- Cecilia Omorogbe.

when I heard the chorus of " where is CECE". She shouted let's turn the table then. It was amazing. I had to walk all through from the back stage with all eyes on me. I couldn't even raise my head up, because I wasn't dressed for the occasion. I was just wearing the usual pants, jacket and camisole. Standing on stage with Olympians and athletes as a recipient was indescribable. Also having your fellow colleagues nominate you as the best was really rewarding. It just makes you want to do more, and go the extra mile to surpass what you have already achieved.

You interview a lot of sports stars both within the studio environment and in the field too. Being that close up, how would you define their mind set? What kind of animals are they? Are most super human beings?

They are just like you and I, with feelings and emotions. Gentle and shy. Yes some of them, you have to prep them in the local language they understand before you can even interview them. They are so passionate about what they do. And most are really close to God. They get easily hurt by what we journalists write and say about them making them shun the media at times.

Has your relationship with God helped in any way in your success story?

I wouldn't be where I am if not for God's grace. From the little girl in Benin, to a sports anchor in the best TV station in Nigeria and Africa! Lagos is one state that can make or break you. So for you to survive without having to engage in anti-social vices, you just have to closely walk with God and seek his face daily. It's a dose you need at all times.

What advise do you have for those that would love to be a Sports broadcaster, either in the radio or tv environment?

Just be the best in all you do, knowing that anything worth doing at all is worth doing well. And understand the basics in journalism. That helps you move faster.

CONTACT Cecilia Omorogbe



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Lilian Blankson



Lilian Blankson was born and raised in New York to parents from Ghana, West Africa. She holds a BA in English, and an MFA in Creative Writing & Literature. Her thesis, an exceptional collection of poetry and short stories, afforded her a prestigious Graduate Award while graduating with highest honors.

Lilian Blankson



Lilian Blankson



Lilian Blankson



“I think staying humble is how I can be most effective in the work that I do. If you are sincere about what your mission in this life is, there is no need to broadcast it publicly.”

- Lilian Blankson.

You keep a low profile but you are an extraordinary woman that has impacted positively the lives of many. For the sake of those who do not know who you are, give us a breakdown of what you represent.

Thank you so much for your very kind words. I think staying humble is how I can be most effective in the work that I do. If you are sincere about what your mission in this life is, there is no need to broadcast it publicly. What is most important is attaining the goal not the attention that comes with it. Quite simply I would say that I am an African Entertainment Enthusiast. I think the core of me is very creative so I strive to utilize my writing, incredible passion for music and TV production skills to elevate and promote African Entertainment by any means necessary. BET International was a very ideal platform to effectively execute that mission. I am so fortunate to have had the privilege of working there so that I could realize some of my goals.

What attracted you to promoting African culture? Why not American culture?

If you were to cut me open, I would bleed thick rich African blood. America is where I was born and raised and where I currently reside, however it is not and can never be all of who I am. The passion for African culture initially manifested itself primarily as a need to educate. There was so much ignorance and bias about Africa and Africans and I found it incredibly irritating and disrespectful. Hollywood has used Tarzan and other primitive visuals to paint their image of Africa to the Western Hemisphere. It is my stance that as Africans, it is critical that we take on the responsibility of educating and correcting the masses about the portrayal of our continent and our culture. While we are nowhere near perfect, we are most certainly far more than what is being showcased about us.

We MUST take the representation of ourselves into our own hands. I choose to accomplish that in my writing, through entertainment and interviews & shows.

We never knew you were involved in Sports at all with BET. How did you get into that?

When I first began my journey with BET

“I worked with BET MAAD Sports for 4 years and it was an exciting time interviewing all of the incredible athletes such as, Carmelo Anthony, LeBron James, Tiger Woods, Donovan McNabb, Reggie Bush, Venus & Serena, Allen Iverson and so many more. ” - Lilian Blankson.

Networks, the VP that I worked with was over Sports, Specials & Prime-Time Programming. I worked with BET MAAD Sports for about 4 plus years and it was an exciting time interviewing all of the incredible athletes such as Carmelo Anthony, LeBron James, Tiger Woods, Donovan McNabb, Reggie Bush, Venus & Serena, Allen Iverson and so many more. We were able to capture African-American male & female athletes at their prime through MAAD Sports and showcase their fun entertaining sides. We also created NBA All-Star and Superbowl Specials. It really heightened my knowledge of the Sports arena and enabled me to develop an appreciation and respect for the athletes and Sports overall. We touched every area of Sports, Basketball, Baseball, Football, Soccer, Hockey, Track & Field, Golf, Volley Ball etc. For several years Sports became "My Thing."

At what point did you decide to dab into entertainment? Has this been your dream discipline?

I think Entertainment happened to me. It began shortly after I started working for Essence Magazine - it would be my initial introduction to working with entertainers.

I was right out of college and determined to be a writer, I was not focused on the entertainment sector although I have been an avid music lover since I was really young. At Essence, we were creating articles and photo shoots with A-List celebrities and also executing the Essence Awards. I discovered I had a natural ability to write and coordinate events really well. When I got to Newsweek Magazine, there was a focus on athletes, writers and performing artists, but again, I really just wanted to write. It was at BET that I found myself thrust into Entertainment and TV simultaneously. For many years, I considered it what I did and not who I was until I began to understand what this privilege could evolve into. That is when I changed my mindset and put a vision in place of how Africa could benefit from the position I was in.

You must have gained a lot of courage and experience from handling the balloting process for the BET awards, Hip Hop awards and the comedy awards. Tell us about your journey into BET and how you coped with handling all the A-list artistes.

“I love writing and producing and directing, anything that allows me to be creative is what I love doing the most. Working in television allows me to utilize all my skill sets simultaneously. .”

- Lilian Blankson.

The balloting process was extremely tedious and painstaking. I would work on it for weeks on end alone making sure every name and every song was captured perfectly. It was critical that names, song titles and collaborations appeared perfectly in the ballot books. This entailed weeks of research and fact checking, it was such an important and critical role and it fell solely on my shoulders. I took it very seriously and often had to be reminded that I was not saving lives, and that this was just for television. But, I always felt a great sense of pride and responsibility to the network and anything that my name was associated with - it had to be flawless. I enjoyed the other part of it which was the creative a lot more than the research. Working with tag lines, colors, images and concepts gave me a great deal of fulfillment.

Working with A-List artists just came with the territory - to me they always have been and always will be just people. The focus was to execute and get it done with perfection - again when my name is a part of something, it has to be flawless... Artists are people who respect you most when they realize you are a professional

who is unfazed by their stardom rather than someone who is behaving like a fan or groupie. I always try to be a professional and nothing more.

You are a director, producer and a creative person. That was evident in your creation of Spotlight for BET International. What is your preferred role?

I love writing and producing and directing, anything that allows me to be creative is what I love doing the most. Working in television allows me to utilize all my skill sets simultaneously. I am happiest when I am in a creative setting whether it's an interview, music video, drama series - anything that allows me to create and entertain and even educate.

There has been this debate on how the BET awards seclude African artistes during the awards ceremony. What is your take on this matter? Why are the winners from Africa not presented their awards on the stage with others?

“BET International never at anytime meant to offend or disrespect Africa or African Artists. From day one, every effort was made to fully represent Africa on the same plain-field, but that was not permitted to happen. ”

- Lilian Blankson.

This is a very difficult and sensitive question and I am not able to speak candidly on behalf of the network. What I will say is having been previously involved with it, BET International never at anytime meant to offend or disrespect Africa or African Artists. From day one, every effort was made to fully represent Africa on the same plain-field, but that was not permitted to happen. All I can say is that the network means well, they truly do, but there is a lot more to the matter than people perceive.

How do you compare your work at BET International with the Business and legal division?

Business & Legal Affairs works hand in hand with BET International in executing contracts and clearing third party content and music for broadcast in addition to many other tasks. I have learned a great deal about the field of Rights & Clearances and Music Publishing overall. This is knowledge that I can share with African artists and their record labels because as we can see from landmark cases and law suits, Music Publishing is an incredibly important field.

The main difference is I conduct a lot of Research now rather than being more creative and creating content like I used to when I was with BET International.

You are also an author and you have a publishing company too. How did your interest in writing develop?

I have been writing for many years. It started when I was very young, my head was filled with so many words and stories and I never quite understood why they were there or what I was supposed to do with them. When I finally started writing at about age 9 or 10, it took form in essays, stories, poems and my diary. I come from a long line of orators & story tellers and I have developed that skill myself. I am very very animated and will tell a really good story! I did not decide to become a published writer until I attended college and was told repeatedly that I had an amazing gift and very natural flair for writing. All through college and even Graduate Study, every piece of work that I composed and submitted was African. I was one of the only black students in my

“My faith has kept me completely honest, transparent and grounded. The field of entertainment is dark and very dirty and without a really strong sense of faith, you will find yourself in very compromising positions. ” - Lilian Blankson.

program and I was determined to school them on African culture. They were often frustrated by it and often didn't "get it," but I didn't care. I pushed on and kept at it until I graduated with honors and won the Graduate Award for the school. Till this day I write, but no where near as much as I used to or even want to.

Why did you launch LNB Entertainment & Productions? Would you say that after a number of years, you have achieved your objective?

I launched my own company so I could sign my artist Wondaboy and also have a platform where I can continue to write and create content such as shows, films and series independently. Working with Wondaboy has been an incredible experience because of my passion for music. He is an outstandingly talented artist and I am so excited to be a part of his career. Additionally, I feel truly blessed to be able to pursue the fields that I love the most and I am excited about creating my own content.

Has your faith in God helped your career? Is faith in God necessary?

My faith has kept me completely honest, transparent and grounded. The field of entertainment is dark and very dirty and without a really strong sense of faith, you will find yourself in very compromising positions. I remain humble because of who I serve ultimately and that humility keeps me out of trouble. I am very clear about what I will and will not do. I can't speak for the world, but I know personally all the tests, trials and tribulations that God has seen me through - if I did not have a relationship with him, I would be dead and gone. Faith in God is that unseen belief that may appear intangible to the world at large because you are literally investing your entire life into that which you cannot see - but you can feel - and that suffices for me. Faith keeps me going, and gives me the ability to achieve things that I really should not be able to. Faith is followed by grace, mercy and favor. Faith is my lifeline and the essence of my career.

Kindly share with us some of your new projects that are about to be launched any time now.

“Awaiting Fate is my Collection of African Short Stories and it's almost done. I am very excited about that book. The stories are deeply moving and some are quite comical and I think they will be very well received. ” - Lilian Blankson.

I am working on several books - a collection of African short stories, a fictional novel, Rain Love Part Two and a few essays. Awaiting Fate is my Collection of African Short Stories and it's almost done. I am very excited about that book. The stories are deeply moving and some are quite comical and I think they will be very well received. I am also working on a few TV shows: interview specials, a drama series and reality series. I am also thrilled about those and am hopeful that they will all be well received.

Some sponsorship will help me get them to the level they deserve to be. Finally, I am working hard with Wonda on his album and a few more videos. I really enjoy co-directing them and seeing him accomplish his musical goals, This is a very exciting time for me and with God's grace, I will accomplish some amazing things!

Thank you so much for taking the time to interview me and share my life's story with others. I am truly grateful for this honor! God keep and bless you in all that you do!

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Lilian Blankson



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Lilian Blankson with various guests. Copyright owned by Lilian Blankson.



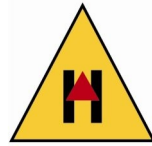
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