

“Naomi Wachira is an artist of formidable talent and heart. Her music & songwriting brings together harmonies that speak across continents and cultures.”- Northwest Music Scene

“I am an African girl, well I know where I’m coming from, and I know who I want to be...” is the defiant soul-anthem that jumpstarted Afro-Folk singer/songwriter Naomi Wachira onto a whole new path and calling. The words, from the title track of her first EP ***African Girl*** (2012), paved the way for this Kenyan-born, Seattle-based artist, who is determined to make a contribution in the world by offering music that is poignant, hopeful and life-giving. Five years later, after a critically acclaimed self-titled album ***Naomi Wachira*** (2014) and an acoustic EP ***I am Because You Are*** (2015), comes her sophomore album ***Song of Lament***, which she says, *“was born out the many tragic losses we’ve witnessed globally - ranging from cases of police brutality to the refugee crisis - that made me grieve about who we’ve become, but also burned a desire in me to create art that would serve society at large and hopefully lessen the chaos around us.”*

Song of Lament, which was recorded at Seattle’s historic London Bridge Studio, with producer Eric Lilavois (Saint Motel, Atlas Genius, My Chemical Romance), is a testament to Wachira’s full embrace of her creative power and its ability to spread goodness to a world churning with chaos and self-inflicted woes born out of fear and mistrust of the “other.” She hopes the album will be a balm, a beacon of hope, a reminder of both our darkness and light, but also inspire humanity towards mindfulness and empathy. By weaving real-life events with thoughtfulness and compassion, the album delves into issues of violence funneled through political ideologies and asks questions about how human beings arrive at this place of utter darkness (***“Heart of a Man”***). She highlights issues of human equality, especially as it undermines the divine sacredness of those who are different (***“Beautifully Human”***), and longs for a society where people take care of each other (***“I am Because You Are”***). With a rise in turmoil across the globe, she acknowledges how easy it is to despair on the status of a world that is hell bent on destroying itself (***“Up in Flames”***). She sings a mournful dirge for the countless lives lost at sea while escaping war torn homelands in search of peace and dignity (***“Farewell”***) and questions those who perpetuate violence in the name of faithful religious expression (***“Where is God?”***). And with an existential yearning, she wonders why Africa, one of the most resourceful continents in the world, has struggled to find her footing (***Song of Lament***). However, not all the songs are heavy. The first and last tracks (***“Our Days Are Numbered”*** and ***“Think Twice”***) are a reminder that while the sun does not discriminate between the good and the bad, fulfillment is found when we spend our days practicing kindness and wisdom and taking account that when all’s said and done, our actions really do matter. She joyously blesses her mother and father, with whom she credits for the woman she is today (***“Mûrathimwo”***), and encourages all of us who’ve hit rock bottom in life and feel disillusioned, to never give up or look back (***“Run, Run, Run”***).

With music that is both uplifting and somber, there is no doubt Wachira is determined to create a niche in the world and perhaps inch us closer to one another as we remember our shared humanity. Like the two predecessors she has long admired, Tracy Chapman and Miriam Makeba, she hopes that she can contribute to making the world a better place. Asked about

what she hopes to accomplish with this album she says, *“if there’s one thing I learned from my parents, it is to try and leave a place better than I found it. My hope is that this album will do just that. I know we are certainly living in dark times, but I hope that we will all find the courage to be light in whatever way we’ve been gifted... that we will seek to understand those who are different from us and find ways to both acknowledge and celebrate our differences and similarities.”*