

# Elton John wants to adopt toddler



between England and the Ukraine as a serious potential problem.

"I don't know what the procedure is to adopt a boy from the Ukraine. I don't think I can because England doesn't have a treaty with the Ukraine," he said.

But he said the fact that Furnish, 46, is Canadian may provide an avenue for adoption from the Ukraine. Some countries also make it difficult for gay couples to adopt.

John and Furnish toured the orphanage where John performed for the children as part of his AIDS Foundation work. Ukraine has one of the fastest rising rates of HIV infection in Europe.

Look out, Madonna and Angelina Jolie pop star Elton John has decided he wants to join the ranks of A-list celebrities with adopted children.

But it's not clear if John, 62, will be able to adopt, and the Rocket Man star has not yet started formal proceedings, which are often long and complicated.

John and longtime partner David Furnish are interested in trying to adopt a Ukrainian toddler named Lev they met during an orphanage tour there.

The singer told reporters in Ukraine on Saturday that Furnish has long wanted to adopt a child but that he was reluctant until he met Lev at an orphanage where many of the children's parents have died from AIDS.

"David always wanted to adopt a child and I always said 'no' because I am 62 and I think because of the traveling I do and the life I have, maybe it wouldn't be fair for the child," John said.

But having seen Lev today, I would love to adopt him. I don't know how we do that but he has stolen my heart. And he has stolen David's heart and it would be wonderful if we can have a home. I've changed my mind today."

He acknowledged bureaucratic hurdles may make adoption of a Ukrainian child impossible, citing the lack of a formal adoption protocol



With Ifeanyi Aniche 08035711230 - Text only

# Dreams, self belief brought me this far

~Banky W



He is one of the returnee music players gaining follower ship by the day. Good looks, raunchy dance moves and a velvety voice are some of the qualities that've endeared him to so many.

Olubankole Wellington was born in United States but brought to Nigeria for primary and secondary schooling before returning to the States when he was 17. Third in a family of four siblings, his first stage performance in Nigeria was at the debut of the Nigeria Music Video Awards (NMVA) in Lagos, 2008 where he performed Ebute Metta, a re mix of Rihanna's famous Umbrella.

That was the beginning of his music career in Nigeria as he went on to release his first Nigerian hit album titled Capable. And that was the seal as Banky joined other A-list artistes and additionally got the alias Mr Capable. Largely mis perceived as arrogant, Banky speaks very humbly of his music career in Nigeria, how he convinced his parents to let him return for music sake, and why people think he's arrogant.

**Did you expect the pace at which your career has moved between 2008 when you relocated to Nigeria and now?**

I'd say yes at the risk of sounding too confident or cocky since I know I'm not such person. I'm actually very humbled by the way God has brought me and where my fans have brought me, and I'm very appreciative of the position I'm in.

But I think, for anyone doing something like this, you need to have the ability to dream, you have to believe in yourself and you have to dream that you are the

best at what you do, and that you'll get there, whatever your goals are. I was raised to believe that it's possible to be the best. So, I did expect to be big.

People think my pace is fast because I moved to Nigeria in February 2008 and I've only been here for about a year. However, if you think about when I started making music officially, which was in 2003, five years of constant hard work and pouring your savings into a dream without making money from it is not an overnight success.

**What brought you to Nigeria in Dec 2007?**

Mr Capable... Truly Capable I came around because my sister- the only daughter of the family, was getting married. I had been in touch with DJ Humility and he actually broke Ebute-Metta here. I went to meet him at Ocean view and the next thing I knew I was to perform without back up dancers. Sometimes, the spontaneous performances are always the best ones and I think the crowd really liked it.

It (Ebute Metta) became so big in Nigeria that it actually put me off from doing any more mix because I didn't want people to put me in that box.

That definitely opened doors for me in Nigeria and it was the beginning of music for me in Nigeria. Later, I met Chief Dele Momodu outside the country. He had seen me perform in Canada. After the event, he called me aside and said, "See the way all these girls are screaming.

Whatever you're doing here, school, work, bla,bla is cool. But you have something special that your people back home need." I knew already before he said so but I was trying to figure out how to go about it.

**How was it making up your mind to return?**

That kind of decision is never easy because you have a routine you're already used to. And also it's tough to explain to your parents that you're leaving this very good job after going to school for so many years.

**Did you tell your parents the truth that you were returning to do music?**

Well, I had to at that point because they knew the company I was working for didn't have a branch in Nigeria. So, I couldn't come up with that. But for me, it was something I had always dreamt.

It was a thing that if I didn't come back and at least try, it would forever nag at me and I didn't want regrets when I'm older with kids. You know how parents always have fabulous tales of things they could have done when they were younger... bla bla.

I didn't want that. I wanted to test myself to see if I had what it takes to do this (music) full time. What I told my folks was "Listen, this thing is eating at me. If I don't do this, I'm never really gonna be happy. If I go and God forbid, it doesn't work out and I fall flat on my face, I already have an education. I can come back and get another job or go back to school and get a second degree or something else afterwards. Just let me try".

**And what did they say?**

My parents are lovely people. They encourage and support me in whatever I do. I know they were nervous about me leaving the security of what I had but I told them to just give me a time frame. In fact, it's funny. I told my parents, "give me a year. Let me see where I end up".

Really, I was just telling them that to get them off my back. When I came back for my sister's wedding, because I already had a song on radio, people were dragging me to different places. So, I already saw that I fit in. So, basically I went back to America to quit my job, close shop and then break the news to my family that I was moving back.

**When precisely did a year start counting?**

It started counting February 14, 2008, St. Valentine's day. That was when I moved back into the country.

**While growing up, did you think you'd end up doing this?**

Yes, I always dreamt of it.

**Have you ever considered taking up acting?**

In Nigeria, yes. But not until this album is done. Plus, it would have to be the right script and the right quality for me to do it.

When I was growing up, I did everything in the arts- painting, drawing, singing, acting, wrote plays.... In fact, shout out to my English teacher in secondary school (Mr Oke) who saw something extra in me, especially, my talent in entertainment at Home Science Sec. School.

When I came back to the country, I went to the school, Home Science Secondary School to see him and he said he'd have been surprised if I turned out to be somebody else that didn't have anything doing with music.

**Is there any Nigerian actor you admire?**

I'm a huge RMD fan (Richard Mofe Damijo). My growing up years in Lagos made me familiar with him. When I met him at an occasion in December 2007, I was star struck. And then he said he loved my music. I was so shocked and was like 'oh me'.

It was almost like I was meeting my own version of Denzel Washington.

**Why do people perceive you as arrogant?**

That's a bit complicating. The truth of the matter is people have this perception because they only see you on TV and on stage. The truth is that in a video or on stage, you have to exude a certain energy to captivate an audience. The other thing is that when you're a public face, you don't know anyone but everyone knows you.

When people see you and because you didn't give them that smile or reception that they are looking for, automatically, you are a cocky, arrogant person even though you're not.



# Kanye West spoils show at MTV Awards

...Disrupts Swift's speech; tribute to MJ

Even by the standards of the anything-goes MTV Video Music Awards, Kanye West's hijacking of country-pop sweetheart Taylor Swift's speech at the Sunday night ceremony was particularly brutal.

The pre-show buzz had focused on the highly anticipated tribute to the late Michael Jackson, but West's disruption stole the spotlight.

A giddy Swift was in the midst of her acceptance speech for Best Female Video when the often-mercurial West rushed onstage, grabbed her microphone and let loose an outburst on behalf of singer Beyonce Knowles, who had lost out in that category.

But audiences who stayed tuned until the end of the broadcast were treated to a touching bookend: Knowles, the night's top winner, invited Swift onstage and gave the teen singer her moment in the spotlight.

"I remember being 17 years old, up for my first MTV award with Destiny's Child, and it was one of the most exciting moments of my life," Knowles said,

referring to the girl group with which she had her start. "So I would like for Taylor to come out and have her moment."

Speaking to reporters later, Swift was understated about her take on the disruption.

"I was excited to be onstage because I just won the award. And then I was excited that Kanye West was onstage. Then, I wasn't excited anymore," she said.

MTV told journalists the West-Swift incident was not

planned -- a point it had to stress after a walkout by singer Eminem at last year's event turned out to be staged.

Hip-hop superstar West, who was pictured before the ceremony swigging a bottle of Cognac, was escorted from the building after the rant, the network said.