

Mp3 Imaginary Homeland - Jump For George

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A soulful blend of African fiddles, talking drums, and jazz. Two years living in rural Ghana and hearing African horse-hair fiddles led jazz composer David Rogers to seek out the connections between rural string music and polyrhythmic percussssion... 7 MP3 Songs WORLD: African, JAZZ: World Fusion Details:

"With praises to a dozen genres and fealty to none, this quartet is creating an original vocabulary that endorses both jazz and folk as equal partners in their own musical nation." - Dirty Linen Magazine

"Rogers is an inventive and charismatic saxist, and as a bandleader he's savvy enough to make optimal use of what he's got: that's not a mere violin Rice is sawing in the opening track, 'Kanawha Girl'; it's a bona fide crazy-ass African hillbilly fiddle. When Rogers and Stone duel it out on lunndogo talking drums in their 'Travelogue,' you might as well be in the heart of an alternative African universe's own Bonnaroo jam-band land.... The synthesis of jazz and world music is nothing new, of course, but... Rogers' pieces could only have been conjured via one thoroughly invested in the multiple traditions being considered -- think Coltrane's relationship to Indian music and its spiritual birthplace as a reference point." - Global Rhythm Magazine

"An original, yet somehow deeply rooted, musical sound. [They] have found the non-existent link between Appalachian string bands, Ghanaian percussion, downtown jazz and a host of other ideas that miraculously fit together as if they had the deepest of ethnomusical roots." -- CDRoots

"Combines the best of contemporary jazz... with West African instruments, melodies, and rhythms. Rice is one of the unsung heroes of jazz violin. Unlike some world music amalgams... Imaginary Homeland is made up of musicians steeped in both traditions, who delve into the deeper mysteries of these cultures.

Rice is one of the unsung heroes of jazz violin. The music makes you want to get up and dance, but you never want to stop listening!" Ann Arbor Observer "It's a wonderful sound that the group has; it combines African xylophone, talking drums with American strings and jazz. You're in good company with Debussy and many other great composers who were highly influenced by... music of other cultures." George

Preston, WNYC-FM 93.9 "David Rogers'... saxophone hypnotized" The New York Times "Pick Of The Week. Improvisational jazz inflected with African rhythms, talking drums and wrought-iron bells." The New York Press LINER NOTES (by David Rogers): When I started writing for this band, I had just returned

from two years in rural Ghana (West Africa) living and studying with masters of drum language, fiddle, and xylophone music. I had these African traditions in my mind, as well as some of their descendants (jazz, Cuban son, Appalachian fiddle), as I composed in New York. I was also inspired by a sense of various traditions being drawn together and finding new directions. When Mark Stone returned from Uganda he spent his first week in Detroit performing music from East and West Africa, America, and the Caribbean. Together we hoped to unite something from these many traditions-in the music of an imaginary homeland. KANAWHA GIRL is written for Mark's daughter Abena, who was born in West Virginia and whose mother, Serwah, is a Ghanaian dancer. "Kanawha" is itself an imaginary homeland in history. During the Civil War, the northwestern counties of Virginia chose that name when they broke away from the Confederacy to rejoin the Union. The Union overruled the name, and determined that Kanawha would instead be called West Virginia. This piece is inspired by Appalachian music and its African and Scots-Irish roots. My sax theme at the start is based on an old Appalachian folk song about a "foreign lander." You can hear in Mark's drumming the call-and-response of an African water drum (dansuom) and American "hambone" body percussion. Every homeland needs an ANTHEM. Ours is inspired by the one-string horse-hair-and-calabash fiddles (called gonji) played across the savannah of West Africa. I was often awoken at night by their melodies drifting through the thatched roof of my hut when I lived with the family of master drummer Dolsi-naa Abubakari Lunna in Tamale. Gonji music is played by groups of dancing fiddlers weaving melodies together against a swishing rattle and a male singer's reedy voice. In this piece Marlene and Matt play the dueling fiddles, Mark's Ugandan rattle provides rhythm, and my talking drum and sax join in the groove. A mobius strip is what you get when you twist a ribbon once and tape the ends together: a one-sided surface that flips over on itself and back over again. MOBIUS TRIP follows the same twist: the main riff is heard first in the melody, then flips over to the bass line, then flips back up to the melody where it started. Mark gives this jazz tune an African edge with his eclectic drum set. Instead of a bass drum he uses a square gome frame drum, instead of a snare drum he uses a lizard-skin engalabi hand drum, and for a hi-hat he uses an oyo nut rattle on his foot pedal. JUMP FOR GEORGE was written for my son while he was still jumping in his mother's tummy. Mark plays the gyil, a 16-key xylophone played by the Dagara people in Ghana, Burkina Faso, and Cote D'Ivoire. The gyil's wooden keys resonate over 16 gourds, which each have holes lined with papery spider egg-sacks. These vibrating membranes create a buzzing sound, or "spirit," around the melody that

is a crucial element in music across Africa. The rhythm of this piece comes from bewaa, a Dagbara dance with spectacular jumping and music that alternates singing and percussive solos. In our group, Marlene's violin and my alto sax are the "singers," joining Mark and Matt in a jubilant call and response.

TRAVELOGUE features the lunna, a talking drum of the Dagbamba kingdom in northern Ghana. My deep-toned lunndogo (bass lunna) opens the piece with a soliloquy and later enters into a duet with the higher pitched lunna. At festivals, funerals, weddings, and ceremonies of chiefs, these drums "speak" proverbs that can be used to recite history, give counsel, and praise or mock those in attendance. This piece tells the story of my honeymoon trip with my wife Karen through southern Ghana and up to the north for a homecoming with Dolsi-naa's family. The piece follows the arc of that trip, traveling through a shifting terrain of rhythm and tone without ever returning to where it started. The music's loose transitions are inspired by the fluidity of African music we heard on that trip. EL SONERO takes Cuban son music as its point of departure, celebrating the laid-back rhythm of early septetos, the searing brass riffs of 50's groups like El Sonero Matancera, and the harmonic freedom of pianist Eddie Palmieri. A mixture of African and Spanish dance rhythms meet in the Cuban son tradition. We explore new instrumental colors for those rhythms with my tenor sax and the African sounds of Mark's drum set. El Sonero was written with love for my wife, Karen. THE WORLD IS NOT YOUR HOME takes its name from a Hausa folk song. The violin plays its plaintive melody as the tune begins. Lunna and drum set then enter with a Dagbamba-inspired groove that launches the main jazz theme and a series of solos. The Hausa melody and the lunna finally meet as the piece concludes. The unspoken lyrics of the folk song remind us: "One by one we come into this world, one by one we leave it. One by one we come into this world, one by one we leave it. This world is not your home. It is just like a shaky hut." David Rogers New York City, August 2003

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