

Mp3 Mervyn Africa - No Way Home

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Jazz/rock 9 MP3 Songs JAZZ: World Fusion, ELECTRONIC: Virtual Orchestra Details: MERVYN AFRICA PIANIST 1950s: South African born Mervyn Africa has pursued a successful musical career in South Africa and the rest of the globe. Born in 1950, he started piano lessons at age five, at the Holy Cross School in District Six, Cape Town. Mervyn subsequently studied piano with various classical tutors at the University of Cape Towns College of Music. 1960s: With great encouragement from his musical parentage, he studied jazz piano with tutors like Henry February and Chris Schilder. Later he did jazz harmony with Kenny Barron (Rutgers University), Frank Foster, Larry Ridley, Monk Montgomery, and Freddy Waites. He performed profusely as a young child, being involved with piano trios, solo recital pieces, and accompanying for opera/dance/choir. He was also a member of the Cape Town Boys Choir. Being a child of the sixties influenced him, and as a teenager he formed bands reflecting the best of the jazz/rock fusion of the time. At this time he was also pursuing his studies at the College of Music (Maynardville). After College, he continued working with his already successful band, Oswetie. Oswetie toured Angola and Gabon. On his return to South Africa, Mervyn worked with Des and Dawn Linbergs production of Gilbert and Sullivans The Mikado. The backing band consisted of Duke Makasi, Siphon Gumedede, Russell Herman, Gilbert Mathews, and George Tyefumani. They later formed the band Spirits Rejoice (original music), and the famous vocal group Joy. The band won nine Sari Awards for their music and production, including the legendary song Paradise Road. Spirits Rejoice' also backed visiting UK/US artists like Dobby Gray, Clarence Carter, Double Exposure and Leo Sayer. 1980's: Like so many of his predecessors, Mervyn Africa found the South African political regime completely incompatible with his multi-cultural approach to music. In 1981 he left his homeland to settle in England where he worked with fellow exiles Dudu Pukwana (Brotherhood of Breath), Julian Bahula, Johnny Dyani, Jo Malinga, and later Hugh Masekela (Europe, USA, Canada). He was the founder of the London based group District Six, touring and recording two albums. During this period, he performed with a multitude of musicians in Europe and the UK. He toured as pianist with well known singer Carmel, contributing compositions and arrangements to her album Set Me Free. At the same time, he formed a band Kaap Finale, producing an

album, *Mellow Mayhem*. This album reflects Mervyn's rich musical heritage and his ingenious synthesis of the many styles.

1990s: Mervyn was commissioned by the Greater London Arts Council to compose and perform a jazz concerto for piano and full orchestra. The original score is in the British Music Archives, and the District Six Museum, Cape Town. This decade was spent composing music for numerous T.V. documentaries, drama, dance groups and film. He has worked for the B.B.C. in this capacity. Mervyn is also known around England's pop scene as a great composer and arranger of backing instrumentals. He has virtually worked with everyone, encompassing ska, r&b, and rock. During this decade, Mervyn Africa was in high demand for his solo piano performances. This led to a busy career in the U.K. and Europe. One cannot exclude the various group performances he has done with South African exiled musicians, as well as great U.K., European, and American artists (i.e. Archie Shepp, Max Roach, and Courtney Pine). Mervyn also worked with the British Council, producing a series of concerts and workshops throughout Eastern Europe. More recently he has composed and performed with the London band 'Jazzhearts', and can be heard on their cd *The Way It Feels*. "One of the best jazz tunes to come around in a long time in the form of jazz pianist Mervyn Africa's highly creative composition, *22nd September*." (JazzReview, on cd *The Way It Feels*.) Africa creates sumptuous piano improvisations and compositions, drawing from his rich cultural and musical background. He draws on influences ranging from classics or carnival songs, through township jazz, to a Malaysian musical heritage. His performance style, in which songs or story telling might enter a concert, just as naturally as a host of musical directions, leaves the audience in no doubt about his dynamic, direct approach. He has released his first solo cd *After the Storm* on his own record label ZONE 1.

2000s: In 2000 he was invited to Cape Town to play at the Baxter Theatre. This was the first time he played in South Africa for twenty years. The millennium also brought a very special event for Mervyn. He was invited by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II to perform solo piano at a special occasion for the President of South Africa, Mr. Thabo Mbeki; in London, U.K. In the summer of 2001 he toured with David Murray's *Mbiso* (a tribute to Johnny Dyani) with fellow compatriots Pinise Saul, Lucky Ranku, and the World Saxophone Quartet. He also did a concert at the North Sea Jazz Festival [Revisited] (Cape Town), with David Murray, with whom he also toured Japan to great acclaim. There have been several Exiles Return Concerts throughout South Africa, and Mervyn has participated in several of them. In December 2005, he was the musical director for the Exiles Re-Initiation Concert, a project with the Department of Arts and Culture. This unique performance was held in New Brighton, Port Elizabeth

home to many of South Africa's legendary jazz musicians. Mervyn Africa has returned to Cape Town and hopes to bring his worldly musical experience back to his home town. He is currently completing a cd, composed and performed by himself only, on the Yamaha Clavinova. Venues: Mervyn has worked in hundreds of clubs throughout the world, and many of the world's most spectacular concert halls. He has also performed at most of the International Music Festivals, including Berlin, Tokyo, Montreal, North Sea, Edinburgh, Glastonbury and Montreux. Teaching: Mervyn has consistently taught throughout his career, privately, master classes, workshops, and was composer in residence at Bath University, England.

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