

Mp3 Oneness Of Juju - African Rhythms

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Afro-Funk and jazz 10 MP3 Songs JAZZ: World Fusion, URBAN/R&B: Rhythm Blues Details: N.A.M.E. BRAND RECORDS BLACK FIRE RECORDS SHEKERE MUSIC, BMI PLUNKY ONENESS OF JUJU BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION Plunky Oneness is one of the most enduring and versatile funk, jazz, Afro-fusion groups of all time. The group has been described as the missing link between Pharoah Sanders and Kool the Gang! The band has been performing for more than 30 years and they still have a funky fresh sound as evidenced by their 2004 concerts with Earth Wind Fire and SOS Band. Every Plunky Oneness concert is a festive carnival. A party with a purpose. Led by saxophonist J. Plunky Branch, who has been gigging and touring for over 35 years, Plunky Oneness is a unique combination: exotic smooth grooves, sax, vocals, African percussion, and electronics. This, along with the groups infectious energy, moves audiences of all ages to celebrate, dance and shout. Over the years Plunky has produced and released 20 albums of original avant-garde jazz, funk, soul, fusion, gospel and African music. Forever In A Moment is the groups new smooth, urban jazz CD. Last year Strut Records of London released a two-CD retrospective compilation entitled African Rhythms - Oneness of Juju 1970-1982. But make no mistake about it: live, onstage Plunky has got to be Phunky! Plunky Oneness has performed at numerous festivals, including: three times at the National Black Arts Festival, Atlanta, Georgia; twice at the Hampton Jazz Festival in Virginia; and at the Worlds Fair in New Orleans. The group has toured in Africa and Europe, with three headline performances at Londons famed Jazz Caf. They have opened concerts for some of the biggest names in Black music, including: Earth Wind Fire, Patti LaBelle, B. B. King, Ray Charles, Frankie Beverly Maze, Sun Ra, The Isley Brothers and Roy Ayers. In addition to their performances at the National Museum of African Art in Washington, DC; the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts in Richmond, VA and at Alice Tully Hall at the Lincoln Center in New York, Plunky Oneness enjoys the intimacy and loyalty of smaller venues in their native Mid-Atlantic region. Plunky Oneness members includes: J. Plunky Branch, sax and vocals; Tonya Lazenby-Jackson, keyboards and vocals; Chris Beasley, guitar; P. Muzi Branch, bass; Corey Burch, drums and African master drummer, Asante from Ghana, West Africa who formerly played with Fleetwood Mac, Paul Simon

and Lonnie Liston Smith. Plunky Oneness evolved from Juju. Juju is about ritual and rhythm and spirituality and joy. Plunky Oneness of Juju is the name of a rhythm blues-African-jazz-funk band from Richmond, Virginia, U.S.A. The group, originally known as Juju, was founded in San Francisco in 1971 and has continued to evolve for over 30 years, performing and recording with changes in personnel and under different group names, but always led by J. Plunky Branch. The basic chronology has been as follows: the group was originally called Juju (1971-74), then Oneness of Juju (1975-81); then Plunky Oneness of Juju (1982-88); and most recently Plunky Oneness (1988 - present). The original group, Juju, was composed of musicians who had been the music ensemble for a ritual/theatrical production entitled "The Resurrection of the Dead", written by San Francisco playwright, Marvin X. The six musicians had been chosen because of their previous musical experiences and their Afrocentric orientation to music and culture. In the play, each night there was ritualistic music, historical commemorative songs, improvisational music testimonials, and an actual naming ceremony in which members of the cast would receive new names. The musicians for this production were an important and driving component. When the theatrical production completed its run and the cast was disbanded, the musicians decided to continue their musical explorations and pursuits together. They formed a group and Juju was born. Saxophonist, J. Plunky Branch from Richmond, Virginia and bassist, Ken Shabala (Kent Parker), from Brooklyn, New York, had met at Columbia University in New York where they attended college. There Plunky formed an R&B group called The Soul Syndicate and Kent Parker was its lead singer. From 1966 - 68 they played colleges and clubs in and around New York, setting and breaking attendance records at The Cheetah Night club in Manhattan and sharing the campus spotlight with another group from Columbia, Sha Na Na. After college Plunky migrated to San Francisco and Kent followed. In 1969 they met vibraphonist, Lon Moshe (Ron Martin) from Chicago and joined an African avante-garde group called Ndikho and the Natives, led by South African pianist/percussionist, Ndikho Xaba. The group recorded one L.P. "Ndikho and the Natives". Plunky, Ken Shabala and Lon joined the other original members of Juju: percussionist, Michael "Babatunde" Lea from Englewood, New Jersey; and two musicians from San Francisco: pianist, Al-Hammel Rasul (Tony Grayson) and percussionist, Jalongo Ngoma (Dennis Stewart). These musicians had come from separate and distinct musical backgrounds. Plunky had been raised on southern rhythm blues and gospel music and had studied jazz and classical music in school. Bassist, Ken Shabala was a R&B vocalist, jazz enthusiast and radio deejay in New York. Lon Moshe had

been a part of the Chicago avante-garde jazz scene. Al-Hammel Rasul was a self-taught pianist who performed in his church and with various jazz and soul groups in San Francisco. Babatunde and Jalongo had long studied African, Afro-Cuban and Brazilian drums and chants and percussion. As Juju, these young Black musicians dedicated themselves to using their music as a vehicle for raising political, spiritual and cultural consciousness. They practiced and rehearsed everyday for hours and hours and eventually developed a highly energetic, ritualistic, African, avante garde music based on rhythm, energy, improvisation, traditional chants and creative jazz. Juju performed in clubs, festivals and at political gatherings in the San Francisco Bay area, working with such notables as John Handy, Santana, Sun Ra, Pharaoh Sanders, Bill Summers, and others. The group recorded an album in 1972, *Juju - A Message From Mozambique*, which was released in 1973 on the Strata-East Records label. In 1973 the group migrated from San Francisco to New York and became a part of the New York creative music scene. They worked with musicians like Sam Rivers, Frank Lowe, Rashied Ali, Pharaoh Sanders, Sun Ra, Joe Lee Wilson, Ahmed Abdullah, Marzette Watts, Julius Hemphill, Clifford Jordan, Sonny Fortune, Jackie McLean and many others, including the other artists on the Strata-East label. Ornette Coleman was particularly helpful to the band during this period, giving them the full range of his support by allowing Juju to live and work in the Artist House, his gallery, loft and studio at 131 Prince Street, in the SoHo of New York. In 1974, the group moved to Richmond, Virginia and recorded their second Strata-East album: *Juju Chapter Two: Nia*. By 1975, Plunky had decided to stay in Richmond permanently. There were some personnel changes but, more importantly, the music and audiences of that Southeast region of the U.S. began to have an effect on the music of the group. Now, the group was incorporating more R&B influences, more vocals, more urban contemporary instrumentation. Originally Juju had used saxophone, vibraphone, piano, congas, timbales, traditional percussion instruments and upright bass. On occasion Babatunde and Jalongo would take turns on the trap drums. But when Ronnie Toler, a funk drummer from Richmond was added to replace Jalongo, who had moved back to San Francisco, and Plunky's brother, Muzi replaced Ken Shabala on electric bass, the music became much more funky and danceable. The group name was changed to *Oneness of Juju* to reflect these changes. The most important change in the sound of *Oneness of Juju* was the addition of vocalist, Lady Eka-Ete (Jacqueline Holoman). This singer possessed a voice of such distinctive mellowness that she evoked a kind of spell over audiences and listeners. She was a mesmerizing presence on stage and she moved the music of

Oneness of Juju to new heights of appeal. In 1975, the group released its African Rhythms album, on the Black Fire Music label, marking the beginning of a long and fruitful relationship with producer and label president, Jimmy Gray. This album had a powerful impact on the Mid-Atlantic music scene, particularly in Washington, DC. There, Oneness of Juju often performed with Gil Scot-Heron, Hugh Masekela, Chuck Brown the Soul Searchers, the Young Senators, Brute, Experience Unlimited and other popular groups.

Discography (Abridged): Forever In A Moment (2004, Smooth jazz) Instrumental Praise (2004 Gospel) Got to Move Something (2003, Jazz funk) Solo Journey Between Dimensions (2002, New Age) Got to be Phunky (2001, funk) Saxy Mellow Moments (2000, Smooth jazz) Groove Tones (1999, Acid jazz) I Cant Hold Back (1996, Jazz funk) The Oneness of Funk (1994, Jazz-funk) One World One Music (1992, Jazz-world) Spiritual Sounds Within My Soul (1992, Gospel) Move Into the Light (1990, Jazz-funk) Tropical Chill (1988, Jazz-funk) Electric JuJu Nation (1984, Funk-jazz) Everyway But Loose (1982, Funk) Bush Brothers Space Rangers, (1978, Funk) Space Jungle Luv (1976, Afro-jazz) African Rhythms (1975, Afro-jazz) Chapter Two: Nia (1974, Avant jazz) Message From Mozambique (1972, African jazz)

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