



Ladysmith Black Mambazo

18 juli, Stockholm, Konserthuset, Stora salen, 20:00

Mention African song and most people think of South African practitioners of the vocal arts - Solomon Linda, Miriam Makeba and perhaps more than anyone else in recent memory, Ladysmith Black Mambazo.

It is Ladysmith Black Mambazo who has come to represent the traditional culture of South Africa. They are regarded as South Africa's cultural emissaries at home and around the world.

In 1993, at Nelson Mandela's request, Black Mambazo accompanied the future President, and then South African President F.W. de Klerk, to the Nobel Peace Prize ceremony in Oslo, Norway. Mambazo sang again at President Mandela's inauguration in May of 1994.

They are a national treasure of the new South Africa in part because they embody the traditions suppressed in the old South Africa.

It's been more than fifteen years since Paul Simon made his initial trip to South Africa and met Joseph Shabalala and the other members of Ladysmith Black Mambazo in a recording studio in Johannesburg.

Having listened to a cassette of their music sent by a DJ based in Los Angeles, Simon was captivated by the stirring sound of bass, alto and tenor harmonies. Simon incorporated the traditional sounds of black South Africa into the Graceland album, a project regarded by many as seminal to today's explosive interest in World Music.

The traditional music sung by Ladysmith Black Mambazo is called ISICATHAMIYA (Is-Cot-A-Me-Ya). It was born in the mines of South Africa. Black workers were taken by rail to work far away from their homes and their families. Poorly housed and paid worse, they would entertain themselves after a six-day week by singing songs into the wee hours every Sunday morning. Cothoza Mfana they called themselves, tip toe guys, referring to the dance steps choreographed so as to not disturb the camp security guards. When miners returned to the homelands, the tradition returned with them.

Their work with Paul Simon on the Graceland album attracted a world of fans that never knew that the subtleties of Zulu harmony could be so captivating. Their first album release for the United States, SHAKA ZULU, was produced by Simon and won the Grammy Award in 1987 for Best Traditional Folk Album. Since then they have been nominated for a Grammy Award six additional times, including a nomination in 2001 for the album Live From Royal Albert Hall.

The group has recorded with numerous artists from around the world besides Paul Simon. These include Stevie Wonder, Dolly Parton, The Wynans, Julia Fordham, George Clinton, Russell Watson, Ben Harper, Des Re and others.

Their film work includes a featured appearance in Michael Jackson's video Moonwalker and Spike Lee's Do It A Cappella. Black Mambazo provided soundtrack material for Disney's The Lion King Part II as well as Eddie Murphy's Coming To America, Marlon Brando's A Dry White Season, and James Earl Jones' Cry The Beloved Country.

The group has been invited to perform at many special occasions. One event, at the special invitation of President Mandela, was to perform for the Queen of England and the Royal Family at the Royal Albert Hall in London. The group has also performed at two Nobel Peace Prize Ceremonies, a recent performance for the Pope in Rome, South African Presidential inaugurations, the 1996 Summer Olympics, a Muhammad Ali television special, many music award shows from around the world, and many other special events.

In the summer of 2002 Black Mambazo was again asked to represent their nation in London for a celebration for Queen Elizabeth II 50th Anniversary as Monarch. Dubbed The Party at the Palace, Ladysmith Black Mambazo joined with Eric Clapton, Rod Stewart, Joe Cocker, Phil Collins and Sir Paul McCartney on McCartney's songs Hey Jude and All You Need Is Love.

<http://www.mambazo.com>

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