

Urgent Jumping! East African Muziki Wa Dansi Classics *Sterns/Sonic RendezVous*

During the boom years of the 1960s and on into the 70s, East Africa, in particular Nairobi, was an irresistible magnet for musicians throughout the continent. Here they could record during the day and work in a club at night. From all parts of Kenya, Tanzania, Zambia, Zaïre, South Africa and beyond, musicians switched bands, swapped tunes, jammed, performed and generally added to the musical DNA that even now resonates around the world.

The resulting “perfect storm of international and parochial musical genius” gave birth to a standard of musicianship that has echoed down through the decades. In the 80s, while bands such as Samba Mapangala & Orchestra Virunga were able to find their first new audiences outside of Kenya, Congolese artists such as Tabu Ley and Mbilia Bel found some of their most enthusiastic fans inside the region. In the 90s, as the liner notes tell, the pool of musicians in Tanzania was sufficiently skilled and musically educated, that soukous stars needed to look no further than amongst the local talent when booking their backing bands for stadium-filling tours.

Into the new millenium and while hip hop made undeniable gains in East Africa, the love for zilipendwa or ‘golden oldies’ never went away. But while the carnivals of Colombia might have opened up to this music many years ago, European and American DJ culture, obsessed with the style and sound of 1970s West Africa, is perhaps only now turning its attention eastwards. But Sterns Africa have a long history of producing and releasing music from all parts of Africa, and on this album we have teamed up with John Armstrong, one of the first club DJs to regularly play African and Latin music in London, and bring you a specially selected set of 27 tracks recorded in East Africa between 1972 – 1982.

Some are super-rare, some are now finding their way into the boxes of DJs more recently bitten by the East African bug. All are mastered from original analogue tapes as supplied by the producers, and all are “Musiki Wa Dansi” classics ... just right for some Urgent Jumping!

