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Mosaic Select: Randy Weston (MS 004)

Text from mosaicrecords.com announcing this set:

"Weston's pianistics have an individuality all their own. When Randy plays, a combination of strength and gentleness, virility and velvet emerges from the keys in an ebb and flow of sound seemingly as natural as the waves of the sea."

Langston Hughes, Original liner notes

The Infectious Joy of Music

Like his early mentor Thelonious Monk, Randy Weston's piano style is both original and steeped in jazz history. He drew upon the rhythmic drive of the Harlem masters, the rich chords and wide voicings of Ellington and the spare, jabbing right hand of Count Basie. To this mix, he would later incorporate melodic and rhythmic forms from all over Africa. And from the outset, he was a gifted composer with an early penchant for $\frac{3}{4}$ time; many of his tunes would become jazz standards eclipsing their creator in popularity.

Despite the irresistible melodic and rhythmic appeal of his music, Weston has never achieved the popularity that he deserved. Throughout the decades, he has moved from label to label and from continent to continent making magnificent music and avid converts everywhere he played.

A SENSE OF JOY

This set, spanning 1957 to '63, offers highpoints of every facet of his music, all of which exudes a joyous spirit that is the nature of the man himself. The earliest, Piano-A-La-Mode (Jubilee) is a solo and trio date that focused on Randy's unique and vibrant piano style. A year later, Little Niles with a sextet featuring Johnny Griffin and Live At The Five Spot with Coleman Hawkins and Kenny Dorham, both for United Artists, reveal a prolific and startling fresh jazz composer as does a previously unissued 1960 Roulette album with Cecil Payne, Ron Carter and Roy Haynes.

Perhaps Weston's greatest contribution is fusing jazz with authentic forms of African music. His first albums in the field, Uhuru Afrika (Roulette, 1960) and Highlife (Colpix, 1963), are masterpieces that blended richly arranged ensembles with such great soloist as Clark Terry, Freddie Hubbard and Booker Ervin with galvanizing polyrhythmic drum ensembles.

It is an honor to bring these extremely rare gems back to life; mastered in 24-bit from the original master tapes with astounding sonic results.

Track Listing & Discography

DISC ONE

1. Earth Birth (A)	2:50	(Randy Weston)
2. Little Susan (A)	3:22	(Randy Weston)
3. Nice Ice (A)	2:54	(Randy Weston)
4. Little Niles (A)	5:58	(Randy Weston)
5. Pam's Waltz (A)	3:13	(Randy Weston)
6. Babe's Blues (A)	6:55	(Randy Weston)
7. Let's Climb A Hill (A)	5:50	(Randy Weston)
8. Hi Fly (B)	7:21	(Randy Weston)
9. Beef Blues Stew (B)	5:00	(Randy Weston)
10. Star Crossed Lovers (B)	5:09	(B. Strayhorn-D. Ellington)
11. Spot Five Blues (B)	10:42	(R. Weston-K. Dorham)
12. Lisa Lovely (B)	4:40	(Randy Weston)
13. Where	5:53	(Randy Weston)

DISC TWO

1. Earth Birth (C)	5:10	(Randy Weston)
2. Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen (C)	3:14	(traditional)
3. Saucer Eyes (C)	4:19	(Randy Weston)
4. I Got Rhythm (C)	5:22	(George Gershwin-Ira Gershwin)
5. Gingerbread (C)	2:54	(Randy Weston)
6. Cocktails For Two (C)	3:35	(Sam Coslow-Arthur Johnson)
7. Honeysuckle Rose (C)	6:28	(Fats Waller-Andy Razaf)
8. Fe-Double-U Blues (C)	5:36	(Randy Weston)
9. Portrait Of Patsy J (D)	4:07	(Randy Weston)
10. Uncle Nemo (D)	4:58	(Randy Weston)
11. Cry Me Not (D)	5:17	(Randy Weston)
12. Honk Honk (D)	2:01	(Randy Weston)
13. Saucer Eyes (D)	4:22	(Randy Weston)
14. 204 (D)	6:31	(Randy Weston)
15. C.B. Blues (D)	4:54	(Randy Weston)

DISC THREE

1. Introduction: Uhuru Kwanza (Part One) (E)	2:36	(Langston Hughes)
2. First Movement: Uhuru Kwanza (Part Two) (E)	5:45	(Randy Weston)
3. Second Movement: African Lady (E)	8:24	(R. Weston-L. Hughes)
4. Third Movement: Bantu (E)	8:03	(Randy Weston)
5. Fourth Movement: Kucheza Blues (E)	8:01	(Randy Weston)
6. Caban Bamboo Highlife (F)	2:44	(Randy Weston)
7. Niger Mambo (F)	5:01	(Bobby Benson)
8. Zulu (F)	4:40	(Randy Weston)

9. In Memory Of (F)	7:44	(Randy Weston)
10. Congolese Children (F)	2:32	(Randy Weston)
11. Blues To Africa (F)	6:21	(Randy Weston)
12. Mystery Of Love (F)	7:37	(Guy Warren)

(A) Idrees Sulieman (“Babe’s Blues”), Ray Copeland (all others), trumpet; Melba Liston, trombone; Johnny Griffin, tenor saxophone; Randy Weston, piano; George Joyner (Jamil Nasser), bass; Charlie Persip, drums. Arranged by Melba Liston.

On “Let’s Climb A Hill”, no horns appear and Persip doubles on tympani.

Recorded in New York City in October 1958.

Produced by Jack Lewis. Recording engineer Ray Hall.

Originally issued as LITTLE NILES (United Artists UAL 4011/UAS 5011).

(B) Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax; Kenny Dorham, trumpet; Randy Weston, piano; Wilbur Little, bass; Roy Haynes, drums. Arranged by Melba Liston. On “Lisa Lovely” Clifford Jarvis is added as an additional drummer. On “Where” vocalist Brock Peters is added.

Recorded live at the Five Spot, NYC on October 26, 1959.

Originally issued as LIVE AT THE FIVE SPOT (United Artists UAL 4066/UAS 5066).

(C) Randy Weston, piano; Peck Morrison, bass; Connie Kay, drums. “Nobody Knows..” and “Cocktails For Two” are piano solos.

Recorded at Beltone Studios in New York City in Spring 1957.

Produced by Lee Kraft.

Originally issued as PIANO-A-LA-MODE (Jubilee JGM 1060).

(D) Cecil Payne, baritone saxophone; Randy Weston, piano; Ron Carter, bass; Roy Haynes, drums.

Recorded in New York City on June 4, 1960.

Produced By Teddy Reig.

“Saucer Eyes” was first issued on The Roulette Jazz CD Sampler (Roulette B2-97772). All other selections are previously unissued.

(E) Clark Terry, trumpet, flugelhorn; Benny Bailey, Richard Williams, Freddie Hubbard, trumpets; Slide Hampton, Jimmy Cleveland, Quentin Jackson, trombones; Julius Watkins, French horn; Gigi Gryce, alto saxophone, flute; Sahib Shihab, alto & baritone saxophone; Jerome Richardson, saxophones, piccolo, Budd Johnson, tenor saxophone, clarinet; Yusef Lateef, tenor saxophone, flute, oboe; Cecil Payne, baritone saxophone; Les Spann, flute, guitar; Kenny Burrell, guitar; Randy Weston; piano; George Duvivier, Ron Carter, basses; Max Roach, Charlie Persip, G.T. Hogan, drums; Babatunde Olatunji, African percussion; Candido Camero, congas; Armando Peraza, bongos, congas; Arranged by Melba Liston

On “African Lady” vocalists Martha Flowers and Brock Peters are added.

On “Introduction: Uhuru Kwanza” narrator Tuntemeke Sanga is added.

Recorded at Bell Sound, New York City in November 17 & 18, 1960.

Produced by Teddy Reig

Originally issued as UHURU AFRIKA (Roulette SR 65001)

(F) Ray Copeland, trumpet, fluegelhorn; Jimmy Cleveland, Quentin Jackson; trombone; Julius Watkins, French horn; Aaron Bell, tuba; Booker Ervin; tenor saxophone; Budd Johnson, soprano & tenor saxophones; Randy Weston, piano; Peck Morrison, bass; Charlie Persip, drums; Frankie Dunlop, drums, percussion; Archie Lee, congas, percussion; George Young, percussion. Arranged by Melba Liston.

Recorded at Webster Hall in New York City in April, 1963.

Produced by Jack Lewis.

Originally issued as HIGHLIFE (Colpix SCP 456).

Produced for release by Michael Cuscuna.

Remixed from the original three-track masters (D & E) transferred in 24-bit and mastered by Malcolm Addey at the Malcolm Addey Studio, New York City. Session C is mono. All others are stereo.

Note: The brightness and distortion on the live session (B) is in the original stereo tape and has been improved as much as possible.

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