



RICHARD BONA - HERITAGE

Richard Bona's seemingly effortless voice, fierce skills on the bass, unique songwriting/arranging expertise and ability to learn just about any instrument simply from watching, position him as a rare African artist to have established an international reputation that transcends cultural boundaries. His new album is a compilation of art inspired by the shared heritage, rich folkloric and traditional music of West Africa and Cuba. Sit back and experience art with a purpose; Richard Bona and the Mandekan Cubano have carefully crafted a fusion of sounds, which merge cultures together through their ability to speak the universal language of music.

More than just a statement put to a tune, music is an outpouring of one's soul in a deeply personal manner and that is exactly what "Heritage" serves to do. It is a window into the years of oral stories that have been passed down and placed in the musical prowess of Bona and the Mandekan Cubano. While this is Bona's first official Afro-Cuban record, it is not his first endeavor in the African music scene—rather, it is the culmination of his decades of experience in various genres, which produces an authentic expression of culture through sound. Preserving the traditions of the western African slave "Cabildos," Bona and the Mandekan Cubano bring the music, dance, rituals, and oral history of the island to the comfort of your home. Seeking inspiration from his origins, the themes of Bona's art address international issues, which mirror his desire of utilizing music to take a stance on issues affecting the oppressed or the forgotten cultures of the people who so courageously paved the way for the life we presently live. The polyrhythmic beat felt in many of the tracks paradoxically serves as the bridge between African and Cuban music.

In present day society, we often get trapped into rigid lifestyles that reflect only one type of musical influence or culture. However, our world is vast, diverse, and is supported by the beautiful interweaving of multiple backgrounds. Without such diversity, our world would cease to be, quite frankly, a "world." Its very definition reveals that it is "the earth, together with *all* of its countries, people, and natural features." As a result, this album serves to educate listeners of the beauty that is created from remaining true to ones roots, yet also stepping outside of oneself to learn from others. Separately we succeed, but together, we thrive.