

'TOMORROW' – A THOUGHTFUL AND VERY BEAUTIFUL CD

By Birgitte Jallof



(Photo: Louise Hagerup)

With Heerups lithograph in the background, there is no doubt that Gimo - Abdul Remane Mendes - is in Denmark, a country which he chose 20 years ago as his second homeland. Here Gimo is teaching at the music school in Aarhus, running intercultural music projects and supporting among other things the development of a hospital in the culturally rich and strong - but also economically very poor - island 'Ilha de Mocambique', from where he came.

Like the disarming and universal openness and warmth that radiates from Gimo so is also Gimo's music full of openness and warmth, disarming and universal, soft and beautiful, with very fine arrangements and backing vocals. With its clear roots in the music of Gimo's childhood island Mozambique: 'Ilha de Mocambique', mixed with music from other parts of Mozambique along with Latin rhythms, 'migrated' from the former colonial power Portugal and the related language of Brazil, you may find surprising Scandinavian references mixed into the music, reflecting Gimo's 20 years stay in Denmark.

The language is my mother's voice - for Gimo the language is Makua

Gimo who was born in 1955, founded in 1983, the highly acclaimed Makua-singing group EYUPHURO which among other things worked with Peter Gabriel (more on the website). But much earlier - already in his teens - Gimo composed music during the last year of the war of liberation - early 70s - in Gimo's native language Makua. It was the language people understood all around Gimo and in which Portugal, Mozambique's tyrannical colonial power - of course - had forbidden them to sing. Gimo still sings mostly in Makua, but some of the songs are also in Portuguese, Mozambique's official language. Therefore Included with the CD is a beautiful booklet with the content of some of the song, and on the website you can also read about all the CD's 19 numbers. (The song themes in box below)

Stort-telling in the glow of the fire

Gimo is a storyteller. When I read about the songs and hear Gimo sing, I imagine that he is sitting on the floor with his guitar - or maybe it is Mozambique's warm, red earth he sits on and with the fire crackling in the darkness - telling his children - and us - about everything from where he comes from in Mozambique. He talks about his dream of a better and stronger Mozambique and Africa. He tells of the great African leaders who have led the way as Mandela today - and of independence leaders like Nkrumah, Cabral, Nyerere, Lumumba and Mozambique's own Eduardo Mondlane. But we also hear about the challenges in today's Mozambique and Africa where many leaders are self-serving and forgetting about the needs of the people. And Gimo tells his children - and us - how education is important, coupled with good, healthy

attitudes just as Gimo's grandmother at the time told him when he was a child sitting with her at the bonfire in the evening: respect for each other, simple humanity and integrity, helpfulness and solidarity, faith and love.

AN AFRICAN MAN'S DREAM *(to Nelson Mandela and to humanity)*

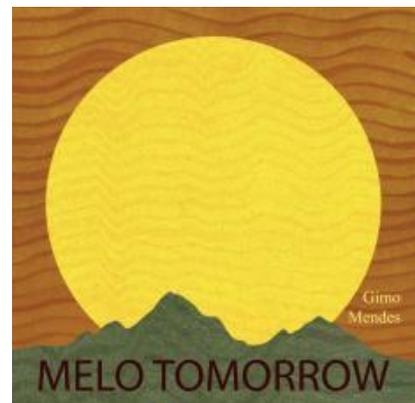
From the mirror that the palms of my hands are I see the old map of the humanity crossing deserts, oasis, seas, snow, Vulcans and mountains Amid my fingers I still feel the thorns of time whistling the differences that shaped paths, poses, feelings and breakups And while the warm river of my blood softens the voice of my hearth I stretch my arms looking for a world-city with the golden colours of a rainbow. Emidio de Oliveira February 2013

CD's dedication. From the booklet that comes with the CD.

Dedicated to Mandela

When I talked with Gimo on the phone from AARHUS it was with joy that he could tell me that his CD had just been given to Graca Machel, so she could give it to her husband, Nelson Mandela. It was obviously important for Gimo - and not so easy, as everything is.

The CD 'Tomorrow' is dedicated to Mandela (see text above). And Mandela symbolizes for Gimo all the good that Africa offers and Gimo wishes with the CD that Africa and Mozambique 'Tomorrow' be a reflection of that.



Gimo writes in his introduction to the booklet that comes with the CD:

"Africa is so big and so rich and yet what we mostly hear from there are about conflicts, natural disasters, decease, corruptions and poverty. As an artist I prefer to present Africa as a continent full of optimism....more than 60% of all Africans are under 25 years of age, and this section of the population should mature. We must therefore invest in education for Africa needs educated people and employment. I see this as a major responsibility which we all must strive towards: artists, governments and citizens-but not just Africans!"

A warm recommendation

There are not many outside of Denmark who will immediately understand the lyrics when they listen to the CD and Gimos songs in Makua, and may be not so many more that will get the lyrics in Portuguese, but it's absolutely no reason not to listen to them. With the booklet in hand, and may be after reading this review, the music is so telling and inspiring that when we let Gimo's beautiful, soft voice and rousing music snuggle around us, well, then Gimo sings and plays right into the place within us where we believe in everything that is good in the world.

'Tomorrow' is a CD which, like its great predecessor A LUZ (light) can be listened to intensely, but may also easily provide a wonderful mood in the house, the guest tender in the soul. Although Gimo is from Mozambique with a large 'M', he also shows a broader mind-set in his political and human texts, indeed as an African - with a large 'A', and on the CD you hear musicians from Mozambique, Denmark, Brazil, Cameroon and Rwanda.

About the themes and messages of the CD

*The Double-CD's 19 numbers begin with a strong history of the time of the slavery trade, which Gimo's grandfather told him about ('The history of a people'). And a number of songs tell about the many challenges still with us such as **how some of the traditional values disappear with the youth** in exchange for a 'crazy world' where ambitions are preventing true human contacts and where alcohol and binge drinking can be the consequence of rootlessness when you turn the back on family and tradition. **A story about the man** who returns from the city to the village with fine clothes and bags with gifts for the girls who are happy for him to begin with - but who **ends up being isolated** ('The World' / 2, hey you / 5, 'The man with the bags' / 11). And the CD also has an answer when it proposes that **young people are encouraged to come forward as leaders of the people** to ensure that the country's natural wealth and other values will benefit all the people - ('Sudjay' / 7).*

*The disc also contains in its beautiful sharing of Mozambican traditions a number of love songs that tell about relationships, especially between young men and women, and the challenges they may contain (Simae nine Djanina / 3, At Work / 6 First Sight / 8, The woman I love / 9). And a song is about how **a man should not insist on his own needs and desires immediately after his wife have given birth**, but rather help get the new baby a good start in life ('Mother of a baby' / 13).*

*The remainder of the CD numbers call for moral rearmament, **'our leaders are in suits and ties and do not listen to the people'** ('suits and ties' / 12), and in 'Take knives and matches away from the kids' Gimo compares Africa and the incessant conflicts with young people's too careless handling of knives, guns, fire, and says that **'one fire is enough to destroy an entire life's work'**. ('Take knives and matches away from the kids' / 16). As a countermeasure Gimo suggests that **"I will pass on our history and cultural values to young people, like my grandmother taught me about life when she told stories by the fire."** (My mother/15.)*

*Finally Africa's pride is hailed, as expressed at independence and naming of the freedom heroes, and **"Mandela is now the victory cry from the African continent"** (Mandela/14) and the CD's second to last song is about the won freedom that we should not take for granted, but each single day cherish. An English speaking female voice says: 'Children, young people! Men and women in Africa! **Let us fight for peace and not cultivate hatred.** Let's join hands and work for a better future for all of us in Africa' ("Freedom" / 18)*

More on the CD and on Gimo here:

The double album released by Gateway Music (www.gateway.dmf.dk) can be purchased for 118 DKK at www.gatewaymusicshop.dk and in its entirety or as separate digital audio files among other on [itunes.apple.com / us / album / Melo-Tomorrow and www.amazon.com / Melo -Tomorrow- Gimo-Mendes](http://itunes.apple.com/us/album/Melo-Tomorrow-and-Gimo-Mendes).

Read more about Gimo and his music here: [http://www.gimomendes.com / uk / bio.html](http://www.gimomendes.com/uk/bio.html)

Listen to (Portuguese) [www .voaportugues.com/content/gimo-mendes-ea-liberdade-de-criar/1735669.html](http://www.voaportugues.com/content/gimo-mendes-ea-liberdade-de-criar/1735669.html)

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