

2008

ZIMBABWE IN PHOTOS



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Oliver Mtukudzi – the Good and the Great

EDITION 11



Chris Kabwato
Project Coordinator

A Different Kind of Leader

Two weeks ago the great Oliver Mtukudzi (Tuku to his fans) performed at the National Arts Festival (www.nationalartsfestival.co.za), Grahamstown, Eastern Cape Province, South Africa. Grahamstown's claim to fame is Rhodes University and the fact that this little pseudo-Victorian village was the site of titanic wars between the Xhosa and the English settlers. But Tuku had come to town to do something else other than fighting.

Tuku and his son, Sam, wowed the capacity crowds with a mix of old and new songs. Sam opened the concert with two solo numbers from his debut album, *Rume Rimwe*, and had the crowd chanting "Like father like son". The multi-talented Sam played both the saxophone and the guitar and also showed that he can do some fancy moves of his own. But the show was really about his father whom he introduced, tongue-in-cheek, as "my brother, my friend and, because she is not here, my mum". When the Man came on stage you could feel the electricity in the air and, the showman that he is, he did not disappoint. For a market that is difficult for African musicians to penetrate, Tuku has conquered South Africa pretty much the way he has done the whole world.

But it was the Tuku I got to meet outside of the concert that impressed me the most. This was my second meeting with Tuku - the first meeting being in Nairobi at the World Social Forum in 2007. At that event i took lots of photos and some are published here.

When Tuku came to Grahamstown we invited him home with his group, and we spent a lovely afternoon chatting and, of course, had the obligatory *sadza* and meat. Tuku generously allowed me to record his show on video and we also spent time with him and the group backstage.

The qualities that come from Tuku are unmistakable – he is a good listener, he is a warm person, he laughs a lot and he is humility personified. I think it is these qualities which inform his music and his stage persona – deep concern for society and the belief that music can change the world.

This issue is a tribute to this great person, a great patriot.

(Check Tuku's website – www.tukumusic.com)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Chris Kabwato'.

Chris Kabwato
Project Coordinator



Just before getting on stage...

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ZIP

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Oliver and Sam Mtukudzi.



Father and Son face off playfully.



Tuku on stage at the Standard Bank Jazz Festival in Grahamstown.



Tuku performs at the World Social Forum, Nairobi, January 2007.



A Tuku performance cannot be fully described in words. You have to feel it.



Singing, strumming, shuffling - Tuku gives you all.

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Sam in a sound check session.



Tuku with South African poet and writer, Lebo Mashile.



Ben Akoh, a Tuku fan, begged for a photo with Tuku and we obliged.



The maestro laughs with an unidentified ubiquitous fan.



Over the years Sam has begun to develop his own identity as a musician.



Tuku with delegates to the World Social Forum. Open Society Institute of Southern Africa (OSISA) supported the presence of Tuku.



Sam Mataure, centre, manages Tuku Music and also plays the drums. He can tell a good story.



Tuku and friends.



The maestro comes calling.



Oliver Mtukudzi Resume (extracted from www.tukumusic.com)

Tuku's career has spanned thirty four years and he has composed 50 original albums (nearly all of them best-sellers). But it is his dedication to the live music scene in Zimbabwe – continually playing to enthusiastic audiences in even the remotest parts of the country - that has earned him the place in people's hearts that he holds today.

'Tuku', nicknamed by his fans, was initiated into the world of professional music in 1977 when he joined the now legendary Wagon Wheels which also featured Thomas Mapfumo. Success came to them early - the first single they recorded together, *Dzandimomotera*, rapidly went gold. This was followed by Tuku's first album, recorded on four-track, which was also a smash hit. Some of the musicians from the Wagon Wheels line-up worked with Tuku to create the Black Spirits, the name of the band that has performed with him throughout most of his career save for a two year period towards the end of the eighties, when he performed with the Zig Zag Band.

With Zimbabwean Independence in 1980, Tuku and the Black Spirits produced *Africa*, one of the most important albums of its time, and with the two hits it spawned, *Zimbabwe* and *Mazongonyedze*, the fledgling country founded one of its first great voices. From Independence to 1997, Mtukudzi released two albums every year, establishing himself as a producer, an arranger, a prolific song-writer and, with his famous "big voice", a formidable lead singer.

Tuku tours the world extensively and has played across Africa, Europe, Australia, New Zealand and the USA.



MEET THE TEAM



Chris Kabwato – Publisher

Chris is the Publisher and Editor-in-Chief of Zimbabwe in Photos.

Chris also manages the Highway Africa programme at Rhodes University, South Africa. Highway Africa is a research, training and conference project focused on ICT, journalism and the media. His background is in arts and media.



Levi Kabwato – Journalist

Levi is a photographer and maintains the Zimbabwe in Photos blog.

Levi is currently studying for a Post-Graduate Diploma in Media Management at the Sol Plaatje Institute for Leadership at Rhodes University. Before coming to Rhodes, he was the staff writer for Malawi's Blantyre Newspapers Limited, publishers of The Daily Times, Malawi News and The Sunday Times.



Shalen Gajadhar - Design & Layout

Shalen drives the design and layout of Zimbabwe in Photos.

Shalen is a teacher in Communication Design at Rhodes University. He completed his Bachelor of Journalism at Rhodes in 2003. He is responsible for the design and layout of most of Highway Africa's publications. Shalen also teaches design courses specifically structured for mid-career designers and layout artists. If he is not reading, he also freelances, with projects ranging from book layout to business cards.

