

Dudu Pukwana - In the Townships (1973)

Written by bluesever

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A1 *Baloyi* 5:18 A2 *Ezilalini* 6:43 A3 *Zukude* 5:43 [play](#) B1 *Sonia* 3:28 [play](#) B2 *Angel Nemali* 6:04 B3 *Nobomyu* 4:00 B4 *Sekela Khuluma* 4:14

Musicians: Harry Miller- Bass Louis Moholo- Drums Dudu Pukwana- Keyboards, Percussion, Alto Sax, Vocals Bizo Mngqikana- Tenor Sax, Percussion, Vocals Mongezi Feza- Trumpet, Percussion, Vocals

This glorious, ferocious recording is one of the pinnacles of the music created by the South African expatriates who settled in England in the '60s and melded with the free jazz community therein. Leader and alto saxophonist Dudu Pukwana and trumpeter Mongezi Feza were twin fountainheads of this movement and are in rare form here, both instrumentally and as composers. The pieces here are largely riff-based, but what incredibly infectious and funky riffs these are. South African music emphasized the importance of various thematic materials by how often it was repeated in a song, and these guys iterate the melodies with a vengeance. Happily, these melodies are so utterly catchy that one can wallow in them for hours, listening with giddy enjoyment as these musicians overlay and embroider them with uproarious playing, not to mention the frequent vocal exhortations and cries.

Pukwana's alto has an altogether human quality, by turns heart-rending and exultant, while Feza (one of the greatest trumpeters that virtually no one has heard) has a silvery, irrepressibly witty aspect to his work that sneaks up and kills when least expected. Anchored by the incendiary rhythm team of Harry Miller and Louis Moholo, this is a band that just doesn't stop, going from one pounding, dancing song to the next, never pausing for breath, as though playing nonstop during a 72-hour township festival. Along with Moholo's *Spirits Rejoice!* on Ogun, that all-too-brief moment where musicians feeling the racist restrictions of South Africa found a welcome home and fertile creative soil in England is nowhere better represented. Highly recommended. ---Brian Olewnick, AMG.

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Dudu Pukwana's joyous music is a vibrant, life enriched, soul restoring elixir. If you think I'm expounding record company hype then you are a fool to yourself. Just listen! The music speaks! The music shouts! The music is a balm that cures disease but is subversive in its place of origin. The upholders of apartheid in South Africa (not forgetting their supporters abroad) realise that the music of Dudu and Abdullah Ibrahim (Dollar Brand), Miriam Makeba, Jonas Gwangwa, Hugh Masekela, and all the others, can bring joy in misery. It is a medicine to heal a sick society's ill (evil).

Bra Dudu is a living example of the futility of the apartheid system which when not actually killing people attempts to control the majority by destroying their spirit. But just one of Dudu's upward bound notes can manifest joyful feeling to restore the dispossessed and exorcise the most carefully plotted of racist witchcraft spells.

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