

Owiny Sigoma Band - Owiny Sigoma Band (2011)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Gone Thum Mana Gi Nyadhi* 2. *Odera Lwar* 3. *Wires* 4. *Margaret Okudo (Dub)* 5. *Hera* 6. *Doyoi Nyajo Nam* 7. *Owegi Owando (Solo)* 8. *Nabed Nade Ei Piny Ka (Rework)* 9. *Here On The Line* 10. *Rapar Nyanza* Jesse Hackett (keys) Louis Hackett (bass) Sam Lewis (guitar) Chris Morphitis (bouzouki, guitar) Tom Skinner (drums) Joseph Nyamungu Charles Okoko

This Nairobi-London sound clash mixes traditional Kenyan Luo styles with contemporary western influences, and really works. The project started when Jesse Hackett and other members of the electronic hip-hop and soul collective Elmore Judd went out to Kenya at the invitation of a voluntary organisation promoting local musicians. Here they met up with Joseph Nyamungu, an exponent of the traditional nyatiti 8-stringed lyre, and began performing with him and local percussionists, naming their band after Nyamungu's music school (and his late grandfather). Back in London, Judd played one of the tracks they recorded to DJ Gilles Peterson, who was so impressed with "this weird collage with a great groove" that he commissioned a full album for his Brownswood record label. The result includes nyatiti solos alongside percussion and bass work-outs, but the best sections are those when both groups come together to create a quirky, slinky dance style. This is just the sort of project Africa Express set out to promote, so it's no surprise to find Damon Albarn adding Farfisa organ or omnichord (like an electronic autoharp) on a couple of the tracks. ---theguardian.com

What I heard when I first played Owiny Sigoma Band on the radio was a phat, wayward dance record with African leanings and it just felt completely right... That's why it was good to continue along the path that they'd followed, because they've got a different approach to how the drums should sound and the bass should sound – it's like they've been listening to a bunch of Arthur

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Russell and Liquid Liquid records. Those characteristics alongside the nyatiti, the vocals and the cow's horn, lend it these unique properties that you don't hear in any other African music and make it exciting. But, fundamentally, the reason that it works for me (and Brownswood) is that it's drum and bass heavy... rhythmically heavy. ---Gilles Peterson, soundcloud.com

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