

## Soweto String Quartet – Zebra Crossing (1994)

Written by bluesever

Monday, 26 October 2009 00:16 - Last Updated Tuesday, 13 May 2014 10:43

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01. *Mbayi Mbayi* 02. *Zebra Crossing* 03. *Zulu Lullaby* 04. *Kwela* 05. *The Paul Simon's Graceland Collection* 06. *Bossa Baroque* 07. *Shut Up And Listen* 08. *St. Agnes And The Burning Train* 09. *Kadeni Kwazulu* 10. *Ntyilo Ntyilo* 11. *Where Were You Taking Me To* 12. *Nkosi Sikelel' iAfrica* 13. *Mbayi Mbayi (Reprise)* Soweto String Quartet: Sandile Khemese, Thami Khemese (violin) Makhosini Mnguni (viola) Reuben Khemese (cello). + Kelly Petlane (flute) Johan Laas (keyboards, synthesizer, timpani) Ian Herman, Richard Mitchell (drums) Veli Shabangu (percussion)

Soweto String Quartet are four musicians from the apartheid-created township of Soweto, South Africa, which was established when blacks were forced to move out of racially integrated Sophiatown in the early 1950's. Though the members are classically trained musicians and the instruments (first and second violins, viola and cello) make up a traditional string quartet, the music and arrangements found here are not what you would expect. The Soweto String Quartet perform traditional African hymns, folk songs and lullabies, all with their own original arrangements. It is distinctly African music played on traditionally European instruments, and that approach creates new and wonderful music. The members also perform arrangements of songs by some of their favorite contemporary musicians. Selections from Paul Simon's *Graceland* are performed in a seamless medley, and Sting's "St. Agnes and the Burning Train" gets a great melodic treatment. The quartet's arrangement of Dave Grusin's "Bossa Baroque" is an innovative interpretation of a classic piece. The Soweto String Quartet gets help on several tracks from a quartet of drums, bass, percussion and guitars, but they stay wisely in the background and allow the Quartet to shine. This is definitely not for the narrow-minded lover of traditional classical music. But it is music well worth spending some time with, though it may seem a bit strange at first listen. The Soweto String Quartet have created a tribute to their rich musical background and homeland, while expressing their own talents and love for modern music. ---Susan Cruickshank, Rovi

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