

Hugh Masekela - Home Is Where Music Is (1972)

Written by bluesever

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01 - *Part Of A Whole.mp3* - 9'40" 02 - *Minawa.mp3* - 9'39" 03 - *The Big Apple.mp3* - 7'55"
04 - *Unhome.mp3* - 5'23" 05 - *Maseru.mp3* - 7'11" 06 - *Inner Crisis.mp3* - 6'16" 07 - *Blues For Huey.mp3* - 6'26" 08 - *Nomali.mp3* - 7'18" 09 - *Maesha.mp3* - 10'29" 10 - *Ingoo Pow-Pow (Children's Song).mp3* - 6'40"
Hugh Masekela - Flugelhorn Eddie Gomez - Bass (Acoustic)
Makaya Ntshoko - Drums Dudu Pukwana - Sax (Alto) Larry Willis - Piano

Released as a double LP on Chisa/Blue Thumb in 1972, Hugh Masekela's *Home Is Where the Music Is* marked an accessible but sharp detour from his more pop-oriented jazz records of the '60s. Masekela was chasing a different groove altogether. He was looking to create a very different kind of fusion, one that involved the rhythms and melodies of his native South Africa, and included the more spiritual, soul-driven explorations occurring in American music at the time on labels like Strata East, Tribe, and Black Jazz as well as those laid down by Gato Barbieri on Bob Thiele's Flying Dutchman imprint. The South African and American quintet he assembled for the date is smoking. It includes the mighty saxophonist Dudu Pakwana and drummer Makaya Ntshoko, both South African exiles; they were paired with American pianist Larry Willis and bassist Eddie Gomez, creating a wonderfully balanced, groove-oriented ensemble. Produced by Stewart Levine and composer Caiphus Semenya, this is a near mythic date that was reviewed favorably but infrequently back in the day.

The ten tunes here range between five and 11 minutes; half were written by Semenya, Masekela and Willis wrote one apiece, and the balance were covers -- including a gorgeous arrangement of Miriam Makeba's "Uhomé." "Part of the Whole" opens the set with Willis on Fender Rhodes piano, with a lazy rolling blues groove that is equal parts soul-jazz and South African folk melody. The horns enter behind him playing a vamp before they ramp it up in the chorus twice before Pakwana takes his solo against the rhythm section. Willis' sense of time is indomitable and the funky breaks laid down by Ntshoko are beautifully balanced by Gomez's woody tone. Pakwana wails emotionally, swerving between post-bop and more free explorations. Masekela answers his solo on his flugelhorn in tight, hard blues lines. His flight

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remains inside with the rhythm section offering this deep groove-laden backing. It's merely a taste of things to come however, as the following cut, Sekou Toure's "Minawa," makes clear. Willis opens it with his own solo backed by the rhythm section; his touch is deft, light, elegant, and deeply melodic. It feels like a different band until the horns enter. When they do, they open that intricate lyric line into waves of passion and restraint. Semanya's "The Big Apple," feels like a tune written by Ramsey Lewis with a horn section backing him. It's all bass note groove, hypnotic repetition, and soulful blues before the horns get to move around one another and solo above Willis' beautiful fills on the grand piano. This set marks the first appearance of Willis' tune "Inner Crisis," the title track of his debut solo LP which would appear a year later on Groove Merchant -- only this time with an acoustic piano intro before moving to the Rhodes. This track is a funky spiritual jazz classic and this version may be better than his -- largely due to this killer horn section. Other standouts include Kippie Moeketsi's loping "Blues for Huey," the ballad "Nomali," and Masekela's knotty, joyous "Maseru." In sum, Home Is Where the Music Is, is a stone spiritual soul-jazz classic, that melds the sound of numerous emerging jazz schools in its pursuit of musical excellence; it succeeds on all counts and is one of the greatest recordings in Hugh Masekela's long career. In a year full of amazing titles, this is still a standout. ---Thom Jurek, allmusic.com

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