



## **SASA MUSIC Promotions Ltd**

309, Aberdeen House • 22-24 Highbury Grove • LONDON N5 2EA • UK  
Tel: (0)20 7359 9232 • Fax: (0)20 7359 9233 •  
[rab@sasa.demon.co.uk](mailto:rab@sasa.demon.co.uk) [www.sasamusic.com](http://www.sasamusic.com)

---

## **Samba Mapangala + Orchestre Virunga**

### **Biography**

Samba Mapangala and his group Orchestre Virunga are one of the classic bands from Central and East Africa from the last 25 years. Known and loved throughout East Africa and beyond for his astounding voice, Samba created an innovative mix of the best Congolese rumba and soukous with an earthier Kenyan style.

Their song and CD of the same name 'Malako Disco' (originally released in 1984 and later renamed 'Virunga Volcano' in Europe) is almost always featured in lists of the top all-time African recordings. *Virunga Volcano* is among the 100 Essential (World Music) CDs in the Rough Guide book series.

\*

Born in Matadi, Zaire (DR Congo), Samba Mapangala played with various Kinshasa bands including Super Bella Bella in the early 1970s, before forming his first band, Les Kinois in Kampala, Uganda where he had moved. Samba then led his band of musicians east after the stint in Uganda, and as lead singer and songwriter, they relocated to Nairobi, Kenya in 1977 where they took the scene by storm.

Samba's voice and songwriting talents won Les Kinois the recognition which lifted them above the crowd of bands struggling for work in Kenya. Samba was not satisfied by producing generic Congolese rumba (AKA soukous) and he quickly adopted East African influences, incorporating the lilting benga rhythms of Kenya. In 1981 he formed Orchestre Virunga, a band made up of Congolese and Kenyan musicians which became one of the most popular bands in all East Africa

Singing in both Congolese Lingala and Kenyan Swahili languages, Samba and the Orchestre Virunga won a large and dedicated following in Nairobi. This exploded following the release of his classic track Malako in 1984, a song which reverberated across the dance floors of Africa and which remains legendary to this day.

In 1989 Samba made his first visit to Europe recording with Quatre Etoiles in Paris. In 1991 he returned with Orchestre Virunga for a European tour after which Samba stayed in London to record 'Feet on Fire' for the Stern's label. These recordings were extremely well received and a punishing tour schedule took them across the world. Finally in 1997, after a successful but exhausting North American tour, Samba decided to settle in Washington DC, USA and take a well earned break. After three years however, he could no longer resist the urge to record and flew to France where he gathered a group of Congolese musicians with whom he made the album 'Ujumbe'. Samba's lyrics offer an insightful social commentary as well as plenty of homespun advice, and this is offset by the dance-friendly music his band creates.

In May 2004 Samba went on a 2-week concert tour of Tanzania after a 7-year absence. He performed with an all-star line-up of musicians based in Kenya and Tanzania. he repeated this trip back to an equally heart-felt homecoming in Nairobi in 2006.

In 2005 a collection from the Orchestre Virunga archives was released as 'Virunga Roots Volume 1'. Pleased by the enthusiasm with which this was received, the band regrouped in 2006 to record 'Song and Dance' for Virunga Records. His hunger now restored and with a group of excellent musicians formed around him, Samba is ready to take to the road again, leaving no dance floor unfilled.

Tours of Europe and the USA are in the planning stage, with a releases of both brand new songs, as well as a double-CD career retrospective are in the pipeline

## Partial Discography

- \* It's Disco Time with Samba Mapangala (1982)
- \* Virunga Volcano 1981/1990 (Earthworks, CD)
- \* Safari 1988 (Kenyan cassette)
- \* Vunja Mifupa 1989 (CBS Kenya IVA 071, cassette)
- \* Paris-Nairobi 1990 (European cassette)
- \* Feet On Fire 1991 (Stern's Africa STCD 1036, CD)
- \* Karibu Kenya 1996 (Sun Music, CD)
- \* Vunja Mifupa 1997 (Lusam 01, CD)
- \* Ujumbe 2001 (Stern's / Earthworks STEW43CD)
- \* Vunja Mifupa Virunga Roots Volume 1 2004 (Samba Mapangala)
- \* Song and Dance 2006 (Virunga Records)