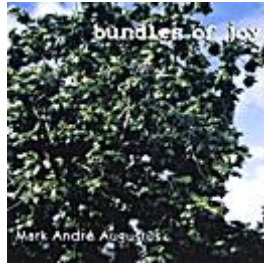


Mp3 Mark Andre Augustus - Bundles Of Joy



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Samba, soca, calypso suffused with rap, jazz, dub and a hint of new world sound 12 MP3 Songs LATIN: Brazilian Jazz, WORLD: Island Details: Be warned: this music does not crave popularity but it is exquisite, clean, rhythmically appealing and, at times, personal! When in 1999 Mark Andre Augustus came to Laventille on the hilly outskirts of the capital, Port-of-Spain - an area reputed for rising crime rates and a place even locals gradually grew less inclined to visit - this clean cut, seemingly upper-class guy was an odd ball as the Laventille Youth Facility Manager but well adjusted while situated next to Trinidad and Tobago's premier steelband, the WITCO Desperadoes Steel Orchestra. Rawle 'Little Bit' Flemming is the steelband's drummer and Rikky Andre Robely, aka 'Psycho', its one-time vice-president and pan virtuoso. Both were Augustus' students in July 2003 at the Youth Facility's studio. They light-heartedly but aptly dubbed it the House o' Jam for its rhythmic outpourings and ... an odouriferous (should that be odour-ferocious?) pair of sneakers always worn by one of the studio's young proteges who happens to work in the construction industry. He wore no socks to boot! Whew! We be jammin'! Young recording artists like Vanessa Grant, Kinnon Alexis, Michael De Peza, Dominic Herbert and several others were unknowingly helping Augustus, Robely and Flemming fine-tune their arranging skills by offering free services to young people to produce their songs for radio. Andre, as he is more commonly known, had in fact produced his first CD Seed of the Fruit in 2002 with contributions from drummers of the Laventille United School of the Performing Arts. For seven consecutive years, he toured El Callao and Barlovento in Venezuela with a number of young dancers and drummers from the area as part of an Arts Programme at the Youth Facility under the auspices of the Youth Division of the Ministry of Sport and Youth Affairs. It's perhaps more than fortuitous that Andre's involvement in music would prove to be such a synergistic fit with Laventille's own musical pedigree, being an area that is home to a significant portion of the country's

cultural icons. After all, this is where the steelband was invented and grew up! (Don't let any Johnnies-come-lately convince you otherwise!) Laventille has always had a strange blend of the rough-and-tumble comingling with those who pursue beautiful music as happened with violent clashes in its early steelband history. He consistently credits 'Bit', 'Psycho' and Laventillians in general for opening his eyes and ears to the subtlties of soca and calypso. He is thankful too for the example of Mother Teresa of Calcutta for her work with the poor - a code of unconditional and sacredly rooted love he adopts in his approach to the people there. The poor - that catergy that evokes so much social ambivalence but reveals some surprising interior discoveries! "Let Bundles of Joy be a testament to all those who contribute to the studio and to the friendship and musical vibe we all share in Laventille. To work with the poor and marginalised is really to have sunshine in your life. I see miracles everyday and how this CD came about is really one of them. God willing, it will be an instrument to help us uplift young people in Laventille." His father, Earl Augustus, later Avelar de Tavernier, was another major influence on Andre's musical interests. Marimba and We Must Dance go all the way back to 1975-78 when they began writing together. In 1989, he recorded a short ballad version of Carmel which his father wrote in the mid-eighties after a visit to California. But his father passed on in 2001. Then in 2006, while rummaging through some cassettes, he stumbled on an a capella recording: it was his father's voice with a full lyrical version which is reproduced here as a bossa. But We Must Dance is his favourite father-son collaboration - some filler lines extrapolated from 'Bit' and captured by David Bertrand's luscious multi-track flutes are supported by a catchy Lord Kitchener 'Sugar Bum Bum' bass line and crowned with Robely's double-second pans. Maybe the unique colours in this rendition, even for Trinis and Caribbean listeners, makes it the CD favourite. Throughout the album are some haunting echoes of Brazilian motifs, chants and feeling. Antonio Carlos Jobim is Andre's single-most admired composer. Everywhere the rastro - the track of beauty - can be sought and found, even amidst the vicissitudes of life. This collision of worlds can be heard in the track House o' Jam. There are contributions from each member of a core producing team. Native Lullaby, like Mornin', Chillin', and On de Road, is one of those songs that is born and grows up in the studio -a perfect 'milestone' for those welcoming the patter of little feet in a New World kind of way. "Either the word 'joy' is in the lyrics of a tune or the theme of the song suggests it." Guide Us he penned back in 1989 in Philadelphia as a prayer: who else could be the author of joy? About Horizons, the composer admits that he wrote its basic form after the emotional release on leaving a cult at his father's

intervention when he was only 16. Thirty-one years later and largely because of Ming's influence (Michael Low Chew Tung of the band Elan Parle and who helped produced his first CD), its beat is freer and takes you to various mental landscapes and vistas. If you need to get away or celebrate a breakthrough, this one's for you! Surprisingly, Andre confesses that the studio is not sound-proofed so here and there you can detect natural sounds which he kept to ensure the sound is...well... original and organic. A few hints: at the end of Marimba a truck passes by; at the end of At Sundown, some of that watery sound is actually rain falling on a very thin roof; and at the opening of Chillin', yep, that's a car passing by on the main road under Damion's rap - well he's talking about being on the block, isn't he? You should know too that Chillin' was a class project - Lawrence Taylor and Glen Patrick egging their teacher on. But his friend Yann Mellet in Philly kept telling him to quit his 'niceness' and get tough, hence the subject matter in that track. When CDBaby asked him how he would classify this music, it brought back memories of long debates with the core team as to what was actually being created in studio. Andre says he's quite happy with the new definition: samba-soca-calypso suffused with rap, jazz, dub and a hint of new world sound. Should you decide to invest in world music(for the first time or yet again), this ride is quite varied and empowering. Mark Andre Augustus was born on February 24, 1959 and in 2006 turned 47 years: the total time on his CD reads 47:59 and like that happy coincidence, Bundles of Joy also marks a real milestone in his development.

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