

# Mp3 Thomas Mapfumo - Sweet Chimurenga



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Sweet Chimurenga is the 14th album from Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited. Listen to this classic. 10 MP3 Songs WORLD: African, WORLD: World Beat Details: This digital download-only release is available on all CD Baby digital vendors, iTunes, Emusic, etc. Get this re-mastered Unlimited Edition at any of these fine purveyors of digital sound and idea. iTunes album link:

[phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=204323917](http://phobos.apple.com/WebObjects/MZStore.woa/wa/viewAlbum?playlistId=204323917) Thomas Mapfumo towers among the African bandleaders of the 20th century. Born on July 3, 1945 in Marondera, a rural town south of the Rhodesian capital, present day Harare, Mapfumo moved to the city at the age of 10, and within a few years had begun a career as an itinerant rock 'n' roll singer for cover bands. In the early 1970s, when the liberation struggle that would transform Rhodesia into Zimbabwe was heating up, Mapfumo began writing songs in his own language, Shona, and adapting the sacred music of the Shona mbira (hand-piano). The music was a revolution unto itself---the first genuinely local pop music the country had heard. Mapfumo's "chimurenga" (struggle) songs rallied citizens and guerilla fighters alike in a war against one of Africa's most pernicious colonial regimes. By the time independence came in 1979, Mapfumo had his own band, the Blacks Unlimited. He had become the new country's most popular singer and also its national conscience. For the past two decades, Thomas Mapfumo has maintained his stature, constantly recording new songs that examine the country's problems and challenges from a fiercely moral perspective, evolving his large band, the Blacks Unlimited, to refine its powerful blend of Shona roots and contemporary pop, and playing countless all-night concerts to buoy the faltering spirits of a young country in hard times. Mapfumo is recognized around the world as an African original. But no foreign praise can match the adoration he receives from his fellow Zimbabweans. This series provides listeners with landmark chimurenga recordings previously released only in Zimbabwe. SWEET CHIMURENGA Sweet

Chimurenga is the 14th album from Thomas Mapfumo and the Blacks Unlimited. Recorded in 1994, it finds the band in a period of transition. The pillars of the Blacks Unlimited's indispensable rhythm section, drummer Sebastian Mbata and bassist Charles Makokova, were both ailing and had less than a year to live. In addition, Chartwell Dutiro, who had six years earlier become the first mbira player in the regular Blacks Unlimited lineup, had recently left to pursue his own fortunes in London. Once again, the band was at a crossroads. But as ever, the music itself---that sweet chimurenga---had to go on. To that end, Thomas Mapfumo recruited a number of new musicians. The year before, he had called on one of his earliest collaborators, Joshua Dube, to replace lead guitarist Ephraim Karimaura, who had died near the end of 1993. Sweet Chimurenga also features guitarist Ashton "Sugar" Chiweshe, a longtime contributor to Blacks Unlimited recordings. As to the rhythm section, Mapfumo called on another old friend and colleague to spell the ailing Makokova on bass. Allan Mwale had been the bassist in The Springfields, a cover band in which Thomas sang rock 'n' roll songs during the 1960s. Years of playing rumba music had left Allan with a powerful touch, but he had to play catch-up on the intricacies of mbira bass. "Mbira is like jazz," Mwale recalled in a 1998 interview. "There are more chords than in rumba. But the difficult part was to learn all the songs. Charles was my teacher for mbira bass." And he taught well. Mwale's muscular bass playing would be a trademark of the band for the next five years, until his death in 1999. Mapfumo also brought in a backup drummer, Sam Mukanga, a veteran of Nyami Nyami Sounds and John Chibadura the Tembo Brothers. Soon, Mukanga would become the Blacks Unlimited's full-time drummer. Sweet Chimurenga also marks the debut of keyboardist Richard Matimba, another Tembo Brothers alumnus. With Dutiro's departure, young Bezil Makombe of Seke became the lead mbira player, a key role when it comes to arranging mbira songs for the band. Joining Bezil and his brother Ngoni Makombe, Chaka Mhembere filled out the three-man mbira section that would become more and more central to the Blacks Unlimited sound in forthcoming recordings. With all this change, you might expect some tentativeness in the music, but think again. From the spirited boogie of "Chikende" to the deep mbira of "Chemutengure" and "Mvura Ngainaye," all the elements of chimurenga magic are here. There is humor, whimsy, and tough-minded social critique. There are also a few surprises, like the mbaqanga-tinged "Vana Vechikoro," and "Tsotsi," a slam on urban hooligans. In retrospect, the most significant song here is "Mvura Ngainaye." Just as the Blacks Unlimited were suffering painful losses in 1993 and 94, all of Zimbabwe was suffering a long drought that would take many lives. Mapfumo's call to God for rains struck

a chord with Zimbabweans. For the rest of the decade, no Blacks Unlimited show would be complete without a long version of this song, as close to a spiritual communion as you'll ever experience in a crowded beer hall. THE SONGS Vatete ("Auntie") "Auntie. Why do you keep thieves in your house?" a nephew asks. His aunt has been charmed by young hoodlums and has taken them in, blind to their true nature. Her nephew tries to warn her of her error. Chikende (A traditional village dance) Vakomana ndaka rota ngoma. "Boys, I dreamed the drumming." This swinging endorsement of the spiritual power of music updates a theme and a musical direction with many precedents in the chimurenga song book.

Significantly here, Mapfumo uses mbiras as part of the rhythm section in a jit-like song. From this point on, that becomes normal practice in the Blacks Unlimited. Njodzi ("Tragedy") This song, played in the mbira style though not actually a traditional mbira song, lists various causes of death. "Vachibayiwa nebanga" means "stabbed with a knife." "Vachidiyiwa neshumba" means "mauled by a lion." Vachitorwa nemvura Swept away by the water Vachirunwa nenyoka Bitten by a snake. Vachitambura Struggling/in a predicament. Chemutengure Mapfumo explains this traditional children's song. "It's about this guy Chemutengure who drives a donkey cart. This man had worked for a white guy for a long time, so the white guy thinks, 'Well, this guy is just a good driver for his donkey cart. So I must give him his own donkey.' That donkey was something of a treasure to the driver because it was given to him by his boss. So now when he is driving his cart, his donkey will also be drawing the cart. Sometimes he says, 'Heh! Heh!' some words that you use to make the donkeys move. The driver is saying, these are my donkeys and this is my cart, forgetting now that he only owns one donkey. So children used to see him driving these donkeys, and they composed a song about him. They sing, 'Chemutengure at the wheel of the cart.' And he answers them back, 'Why did you call me the cart driver?' And the children say, 'We have seen the grease on your trousers.' So they go on like this with a lot of funny words about this guy. Just funny words." Wanditi mutyairi wandioneyi? Why have you called me a driver? Ndaona girizi rawakazora. I've seen the grease on you. Wanditi mukokeri wandioneyi? Why do you call me a herd man? Ndaona mabhurukwa azare dova. I've seen your trousers. They are full of dew. Mukadzi wemutyairi haashaye dovi anotora girizi okurungira. The wife of a driver has got no problem with peanut butter. She can always take the grease and stir it into the relish. Ndiyei mutyairi wanzai dovi wozoti wokamura rimwe wozora. He is the driver. Put a lot of peanut butter for him so that he will be able to use it on his skin. Tsotsi ("Hooligan") Tsotsi is South African word for a street thug, an increasingly prevalent menace in Harare as

the Zimbabwean economy declined during the 1990s. Here, Mapfumo borrows something else from South Africa, the feel of that country's old African jazz, which he's loved since his boyhood, to point an accusing finger at young men who choose a life of crime. Kuwanikwa Pano ("Found Here"). Another folk story. In this one, baboons raid a maize field. Mapfumo, whose totem is Mukanya, the monkey, explains. "The owners of those fields would come running after them and then the baboons would start singing this song. 'If I happen to be found here by the owner of the fields, I really have to run away.'" In the song, you hear Mukanya talking playfully, taking on the roles of the characters in the story. Zvatakabva Kuhondo ("As we finish the battle") "If only we had known the situation would be this bad." This is the first in a series of chimurenga songs that address people's disappointment with the social reality the leaders they fought to empower have given them. Mapfumo says, "When the war was over, people had been promised good things: a bright future, free education, medical aid. But there wasn't anything like that. We got into power but nothing ever happened. Today people are paying up to the neck for their health and the education of their children." Ndiwe Chete ("You are the only one") A love song played in the mbira style. Mvura Ngainaye ("May the Rains Fall Down") Mvura ngainaye, Mariwo Mvura ngainaye, Mambowe (Mariwo and Mambowe are different ways of addressing God.) Tino kumbirawo mvura, Mwari baba. Tiwane kuguta (We ask for rain, or Lord, so that we may survive.) Tiwane kupona ("kupona" suggests a crisis that only the rain can stop.) Ikasanaya tinopera iwe, Chaminuka (If it doesn't rain, we will perish. This line is addressed to Zimbabwe's most revered ancestors, Chaminuka, Kaguvi, Nehanda, and Nyakasikana. The song tells them to talk to the Lord so that rains will come.) Vana Vechikoro ("School Children") Mapfumo says, "I am telling children that they must go to school in order to get educated. Time is not on their side. The future is not very bright if you are not educated. You will end up suffering or working for other people for nothing. Your life will not be as good as you might have thought." Banning Eyre 2000

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