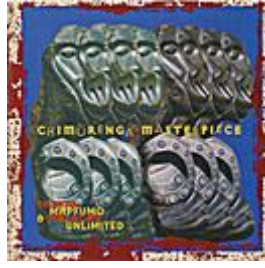


# Mp3 Thomas Mapfumo - Chimurenga Masterpiece



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In 1990, things were going well for the Blacks Unlimited. They had signed to Mango Records and had released two internationally acclaimed records, *Corruption* (1989) and *Chamunorwa* (1990). For the first time, Thomas Mapfumo had fulfilled his lifelong dream of touring in the United States---home of his boyhood idols, Otis Redding and Elvis Presley---not once but twice. *Chamunorwa* had proved a sensation back in Zimbabwe. It was hailed as Mapfumo's deepest exploration yet of mbira roots. The Blacks Unlimited now had three mbira players in the lineup and chimurenga fans everywhere were in agreement that the band had never sounded better. So, following a long tour, Mapfumo and his musicians returned to Zimbabwe and to the studio to record their tenth album, determined to outdo themselves. The result was *Chimurenga Masterpiece*. Looking back, Thomas Mapfumo remembers this album best for the song, 'Jojo,' a cautionary tale about the dangers of entering into politics, especially, but not only, in Zimbabwe. 'Politics is a dangerous game,' says Mapfumo. 'Some people just join politics for the excitement. They don't know that it is dangerous. You could get killed. You have to play your cards carefully to survive.' Ten years after Zimbabweans proudly elected the regime of Robert Mugabe, the country was faltering, and politicians, once heroes, were now suspect. A year earlier, Mapfumo generated shock waves with the song 'Corruption,' a playful jab at corrupt politicians that hit a nerve with Mugabe's scandal-tarred administration. 'Jojo' marks a more direct slam on the whole culture of politics under Mugabe's ZANU-PF

government. The song was a turning point in Mapfumo's shifting attitude toward Zimbabwe's leaders. 'We had all been keeping our fingers crossed,' recalls Mapfumo, 'watching, assessing the situation with our new government. As we did that, we began to find out that it wasn't an easy road. We still had a lot of problems to overcome. We definitely found out that things weren't going to be rosy. We still had a lot of fighting to do.' Chimurenga Masterpiece makes equally strong statements in the realm of personal politics. Two songs, 'Jairosi' and 'Ndozvauri,' take the point of view of women wronged by their husbands. While no one would call Mapfumo a feminist, these songs reflect his strong sense of social justice. Men who beat and abuse their wives get no more sympathy from Mapfumo than corrupt politicians squandering the dreams and resources of the Zimbabwean people. Banning Eyre, 2000

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