

## Mp3 Fertile Ground - Spiritual War (2000)



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An eclectic blend of Soul, R&B, Jazz and world rhythms. 17 MP3 Songs URBAN/R&B: Soul, JAZZ: World Fusion Details: FERTILE GROUND Biography Every so often, a band turns up out of nowhere that takes your breath away. Only once in a blue moon will they have a sound with the requisite strength, depth and energy to electrify crowds, musicians, DJs, journalists, promoters and label managers not just once or twice, but over and over again, cementing their place as musical and social innovators. When Fertile Ground first crossed the Atlantic two years ago, this potential was obvious. Maybe it was the raw, organic energy and unashamed spirituality of their sound - "outer-national" as they describe it, a cross-cultural fusion of all things spiritual and funk-ridden, from Afrobeat, be-bop, Latin and Caribbean rhythms, reggae and rapoetry to R&B, US garage, modern soul and hip hop. Maybe it was the change-perfect scope for improvisation found only when world-class musicians know each other inside out, the crispness of the horns, Navasha Daya's cosmic stage presence and soaring vocals, or the experience that comes from touring with the likes of Chaka Kahn, Jill Scott and D'Angelo. Maybe it was the powerful, political message of peace and love, which could not have come at a more appropriate time. Or maybe it was the way in which (cf. Pharaoh Sanders) the weight of the message was balanced out by a sound so uplifting it would be wacky were it not delivered with such absolute sincerity and astonishing virtuosity. Whatever it was, by 2002 they had followed their first two US-only releases with "Perception" and "Seasons Change" - two groundbreaking albums in as many years - and changed the lives of unsuspecting punters from London's Jazz Caf to the Blue Note, Tokyo. "Lyrics, we're always talking about positive things. I think that's the thing that sets us apart from everybody else - it's a really creative way of doing positive music," James Collins told Music Monthly. "The band has a diverse kind of appeal. It can be listening music, it can be on a jazz vibe, or you can attack it more from a dance vibe. Which is complex to look at it, the way

music is now, but it's pretty ordinary when you look at artists like Stevie Wonder or Donny Hathaway or even Bob Marley. These were artists you can put in any number of categories, but ultimately it's just good music." Initially a trio led by songwriter/keyboardist/trumpeter James Collins with vocalist Navasha Daya and drummer Marcus Asante, Fertile Ground sprung from the Baltimore soul-jazz-poetry underground in the spring of 1997. Their first two albums, 1998's "Field Songs" and "Spiritual War", were released on Collins's independent label, Blackout Studios - a project initially launched specifically to produce and distribute Fertile Ground's material, that has now expanded to include world-renowned soul-house team the Basement Boys, British songstress Julie Dexter and vocalist Maysa, among others. The aforementioned "Field Songs" was hailed as an instant classic on the Baltimore/DC jazz/soul scene, selling 10,000 copies locally. Just over a year later, the group had doubled in size with the addition of numerous reknowned musicians including Ekendra Das, one of the world's leading percussionists and an associate of Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Pharaoh Sanders, Roberta Flack and Harry Belafonte. With the corresponding release of the momentous "Spiritual War", Fertile Ground were soon performing regularly at jam-packed venues right across the States - Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, DC, New York, Philadelphia, New Jersey. It was only a matter of months before Jake Behnan signed them up to their Brighton-based label, Counterpoint Records. "Perception" was Fertile Ground's European debut, a selection of tracks from the first two independently-released albums, available on vinyl for the first time and recently licensed for domestic release in Japan. A UK tour in support of the album included two dates at the Jazz Caf and one at the legendary Jazzbop in Brighton, and a subsequent booking at the Drum Rhythm Festival in Amsterdam where they literally stole the show from some of the more established headline acts. The follow-up, "Season's Change", released in April 2002, took the world by storm and the single "Take Me Higher," (October 2001) including remixes by Waiwan and Kaidi Tatham, was hammered by cult DJs including Gilles Peterson and Patrick Forge and has been licensed to numerous compilations all over the world. One six-week, 30-date international tour in support of the album encompassing England, Belgium, Scotland, Spain and Japan, followed by further sell-out shows in Toronto, Cleveland, Chicago and at the Eden Project in Cornwall and London's Jazz Caf on their return to the UK in October 2003, and Fertile Ground have clocked up a massive 120,000 record sales worldwide to date - staggering and almost unparalleled amount for a purely independent driven enterprise. Now this figure set to go through the roof with the release earlier this year of "Remixed", which enlists the talents of producers and artists as

musically and geographically diverse as Ayro (Detroit), Ebb (New Zealand), Gucciman (Spain), Jazztronik (Tokyo), Oneness Of Two (Brighton), Seiji (London), Kaidi Tatham (London) and Waiwan (Manchester). Meanwhile, Best Kept Secret's own Russ Dewbury and Ben Mitchell's groundbreaking album, "Rapping with the Gods" (Mumo) - including a collaboration with Fertile Ground on the track "Spaces and Places" - released earlier this year. Quite simply, Fertile Ground is the most exciting live band on the international soul/jazz circuit. For more info on Fertile Ground visit: [blackoutstudios.com](http://blackoutstudios.com) [counterpointrecords](http://counterpointrecords.com)

PRESS QUOTES "This amazing band embody everything that's great about black music - they mix jazz, hip hop, soul and Caribbean. Everyone I've played it to has run out and bought it." - Mr Scruff "simply overflowing with peace, love and affection" +++++ (Musik) "joyous" (perception) +++++ (Jazzwise) "jazzheads, hunt this one down: you won't regret it" (Perception) +++++ (I-DJ) "will have lovers of soul music kicking themselves in years to come if they don't purchase this first time around" (Perception) +++++ (DJ Mag) "music steeped in the spiritual and political quest of the jazz greats" (Perception) +++++ (Seven) "undoubtedly one of the best album's you'll hear this year. Sensational" (Seasons change) +++++ (Blues Soul) "superb" (seasons change) +++++ (I-DJ) "Eclectic, erudite and very, very essential." (seasons change) +++++ (DJ Mag) "nutritious soulfood to immerse your body and mind" (seasons change) (pitchadjust.com) "and exhilarating experience" (seasons change) (Mojo) "Pure genius" - (take me higher remix package) +++++ (I-DJ) "if anything's gonna make you a 'beats' believer, then this is it" (remixes number 2) (Jockey Slut)

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