

THE MIGHTY MOCAMBOs



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About

„Funk’s influence on pop culture and music direction is through the roof and bands like The Mighty Mocambos clearly were ahead of the curve.“ T. McLendon, Afropunk

The Mighty Mocambos are spearheads of the contemporary funk movement. Their mix of blazing horns, soulful guitars, breakin’ drums and driving basslines with an extra dose of quirkiness is loved by peers, fans and critics alike. Creating a unique sound with tape machines & second hand gear, their music has a rough intuitive charme. Their adventurous spirit is unparalleled in a genre that often relies on throwback. Their distinctive DIY approach and raw funk beats have gained them a worldwide following among dancers and DJs.

After 5 albums under their own name and countless more as a backing band for other artists, the Mighty Mocambos keep pushing forward, adding an eclectic array of influences to their groove, from krautrock to cinematic soundscapes and outernational styles.

Their list of famous collaborators is impressive, among them Afrika Bambaataa, Lee Fields, Ice-T, Charlie Funk, Peter Thomas and Kenny Dope, only topped by their list of production duties from Gizelle Smith, Caroline Lacaze, Bacao Rhythm & Steel Band, Eric Boss, Carlton Jumel Smith to Magic Source or Mona & Hammerbrook Sound Machine.

After almost two decades in the game, the group has remained vital and relevant not lastly due to their connection to the international hiphop and breaking scene. By reimagining electronic beats with a live band, the Mighty Mocambos’ versions have become cult classics. Their original compositions for breaking competitions and live performances at b-boy and b-girl battles have earned them a reputation that encompasses many generations.

The band is currently preparing an album recorded at legendary MPS Studios in the Black Forest and will play a series of concerts in Europe for its launch.

History

What started out years ago as a take on “deep funk” and its associated vinyl culture has completely grown into its own oeuvre d'art. Formed as a jam band by school friends while still in their teens, it was the launch of their production and record label in 2006 that made the Mocambo collective appear on the international scene. Apart from self-releasing the group's own recordings, Mocambo Records became a household name by putting out highly collectable vinyl 45s contemporary funk outfits as well as unearthing lost library treasures. To differentiate themselves from the label, the group took on the name “Mighty Mocambos”, initially a fun pseudonym given to them by a friend for a private press single.

The Mighty Mocambos did not restrict themselves to their own label. Their interpretation of the Furious Five classic “The Message” - released under a pseudonym on an obscure phantasy label without proper distribution - got picked up and remixed by Grammy-nominated producer legend Kenny Dope (Masters at Work, Bucketheads). Their first single with UK funk singer Gizelle Smith, “Working Woman”, became an overnight smash and a prime-time club favourite of funk & soul DJs worldwide. Initially released on the Finnish private imprint Old Capital, it got a remix treatment by Kenny Dope and a re-release on Kay Dee Records as well.

After earning their credits through vinyl 45s, band and singer stepped up their game with the full-length “This Is Gizelle Smith & the Mighty Mocambos” in 2009. The album received rave reviews, got lots of airplay and sold a bunch of physical copies. Its success led to an extensive tour throughout Europe with club dates from Marseille to Oslo, performances at massive festivals such as the Printemps de Bourges in France and live radio appearances at the BBC and Radio Nova.

With the following album “The Future Is Here” (2011), the band itself took the spotlight with features by hiphop legends Afrika Bambaataa and Charlie Funk, French singer Caroline Lacaze and German rare groove queen Su Kramer, manifesting their unique raw funk sound and refining their unmistakable instrumental style that had gained international reputation. The album was toured extensively, including an impromptu performance with Afrika Bambaataa at Hamburg's Reeperbahn Festival (covered by ARTE TV), support gigs for Lee Fields and headline shows at renowned venues such as Amsterdam's Paradiso, Islington Assembly Hall in London, Paris' Bellevilloise, Tempo Club in Madrid or at home at Hamburg's Mojo Club.

Following the production of the critically acclaimed debut album “En Route” (2013) by French soul singer Caroline Lacaze - a stunning mix of French Beat, Soul & Psychedelic Rock - the band went on to record a full length under their moniker Bacao Rhythm & Steel Band. Their interpretation of 50 Cent's P.I.M.P. had long become a cult classic and was often mistaken for the original sample. The group's approach in stretching the boundaries of funk by adding Caribbean steel pans caught the interest of Brooklyn's finest label Truth & Soul Records / Big Crown Records - who signed the band and released several albums with an explosive mix of funk and hip hop cover versions and original compositions that showcase the band's singularity in today's funk circuit.

The Mighty Mocambos' album “Showdown” (2015) set another cornerstone in their prolific career as a globally active instrumental funk outfit. While maintaining their organic approach of recording real musicians live on tape, the group refined their trademark sound with a dramatic edge, a hard hitting production and ventures into less obvious musical territories, featuring a diverse list of special guests ranging from German film composer icon Peter Thomas, multi-instrumental genius Shawn Lee, Nashville soul sensation

DeRobert to hip-hop pioneers Afrika Bambaataa and Donald D. The album took the band once more on the road, including legendary performances at clubs like Paris' Bataclan, London's 100 Club and Erinevate Tubade Klubi in Tallinn/Estonia.

With their third album „2066“ (2019) the band continued to grace turntables and stages all over the place. A guestlist ranging from hip-hop legend Ice-T, soul survivor Lee Fields to upcoming Brooklyn MC JSwiss and their own kids, styles ranging from deep soul ballads, breaking soundtracks and outernational flavours, the album cemented their reputation as the spearheads of the contemporary funk movement.

The group has made themselves a name in the breaking world, often performing live to b-boy and b-girl battles and composing music specifically for competitions.

Just before the pandemic hit, the group started recording live performances on a portable 8-track tape machine. While most bands shifted their stage to the studio in 2020, producing an abundance of isolated lockdown-inspired material, the Mighty Mocambos took the mobile version of their recording studio on the road and documented their way through the pandemic as a live band on the full-length ‚Scénarios‘ - an album with songs specifically written and arranged for live recordings in unique settings during an unprecedented time.

After almost 20 years on the scene, the band keeps on pushing boundaries with unique collaborations and creative excursions - be it Ukrainian vocals or unusual instruments as the phin, gralla, steelpan or dulcimer - all while maintaining their unique groove.

For their latest album „A Higher Frequency“, the Mighty Mocambos recorded at MPS Studio in Villingen, Black Forest, revisiting German jazz recording history and creating a forward-thinking longplayer at the iconic place.

When not recording for one of their many outlets, the band is touring regularly and celebrating peace, unity love and having fun(k).