

Sharhabil Ahmed

The King Of Sudanese Jazz

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We're super happy to announce our 13th release by Sharhabil Ahmed, the actual King of Sudanese Jazz (he actually won that title in a competition in the early 1970s). Sonically it sounds very different from what Jazz is understood to sound like outside of Sudan. It's an incredible unique mix of rock'n'roll, funk, surf, traditional sudanese music and influences from Congolese sounds. Original copies of Sharhabil recordings are often hard to find, so we're happy they will now be widely available. "Argos Farfish" which was featured on our last comp amassed close to 400.000 plays already.

Tracklist

01. Argos Farfish
02. El Bambi
03. Malak Ya Saly
04. Kamar Dawa
05. Zulum Aldunya
06. Aziza
07. Ya Shagini

Sharhabil was born in 1935 and he is the founding father of the Sudanese Jazz scene. His aim was to modernize Sudanese music by bringing it together with western influences and instrumentation like he summarized it himself in a 2004 interview for „Al Ahram Weekly“: “[...]Haqiba music, you know, was traditional vocal music with little accompaniment beyond a tambourine. When our generation came in the 1960s, we came with a new style. It was a time of worldwide revolution in music. In Europe, the rhythms of swing and tango were being replaced by jazz, samba, rock- and-roll. We were influenced by this rejuvenation in Sudan, too. I started out by learning to play the oud and traditional Sudanese music, and got a diploma from the music institute of Khartoum University. But my ambition was to develop something new. For this, the guitar seemed like the best instrument. Western instruments can approximate the scales of Sudanese music very well. After all, a lot of Western music is originally from Africa. I have absorbed different influences, from traditional Sudanese rhythms to calypso and jazz, and I hold them together in my music with no difficulty.” Referring to its sonic appearance, Sudanese Jazz hasn't too much in common with the western idea of Jazz. Sharhabil's sound feels more like a unique combination of surf, rock n roll, funk, Congolese music and East African harmonies a.o. So it kind of made sense to me, while visiting him in Sudan, to see the records he kept over the years: 2 of his own and 2 by Mulatu Astatke signed to him, further proving the influence of Ethiopian and other neighboring countries. In fact, Sharhabil was not just one of many Sudanese Jazz artist. He is the king of Jazz, literally, since in he won a competition over other artists for that title.

The release comes with a booklet including liner notes, interview and unseen photos (12 pages vinyl, 24 pages CD). Fully licensed from the artist.
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