

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION



The Outernationalists

Ethnomixicology

So who exactly are The Outernationalists? The answer lies in the musical background of **Afro Celts** founder **Simon Emerson** and leading U.K. music writer/DJ/producer **Phil Meadley**. Together the duo have joined forces to delve deep into the heart of global beat culture and come up with a seriously funky club mix of Afro, Indian, Arabic, Latin, and global psychedelia in the style of Coldcut's classic, *Journeys By DJ*. The duo's name refers to their love of international sounds taken to the outer limits of experimentation. The title *Ethnomixicology* is a gentle jibe at ethnomusicologists, whose ethos of only recognizing puritanical tradition is opposed to many open-minded musicians who love to fuse traditions and cultures.

Simon's Afro Celts have built an impressive reputation around the world for their exuberant live shows and albums featuring a wildly diverse mix of West African rhythms, Irish traditional music, and cutting-edge dance grooves. They have been nominated for several Grammy awards, been on the soundtrack to films such as Scorsese's *Gangs of New York* (at the producers' personal request), and recorded with artists such as **Sinead O'Connor**, **Robert Plant** and **Peter Gabriel**. Simon was also responsible for producing **Baaba Maal**'s seminal album *Firin' In Fouta*, and even further back was the founding member of respected acid-jazz band Working Week. Suffice it to say that Simon's tastes range far and wide.

More recently, Simon felt a need to go back to his soundsystem roots and started to DJ once again. Having been brought up on a diet of punk and impromptu squat parties, the cut n' paste culture of dance music has always been appealing. But only in recent years after checking out bands and seeing global beats emerging as some of the most vibrant music on the London club scene, did he decide that there was enough of a new audience out there to appeal to his eclectic taste buds.

Partly responsible for this recent change of heart was his friendship with leading global beats writer Phil Meadley. Although starting out writing for various underground magazines about left-field dance music (even contributing to the hallowed pages of U.S. publications *URB* and *XLR8R*), Phil gradually became more enamored with the idea of mixing traditional African, Indian, and Arabic sounds with dance beats and electronic production. As he points out, "it's so much more stimulating than your bog-standard 4/4 beat if it's done in a respectful and intelligent way." He started the first U.K. column dedicated specifically to global fusion in *Wax Magazine* before writing for specialist U.K.-based world publications *Songlines* and *The Independent*. Meadley has also made his name known by compiling the CDs *Zen & the Art of Chilling 1 & 2* for Ark 21, and *Asian Chill* and *Indestructible Arabian Beats* for Manteca. A chance to move into production work arose when he was asked to put together the *SanScapes* project in aid of the Bushmen of the Kalahari for the MELT 2000 label. Simon was one of the producers whom Phil approached for a remix of the Khoi-San Bushmen (he recorded under the moniker Animal Radio).

The idea for this particular mix was to make a hard-hitting and eclectic club album that would appeal to both dance and world music fans. Simon points out that there is a lot of real instrumentation going on throughout the mix. Both felt that too many global beat compilations have relied on chillout material and this conflicted with their experiences as DJs where the heavier the club beats the more euphoric the response. Although ideas were thought out at Phil's home in the Dorset countryside and Simon's house in Stoke Newington, the final mix was laid down at the Afro Celts' studio in Islington. The studio used to be the headquarters of **Pink Floyd** and was where *The Wall* was recorded. Simon handled the mixing duties on his new Pioneer 1000 decks and trusted Technic turntables, with sequencing decided by both. The mix was then laid down from DAT onto the Afro Celts' mixing desk with additional special effects compiled and mastered by **Martin Russell** and **Mass** of the Afro Celts.

Many of the tracks were rare or previously unreleased at the time of recording. "Green Africa" was a track Phil found on Italian label Irma. Apparently the producer **Moz-Art** was one of the first to champion Afro-beat in Europe and his deep love of the Fela sound is apparent. "The Big Bhang" is an exciting blend of organic Anglo-Indian fusion from acclaimed global beat DJ **Nelson Dilation** and his new band. **Hawke** was chosen because Simon loved the psychedelic prog-rock guitar sound and sees a continuing move towards live sound in dance culture. Simon has been working closely with Brighton outfit **Headmix** and their track mixed by **Max Pashm** is a completely unique take on Eastern European digital roots. Phil discovered Turkish percussion group **Harem** and hasn't stopped playing tracks from their new album when he DJs. The crowds respond really well to the hard beats and strong Arabic percussion with the track "Orient Carnival" being a rich amalgam of Oriental and Brazilian carnival rhythms. The track is mixed with **Snooze's** "It's More Expensive For This" to give it a harder edge and builds up nicely to **Spiritual South's** monstrous Afro-beat anthem "Green Gold." Next comes an exclusive Afro Celt remix of Belgium's top folk fusion band **Urban Trad**. The band was inspired by seeing the Afro Celts at Belgium's biggest folk festival **Dranouter**, and the bands have kept close links ever since. **Bucovina Club's** incendiary working of the great gypsy band **Taraf de Haïdouks'** "Carolina" is taken from the wonderful *Electric Gypsyland* CD on Crammed Discs. This gypsy dancehall vibe fits neatly into **Cakeboy's** wacky "Big & Bouncy" whose cut n' paste ska sound mutates into Snooze's "It's More Expensive For This" (given a unique Outernationalist makeover). The African theme returns with new **Trans-Global Underground** protégé **Doreen Thobekile** whose track "Hambanam" is distinctly South African in flavor. Both Simon and Phil love ska and **United Eye's** old skool classic "Ska East of the West" hits the mark admirably. "Fire Water" by Agit-dance outfit **Fun-Da-Mental** is a very powerful mix of Zulu chants and Asian breaks and here is mixed by **Moody Boyz** into a driving tech-house floor filler. Simon cleverly adds some frenetic ulliean pipe playing from Afro Celts' "Deep Channel" to give the album an explosive Afro-Celtic finale.

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