

Maiko Zulu: African Reggae Ambassador



Maiko Zulu is a Zambian reggae artist and human rights activist. He was born in Livingstone, Zambia and he grew up on a farm, herding goats and growing corn and vegetables on his grandfather's farm in the central province of Zambia. It was there that he learned his first vocal chords while screaming and running behind 100 to 150 goats.

He has performed with local music legends such as Ackim Simukonda, PK Chishala, Chris Chali of the Amayenge Cultural Ensemble, and he has performed on the same stage with the late Brenda Fassie (Independence Stadium, Lusaka), Lucky Dube (Independence Stadium, Lusaka), Oliver Muthukudzi (Ndola, Zambia) and Jabu Khanyile (Durban, South Africa) and Kanda Bongoman, among others. In 2001, then going by the stage name of St. Michael, he became the first Zambian artiste to be nominated for the biggest music awards in Africa, the Kora All Africa Music Awards (www.koraawards.com). He has won the local Ngoma Awards for Best Male Performer on two occasions and also the Annual Zambian Music Industry Award, been nominated for the M-Net Most talked about artiste awards in Zambia. Internationally, he has performed in South Africa (Durban 2000 AIDS conference), Burkina Faso and in the United Kingdom.

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Due to his involvement and active work in promotion of human rights, International Labor Organization honored him as goodwill Ambassador Against Child Labor for Zambia. He has also produced 6 albums namely: *In the Ghetto* (2001), *Pressure* (2004), *Reggae Unlimited* (2005), *Mad President* (2006), *Monk Square Revolution* (2008), and *Ju\$stice For Hire* (2009). Maiko is an aggressive stage performer with direct social commentary in his hard-hitting lyrics. His 2006 album *Mad President* has continued to raise the controversy surrounding the artiste with Parliament in Zambia debating his music during live broadcast of parliamentary debates. So far, he is the only local reggae artiste to have hit the *Sounds Top 20 Charts* in Zambia. Maiko is a self-managed artiste, and thus known for his positive contributions in the area of human rights, media freedoms, youth development, child protection, arts development as well as the reproductive health sector where he has been ever visible in the quest to reduce the HIV/Aids prevalence rates.

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