

Freedom Sounds - The South African Musical Journey To Liberation

Supplier **SOMETHIN' ELSE**

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Producer **Matt Hall, Alex Feldman, Nicky Birch, Paul Bennun**

Short Synopsis

(about 30 words) **May 10 2004 marks the tenth anniversary of the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela in South Africa's first ever free elections. On April 26-29, 1994, South Africans flocked to the ballot boxes to cast their vote after years of repression, with April 27, now known as Freedom Day, marking this monumental occasion. But it was obviously not just the political climate that was affected by this remarkable event: so too was the music. 'Freedom Sounds' traces the history of South African music, both before and after majority rule, in an inclusive and welcoming manner. The series will also chart how the arts, and music in particular, became the battlefield on which the white South African government and their opponents, the anti Apartheid movement fought some of the bitterest battles in the war to bring democracy to South Africa.**

Synopsis **Transmitting around the tenth Freedom Day, 'Freedom Sounds' is a landmark series that will explore the development of South African music from the rise of the Marabi form in the 1920's, through to the international success of Ladysmith Black Mambazo in the present day, taking in Abdullah Ibrahim, Dusty Springfield, Paul Simon, Johnny Clegg, Bob Marley, Manfred Mann, 'Tom Hark' and many others on the way. But it will also parallel these musical movements with the tumultuous politics of the country for the last 50 years, examining how cultural imperialism, apartheid, international pressure and finally newly found political freedom have impacted on musicians and their music. We'll be hearing from the major figures**

who've affected the country, alongside examining the musical and political changes in the country, 'Freedom Sounds' will showcase the

Ladysmith Black Mambaso, Abdullah Ibrahim, Paul Simon and Nelson Mandela will not be confined to one or two shows. Instead their influence will be felt throughout the series, being cited wherever necessary to paint a complete picture of the topic of each individual programme.

Matt Hall, Nicky Birch and Alex Feldman are the team behind Radio 2's highly praised series on Jamaican music, 'Island Rock'. All are experienced in drawing out the major themes of complicated stories, and presenting these tales in an accessible manner for the Radio 2 audience.

For this project they will be joined by Paul Bennun. A director of Somethin' Else, Paul's father was a member of the ANC in the 60's before fleeing South Africa for England. As such, Paul has excellent contacts (and goodwill!) in many echelons of South African society, and will be responsible for sourcing much of the exclusive content the series will contain.

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vast array of South African music from jazz to pop and everything in between.

Freedom Sounds will also examine the world's reaction to South African music and politics. How far did Paul Simon's epoch defining 'Gracelands' LP bridge the way to putting the sound of South Africa into the mainstream? Why did Dusty Springfield pull out of a Sun City gig at least a decade before the cultural embargo became a cause celebre amongst Western musicians? What caused British and American artists to give musical support to the ANC with Artists Against Apartheid? And exactly how instrumental was the 'Free Nelson Mandela' concert in the campaign for his release? All of these questions and more will be explored through a range of contributors and archive, as well as tracks focusing around the struggle for majority freedom.

We'll also be examining the changes in South Africa since 1994, particular the explosion of the Kwaito style in black towns in contrast to the domination of rock in white ones. 'Freedom Sounds' will ask how far are these styles associated with the racialised groups of the past? What are the challenges, both musical, cultural and social, that South Africa faces as we come to the tenth anniversary of freedom?

Rejecting the chronological approach for a programme structure which will provide a overview of the different political factors involved in the freedom struggle, each programme in the series will stand on its own, summing up a different facet in sixty minutes. In this way central figures like