

# NADI QAMAR

THE NURU TAA AFRICAN MUSICAL IDIOM PLAYED BY NADI QAMAR ON THE

## MAMA LIKEMBI



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MUSIC LP

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# NADI QAMAR

## MAMA LIKEMBI

### The Nuru Taa African Musical Idiom played by Nadi Qamar

The Nuru Taa African Musical Idiom is a concept in which I, as craftsman-composer-instrumentalist draw from many cultural sources to project a contemporary Black expression.

The name Mama-Likembi is a combination of two African words. Mama is Kishahili for mother. Likembi is generic in west, central, and southwest Africa.

I conceived the Mama-Likembi from my collection of Likembis, Mbiris Lizembis. These are renovated by personally crafted sound boards, bridges metal keys and decor.

The keyboard layout accommodates an eight finger playing technique which excludes the use of thumbs. The instrumental range is as follows:

The Talriha is indigenous to Madagascar and the Malagasy Republic. In 1960, a friend, Mr. Jimmy George, bought one from a merchant marine and resold it to me. This instrument reveals with its tonal characteristic, an affinity between African and East Indian cultures. The 17 strings each have a sliding bridge which make possible its microtonal tuning. Its tonal dimensions (extendible by tubual length) are as follows:

#### After Glow

The memory of Malikia Hadi returns as a gentle shower of kisses, just over the heart.

#### Ode to the Shrines of Buddah

Is a melodic tone poem recalling the feeling of awe and peacefulness while visiting the Shrine at Nara Japan where the deer mingle with visitors and eat waters from your hand, and the eyes of mediators gaze quietly to the horizon.

#### Australian Seascape

The Mama-Likembi recalls the tepid mists of the Indian Ocean steeping every breath of air, and shrouding both past and future as the whispered whistle of the nearby surf mouth an endless tone.

#### Tribute for Art Tatum

To a blood cousin whose incomparable piano artistry and personal encouragement gave me much inspiration.

#### California Sutra #2

The Talriha speaks through a big California calabash on the green wall to wall carpet of my white walled apartment amidst the pink potted palms and lush greenery of the Los Angeles Jungle.



#### Earth Quintessence

This Mama-Likembi music is a tour de force expression which shows the rhythmic diversity of the instrument.

#### The Nurua Taa Idiom

Is a contemporary African musical concept which is conceived to the perpetuation of classical African-Asian compositional and playing techniques, and to make them comprehensible to students of the black Diaspora.

This cultural activity will thereby stimulate student interest in ethnic musical instruments which are part of the African American cultural heritage.

My musical career began in my birthplace, Cincinnati, Ohio at Browns Chapel A.M.E. Church where I was both piano soloist and accompanist. From about 1935 to 1962 I was a jazz pianist, during that period having performed with Charles Mingus, Oscar Pettiford, Charlie Parker and many other musicians of that genre.

During the early 1960's, New York City was flooded with African musical instruments and the Guineanim Ballet Africanne dance troupe performed here annually thus I became an African music fan, collector, and craftsman.

In 1965, having begun construction of the Mama-Likembi and having acquiring through research a basic knowledge of African music, I joined the Zulu singers and dancers as a drummer-singer and performed with them for seventeen weeks at the World's Fair African Pavillion.

From 1966 through 1969 I performed concert lectures and concerts throughout New York City and Brooklyn. The African Jazz-Art Society gave me invaluable exposure. In 1969 I then performed as guest soloist-lecturer in Brooklyn Symphonia Symphony Orchestra in collaboration with its Director, Mr. Sergfried Landau premiering suite for Likembi, Talriha, Kuna and bells which was titled Wymbony sita (six songs). During that year I composed, conducted and performed "the Likembi Panoram" with the Black Composers Society Chamber Orchestra. From 1970 through 1972 I became Artist in Residence at the New Lafayette Theatre. During this time I lectured and conducted an African music workshop at Community Educational Exchange Program on Columbia University campus. I then joined Nina Simone as accompanist, soloist and assistant to Swami Swanam Dashram, as her yogi counselor. During the next two years we toured the U.S.A., West Indies, Japan and Australia.

I extend thanks to Folkways Records through whom I did much research with recorded African Music, the proprietor of African Moderne who introduced me to Folkways Records, Mr. Elombe Braith of The African Jazz-Art Society W.O.R. Television News and the Harlem News Service, through whom I received much valuable publicity, Mr. Wendelle Wayne, former director of Countee Cullen Library where I performed many concerts, Miss Nina Simone who introduced me to the people of four continents and Mr. Bill Gunn for his inclusion of music in George and Hess and Black Picture Show.

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