

HEART BEAT & SOUL



Malia *Ripples*

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<https://www.facebook.com/pg/MaliasMusic>

Line-Up: Malia (voc), Alexandre Saada (Piano), Sylvain Rabi (Geige), Marina Capstick (Bratsche), Bruno Ducret (Cello), Mwezi (Gast Voc)

Tracklisting: 1. Unfastened 2. Maddy, 3. Little Darlin, 4. After the Love, 5. Echoes Of Dreams, 6. Little Bee, 7. Little Sparrow, 8. Mary Mary, 9. My Love, 10. Unfolding, 11. Man In Your Eyes, 12. I Miss You, 13. Imagine (bonus track), 14. The First Time I Saw Your Face (bonus track)

Malia – Ripples

Maybe you can't hold on to a dream, but dreams can trigger strong emotional cross-currents. And so it was for singer Malia on her popular, long-lived "**Echoes of Dreams**". Released in 2004, the songs on that album form the basis for her new recording, "Ripples". It is not a remake in the normal sense; rather, these emotive ebbs and flows are direct links to this **British-African** artist's highly emotional acknowledgement of her roots. Accompanied by pianist Alexandre Saada's sensitive play and his arrangements for the string trio, Malia has radically stripped down her original work, moving from the playful pop-jazz style of her earlier career towards a raw, **blues and soul-drenched sound that, more than ever, relies on the strength and passion of her voice.**

Malia reflects on the motivations behind once again sounding the echoes of her dreams: "Sometimes life gives you a chance to realign. I feel that I often have a better understanding of my lyrics today than when I wrote them. With the experiences I've lived through, including the hard times, I've had a strong inner desire to re-work the songs."

After six stylishly eclectic albums, Malia's re-worked songs on "Ripples" reveal an artist who lays down new challenges for her listeners. At the same time, there's the dividend of the album's poignant authenticity. Whereas the "Echoes of Dreams" sessions were distinguished by the desire to experiment with soulful vocal parts, whiffs of jazz, and rock-tinged rhythms, Malia has reversed course on "Ripples". Recording the album in pianist Alexandre Saada's Paris home, Malia emphasizes, "I wanted to tone everything down in order to push the essential core of the pieces into the foreground."

"Ripples" exposes emotions from the hidden corners of the soul, recorded within a sense of sheltered calm – namely, the home of a close friend. As Malia points out, "There is no big story about this production, no big story or any hype to accompany the record. I am saying that it is enough for me to share the story I am in with you. That is the big story for me. I hope my story creates an intimacy that invites you to share your story with the world around you. Freedom is being yourself." Born in the South-East African republic of Malawi, as a teenager, Malia moved with her family to England. On "Ripples", the artist immerses herself in such

songs as “After the Love” and “Little Sparrow”. These pieces had already reflected a basic note of melancholy on “Dreams”; they spoke of the pain of love, a shaken sense of femininity, cultural frictions, yet were performed with a relaxed neo-soul-jazz air. That album was the inspired work of French-Armenian star producer André Monoukian, the man who discovered Malia and masterminded her sensational debut album, “Yellow Daffodils” (2002).

“Echoes of dreams left so deep in my mind. They are still here to remind me of the girl that I was...” – Malia once again grabs hold of these lyrics in order to affirm: the young woman in search of her identity had shouldered a heavy burden. This musician had fought, using all her expressive eloquence, a lioness forging ahead on her long journey. A lot has happened since those earlier times. Malia emphasizes that she consciously moved back into that young woman, into that exciting zone hovering between innocence and adulthood, in order to reflect on the present; “Life is bitter, and life is beautifully sweet. I believe that our past is strongly connected with our future, and, as the sum of our experiences, the Echoes of our Dreams continue to collide with our destiny.”

For years, Alexandre Saada has worked closely with Malia. The pianist’s roots are in jazz, as is the case with Malia’s former producer André Manoukian. Saada has accompanied the “hypnotically fascinating singer” (RBB Kulturradio) in many of her live performances, especially when Malia has dealt exclusively with Nina Simone’s music. During the recording of “Black Orchid” (2011), her tribute album to Nina, Malia had to deal with cancer. Pain and defiance, vulnerability and a hunger for life – just as her declared hero Nina Simone had done. Through the passion and anguish of her voice, Malia laid it all on the line, and Alexandre Saada’s piano was instrumental: “His raw, sensitive way of playing gives me the room I need to explore the songs.”

Essentially, these Paris sessions are a dream-like continuation of the concert events, captured with the allurements that radiates from the intuitions and imperfections of the moment. You feel a note ring out, not quite caught, yet, with its raw timbre, it reverberates all the more intensely; then there’s Malia calling out in an emotional rasp – it’s all woven into the music. “Life is about friendships and improvising,” says Malia; “We pick each other up when we fall down and we elevate each other to greater heights. This is the great power in making music, it reflects how we are in life.” Thomas Pegorier admixes a pure piano/vocal sound that often exerts a meditative feel, underscored with the sensitive chamber music finesse of violinist Sylvian Rabi, violist Marina Capstick, and cellist Bruno Ducret. Malia has added two cover songs to her own original pieces – “The First Time I Ever Saw Your Face” by Ewan MacColl on the one hand, and John Lennon’s “Imagine” on the other: In duet with the young singer Mwezi, the two accentuate the fragility that this classic embraces, as they instill a new magic in this intimate, familiar melody.

In 2016, Malia recorded her debut album for MPS (Edel:Kultur), “**Malawi Blues/Njira**”. The album features much more than this exceptional singer’s “new look”; shorn of her afro locks, Malia turned towards a concentrated, intuitive form of storytelling that includes the traditional Kwela music of her African home along with a bedrock of earthy blues. On “Ripples”, she takes this intense passion a step further: “I hope my story creates an intimacy that invites you in and frees you. Freedom is being yourself.”

Malia is available for interviews!

ISRCs: 1. Unfastened (DEH841800033), 2. Maddy (DEH841800032), 3. Little Darlin (DEH841800027), 4. After the Love (DEH841800028), 5. Echoes Of Dreams (DEH841800029), 6. Little Bee (DEH841800038), 7. Little Sparrow (DEH841800035), 8. Mary Mary (DEH841800030), 9. My Love (DEH841800031), 10. Unfolding (DEH841800034), 11. Man In Your Eyes (DEH841800037), 12. I Miss You (DEH841800036), 13. Imagine (DEH841800039), 14. The First Time I Saw Your Face (DEH841800040)

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