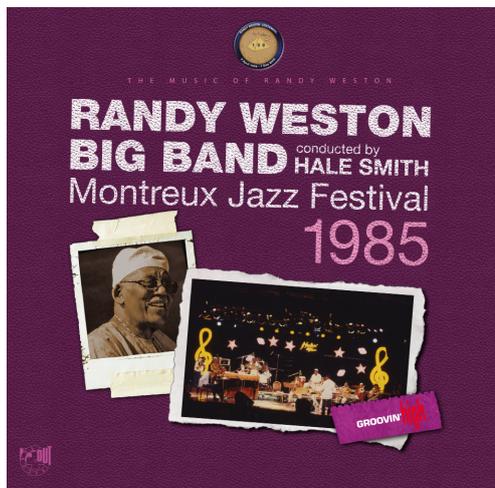




## PRESS RELEASE



### RANDY WESTON BIG BAND MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL 1985



IOR 2LP 77166-1



IOR CD 77166-2



- |  |                               |   |
|--|-------------------------------|---|
| 1. African Cookbook (21:55)                                | 4. African Sunrise (18:09)    | <b>Randy Weston piano</b>   <b>Benny Bailey trumpet</b>   <b>Sahib Shihab baritone &amp; soprano sax</b>   <b>Talib Kibwe alto &amp; soprano sax &amp; flute</b>   <b>Benny Powell, George Lewis trombones</b>   <b>Clyde Lucas drums</b>   <b>Wilbur Little bass</b>   <b>Sam Kelly bongos</b> |
| 2. Hi Fly (10:10)  | 5. Congolese Children (09:12) |   |
| 3. Blues For Strayhorn/<br>Portrait Of F.E. Weston (08:15) | 6. C-Jam Blues (08:57)        |   |

### RANDY WESTON BIG BAND MONTREUX JAZZ FESTIVAL 1985 (IN+OUT Records)

**IN+OUT Records is celebrating the 100th birthday of jazz piano legend Randy Weston with three albums featuring previously unreleased live material. These will be released individually on vinyl and CD, as well as together in an elegant and strictly limited collector's box set.**

Randy Weston, the giant. He was said to stand 6 feet 7 inches tall, which is why he gave his most famous composition the name "Hi Fly". He once remarked that from his height, looking down at the ground felt like flying. Indeed, the towering figure born in Brooklyn in 1926 drew attention not only for his physical stature but also for his music — his titles possessed that special something: memorable, distinctive melodies with a strong sense of identity. This was due in part to the fact that Rhythm & Blues can rightly be called Weston's musical cradle, but also because, in the second half of his career, he devoted himself especially to the legacy of his African ancestors.

His father had sharpened his awareness early on. He ran a restaurant in Bedford-Stuyvesant, a New York neighborhood that was considered a focal point of the Brooklyn jazz scene. "You are an African born in America. Look in the mirror and learn who you are," he impressed upon young Randy, encouraging him to trace the roots of jazz back to its „mother continent," Africa. That Weston's playing was always edgy and rhythmically charged was due above all to Thelonious Monk — alongside Duke Ellington, his greatest role model. Monk advised Weston never to make musical compromises — advice he followed faithfully until his death in 2018 at the age of 92.

As early as 1960, Weston dedicated an entire album, „Uhuru Africa", to African sounds, followed in 1963 by „Highlife" and in 1964 by „African Cookbook". In 1961, the pianist traveled to Nigeria for the first time, and by the late 1960s, he had settled for several years in Tangier, Morocco, where he ran a jazz club. Later, he worked regularly with Gnawa musicians and, in 2017, released *The African Nubian Suite*, a sweeping exploration of human history through sounds from Egypt, Senegal, China, and Afro-America.

In honor of Randy Weston's 100th birthday on April 6, 2026, IN+OUT Records is releasing a spectacular box set featuring three previously unreleased albums. These recordings capture the pianist's performances in 1985 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music and the Montreux Jazz Festival, as well as his 1988 festival collaborations with fellow pianist Monty Alexander — all preserved for posterity by Weston's longtime friend Jacques Muyal. The collection will be available on vinyl in an exquisite leather case, complete with a commemorative medal designed by the artist himself.

#### Montreux Jazz Festival 1985

**Randy Weston's 1985 Montreux Jazz Festival performance captures the power of his Big Band in peak form. With vibrant arrangements by Melba Liston and soulful tributes like "African Cookbook" and "Congolese Children," this recording celebrates Weston's deep African roots and boundless musical vision.**

The year 1985 was to become one of the most important in Randy Weston's career. After the spectacular success of his concert—arranged by Melba Liston—at the Academy of Music in his hometown of Brooklyn in February, he traveled to Europe a few months later with a smaller, but no less brilliant ensemble. On this tour, the Big Band was also booked to perform at the prestigious Montreux Jazz Festival, where the present recording was made.

The performance begins—at the explicit request of Claude Nobs, founder and director of the Montreux Jazz Festival—with one of Randy's signature compositions, "African Cookbook." It is followed by "Hi-Fly," the airy, timeless jazz waltz, and "Portrait of Frank Edward Weston," a tribute to his father and one of his greatest sources of inspiration. The set concludes with "African Sunrise," presented in a stunning arrangement by Melba Liston, who, however, was unable to join the European tour and was replaced by Hale Smith.

Particularly noteworthy is the final piece, "Congoese Children," one of Weston's absolute favorites. It is based on a traditional folk melody of the Bashai tribe, sung by a group of boys attending a mission school on Lake Kivu in Congo—an experience that had deeply inspired him. The audience was euphoric, whistling, cheering, and clapping wildly. Randy Weston and Hale Smith had no choice but to offer an encore. They chose Duke Ellington's "C Jam Blues," which evolved into an almost magical jam session full of shimmering rhythms, during which Hale joined Randy at the

piano to play together.

The concert stands as another great yet little-known milestone in the rich career of the man who was named Composer of the Year by DownBeat magazine in 1996 and received the American Jazz Masters Award from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2000. Thanks to Jacques Muyal, it is now accessible to jazz fans of the 21st century.

## THE COMPLETE RANDY WESTON CENTENNIAL PROJECT:

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