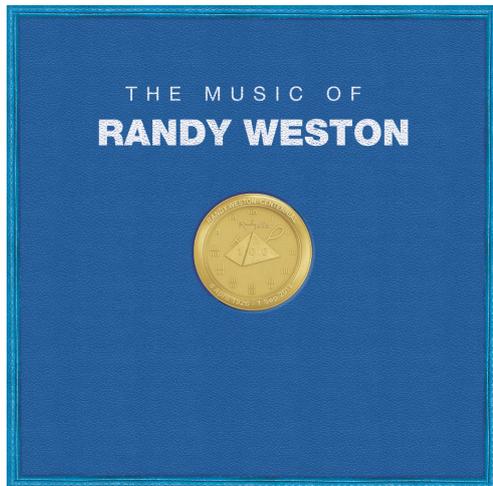




PRESS RELEASE



THE MUSIC OF RANDY WESTON



IOR BOX 77168-1



The box set includes

Randy Weston & African Rhythm Orchestra *Brooklyn Academy Of Music 1985*

Randy Weston Big Band *Montreux Jazz Festival 1985*

Randy Weston & Monty Alexander *Montreux, Zaragoza & Ramatuelle Jazz Festivals 1988*

4-page booklet

LP / CD

2LP / CD

2LP / CD

THE MUSIC OF RANDY WESTON

(IN+OUT Records)

Randy Weston – pianist, composer, visionary. Towering at 6 feet 7 inches, he stood just as tall in jazz: bridging Brooklyn and Africa, his music fused rhythm, pride, and ancestry. IN+OUT Records honors his centenary with three unreleased live albums, preserved in a luxurious 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 Moyal. The collection will be available on vinyl in an exquisite leather case, complete with a commemorative medal designed by the artist himself.

Brooklyn Academy Of Music 1985

A long-overdue homecoming: In 1985, pianist Randy Weston returned to Brooklyn with his African Rhythm Orchestra and Melba Liston’s radiant arrangements — merging blues, gospel, and African trance into one powerful celebration of roots and rhythm.

It was simply long overdue and meant nothing less than a homecoming for him — a return in which he brought not only his music but also stories and the soul of Africa back to his homeland. When Randy Weston came to Brooklyn in 1985, the city finally had the opportunity to pay proper tribute to one of its most important musicians. With a week-long celebration culminating in a concert on February 16 at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (BAM), they sought to honor their great son, who by then stood among legends like Max Roach, Duke Jordan, and Cecil Payne.

For this occasion, Randy was allowed to assemble a dream ensemble — with dancers, singers (including Andy Bey), and an illustrious big band. The arrangements and musical direction were entrusted to his closest collaborator and musical sister, Melba Liston — a brilliant trombonist and masterful arranger. She had the gift of transforming Randy’s compositions into magnificent orchestrations that captured all the magic that defined him.

Thanks to Melba Liston, he was able to trace his musical paths — beginning with blues, gospel, and spirituals, briefly detouring (but not lingering) down a side street of swing, and finally arriving at the trance-like elegies of the Gnawa, who had been brought centuries ago as slaves to the northwest coast of Africa. No one transformed time into harmony more consistently than Randy Weston, and no one cultivated the percussive dimension of the piano so deeply — an instrument that, in his hands, often sounded like a drum set with 88 skins. From groove emerged structure — enchantment at the highest level. The pieces bore titles such as “African Sunrise,” “The Last Day,” “Portrait of Vivian,” and “Blue Moses” — heavy, dark, mystical, swaying works of art, grand and too profound ever to fit into the shallow box of so-called “world music.” Why his collaboration with Melba Liston worked so perfectly, Randy Weston explained like this:

“We both knew that for a recording we wanted older musicians as the foundation. Then we brought in the younger ones. The elders have the know-how — they know all the secrets about music that we don’t. The younger ones bring in the energy. Melba always made sure we had that foundation.”

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, “Congolese 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.

Montreux, Zaragoza & Ramatuelle Jazz Festivals 1988

Randy Weston & Monty Alexander – two master pianists in dialogue. In 1988, their duo performances in Montreux, Zaragoza, and Ramatuelle revealed jazz as a vibrant conversation between continents, jazz, and spirits.

Randy Weston had many faces. That’s why the third part of the tribute marking his 100th birthday does not once again focus on

big bands, but rather on the smallest possible ensemble—the duo. The encounters between him and Monty Alexander in 1988 rank among the most dazzling performances of two great, versatile, and above all unconventional pianists who could be admired on public stages at that time.

The fact that Randy Weston was joined by Eric Asanté from Ghana and Monty Alexander by his Jamaican compatriot Bobby Thomas—each bringing their own percussionist—does not invalidate the term “duo.” On the contrary, the buoyant rhythms only amplify the power of the two pianos. This congenial partnership served as a vivid reminder that jazz does not have to be solely an American art form, but rather a living dialogue between continents, histories, and identities. Weston and Alexander spoke different dialects of the same language. Yet their message was always the same: in jazz, it matters as much where we come from as where we are going.

The summit meeting of these two grand masters of the keyboard took place in 1988 at the initiative of Spanish promoter Jordi Suñol. The tour led from the Montreux Jazz Festival to Zaragoza and finally to the picturesque Mediterranean village of Ramatuelle in southern France. For the concerts, they agreed that in the first part each would perform with his own percussionist, while in the second part they would join forces on stage. Since there already exists a considerable number of solo recordings by both Randy Weston and Monty Alexander, the newly released tracks focus on their magnificent intermezzi from the second set—moments that drew their incredible energy from deep mutual admiration. Once again, both “Hi-Fly” and “Blue Moses” can be heard in two distinct versions, the fascination lying in how Weston and Alexander made the same pieces sound completely different, even though only a few days separated the recordings. In addition, a wonderfully colorful rendition of Thelonious Monk’s “Blue Monk” stands out as a luminous example of their shared musical language.



THE COMPLETE RANDY WESTON CENTENNIAL PROJECT:



LPs in High Glossy Gatefold Covers
CDs in Slip Cases LP Style

IOR 77168-1
Boxset incl. 4-page Booklet
Vegan Leather Bag with
embedded brass medal
designed by Randy Weston
Limited to 500 copies



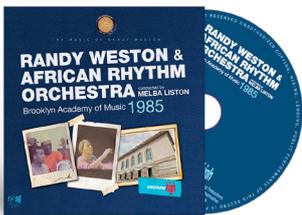
IOR 77165-1
LP • 180gr. Virgin Vinyl
High Glossy Gatefold Cover



IOR 77166-1
2LP • 180gr. Virgin Vinyl
High Glossy Gatefold Cover



IOR 77167-1
2LP • 180gr. Virgin Vinyl
High Glossy Gatefold Cover



IOR 77165-2
CD
High Glossy 6-page Digifile



IOR 77166-2
CD
High Glossy 6-page Digifile



IOR 77167-2
CD
High Glossy 6-page Digifile