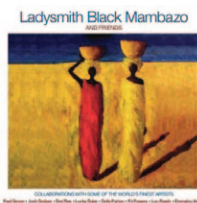


REVIEWS

LADYSMITH BLACK MAMBAZO

**Ladysmith Black Mambazo & Friends**

[Razor & Tie]

Following quickly on the heels of their last studio album, *Songs from a Zulu Farm*, this exceptional two-disc anthology finds South African vocal group Ladysmith Black Mambazo rounding up many of its stellar collaborations with other artists. After reaping international acclaim for its performances on Paul Simon's 1986 landmark *Graceland*, the group continued to stretch its musical boundaries, proving pliable enough to succeed in varied genres and both secular and spiritual settings. Those Simon songs ("Homeless," "Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoes") sound as inspired and irrepressible as ever here, while their rousing renditions of familiar standards including "Ain't No Sunshine," "Amazing Grace," and Billy Joel's "River of Dreams" soar on the strength of vibrant harmonies, vocal agility and effusive energy. Even with a host of superstars in tow—Dolly Parton, Emmylou Harris, Melissa Etheridge and the late Phoebe Snow among them—the group consistently commands the spotlight with its singularly celebratory spirit. —LZ

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