

THE *VOICE* OF THE SEAS



MFA KERA'S RHAPSODY
SUNG BY DEL FIONN SYKES

THE VOICE OF THE SEAS

RHAPSODY IN 7 TABLEAUX

MFA Kera compositions & text

Reinhard Katemann arrangements & strings

Soprano Del Fionn Sykes voice & collaboration

„The Voice of the Seas“ – Africa Mother of all, Reminiscence and Pleas.

Seven pieces, Rhapsody sung by brilliant and versatile, classic-trained vocalist Del Fionn Sykes. A sumptuous, powerful, and original hybrid musical concept rooted into African, Afro-American, Afro-Caribbean, Oriental, and more cultures with European classical strings-arrangements. A unique journey through history of Black Music and an urgent plea for peace!

(For full version, see page 5)

Listen to the full release on Spotify

<https://open.spotify.com/intl-de/album/5Gwe5hgZp96qMO7J6znDa5>

Listen to 1 min-shortcuts in highest quality

[01 Odeylo](#)

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[06 What is this ? - \(You take you take\)](#)

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Watch the official Videos on YouTube

[What is this? - \(You take you take\)](#)

[Front Line](#)

Website & Contact

<http://www.blackheritage.de>

blackheritage@online.de

The Artists



Del Fionn Sykes hails from the coastal Virginia region. She earned a Bachelor's degree in Biology, University of VA; a Master's of Ed., George Washington University and a Master's of Music, Voice Performance, Binghamton University/ SUNY. In the USA, among her invitations, Ms. Sykes was a featured artist with *El Paso Opera*, *New York Vocal Artists*, *Tri-Cities Opera*, *Amato Opera*, *Regina Opera*, *Weill Recital Hall*, and *Symphony Space*. From 2005–2013, she resided in Germany where she performed as a soloist with orchestras, vocal ensembles, summer festivals and appeared on numerous German TV shows. Ms. Sykes moved back to the USA in 2014 where she continues her passion for performance through participation with local organizations such as *Virginia Opera Association*, *Virginia Musical Theatre*,

Virginia Stage Company, *Symphonicity*, *Peninsula Community Theatre*, *Williamsburg Players* and the *Underground Performance Arts Collective*.

Highlights - Musical theatre: *Black Girl Magic* (Opera Singer, Maxine Waters, Mother Clara Hale) and *A Motown Christmas*, UPAC; *Guys and Dolls* (General Matilda Cartwright) Virginia Stage Co.; *Mary Poppins* (Mrs. Corry) Virginia Musical Theatre; *Into the Woods* (Granny) TNCC; *Jane Eyre*, the musical (Grace Poole) Williamsburg Players; *Ragtime*, the musical (black ensemble/black lawyer) Peninsula Community Theatre

Opera: *Die Fledermaus* (Rosalinda), *I Pagliacci* (Nedda), *Carmen* (Micaela), *The Magic Flute* (First Lady), *Le Nozze di Figaro* (La Contessa).



Of Creole descent, **MFA KERA** was born in Madagascar and raised in Senegal. She began her musical career in Paris, performing Blues and Gospel with Memphis Slim and collaborating with icons like John Lee Hooker and Mickey Baker. She appeared in the film *The Adventure of Jazz* alongside Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong and released her first recordings as a tribute to Mahalia Jackson.

KERA explored funk and Afro-pop, including a project with Wasis Diop on RCA. After a creative period in Los Angeles, she moved to Berlin via Japan to develop world music collaborations, coining her style “Ethno-Techno-Pan-African Sphere”. She worked closely with Reinhard Katemann and African master drummers to create “Heavy-Wood-Music”.

She later founded the *Black Heritage Orchestra* with US jazzman Mike Russell, tracing the story of Black music from African roots to Jazz, Gospel, and Funk. Her musical play *Odeylo - The Story of Mama Africa* was supported by the Berlin Senate; the soundtrack remained in the world music charts for a year.

KERA’s “Journey” projects blend African music with rock and classical influences. She composed French-language educational songs for Klett Verlag, recorded in China and Brazil (with Olodum and Carlinhos Brown), and performed for German presidents.

She founded the multi-ethnic *Universal Gospel Voices* and launched the reforestation-focused project *Power of Music and Arts to reconcile Mankind with Nature*, in partnership with Trees for the Future. KERA continues to compose, perform, produce, paint, and lead international workshops.



Reinhard Katemann was born in Germany in 1953. He began his musical training at the age of ten, studying classical piano, horn, trombone, and tuba. His talent and dedication soon led him to conduct his school's choir in 1965. Between 1962 and 1972, he completed an apprenticeship as a piano tuner, all while performing regularly in bands - a clear sign of his early commitment to both the technical and creative sides of music. In 1978, he moved to Berlin, where he refined his skills in sound programming and composition.

He gained early commercial success by developing and selling custom sound libraries for Yamaha synthesizers. Parallel to this, he pursued his work as a composer, arranger, and keyboardist, gradually establishing himself as a versatile figure in Berlin's music scene.

Reinhard's interest in African music developed at a young age, and his meeting with MFA KERA in Berlin marked the beginning of a long-standing artistic partnership. Together, they form the creative core of the *MFA KERA Ensemble*. He has also served as the arranger for the *Black Heritage Orchestra* since its inception, contributing significantly to its distinctive sound.

Despite his many musical commitments, Reinhard also built his own digital recording studio - an extension of his deep passion for sound and production.

Full Synopsis of the Rhapsody

The voice of the seas is the voice of Africa, mother of all, the source of humanity, the eternal griotte. Together with the well-known German arranger Reinhard Katemann, MFA Kera has composed and produced a rhapsody which incorporates many different styles in the course of the release and potential performance.

MFA Kera's quote: "I do believe there are still enough human beings who will respond to this ultimate call of their Mother, indeed there is a state of emergency."

With this project she introduces a completely novel fusion of musical influences from the African diaspora and classical European music.

The piece consists of a narrative in seven tableaux, which are expressed in word and music. The story of Ma Africa (here depicted from shortly before the onset of the Western/European human slave trade) is interpreted by an African, Afro-American, or Caribbean classically trained singer (Soprano). In the present release, the brilliant and versatile interpreter **Del Fionn Sykes** takes on this role, addressing major universal themes.

"The Voice of the Seas" is the voice of the Mother of all, Africa, the source of humanity, the eternal *griotte* (oral storyteller). The work reflects the experience of pain, suffering, separations of all kinds, greed, injustice, fanaticism, brutality, fears, and ignorance, but it also shows the potentials which this experience can bring about.

This gives the language of Africa a universal note which transcends borders.

Imagine: A "Mother Africa" who tells part of her story throughout the last centuries in several scenic musical tableaux, but uses for her captivating testimony the language of Western opera with an operatic voice.

The concept:

Seven pieces depicting major historical events beginning in Africa just before the onset of slavery and leading up to today. They are closely connected and interwoven with elements of classical European arrangements. This is not new, but innovative is the content of the narration (first time involving Africa, mother of mankind, as main character). In the seven tableaux which make up the show, the history of the world is re-enacted and updated - as a state of high emergency.

Compositions: All pieces are “symbolic” through their form.

01 ODEYLO / Opening with a traditional African song

Excerpt text: “Welcome in the eternal new day, Spirits will always be at the side of the children – in space, time, love and life.”

02 DEL ORO / Oriental-Hispanic music

Ma Africa recollects the first Oriental and European conquests.

03 FRONT LINE / Blues

Ma Africa remembers the “lost children” who were shipped off to North and South America and elsewhere. The first large-scale trade of human beings.

04 AXE BAHIA / Afro-Brazilian music

“Yes, long and tough was the overseas journey and kind of rough here to stay”

“With Orishas and their beautiful saints we never lost the spirit.”

“With Indios we found peace.”

Bahia writes a letter to her mother Africa after having landed in South America.

05 ILVY / Musical fusion

The story of a multi-colored bird who decides to fly higher and higher & meet “those other birds” who can talk to God. It’s about Planet Earth and its nature in high danger – in this case, the destruction of the rainforest.

“Was just a dream, there is no more stream but a monster road... I'm a bird still...”

06 WHAT IS THIS? / Techno rhythm influences

Ma Africa denounces greed... of the humans.

“You take, you take, you take, you kill, you kill...”

“Are you happier now?”

07 Finale: HUMHUM DRUMS / An African-rooted vast rhythm meets rock and gospel and renders evident the bond.

Ma Africa pleads for a life in unison between mankind and nature:

“I am mother of all, and I say good luck, o Children, Peace be with you”

(... I am the origin ...)

Ma Africa has created a bridge across the seas and times and generously shares her unique history.

Although classical music has been inspired by African music before – just as much as so-called “Black music” has been influenced by Western classical music – it is certain that only “Mama Africa” as a *griotte* of modern times manages to cross borders within the pieces with ease.

The pieces show influences of African roots and modernity, soul and jazz, North American blues, gospel, Latin music, Moorish-Spanish music, as well as techno sounds.

A truly fascinating project which inspires and promotes an exchange between nations and cultures, thereby fulfilling a need particularly prevailing in our societies in the 21st century.

The work, with texts in the English language, will be performed by a soloist or more, background vocalists, a septet, a light design and projections team, a choreographer and 4 or more dancers, an MC poet – and musically can be augmented to a philharmonic orchestra.

The participating artists come from Germany, Africa, France, and America.

We thank the Akademie der Künste Berlin for the start-up support.

Release Information

Title of Release **Mfa Kera's The Voice of the Seas**

Language **English**

Version **Production Music**

Primary Genre **R&B / Soul**

Subgenre **Classical**

Country of Origin **Germany**

Main Performer **Del Fionn Sykes**

Arranger **Reinhard Katemann**

Lyricist **Mfa Kera**

Composer **Mfa Kera**

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Track Details

Track Title 01 **Odeylo**

Duration **5:16**

ISRC **DEGB92400800**

Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**

Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**

Background Choir **Kids Classes of Gaby Bultmann, "Leo Kestenberg Musikschule"**
Berlin

Additional Background Vocals **Ruth Smith, Emanuelle Mwangui, Mike Russell**

String Quartet **String Quartet of Gregor Dubuclet**

Double Bass **Charles Sammons**

Drums **Jo DiCarlo**

Piano **Reinhard Katemann**

Percussion **Famson Akinola – Talking Drums, Djembe, Shekere, etc.**

Track Title 02 **Del Oro**

Duration **8:19**

ISRC **DEGB92400801**

Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**

Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**

Background Vocals **Ruth Smith, Emanuelle Mwangui, Mike Russell**

String Quartet **String Quartet of Gregor Dubuclet**

Double Bass **Charles Sammons**

Drums **Jo DiCarlo**

Piano **Reinhard Katemann**

Percussion **Sayed Balaha on Del Oro – Darbuka, frame drums etc.**

Track Title 03 **Frontline**

Duration **6:42**

ISRC **DEGB92400802**

Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**

Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**

String Quartet **String Quartet of Gregor Dubuclet**

Double Bass **Charles Sammons**

Piano **Reinhard Katemann**

Track Title 04 **Axe Bahia – Village Olodum**

Duration **6:38**

ISRC **DEGB92400803**

Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**

Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**

String Quartet **String Quartet of Gregor Dubuclet**

Double Bass **Charles Sammons**

Drums **Nick Costa on Axe Bahia – Village Olodum**
Piano **Reinhard Katemann**
Percussion **Famson Akinola – Talking Drums, Djembe, Shekere, etc.**

Track Title 05 **Ivvy**
Duration **7:04**
ISRC **DEGB92400804**
Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**
Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**
String Quartet **String Quartet of Gregor Dubuclet**
Double Bass **Charles Sammons**
Drums **Jo DiCarlo**
Piano **Reinhard Katemann**
Percussion **Famson Akinola – Talking Drums, Djembe, Shekere, etc.**

Track Title 06 **What Is This? (You Take You Take...)**
Duration **6:24**
ISRC **DEGB92400805**
Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**
Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**
String Quartet **String Quartet of Gregor Dubuclet**
Double Bass **Charles Sammons**
Drums **Jo DiCarlo**
Piano **Reinhard Katemann**
Background Choir **Kids Classes of Gaby Bultmann, "Leo Kestenberg Musikschule"
Berlin, Ruth Smith, Emanuelle Mwangui, Mike Russell**
Percussion **Famson Akinola – Talking Drums, Djembe, Shekere, etc.**

Track Title 07 **Hum Hum Drum**
Duration **9:09**
ISRC **DEYX82211158**
Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**
Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**

Track Title 08 **What Is This? (You Take You Take...) Radio Cut**

Duration **4:21**

ISRC **DEGB92400807**

Lead Vocalist **Del Fionn Sykes**

Conductor **Gregor Dubuclet**

String Quartet **String Quartet of Gregor Dubuclet**

Drums **Jo DiCarlo**

Piano **Reinhard Katemann**

Background Choir **Kids Classes of Gaby Bultmann, "Leo Kestenberg Musikschule"
Berlin, Ruth Smith, Emanuelle Mwangui, Mike Russell**

Percussion **Famson Akinola - Talking Drums, Djembe, Shekere, etc.**