

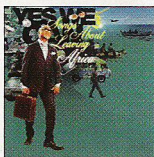
JULY 2010

Yes We Can: Songs About Leaving Africa

Outhere Records OH017

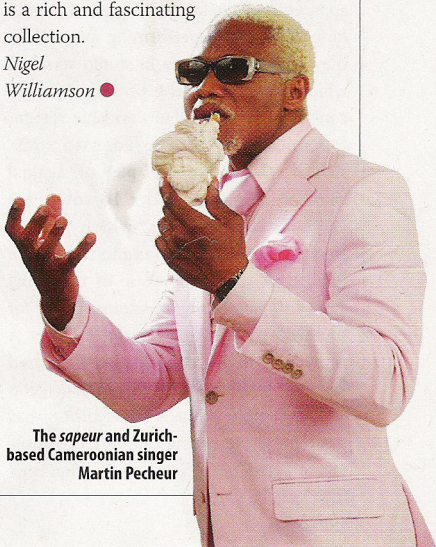
Full Price (65 mins)

★★★★★

Voices away from the motherland

Exile, and the pain of separation, have always inspired some great music and this cleverly conceived and refreshingly original compilation, put together by *Songlines* contributor Rose Skelton, puts the spotlight on how contemporary African artists, most of them now living abroad, have interpreted themes of migration and refugee status. Most impressive of all, *Yes We Can* is not one of those comps on which you already own the best-known tracks, which are padded out by disposable filler. Many will know K'Naan's '15 Minutes Away', the brilliant fusion of hip-hop and pop from his current album *Troubadour*, but an impressive 12 of the 15 tracks here are previously unreleased. Unsurprisingly, many of them deploy the world's most universal musical form *de nos jours*: hip-hop. On 'Money Talk', the Berlin-based Nigerian artist Rapturous raps energetically about the African dream of chasing Western 'glitz, glamour, the fame and the fortune'. Afrikan Boy, a London-based MC, offers a hilarious, grime-based modern outlaw tale about shoplifting in 'Lidl', while on 'Green Card' Ghana's Wanlov raps about securing US residency by marrying an elderly white Texan woman. Others offer a different perspective and express a desire to remain or return to Africa, rather than to escape. 'Immigration Clandestine' finds Senegal's CAPSI Revolution lamenting the African brain drain which is emptying the continent of its most talented individuals, while on the engaging dance-pop of 'Oh Narina' Cape Verde's Izé sings about his homesickness for his island from his new domicile in Paris. It's a little one-paced due to the rap dominance, but as a snapshot of the chief sound currently rocking the modern African diaspora, this is a rich and fascinating collection.

Nigel
Williamson ●



The *sapeur* and Zurich-based Cameroonian singer
Martin Pecheur