

Reliving Zimbabwe's liberation struggle (Second Chimurenga) through Simon Chimbetu's selected songs

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Chimbetu and the Marxist Brothers

Simon Chimbetu was born on 23 September 1955 to Malawian parents who had roots in Tanzania. This explains why he could sing in the Chewa, Swahili, Ndebele and Shona languages. He joined the liberation struggle in Mozambique but returned shortly before Zimbabwean independence in 1980. Simon Chimbetu is one of the musicians popular in Zimbabwean music circles. He is known for popularising Dendera music, a subgenre of sungura music in which the bass guitar is predominant. Chimbetu himself took part in the armed struggle and in the early days of the band the influence of his participation in the guerrilla warfare is evident in the name of the band Marxist Brothers, in view of the idea that the war was Marxist in ideological orientation. Later on, Chimbetu changed the name of the band to Dendera Kings. His music is branded dendera in reference to the booming sound of a tropical bird called Southern Ground Hornbill which is found in the southern African parts of Zimbabwe, Botswana, Zambia, Mozambique and Malawi.