

## ATONGO ZIMBA

**Atongo Zimba** is a musician and griot from Ghana. His tours in Europe, South America and Africa include a benefit for the 2010 Haiti earthquake, at the Alliance Francaise in Accra. His album *Allah Mongode* was recorded in Switzerland. His album *Barefoot in the Sand* was nominated "African CD of the Year" in 2007 by Amsterdam television. His recording of *No Beer in Heaven* was a major hit in Ghana in 2004.

He has released four albums in Ghana. During these years he made two visits to Europe, one in the middle 1990's with Swiss drummer Gabriel Schiltnecht. Their band was called Allah Mungode. The second was with the cultural group, Adisa.

Atongo has been based in the UK since 2003 and has developed European collaborations in addition to keeping a strong link with his home country and its musicians.

He has released two albums internationally since then under Hippo Records. The first was Savannah Breeze (2005) for which Atongo put together a band of Dutch based Ghanaian and Caribbean musicians for this Afro-funk sound. It was produced by Dave Youell, who had produced earlier famed koliko player, Captain Yaba. The second was Barefoot in the Sand (2007), which was a collaboration with Niels Brouwer, well known Dutch guitarist (who also produced the album) and Monica Akihary, vocals. This album is more jazz influenced and gently funky.

Atongo has been playing numerous festivals in Europe as well as in Africa and Latin America. He has recently been playing around the UK with a trio.

Other activities have included providing the music for Kwame Kwei Armah's play, "Elmina's Kitchen" with Juldeh Camara. This ran in the National Theatre, the west end of London and a national tour.

Atongo composes and sings in his native Fra Fra, Hausa, Ga, English and Twi. The themes of his songs include power and respect in inter-personal and inter-ethnic relationships, issues of everyday life and development for Ghana and Africa generally as well as romantic love and spirituality.