

LEBO M BIOGRAPHY

Grammy-award winner, Oscar nominated producer/song-writer, choral master, humanitarian...Lebo M is all those things, but is best known as the voice and spirit of THE LION KING. A native of South Africa, Lebo was first recognized as the only African working on Disney's smash feature film sensation, 'The Lion King' during the fall of apartheid.

Ironically, it was Lebo that brought the insatiable spirit of Nelson Mandela's endurance of a 27-year prison sentence to rule his country through the music that told the same story about a lion returning to Pride Rock. After an oppressive childhood in the notorious ghetto of Soweto, it's no mistake that this profound story of overcoming became an entire body of work for him.

His start was rough, but his large dreams carried him from being a 9-year old performing in smoky homeland nightclubs to Los Angeles, where he begged on street corners, cleaned church floors and worked at the famous double arches, until he finally landed on the doorsteps of Quincy Jones, famed composer Hans Zimmer and Disney.

Lebo M is critically acclaimed for his creation of some of the most moving and resonant music to pass the ears of modern audiences. He is deftly talented at putting together an incredibly rich menagerie of voices, chants, instruments and melody.

An original cast member of the Broadway debut of THE LION KING, Lebo put his performing hat aside to compose the stage renditions of the play in New York, Tokyo, Osaka, London, Toronto, Los Angeles, Germany, The National Touring Company (Houston and San Francisco) and now Australia.

His credits for work as an arranger, performer and producer include the feature films DINOSAUR, THE LION KING and RETURN TO PRIDE ROCK for Disney; THE POWER OF ONE, BACK ON THE BLOCK, LISTEN UP; THE LIFE OF QUINCY JONES, and OUTBREAK for Warner Bros.; MADE IN AMERICA, CONGO, BORN TO BE WILD for Paramount; LONG NIGHT'S JOURNEY INTO DAY, winner of Best Documentary at The Sundance Film Festival, and Academy Award nominee for Iris Films; and TEARS OF THE SUN, with Bruce Willis for Sony Pictures (collaboration with Hans Zimmer).

Lebo has performed at the Rain Forest Benefit concert at Carnegie Hall alongside Sting and Elton John; the Academy Awards; and performed with a 100-piece choir in Kosovo in 1999 to honor Vanessa Redgrave and her project Kthimi to inspire and bring hope to the people; The Essence Awards; the Montreaux Jazz Festival with Randy Crawford and Tony Bennett, and has been honored by Artists For A New South Africa while performing for Archbishop Desmond Tutu.

With three albums under his belt, 12 feature films, an Ivor Novello song writing award, a Grammy, A Tony and an Oscar nomination, a golden note reputation with Disney and a fan club, Lebo returned to South Africa for the first time since he was exiled in 1979. He built his dream house for his family and now splits his time between the two farthest points on the globe, Johannesburg and Los Angeles. In the New South Africa, Lebo has launched Till Dawn Entertainment, a record company with a mandate to bring as much fresh African talent to the U.S. and American talent to Africa.

Lebo's contribution to THE LION KING and to upliftment in his home country, continues from South Africa where he regularly holds auditions in all corners of the country to out source raw African talent which has resulted in a minimum of 8 South African cast members (per show) becoming part of the Disney family.

Lebo established the Lebo M Foundation in 2000 (earlier known as the Karabo Foundation) to provide resources to ensure a better quality of life for those who are disadvantaged. The foundation's main areas of focus include Child Welfare, HIV/AIDS and Housing. The foundation was supported by Quincy Jones's "Listen Up Foundation" and "Artists For A New South Africa." The Lebo M Foundation has to date invested more than half a million rand towards MAAPSA (Musicians, Artists, Assistance Program of South Africa) and raised nearly R70,000 through Party For A Purpose events, for Variety Club.

This hard working and gifted artist launched "Celebrate 10 yrs." in 2003, a South African Music Awards nominated CD single featuring luminaries such as Hugh Masekela, Tsepo Tshola, All 4 One, Rebecca Malope and some of South Africa's sparkling and young talents including hip-hop group Skwatta Kamp, TK, Thando, Stagga, Stoan of Bongo Maffin and Phinda Mtya. The song was also performed in France in 2004 at Euro Disney, thanking the people for their support and contribution to South Africa's 10th year of democracy. □