



**new album release Oct 2019**  
**Saraba Sufiyana - Mystic Utopia (KoniCD011)**

**PRESS**

*Congratulations, it is a great, great album. Thanks for the music!*  
(Enrique Helguera: Radio Nacional de España RTVE)

*13 years in and still improving on that global remit, Rafiki Jazz deliver a magical and rich fourth LP. Devotional music at its most captivating and entrancing.*  
(Dom Valvona: Monolith Cocktail #079)

*An immediate sense of the world united in music, breaking down barriers and borders with aplomb, versed in a rich mixture of Urdu, Hebrew, Mandinka and Hindi, it's a triumph of empathy and unity featuring a multitude of voices and vibrant instrumentation*  
(Allan Wilkinson: Northern Sky)

*Music of the spirit, and full of life, dance, emotion and laughter, delivering another intoxicating musical trip. The music is sublime, but the power in these songs of home, with their imagery of hardship and beauty, is in the twining of stories and voices. This album is consistently a stunning roller coaster ride through lyrical, musical and vocal soundscapes*  
*Vital, affirming music!*  
(Marc Higgins: Fatea Records)

*From Sheffield to the World, it's fresh and dynamic and very exciting. The eloquence of the musical interplay (steelpan, kora, darbuka, oud, berimbau and a myriad other instruments) is a joy to listen to.*  
(Garth Cartwright: Songlines #154)

*Rafiki Jazz play a global folk music of alluring, esoteric, dream-like songs. The musicianship is superb, the vocals haunting, the overall effect exquisite.*  
(Henrik Endor: Prole Jazz)

**ONSTAGE**

*'A truly spellbinding performance & my WOMAD 2018 highlight'*  
(Katharina Herrman E-FESTIVALS)

*'Brilliant in musicality and transcendent in sound'* (Rhythm Passport at WOMAD)



## 2020 BIO

### **'Rafiki Jazz..the best of British' (Songlines:Top of the World)**

[www.rafikijazz.co.uk](http://www.rafikijazz.co.uk)

A big group of star musicians & singers from Africa, India, the Middle East, South America & Europe, bound together on a mission to share their *sweeping divine borderless music*.

*Rafiki Jazz* in 2020 celebrate the start of the new decade with their 4th album release *Saraba Sufiyana* (Mystic Utopia) which blurs the lines of the sacred & secular to produce a magical and rich visionary songbook, described as *a filmic panoramic beauty*, featuring *music of the spirit, full of life, dance, emotion and joy!*

Onstage UK-wide & internationally since 2007, here are the voices & stories of inspirational *Sufi* soul singer *Sarah Yaseen*, griot singer & kora player *Kodialy Kouyate* and Egyptian master-musician *Mina Salama*, soaring above the band's thrilling cross-continental instrumental mixes. *Rafiki Jazz* are renowned for their glittering soundscapes where West African *kora* meets Brazilian *berimbau*, Arabic *oud* duels with Indian violin, *bansuri* & *tabla*, and at the core their compelling grooves of *hi-life* guitar, Caribbean *steelpan* & deep electric bass.

Live shows migrate you to distant lands and bring you close to our urban roots in a musical zone full of possibility & promise. *#Rafikian* songs are powerful & absorbing, drawing on global folk music's archives: they touch you in trance & devotion, shake us up with new languages, and offer sound advice, old news and good news in their social commentaries and heritage tales.

#### Albums:

2019 '*Saraba Sufiyana*' (KoniCD011) is their fourth live-recorded studio album which has a big & emotional vocal presence in its utopian vision of a musical 4<sup>th</sup> World, and features guest singers including Nancy Kerr & Kaitlin Ross from the new English & Gaelic folk scene.

2017 '*Har Dam Sahara*' (Riverboat TUGCD1106) is a compelling third live-recorded studio album of rich grooves reworking devotional music & texts from South Asian & West African Sufi traditions and Coptic & Hebrew liturgy

2014 '*At Kriol Junction*' (KoniCDE010) is a second live-recorded studio album of driving cross-continental soundtracks powered by multi-language texts from the International Declaration of Human Rights & features guest singers & rappers from Iran, Kurdistan, Bangladesh & Zimbabwe.

2009 '*More Big Muzik from Over There*' (KoniCD009) their powerful live-recorded debut studio album mixes up global roots music & features original *#Rafikians* Mim Suleiman, Juldeh Camara, Kodialy Kouyate & Kuda Matimba

Audio: <https://soundcloud.com/rafiki-jazz/albums>

Videos:

RAFIKI JAZZ 2020 (PROMO) <https://vimeo.com/389236600>

RAFIKI JAZZ UPCLOSE (TRAILER) <https://vimeo.com/394141733>

RAFIKI JAZZ LIVE <https://vimeo.com/339127150>

RAFIKI JAZZ AT WORK <https://vimeo.com/318219043>

RAFIKI JAZZ RECORDING <https://vimeo.com/318228071>

Onstage:

Sarah Yaseen: Urdu & Punjabi vocals, ektara, percussion

Mina Mikhail Salama: Coptic & Arabic vocals, oud, ney, saz

Kadialy Kouyate: Mandinka & Wolof vocals, kora, sabar

Cath Carr: guitar, steelpans

Tony Koni: bass guitar, sabar

Johnny Ball: tabla, derbuka

Guery Tibirica: berimbau, pandeiro, gumbé

Vijay Venkat: Carnatic violin, bansuri

Guests:

Kaitlin Ross: Gaelic vocals

Nancy Kerr: English vocals

Juan Gabriel Gutierrez: Colombian throat & overtone vocals

Socials <https://twitter.com/rafikijazz> <https://www.facebook.com/rafikijazz>

<https://www.instagram.com/rafikijazz>

Stream <https://open.spotify.com/artist/6W2UHPeUPXDs1cWnpDQ9Av>

Video <https://vimeo.com/rafikijazz>



## STORY

**Rafiki Jazz** celebrate unity in diversity with a unique shape-shifting sound  
(Riverboat Records)

Rooted in modern Britain yet inspired by ancient musical traditions both near and far, the Rafiki Jazz third album release '*Har Dam Sahara*' (Riverboat) was a love-letter to this intricate world in all its beauty and complexity '*an elegant, mesmerising album of world devotional songs*' (Robin Denselow: *The Guardian*), whilst their Oct 2019 release '*Saraba Sufiyana*' (*Mystic Utopia*) brings even more joyous & deep music from the heart.

Founded in Sheffield in 2006 Rafiki Jazz bring together adventurous regional roots and jazz artists with gifted musicians with migrant and refugee backgrounds. United by a vision to make music in an accessible style that transcends cultural & language boundaries, their sound is fresh but traditional, and expresses the power and beauty of difference.

With nine band members spanning five continents' music & culture, they seamlessly combine the sounds of an array of some of the world's most iconic folk instruments. Onstage you'll see & hear West African kora, Caribbean steelpan, Indian violin, tabla, & bansuri flute, Brazilian berimbau, and Arabic ney and oud...and this is just their rhythm section!

Voices and world languages are the true heart of the *#Rafikian* sound, woven together by the inspirational frontline singing of Sufi Sarah Yaseen, Egyptian Coptic maestro Mina Salama and Senegalese griot Kadialy Kouyate. Recording and touring projects often include guest vocalists from the international folk & roots scene, & their latest album features moving contributions from English folk icon Nancy Kerr, Gaelic rising star Kaitlin Ross, & Colombian shamanic overtone chanter Juan Gabriel Gutierrez.

After over a decade of recording and touring adventures, 2020 sees the band's determination to build further on music as a powerful commentary on contemporary issues of migration, social change and human rights, through compelling boundary-hopping performances of their trademark *#FourthWorldMusic*. Once experienced live, there's a clear, immensely memorable and heartwarming pleasure generated..as much from feeling the rough and robust Yorkshire northern grit that binds Rafiki Jazz together as an ensemble & working team, as from recognising the power & spirit of culture & virtuosity, globalism & faith, that flows from these *#Rafikian*'s individual musical roots.

*Rafiki Jazz* are proud to have had repeat project & touring awards from Arts Council England, PRS Foundation, and the Arts & Humanities Research Council enabling continuing UK-wide touring & creative work, & have performed at many festivals including *Transcender*, *London African Music Festival*, *Guy Garvey's Meltdown*, *Celebrating Sanctuary* (all London UK), *WOMAD* (Charlton Park UK), *10 Days on the Island* (Tasmania) & *Mundial Montreal* (Canada). Live broadcasts include from *BBC Taster TV* (Great Northern Soundtracks Festival UK) & *BBC R3 World on 3* (WOMAD, BBC Folk Night)

They distil the meaning of their name as *Rafiki* (Swahili) for 'Friends' and *Jazz* for 'Freedom'

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