

"If there has to be a definition
of world music, this is it"

Andy Kershaw BBC



African rhythm – Celtic soul

baka beyond

Since the release of the groundbreaking "Spirit of the Forest" in 1993 Baka Beyond has evolved into a dynamic, multi-cultural live show which has played all over the world. From Brazil to Alaska, Norway to Spain, audiences have been enthralled by haunting Celtic harmony singing, drawn into the Cameroon rainforest by traditional forest yodelling (Yelli), and danced their socks off to irresistible African rhythms.

The touring core, based in UK, hails from Nigeria, Ghana, Congo, Cornwall, Wales and Northumberland. Together they create a unique and vibrant sound that fuses delicate guitar lines with African rhythms and heavyweight Congolese bass. Mix in some stunning vocals and a positive message of global unity and indigenous rights and you have a stage show second to none. Audiences emerge inspired and energised.

Baka Beyond has headlined many festivals such as Edmonton in Canada to 20,000 people, but they still love the intimacy of playing theatres and art centres. They have played one of the world's biggest music festivals, Glastonbury, a total of 16 times! Every gig has a sense of fun that turns a concert into an uplifting, inclusive party.

Baka Beyond was founded by Martin Cradick (co-founder of Outback) in 1990 after a 3 month visit to Cameroon with singer wife Su Hart. There they began a lifelong musical friendship with a group of Baka Pygmy hunter-gatherers deep in the rain forest. The trip inspired the award winning debut album "Spirit of the Forest" in 1993, which helped to define the term "World music" and pushed Baka Beyond into worldwide recognition.

To date they have recorded 7 studio albums and several live, including "Baka Live" (recorded whilst touring the UK with 7 Baka musicians) and "Live and Pedal-Powered" (on the audience-powered Rinky Dink Sound System). The earlier studio albums had guest artists recorded either "on location" in Africa or in Martin's studio in Bath, whilst they were visiting the UK.



for special gigs / tours Paddy Le Mercier (Brittany, France) joins us on violin and bombarde

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By the time the acclaimed "Sogo" was recorded (2000) some of the best African musicians resident in England had joined the band. Each album explores the mixing of diverse musical cultures in new ways. The Baka's gentle yet driving forest rhythms that create unity and co-operation in forest life, bind together and resonate through the music of Baka Beyond. The 8th album (released 2011) features the current 5 piece touring band: Nii Tagoe (Ghana) drums, percussion and vocals; Molara (UK/Nigeria) on amazing vocals; Kibisongo Douglas (Congo) bass; with Martin and Su.

Baka Beyond believes in giving back to the source of their inspiration, they call it "cultural fair trade". Royalties are returned through the charity Global Music Exchange (www.1heart.org) either directly to individual musicians, or for sustainable projects decided within the Baka community. A large performance space has been built, as well as work in health and education. With the forest and therefore their lifestyle under threat, it helps that the Baka music is appreciated and nurtured worldwide.

EDUCATIONAL WORKSHOPS

The Baka have initiated Su and Martin into their music and have asked that they spread the culture beyond the forest. Su (a trained teacher) has worked in schools at all levels, with choirs, in the community, at festivals and in prisons. They also run Baka culture camps together and teach at university level. Workshops with the band and a showing of Martin's forest films can run alongside gigs.

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"Keeping still is only an option for the dead, or those captivated by the sheer joy of it all"
Edmonton Festival Canada

"Amazing vocals, powerful percussion, fiery fiddle"
National Geographic Washington USA

"seamlessly woven together to create something new and unique..a ferocious blend of Celtic and African traditions, the highlight of the weekend"
Floydfest Virginia USA



"One of the UK's very finest danceable bands... the energy of the band, let alone the crowd, was astonishing, Baka Beyond is a guaranteed good night out"
Bristol Rocks UK



ABOVE:
a happy Baka Beyond audience in London, UK

baka beyond

FOR MORE INFO
www.baka.co.uk or www.1heart.org