



## Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars

### *Radio Salone*

(April 24, 2012; Cumbancha)



"Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars share experiences of violence, loss and the tedium of life in the camps. But when they make music together, something unexpected emerges: buoyant grooves and fierce optimism." – *NPR*

"...their music emanates a life-affirming positivity." – *BBC*

"...they still have something to teach the world." – *Paste*

The globally acclaimed **Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars** return with their third studio album, *Radio Salone*, out **April 24, 2012**, on CD and limited-edition 2LP vinyl via Cumbancha. Produced by roots reggae, soul and Afrobeat guru **Victor Axelrod, aka Ticklah**, (Sharon Jones and The Dap-Kings, Amy

Winehouse, Easy Star All Stars, Antibalas) and recorded in Brooklyn's **Dunham Studios**, *Radio Salone* marks the band's most musically sophisticated collection of songs to date. The album is the follow-up to the band's 2010 album *Rise & Shine*, which was the **#1 of the year on the World Music Charts Europe**.

Out of dark times, **Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars** have always made music rife with hopeful messages and joyful rhythms. *Radio Salone* is no different, but this time it feels like a milestone album for the group. When they stepped into the studio for the *Radio Salone* sessions, they began laying down tracks with a definitive vintage African vibe, connecting traditional West African sounds with roots reggae in ways that they had never before explored. Employing analog technology, the band used mid-70s era microphones and 16-track tapes. With the limited takes that tape imposes on the recording process, there was often just one chance to create perfection. But perfection to this band means embracing unplanned nuances, allowing the visceral qualities of music to shine, letting the process play out in real time. The mics don't shut off between the album's tracks – an invitation to the listener to join the band on their creative journey.

Having persevered through the horrors of the Sierra Leonean civil war, band leader **Reuben Koroma** and the group continue to musically evolve in exciting ways, well past their jam sessions in the Guinean refugee camps and the rawness of their first recordings in their native capital of Freetown. The songs are infused with intricate dub elements not found in their earlier material and interludes are featured as part of the album flow for the first time. From the hollow echoes of the congoma (also known as the marimba – a percussion instrument with wooden keys and resonators) in album opener "**Chant It Down**" to the bubbling rhythm of lead single "**Mother In Law**" to the irresistible hook of "**Big Fat Dog**," there are thrilling discoveries around every corner. While the band initially gained fame through the power of their story and message, Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars have since become one of Africa's most active touring bands, and the years of experience are reflected in the virtuosity of their performance on *Radio Salone*.



The album title references “Salone” – meaning “Sierra Leone” in the native language of Krio – in which the band sings (along with five other languages) on the new album. The radio theme appears throughout the album artwork and reflects the impact that radio has long had on the band. In the pre-TV and Internet days, radio served as the musical connection to the rest of Africa and the world. Long before the war, members of the band were exposed to vintage reggae, Congolese *soukous*, American soul, and much more. During the war, radio served as an essential escape from the harsh reality of the refugee camps, bringing news and music.

2012 is the 10-year anniversary of the end of the Sierra Leone civil war that ravaged the nation and a look back brings a new appreciation for the story of **Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars**. After a compelling 2005 documentary about the band’s post-war journey skyrocketed them to a global platform, their story and music was soon inspiring fans worldwide. Since then they have garnered praise from the likes of the *New York Times*, *NPR*, *BBC*, *CNN*, *LA Times*, *PBS*, *Billboard* and more. They appeared on *The Oprah Winfrey Show*, opened for **Aerosmith**, contributed to the *Blood Diamond* film soundtrack, and participated in the U2 tribute album *In the Name of Love: Africa Celebrates U2*. They have built a loyal fan base with extensive touring and festival performances both in the States and abroad, winning over audiences with their engaging and vibrant performances. The likes of **Paul McCartney**, **Keith Richards**, **Joe Perry**, **Ice Cube** and **Angelina Jolie** have sung their praises. From the ashes of war, **Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars** have risen like a phoenix to become one of the most lauded African bands in the world.

The band will be touring North America from May until August, including an appearance alongside Michael Franti, Hot Buttered Rum, Dumpstaphunk and others at the **The Gaia Festival** August 3-5 at Laytonville, CA’s **Black Oak Ranch**. For tour updates, visit [www.sierraleonesrefugeeallstars.com](http://www.sierraleonesrefugeeallstars.com).

**Radio Salone Official Tracklisting:**

1. Chant It Down
2. Gbara Case
3. Mother In Law
4. Goombay Interlude - Rain Come Sun Come
5. Reggae Sounds The Message
6. Mampama
7. Kali
8. Goombay Interlude - Papa Franco
9. Man Muyu
10. Toman Teti M’Ba Akala - (How Would They Know That You Have Money?)
11. Big Fat Dog
12. Goombay Interlude - Shake Your Body
13. Yesu Gorbu (At Jesus’ Feet)
14. Work It Brighter
15. Remake The World Again
16. Goombay Interlude - A’Salamaleichem

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