



CENTER FOR WORLD MUSIC

AND RELATED ARTS



Cosmas Magaya

Cosmas Magaya taught and performed Shona mbira music for the Center for World Music in 1998 as part of an extended tour of the United States. A Shona mbira virtuoso, he was born and raised in the rural areas of Mhondoro-Ngezi in Rhodesia (modern Zimbabwe). Cosmas played a major role in the research of the distinguished American ethnomusicologist Paul Berliner, particularly in the books *The Soul of Mbira* (1978) and *The Art of Mbira* (2019), the last of which Cosmas coauthored with Berliner along with two accompanying volumes of notated transcriptions entitled *Mbira's Restless Dance* (2020). Cosmas performed mbira on the accompanying recordings, released as *The Soul of Mbira* on Nonesuch Records. He also performed internationally in Europe and the United States with the group Mhuri Yekwa Rwizi and the Zimbabwe Group Leaders Mbira Ensemble, which featured Hakurotwi Mude, Beauler Dyoko, Chaka Chawasarira, Simon Magaya, and Paul Berliner.

Aside from his career-long focus on the traditional repertoire of the ancient mbira dzavadzimu (“mbira of the ancestors”), Cosmas served as program director for Nhimbe for Progress, a non-profit organization serving impoverished villagers in the Mhondoro region of Zimbabwe. In addition, he served on the Board of Directors of Tariro, a grassroots non-profit organization in Zimbabwe dedicated to preventing the spread of HIV/AIDS through the education of young women and girls. Cosmas also served as the village head of Magaya/Zvidzai Village under Chief Nherera of Mhondoro.