

## Johnny Dyani – Mbizo (1981)

Written by bluesever

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1. *Dorkay House (D. Pukwana) (11:48)*
2. *House Arrest (J. Dyani) (11:15)*
3. *Musician's Musician (J. Dyani) (19:10)*
4. *Dedicated to Mingus (J. Dyani) (5:55)*

Personnel:

Dudu Pukwana (alto saxophone, soprano saxophone)

Ed Epstein (alto saxophone, baritone saxophone)

Johnny Dyani (bass)

Churchill Jolobe (drums)

A live quartet date, Mbizo has the nice, relaxed feel of a warm concert in an intimate setting with the musicians at liberty to stretch out as they please. The final piece is a dedication to Charles Mingus and there's a similar vibe to records like Charles Mingus Presents Charles Mingus with Eric Dolphy and Ted Curson, albeit perhaps not up to that stellar level. The songs vary from lively burners like "Dorkay House," all township strut, to brooding, gorgeously bitter dirges as etched in the bleakly titled "House Arrest." Dyani was one of the strongest, most purely musical bassists in the music up to his untimely death in 1986, and he grounds his group here with rich, pulsating support and imaginative compositions, as well as offering a lovely solo on "Musician's Musician." Indeed, few musicians played with such a unique combination of scornful bitterness and loving appreciation of small moments of beauty as did Dyani. His stalwart companion, fellow South African expatriate Dudu Pukwana, is in fine form, liquid and fiery, as is the lesser-known Ed Epstein, especially on baritone sax. Mbizo is one of a string of fine albums recorded by Dyani in the several years prior to his death and is well worth hearing by virtually any jazz fan. ---Brian Olewnick, Rovi

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