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# **Gino Sitson**

## **Vocalist – Composer - Producer**

A vocal virtuoso from Cameroon

"Sitson is a stunningly versatile vocalist with a cunning imagination and a seemingly endless capacity to create colorfully layered vocal sounds" - Los Angeles Times

Pre-Nominated for the GRAMMY AWARDS 2008  
Cultural Arts Ambassador 2006, Miami, Florida  
Los Angeles Times's best of 2002 (top ten jazz CDs)  
"Parents Choice Silver Medal Honor Award" 2004  
Nominated for the KORA AWARDS 2003 (Best Artist)  
(The equivalent in Africa of the American "Grammy Awards")  
Nominated for the RFI Awards ("Decouvertes RFI") 2000  
Member of the Chamber Music America  
Member of the American Society for Ethnomusicology

[www.myspace.com/ginositson](http://www.myspace.com/ginositson)  
[www.ginositson.com](http://www.ginositson.com)

### Biography

Award-winning, New York-based vocal virtuoso Gino Sitson is from the Bamileke region of Cameroon, Central Africa. His family comes from a long line of musicians known as Ntontas ("players of horns") and his mother is a vocalist and choir director. He and his siblings were introduced to blues, jazz and African traditional music early in life.

Mr. Sitson is a pioneer of a new generation of multi-culturally influenced African musicians who are integrating into their musical styles their own exciting yet bewildering welter of "in-between" living experiences (north/south, tradition/modernity, 20th/21st century). His daring musical project combines in a most innovative way jazz, gospel, blues and traditional African polyphonic rhythms and melodies. By freely combining his trademark vocal acrobatics with a breathtakingly creative command of oral and body percussions and miscellaneous effects, Mr. Sitson forged an eloquent vocabulary capable of communicating far beyond any limits of language or custom. Through his vocal wizardry, he stunningly creates an endless range of sounds and atmospheres. Sitson's seamless four-octave range travels from a soulful, resonantly masculine tenor with woodwind-like overtones to a high-soaring, nearly genderless spiritual wail, a feat that recalls Brazil's Milton Nascimento, another deep-rooted yet restlessly protean, jazz-inflected shape-changer.

Gino Sitson's four-octave voice plus his skills as a composer and arranger put him in high demand for recording sessions and for commercials and radio / television jingles (Danone, Dim, Peugeot, Vahine, etc). The versatile young vocalist performed in a musical and co-composed part of the music (Jeanne et le Garçon Formidable).

He has laid down tracks or shared the stage with Manu Dibango, Ron Carter, Papa Wemba, Wally Badarou, John Scofield, Geri Allen, David Gilmore, Haruko Nara, Bobby McFerrin, Frank Wess, Ray Lema, Craig Harris, James Hurt, Antoine Roney, John William, Mario Canonge, Wallace Roney, Brice Wassy, Oliver NGoma, Exile One, Steve Potts, So Why? (Featuring Youssou NDour, Papa Wemba, Wally Badarou, Jabu Khanyile & Bayete, Lourdes Van-Dunem, and Lucky Dube), La Compagnie Creole, among others.

In 2008, Mr. Sitson was invited by Bobby McFerrin to join him on a PBS documentary ("THE MUSIC INSTINCT: SCIENCE & SONG") and to take part in a special project that took place at the Carnegie Hall ("Instant Opera"). A member of Chamber Music America, he is regularly engaged for movie scores and commercials. He made several TV appearances and has composed music for the noted children's TV show, Dora The Explorer (Nickelodeon). Since 2006, Mr. Sitson is a Cultural Arts ambassador for the city of Miami (Florida).

Meanwhile, his international career continues apace. He has received "Parents Choice Silver Medal Honor Award" in 2004 and nominations from the WMCE (World Music Chart Europe), the RFI Awards 2000. His recent output includes soundtracks to Betrayal (Kevin Ngooh) and Blue Lotus (Dayo Ayodele); jingles for France Television and France 3; an ongoing collaboration with his German-based brother, vocalist-composer-percussionist-actor Njamy Sitson ([www.myspace.com/njamysitson](http://www.myspace.com/njamysitson)).

Mr. Sitson performed at the Carnegie Hall with his own group in 2008.

Aside from musical performances, Gino leads vocal workshops served by his amazing vocal technique, his musical knowledge and his desire to share his love for vocal explorations. Gino has developed workshops for professional as well as non-professional singers, and also for children.

Gino Sitson is a member of the American Society for Ethnomusicology.

"Way To Go" (2009)

Way To Go is New-York based Cameroonian vocal virtuoso Gino Sitson's fourth solo album. In the past, Gino Sitson has divided his albums between a cappella songs and orchestrated tracks. On his new album, Way To Go, Sitson has chosen to put his long-time quartet centre stage, performing material he developed in close collaboration with his musicians.

Gino Sitson

voice, body percussion, compositions

Helio Alves

piano

Lonnie Plaxico

Double bass

Willard Dyson

drums

"Bamisphere": a Tribute to Cameroon's Bamileke Culture

BAMISPHERE is New-York based Cameroonian vocal virtuoso GINO SITSON's third solo album.

Featuring Ron Carter (double bass), Jeff "Tain" Watts (drums), Essiet Essiet (double bass), and Helio Alves (piano), the album consists of a dozen all-new tunes composed by Sitson and sung in Medumba, a dialect of his native Bamileke language.

Sitson's trademark polyphonic vocals and breathtakingly creative command of oral and body percussion effects have sometimes evoked comparisons to Al Jarreau, Bobby McFerrin and the Euro-Congolese vocal group, Zap Mama. But closer examination reveals that he is actually drawing upon a far broader palette of sounds, much of it absorbed while growing

up in Cameroon. His music incorporates everything from dizzyingly convoluted pygmy chorales to sophisticated makossa dance hits to pan-African grooves, plus selected European and American cabaret and jazz influences.

On Bamisphere, Sitson the composer has fashioned a diverse yet suavely cohesive, blissfully lovely set of tunes. In the hands of four of the finest musicians now working on the New York jazz scene, his melodies are revealed as masterpieces of sophisticated artlessness. Spluttering organic ambiences and weightless vocal acrobatics dissolve into childlike strophes, serialist constructions, jazzy explorations, a cappella African village chants or even astringent harmonies reminiscent of Brian Wilson's 'Smile'. Sitson's lyrics address such universal themes as discrimination, tolerance, friendship, freedom, simplicity as a coveted ideal and trustful prayers for guidance. On a more intimate level, Sitson's songs are derived from changes in his personal life, both joyous (the birth of his daughter) and tragic (his brother's untimely passing). But what makes his message immediately and continually compelling is the voice. Sitson's seamless four-octave range travels from a soulful, resonantly masculine tenor with woodwind-like overtones to a high-soaring, nearly genderless spiritual wail, a feat that recalls Brazil's Milton Nascimento, another deep-rooted yet restlessly protean, jazz-inflected shape-changer

### **The Music**

Gino Sitson is the only vocalist who is incorporating African polyphonic techniques into the improvisational jazz vocalese tradition. Through his vocal wizardry and 4 octaves, he stunningly creates an endless range of sounds. Sitson's daring musical project combines with maturity jazz, gospel, blues and traditional African rhythms and melodies in a most innovative way. His lyrics are mostly sung in Medumba, one of the numerous Bamileke languages of Cameroon.

Sitson is a pioneer of a new generation of multi-culturally influenced African musicians who are integrating into their musical styles their own exciting yet bewildering welter of "in-between" living experiences (north/south, tradition/modernity, 20th/21st century).

By freely combining his trademark vocal acrobatics with astonishingly creative body percussions and miscellaneous effects, Mr. Sitson forged an eloquent vocabulary capable of communicating far beyond any limits of language or custom. Experiencing the body and the voice as an endless musical resource: that's what Gino wants to share.

Mr. Sitson has come to exemplify a kind of life where loved ones are spread out among the continents. For this musical nomad, home will always be more about people than places and authenticity is as much about where he is going as where he's been.

### **Master classes & vocal workshops**

Aside from musical performances, Gino leads vocal workshops served by his amazing vocal technique, his musical knowledge and his desire to share his love for vocal explorations. Gino has developed workshops for professional as well as non-professional singers, and also for children.

An exploration of the voice connecting traditional African polyphonies and polyrhythmics with jazz.

In Africa, polyphonic singing is used for major events in everybody's life, from birth to death.

\* Voicing the body \*

Experience the voice and the body in the most innovative way; as an endless musical resource.

Learn to create innovative sounds with the voice and the body

Work on improvised and original songs

Listen and analyse polyphonies and polyrhythmies from different African regions

Learn the complexity of African rhythms through singing (4/4, 6/8, 12/8, 5/4, 13/8...)

Experiencing these rhythms with your body will help express them with the voice

Identify the polyrhythmic elements in the song

Identify the polyphonies elements (scales...)

In New York, Gino Sitson has conducted successful workshops in:

- Museum for African Art (children & adults)
  - New South Bronx Center (children)
  - University Settlement / United Neighborhood Houses of New York (children)
  - New York Cares, P.S 192 (children & adults)
  - West Park Presbyterian Church (adults)
  - LONG ISLAND UNIVERSITY(NYC)
  - THE NEW SCHOOL UNIVERSITY
  - Borough Of Manhattan Community College(guest speaker + performance) NYC
  - Florida Memorial University(MIAMI)
  - Columbia University...
- etc.

Abroad:

- UNIVERSITY OF PANAMA
  - CREOLE BLUES FESTIVAL Guadeloupe- French West Indies
  - PORT OF SPAIN, TRINIDAD, JAPANESE EMBASSY
  - PUERTO RICO CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC, SAN JUAN, PUERTO RICO
  - Akbank Sanat Culture Centrum (Istanbul, Turkey)
  - Hot Brass Jazz Club (Avignon, France)
  - REMY Festival (Yaounde, Cameroon)
  - Liezen Music School(Austria)
- etc.

Selected reviews (USA)

MIAMI NEWS TIME

Describing Gino Sitson, the Cameroonian-born singer who now resides in New York, as an African Bobby McFerrin might give listeners a clue as to the vocal acrobatics that define his sound, but it wouldn't quite do justice to the broadness of his palette. On Sitson's new Song 'Zin, the singer is accompanied most of the time by a jazz quartet that swings ably while Sitson impresses in a more traditional role -- that of a singer fronting a band, albeit one who has a penchant for overdubbing layers of background vocals to sweeten things up. But those tracks pale in comparison to the handful on which Sitson is accompanied only by himself, through creative overdubs and some ingenious body percussion where Sitson generates polyrhythmic tapestries by slapping various body parts, kind of a collage of Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" mini-opera with an African percussion ensemble. It is here, on tunes like "Vocassiko," "Pretty C" (where he impressively simulates the crashing of ocean waves), and "Ngoyak," that Sitson's extraordinary talent shines through. BY EZRA GALE May 2, 2002

ALL MUSIC GUIDE \*\*\*\* ½

He's someone who loves and caresses every note. Whether you can understand his words or not, the meaning is always abundantly clear from his tone."

ROOTS WORLD

The meditative virtuosity of Sitson's solo work is clear, and his voice conveys a pristine, complex instrumental tonality

JAZZ REVIEW.COM

Gino Sitson is a young jazz vocalist from Africa, singing mostly in his native Bamileke language. Born in Cameroon, he studied music and languages in Paris, France, where he also studied ethnomusicology, an important scientific branch of anthropology which focuses on the role of music in cultures. He is to Africa and Cameroon what Bobby McFerrin and Al Jarreau are to USA jazz. An entertaining performer with a unique style of delivery, he will find a large listening audience in the USA...

ALLMUSIC.COM

Gino Sitson has a soul brother in singer Al Jarreau. The Cameroonian and the American seem to share a particular bond in their tastes, world views, and the ways they make music. For both, the voice is the thing, the ways it can be used, and how the body itself can be a musical instrument. And like his more famous counterpart, Sitson is a master at what he does. Performing alone, as on the glowing "Complex City," or fronting a small jazz group, as he does for much of Song 'Zin..., he's someone who loves and caresses every note. Whether you can understand his words or not, the meaning is always abundantly clear from his tone. But his voice isn't his only instrument...

[www.tucsoncitizen.com](http://www.tucsoncitizen.com)

If the phrase "incorporating indigenous African polyphonic techniques into the jazz vocalese tradition" doesn't scare you, grab onto this CD. Gino Stson is from the African country of Camaroon, singing mostly in his native Bamileke. But he has studied extensively in France and now lives in New York City. The Bamileke language is filled with vowel sounds, and, the way Sitson sings it, often seems like bebop sung with a French accent. Much more user-friendly than the musicologist's description above are the singer's own words in the liner notes: "I would like every person who listens to my album to breathe it, dance to it, smile, fly, feel peaceful."

Sitson also likes to provide little philosophical descriptions with each track. For the plaintive "Paper!" he wrote simply, "To people with no residence documents." For the slow and sustained "Bi Nyai" he provides the proverb, "An old person dying is like a library burning." To get an idea of the sound of this music, begin with the octave-leaping acrobatics of Bobby McFerrin and Al Jarreau. To these mind-stretching vocal gymnastics, add the elaborate rhythms that fill all African music. The part that is Sitson the musical philosopher is heard in his creations of charming additions to the body of song that belongs to today's border-crossing people around the world who live between cultures. Traditions of ancient tribal ways are being preserved on city sidewalks and in the sleeping rooms of tall buildings. This he does, modernizing the culture at the same time he preserves it.

There is no anger in this music. There is pride, hope, sadness and a viewpoint expressed in the track "400 Years After" as "The story of the enslavement of a people which still continues 400 years later ... A people that would like to be apologized to as well." Musically, this is a crisp and bright production. Every track is layered with overdubs sung by Sitson. He provides bass beats, strums chords, and adds "miscellaneous effects and backing vocals." Four other singers and seven instrumentalists also take part. Without ever understanding a word of what is being sung, repeat listeners will continue to find delightful discoveries. Chuck Graham

GINO SITSON: a Cameroonian U.S.O. in New York / By Myriem Wong ([www.rfimusic.com](http://www.rfimusic.com)), 2001

New York, April 4th, 2001 - Cameroonian singer Gino Sitson likes to describe himself as a U.S.O. (an Unidentified Singing Object) - and the impact he's made on the French jazz scene is certainly the size of a crater! After having made a name for himself on the Paris club scene, Sitson is now aiming his sights at the Big Apple. And, judging by the success of his recent show at New York's "Jazz Gallery", Sitson, who has just released his second album Song Zin'..., looks set to repeat his French success in the States.

The sidewalks of downtown New York lay shrouded beneath a thin layer of snow as I slipped and slid my way along to the "Jazz Gallery" on Friday night. As I clambered up the white-covered steps of the subway, I must admit I couldn't help wondering what the temperature was in downtown Cameroon at that very same moment. Shivering beneath my winter coat - and cursing the brass-monkey weather New York has been having this 'spring' - I made my way towards Hudson Street. Now, what was it the guy said on the phone, "Hudson Street's just below Spring Street" ... Ah, there I was at last: "The Jazz Gallery" !

Sitson's publicity manager, Jim Eigo, veteran of the jazz-record business for more than a quarter-century, had been resolutely upbeat on the phone. "Go on, be a sport, come along on Friday night and I promise you, you won't be disappointed. I swear, the guy's magic - a genie straight out of Aladdin's lamp!" Which was all very well, but when I finally arrived at "The Jazz Gallery" for Sitson's show, the musicians were still up on stage doing a sound check.

What on earth was going on? The concert was supposed to start at 9pm and there they all were in the middle of the room still rehearsing! Hmmm, I thought to myself, I feel a touch of amateurism coming on. I would have been better off tucked up at home in the warm watching a bit of late-night TV! Well, nothing to be done about it now, I thought to myself philosophically, whiling the time away studying the photos of legendary jazz stars plastered all over the "Gallery" walls.

I'd picked a good seat in any case, right under a black-and-white portrait of Bud Powell and on the wall opposite I could make out the faces of Oscar Peterson, Sonny Rollins et al. Then all of a sudden I heard a friendly voice beside me, "Hi! Do you speak French?" I looked up and saw an exuberant little man, dressed in an eye-catching red shirt with little round

spectacles (more Gandhi than John Lennon!) and a jaunty African cap perched on his head. There he stood, grinning from ear to ear, pumping my hand up and down. "Hi, I'm Gino Sitson! We'll be on any minute now. Hope we'll be sending good vibrations your way very soon!"

With that, I hardly had time to turn off my mobile phone before I heard the voice of the "Jazz Gallery" MC booming, "Ladies and gentlemen, please put your hands together and give a warm welcome to ... Gino Sitson!" The MC's announcement was greeted by a rather tentative round of applause and the man in the flamboyant red shirt took to the stage. The Cameroonian singer, who forged his reputation supporting big-time stars such as Manu Dibango, Papa Wemba, Youssou N'Dour and Jorge Ben, flashed his infectious grin and launched into his set. And all I can say is, if Gino Sitson performs anything like he did last Friday, I wish you all the chance of discovering him one snowy night in New York!

Gino was joined on stage by a close-knit quartet - piano, bass, drums and sax playing together in an extraordinary symbiosis. In fact, rarely have I seen such on-stage harmony between a singer and his band. Brought together from the four corners of France, New York and Navarre, Gino's musicians were solidarity personified and, thanks to their passion and professionalism, they filled the tiny "Jazz Gallery" with Cameroonian joy and bonhomie and a few much-needed rays of African sun.

Singing in Medumba, a dialect from his native Cameroon, Gino performed a wonderfully varied set, inviting the audience to get to their feet and dance to upbeat numbers like *Wô ou Wô* or sit back and listen as he sang the praises of his niece on *Lovely Dany Jo*. But it was his extraordinary final solo which really brought the house down. Flicking his fingers up and down the sides of his jaw, Gino provided his own musical accompaniment, turning himself into a human drum machine. And suddenly I found myself transported back in time to Bobby McFerrin's concert at the Isère Jazz Festival. Performing at the Théâtre Antique de Vienne in the pouring rain, McFerrin had wowed his drenched audience with a similar 'mouth drum' solo. Which bodes well for our Cameroonian Gino – believe me, this man is destined to be big!

Soaking up the heat generated by Gino's on-stage performance, I was just beginning to feel warm waves of happiness wash over me when the MC interrupted my reverie, shouting "Ladies and gentlemen, put your hands together and give a big thankyou to Gino Sitson!" Brought down to earth with a bump, I began rummaging around in my bag, trying to locate my keys, my taxi money and turn my mobile back on. Suddenly, I heard a warm, friendly voice beside me and looking up I found the same grinning, red-shirted fellow as before, asking "So, what did you think? Did you enjoy the show?"

What can I say? Like it? I loved it! And I have to admit, hearing Sitson's incredible vocals belting out beneath the New York skyscrapers on Friday night, I almost found myself believing that yes, miracles do exist!

After exchanging news on Manu (Dibango) and Youssou (N'Dour) and swapping e-mail addresses, I left Gino to get ready for his second set half-an-hour later. Hordes of jazz fans were already queuing at the door and as I made my way out onto the snow-covered New York sidewalk, I soaked up the last warm Cameroonian vibes drifting on the cold night air.

## **Selected Reviews**

### RFI MUSIQUE

Sortie française de Bamisphere, le troisième opus du Camerounais installé à New York. Virtuosité et liberté en sont les maîtres-mots. L'Afrique et le jazz y servent de prétexte pour un ultime numéro d'acrobatie vocale aux messages clairs et sans complexes aucuns. » / Soeuf Elbadawi

### JAZZMAN

« Gino Sitson s'affirme comme le plus talentueux des chanteurs africains dans le contexte du jazz. Virtuose dans l'art d'associer polyphonies pygmées, poly-rythmiques et polytonalités diverses à l'improvisation jazzistique, il réussit à définir un projet décidément original. (...) Sitson tient les promesses de "Vocal Deliria" et "Song Zin". Sensible à la pensée et à l'exemple d'hommes remarquables (Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, Charles Mingus), Sitson transmet en langue medumba ses messages de liberté, de tolérance, de justice, de créativité. (...) Portés par des acrobaties vocales, subtiles et ludiques... » / Francisco Cruz

### LOS ANGELES TIMES (Jazz Spotlight)

« Sitson is a stunningly versatile vocalist with a cunning imagination and a seemingly endless capacity to create colorfully layered vocal sounds (...) his music has evolved into a magical blending of traditional elements from his

native land and the urban swing of New York (...) the results are consistently compelling — producing more fascinating results with each hearing.» / Don Heckman

#### MONDOMIX

"There are few musicians who can come anywhere near Gino Sitson in vocal acrobatics and dexterity." / Daniel Brown

#### TIME OUT NEW YORK

"...is fast becoming a local phenomenon"

#### ALL MUSIC GUIDE \*\*\*\* 1/2

"he's someone who loves and caresses every note. Whether you can understand his words or not, the meaning is always abundantly clear from his tone." / Chris Nickson

#### ROOTS WORLD

"the meditative virtuosity of Sitson's solo work is clear, and his voice conveys a pristine, complex instrumental tonality" / Michael Stone

#### LOS ANGELES TIMES

"An extraordinarily pliable voice in settings rich with melody, emotion and rhythm...his gift for melody and his persuasive powers for interpretation establish an instant connection for listeners...always fascinating." / Don Heckman

### **Selected reviews (EUROPE)**

#### LE MONDE (France):

Gino Sitson is a real vocal acrobat: he sings with fabulous ease and obvious humor developing a register where African traditions come across jazz and blues. As a distinguished ethnomusicologist, Sitson has a rich and varied musical culture, as can be heard on his last album, "Song Zin'...". This musician from Cameroon has already been remarked with the famous Manu Dibango, Ray Lema, Papa Wemba, Steve Potts...

#### L'EXPRESS (France)

This young Cameroonian melodist with smiling eyes, elegant gestures and delirious vocal scansion, inbetween jazz, gospel and African music, amazed us with Vocal Deliria, his first album. Song Zin'..., his next CD, is another jewel full of lightness and humanity, visited by trained musicians (the West Indian pianist Mario Canonge, the Venezuelan percussionist Orlando Poléo, the French cellist Vincent Ségal) where Gino Sitson's subtle militant voice tells about his joy in life, but also his bitter sorrow at the history of Black people.

#### LE FIGARO (France)

Inventive, skilful, seducing, moving, the Cameroonian author-composer Gino Sitson, with surprising vocal performances and creativity, embodies the new ways in African singing.

#### NOVA MAGAZINE (France)

This young man from Cameroon - a revelation of the year - has an amazingly elastic voice and is as much inspired by the sounds of his equatorial forest as by the crazy scating singers in jazz.

#### TELERAMA (France)

Cameroonian inheritor of Al Jarreau and Bobby Mc Ferrin, Gino Sitson engages in vocal acrobatics, somewhere between jazz, gospel and African music.

The Newsletter of The French Music Export Office (world)

Issue #17 January June 2001

This Cameroonian artist is famous for his vocal wizardry: he stunningly imitates the sounds of the sax, trumpet, and bass. Don't skip over this gem of a song!

POPKOMM Festival (Germany)

This edition has broken all records for attendance with more than 17 000 visitors from 50 countries (...) Many showcases of French electronica artists were given throughout the city of Cologne. For world music, Gino Sitson, presented by record company Scalen International, was a total success and the audience remained standing throughout most of the concert.

AMAZON.DE (Germany)

Was Gino Sitson auf Song Zin'... seiner Stimme entlockt, grenzt an Zauberei. Der Vokalakrobat aus Kamerun erzeugt mit den Stimmbändern und seinem (Resonanz)Körper eine Vielzahl faszinierender Klänge und verfügt über ein riesiges Register an Ausdrucksformen. In insgesamt 16 Songs beweist der Stimmartist eine erstaunliche Wandlungsfähigkeit.



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octobre 2005

**jazzman**  
LE JOURNAL DE TOUTES LES JAZZ

#### JAZZ VOCAL

#### GINO SITSON

##### Bamisphere

Gino Sitson (voc), Helió Alves (p), Essiet Essiet, Ron Carter (b), Jeff Watts (dm). Date d'enregistrement non précisée.

★★★ Acrobatique

À New York, le chanteur camerounais trouve l'accueil et la reconnaissance qui lui a fait défaut à Paris. Expérimentateur vocal pour musiciens, Gino Sitson s'affirme comme le plus talentueux des chanteurs africains dans le contexte du jazz. Virtuose dans l'art d'associer polyphonies pygmées, polyrythmies et polytonalités diverses à l'improvisation jazzistique, il réussit à définir un projet décidément original. Fort de son héritage

culturel, de son apprentissage auprès de Bobby Mc Ferrin, et des influences d'Al Jarreau, Sitson tient les promesses de "Vocal Deliria" et "Song Zin". Sensible à la pensée et à l'exemple d'hommes remarquables (Martin Luther King, Malcom X, Nelson Mandela, Charles Mingus), Sitson transmet en langue *medumba* ses messages de liberté, de tolérance, de justice, de créativité. Portés par des acrobaties vocales, subtiles et ludiques, il bénéficie en outre d'une compagnie très honorable.

##### **Francisco Cruz**

1 CD Polyvocal Records 070 –  
Distribué sur [www.polyvocal.com](http://www.polyvocal.com).  
Prix non communiqué.

Radios... about Song Zin'... & Vocal Deliria  
(source: Francophonie Diffusion: [www.francodiff.org](http://www.francodiff.org))

USA (REDWAY) KMUD FM

I really like "Ngoyak" it is at least as good as anything Bobby McFerrin has done (Gino and his friends sound like him to my ears). Very pleasant, light. Simple and beautiful, a welcome addition to our World Beat section.

NIGERIA (LAGOS)

A very nice song with good rhythm

GERMANY (FRANCFORT) HESSISCHER RUNDFUNK / HR 1

Very melodic and musical. Creates a nice spacy atmosphere.

GRECE (ATHENES)LOVERADIO

Nice ethnic style.

QATAR (DOHA) Q.B.S. / Qatar Broadcasting Service

Smooth and entrapping.

ITALY (ROMA)Radio Citta Futura

Our compliments ! This man is really a star in his own, another little star growing in the fields of the jazz polyrhythmic.

QUEBEC (MONTREAL) Société Radio Canada

Sitson makes a complete use of all the artifices of his voice and explores the jazz avenue in a brilliant way. Magnificent.

QUEBEC (MONTREAL) CIBL 101,5

Vocal arrangements are excellent. Check it out!

ISRAEL (JERUSALEM)

Voice of Music ! Great !

LEBANEN (BEIRUT) Radio Mont Liban

We feel as if in the jungle. Very innovative !

GERMANY Radio Berlin / Radio Brandenburg Potsdam

It's great. Very original and full of musical mood. Very good !

SOUTH AFRICA (JOHANNESBURG) Voice of Soweto

Interestingly different. Very nice.

NORWAY (OSLO)

When the voice is a birth instrument, Gino Sitson is its father. Thanks to his polyvalent chords, he is enchanting our waves with the deliria of his voice and saxophone. "Two hands, two cheeks, one mouth". The truth is probably contained by this title. The most limpid album of this month !

SWITZERLAND (LAUSANNE) Radio Suisse Romande

Superb. What a voice ! Everything is good. A real pleasure.

CAMEROON (YAOUNDE) CRTV

It's the only album of this genre which succeeded in finding an echo in Cameroon. Gino the «Bulu» deserves respect for his work full of authenticity which is a wink at traditional musics from the country.

GABON (LIBREVILLE)Africa n° 1

Original ! Amazing ! Joyful cocktail of warm voices and instruments which match with one another in a very particular jazz !

MOROCCO (RABAT) Radio Télévision Nationale

"Vocal deliria", an attracting delirious album.

SENEGAL(DAKAR) Nostalgie Dakar

It is like some Bobby McFerrin with a bit of sun. Brilliant disc, full of joy and warmth. We are always looking forwards to listening to discs like that.

## **Commercials & Jingles**

Television:

Dora the Explorer (Nickelodeon, CBS)

«Habillage d'antenne» for France 3 (National French TV)

«Le Mag du dimanche» (France 3)

Aids Campaign (Arte TV, France 2), etc. ...

Commercials:

Danone, Dim stockings, Haribot Candies, Mayonnaise Calvé, Pantene, Peugeot, Renault Safrane, Vahine, etc....

## **Selected discography**

Gino Sitson / Bamisphere

Featuring Ron Carter, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Essiet Essiet & Helio Alves

2005, Polyvocal Records

Mario Canonge / Rhyzome

2004, O+ Records

Vana / A New Day

Featuring Regina Carter, Gino Sitson, Philip Hamilton, Duduka Da Fonseca...

2003, Twinz Records

Gino Sitson / Song Zin'... Vocadoelic Tales

2002, Piranha Records / Los Angeles Times's best of 2002 (top ten jazz CDs)

Manu Dibango / Mboa Su

2000, Melodie

"So Why?" (Youssou N'Dour, Papa Wemba, Wally Badarou, Gino Sitson, Jabu Khanyile & Bayete, Lucky Dube...)

1998, Sonodisc

Papa Wemba /Molokai

1998, Real World

Brice Wassy / Balengu Village

2000, Melt 2000

Compilation / Mega Africa : "Lovely Dany-Jo"

2000, Wagram

Achille Gajo / Estrada, Les Cultures Project

Featuring Steve Potts, Gino Sitson, Daniel Mille, Kal Dos Santos...

1998, Média 7

Gospel Young Singers / Quatrième Festival Gospel de Paris

1997, Night & Day

Gino Sitson / Vocal Deliria

1996, Polyvocal Records

Gospel Young Singers / Premier Festival Gospel de Paris

1994, Night & Day

## **Videos**

- Bi Nyai

Song Zin'... (Polyvocal Records)

- Makalapati

Vocal Deliria (Absynthe Productions)

...

Solo Albums: "Song Zin'..." (I'm gonna tell you)

After "Vocal Deliria", a debut album acclaimed by critics, composed of vocal African polyphonies and polyrhythmics, Gino Sitson presents a second album called "Song Zin'..." with both orchestrated and vocal pieces, once again all composed by him.

Aerial and impregnated with subtle melodic and rhythmic nuances, Song Zin' opens the way to the free expression of voice. Gino Sitson continues his way through a vocal universe, whose frontiers he jostles with a delirious inventiveness and a jubilant originality. Between respect and daring, cleverly balanced, between exploration of roots and opening to modernity, Gino Sitson's pioneering-voice follows a path off the beaten track. Attentive to his African roots, Gino Sitson sings most of his texts in Medumba, one of the numerous languages of Cameroon, which sounds like music itself! Thus, he opens the way to an African music in the complete definition of the term: from the language used to the themes evoked (slavery; racial prejudice; or respect of the words of ancestors), without forgetting the harmonic, melodic and rhythmic richness of African music. His texts reflect a certain outlook on the world, both committed and poetic.

Inspired by that subtle and brilliant tension between joy in the magic of life and bitter sorrow at the history of Black people, "Song Zin'..." is an album radiating true inner emotions, both deep and light, serious and delirious. You can listen to it, breathe it, dance to it; it talks to you as if it were using a language close to yours with universal dimension.

Even the musical team of the album represents a journey: the Cameroonian Denis Tchangou on percussions and drums; the French-Tahitian Carine Bonnefoy on piano; the Cameroonian Noël EKWABI on acoustic bass; and the French saxophonist Jean-Baptiste DOBIECKI. For some of the pieces, the team is enlarged with the additional voices of the Caribbean Xénia CARAÏBE and Gino Sitson's compatriots from Cameroon Valérie BÉLINGA and Joëlle ESSO (on Paper; 400 Years After ...; Bi Nyäï; Super Lérie). Finally, on a few tracks of the album, Gino Sitson invited three talented guests: the pianist Mario Canonge, from Martinique (on Lensin' ; La Moun) ; the Venezuelan percussionist Orlando POLEO (on Lensin') and the French cellist Vincent SEGAL (on 400 Years After ... and Bi Nyäï).

Backing vocals (all titles), lead vocal, vocal instruments & miscellaneous effects  
lyrics, music & arrangement : Gino Sitson

Solo Albums: "Vocal Deliria"

"Vocal Deliria" is a polyvocal and polyrhythmic album in the African style, composed, arranged and performed by Gino Sitson. Sitson is a unique "chameleon" artist who sings lead and background vocals as well as "vocal percussion". While similar to Bobby McFerrin and Al Jarreau in humor, Gino Sitson succeeds in communicating his originality which resonates through his elegant hand movements, the unusual way of using his voice and his overall personality which is filled with energy. Freely exploring the use of his voice and body, Gino Sitson forges a path combining jazz elements with his African roots. It sets the tracks ablazing !

He sings most of the lyrics in Médumba, one of the many languages of his native Cameroon, which is perfectly suited for the jazz phrasing of his music. In certain songs, the sounds of soprano saxophone add an elegant touch to Sitson's voice, responding in echo, and accenting it with grace. Gino Sitson, a true vocal juggler, offers an original work of art. He is extra-ordinary in the truest sense of the word. His vocal juggling impels one to listen in rapt attention.

## **The Colors in my Head** by Gino Sitson

Song Zin'... means "I'm Gonna Tell You" in Medumba, my mother tongue in Cameroon, Central Africa (song = "tell"; zin' = "you"). But zin could also mean "to walk." If you mix English ("song") and Medumba (zin = "to walk"), Song Zin'... refers to "A Walking Song," i.e., a free, daring and inventive song that is going forward, following a path off the beaten track.

As we walk and take the journey of life, stories are told. With the wind of voice, I am continuing to tell the stories begun by my ancestors, who were known, throughout the generations, as Ntontah ("horn players"). They were travelling musicians, moving from one place to another, "walking" their music in a way.

Like them, I want to be a voice-teller. I want to tell stories with my body and voice, inventing ways of playing with them. Music has the unequalled power of talking to individuals, of touching them, wherever they come from, through the sharing of an authentic emotion, which transcends the boundaries of language. Music helps people come closer to each other, despite any cultural differences that divide them. Just through emotionally-based melodies that resonate in the listener's body and mind.

Sometimes people ask me how I define myself in terms of music. My answer is simple: I don't feel I belong to any style. My music is simply about the encounter and the interaction of sounds. It reflects my own story, my travels and journey through life. From my childhood in Cameroon to my years in France until now, living in New York, I have encountered a wide variety of faces, sounds, rhythms and cultures that have touched my soul. I have crossed many borders and have become a kind of blend myself - even though I remain deeply imbued with my Cameroonian roots.

When I write a song, it's just like painting. I see colors, shapes and images dancing in my head. Voices, melodies and rhythms can tell stories without words. In fact, they have their own universal language. In my village, there is a lullaby with the lyric "Don't Cry Baby." But, in a way, the words are not important because the sound itself is soothing. It doesn't need lyrics to tell the story and talk to people. If you listen to my songs, you'll notice that the tone of my voice is talking by itself. When I perform in Europe or in the U.S., people don't understand my language. Yet they enjoy the music. They can feel whether it's a sad or joyful story.

I once performed at a festival in Palermo, Italy, with 4000 people in the audience. I asked them to "play along" by gently rubbing their palms together, not clapping. The music produced by the combination of all these individual small "voices" was wonderful, and I sang on top of it. Imagine all these people doing the same thing. It's unbelievable, very spiritual, peaceful.

That's what my music is all about: I would like every person who listens to my album to breathe it, dance to it, smile, fly, feel peaceful. I want people to experience my music the way they want, with their own sensitivity. Life is a precious gift. Being able to do something, to walk, to talk, to hear, to see, to listen, to smile, to feel an emotion is a wondrous opportunity. I think it's important never to forget about these great blessings. That's what I want to tell with my music.