

# BLACK●SUN



**Randy Weston**  
**LEGACY**

**Black Sun 1 6034-2 2 CD**  
**Black Sun 1 6034-1 2 Lp**

**Black Sun Music**  
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Randolph Edward "Randy" Weston joined his ancestors – as he would have said – in 2018 after a long life of 92 years. A musician, a composer, a writer, a traveller and a (hu)man, he was a man of kindness, of wisdom, yet a man of firm opinions and an uncanny way to relate to others: he was a man who was good to eat with, to laugh with, to listen to and a man one could learn from always and in all ways. He unfailingly understood situations and he always said what was best to be said.

He was a sage. His art was music; his life was art.

When LEGACY was recorded, he was at the highest his talent would take him. At 74 years of age, his physical and intellectual facilities were almost limitless. But it wasn't just his talent he expressed through music; it was his mission as an American of African descent that fuelled his musical expression and what he perceived as his role in life: to connect, to persuade and then to play and persuade more with the tool of music. It is only then that we don't need a translation to hear and understand.

When – toward the end of his life – the great Duke Ellington was infirm, he had asked Randy Weston to fill in for him for concerts. With Ellington's contribution to this recording, an almost one-hundred-year-old piece called CHROMATIC LOVE AFFAIR comes back to life. Randy Weston – at the outset of his career – thought of himself as a band leader which indeed he was for decades. But it was Ellington and his sister Ruth who had strongly encouraged him to play solo.

July of 2001. A magnificent Steinway grand piano, model D, the best one can get, set up in the ballroom of the Montreux Palace hotel in Switzerland, not far from where he used to live in Annecy in France in the 1970s. The tuner has left. No audience, just the musician, the recording engineer Blaise Grandjean and the audio equipment including a Nagra digital recorder. Concentration. Expression. Music of flow and structure. It's a now-or-never scenario; it's like walking the rope with sleep-walking sense. No protection, no security.

On July 17th sixty minutes, non-stop, no break, full speed ahead. On July 18th seventy minutes; you could feel that this could go on for eternity, ten minutes more each day until eternity could be understood. There was no editing, no processing, no manipulation of what had been accomplished. Following Art Tatum, Erroll Garner and Thelonious Monk, Randy Weston bypassed Keith Jarrett and played himself straight to the top.

Why would these priceless recordings remain unpublished for so long? From 2001 to 2017 they were only accessible to Randy Weston himself other than Blaise Grandjean, the engineer. In 2017 he had a few hundred CD copies made as a private pressing, not for general distribution. We can only guess what the motivation (or the lack thereof) might have been. A rare case of being so terribly afraid of being hurt if there were to be rejection of some kind. Not being able to face the world after having given his best and exposing his deepest vulnerabilities.

Randy Weston's widow Fatoumata had the key, metaphorically speaking. She decided that the music should be out there, not locked away in need of a key to get to it. The recording engineer Blaise Grandjean had the digital original masters. Everything had been backed up over more than two decades to safeguard the integrity of the digital sound files. He himself generated a new master for CD, Lp and digital distribution. The venture has come to its end and a new beginning.