London-based parapanda are celebrating Africa in music. Parapanda means ‘trumpet’ in Kiswahili. Earlier this year, three Ugandans teamed in the UK to trumpet the message that Africa’s cultural music was alive.
“Our prayer is that Africa’s unique art, sounds, rhythms and dance shall reach all peoples of the world with the power to impart, reveal and spread Jesus’ name in every nation,” says Isaiah Katumwa, an acclaimed saxophonist.

The other two are Sheila, Isaiah’s wife, a vocalist; and John Bashengezi (Bash), a guitarist. The trio is born-again Christians.

They recorded an album, Celebrate Africa, in a London studio. It was released recently and is on sale. Bash, the in-charge of Kampala Pentecostal Church Worship Band, says preparations are underway for the group to launch its album in Uganda come December.

Celebrate Africa, an eight-track album, comprises rhythms from South, West, Central and East Africa, fused to create music representative of Africa. This is accentuated by a myriad of languages including Kiswahili, English, French, Lingala and Luganda.

Much as the album portrays African patriotism, it does not lose it is basic gospel message — celebrating the Lord through praise and dance. Their songs include Tumulaalase, Celebrate, Every Halleluyah, Engule, We’ve Come to Worship, Deep Is Your Love, No Need To Cry and Jesus Is Here.

Katumwa was labelled “Uganda’s sax wizard” at the age of 20. He plays the saxophone and traditional folk instruments. He has worked with Eagles Production, Mariam Ndagire, Juliana Kanyomozi, Fred Sebatta and Afrigo Band. He has shared a stage with global artistes like Phil Driscoll and Mike Aremu, Nigeria’s leading saxophonist.

Sheila is a worship leader at Miracle Centre Cathedral, Rubaga. Her experience in song writing, vocal production and harmonies enriches Celebrate Africa. She sings with London Community Gospel Choir and is the founder of Music in the House, an organisation dedicated to the

mentoring praise and worship leaders in the UK.

Bashengezi, a Congolese, is a top guitarist in Uganda. He works with the Watoto Children's Choir and is one of their songwriters. He has played with Wenge Musika, a Congolese band, and shared a stage with Cece Winans and Michael Smith.

By Sebidde Kiryowa
New Vision

Order the CD **Celebrate Africa** Today!

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