

Johnny Clegg dies at 66

It has been confirmed that Jonathan (Johnny) Clegg, succumbed to pancreatic cancer at the age of 66 on the afternoon of 16 July 2019 at his family home in Johannesburg, South Africa.

An anthropologist Johnny Clegg used his music to speak to every person. With his unique style of music he traversed cultural barriers like few others. In many of us he awakened awareness.



Johnny was born on 7 June 1953 in Bacup, Lancashire England and moved to Johannesburg, South Africa with his Rhodesian mother when he was 6 years old. His exposure to Zulu migrant workers during adolescence introduced him to the culture and music. His involvement with black musicians often saw him arrested during Apartheid.

At the age of 17, together with Sipho Mchunu they formed their first band called Juluka. At the age of 33 in 1986 during the height of Apartheid he partnered with Dudu Zulu to form his second inter-racial band called Savuka. Clegg also recorded several solo albums and enjoyed international success selling out concerts wherever he performed.

Apart from lecturing at the Universities of the Witwatersrand and Natal respectively, Johnny studied anthropology and combined his studies with music.

He was awarded by a number of local and international bodies for his contribution to music and society notably by the French Government in 1991 with a Knight of Arts and Letters, and in 2015 he was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire. In 2012 he received the Order of Ikhamanga from the South African government. He was awarded a number of Honorary doctorates by the Universities of the Witwatersrand (South Africa), KwaZulu-Natal (South Africa), Dartmouth College in the USA and the City University of New York.

“ Thankyou for your beautiful music that became part of my DNA. [#RIPJohnnyClegg pic.twitter.com/GGT78KbvRw](#)—

Amo Carstens (@AmoCarstens) [July 16, 2019](#) ”

He authored and published the book "UkuBuyisa Isidumbu" (1981, Ravan Press), and presented papers on "The Music of Zulu Immigrant Workers in Johannesburg" in 1981 at the Grahamstown International Library of African Music and "Towards an understanding of African Dance: The Zulu Isishameni Style" in 1982 at Rhodes University.

Johnny was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer in 2015 but despite fighting cancer continued to tour and perform around the world to pay homage to his fans worldwide.

Johnny is survived by his wife of 31 years, Jenny and their two sons Jesse and Jaron.

The family will be holding a Private funeral service and we ask you to please respect the families wishes. There will be a service for public to pay their respects and the details hereof will be announced in due course.

Roddy Quin

Manager, friend and family spokesman

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