



Michael LeMorin—composer, arranger, guitarist, and vocalist—was born in Les Cayes on the southern Caribbean coast of Haiti. As a child he listened to his mother sing Haitian folk songs while at work, and by the age of ten he had started to play the guitar. Meanwhile, he was studying fashion, at first altering clothing and then presenting tailors with patterns. The family left Les Cayes for Port-au-Prince, but he continued to work in fashion and reached a professional level at the age of fifteen. Music, however, remained his first passion.

In 1980 LeMorin arrived in the United States. He lived in the Bronx and then Manhattan's West Village. He met musicians who played konpa, arguably Haiti's most popular dance band style. From 1981 on he played konpa with the eminent band DJet-X, and in 1986 he performed as well with the Vodou-jazz group Sakad, which experimented with the fusion of the sacred sounds of Vodou and jazz, and which laid the foundation for Haiti's roots music movement. In 1987 LeMorin founded his own group, Freedom Sound. During this time he studied voice with Sheila Egan, and jazz guitar with Howard Morgan at the Guitar Study Center of the New School. He has studied as well with Haitian producer and arranger Dernst Emile.

In 1990 Freedom Sound released its first album, *Songs of Freedom*. The album received enthusiastic response in Haiti when the band introduced it there. Radio Metropole promoted the song "O Dei" ("Oh God") and Radio National "Politik" ("Politics") and "Revolution." When Freedom Sound disbanded, LeMorin founded an ensemble with a more international mix that blended reggae with the raucous sound of Haitian rara. The band played clubs in the West Village and other Manhattan venues, including SOBs, New Music Cafe, and the Bitter End, and its music received radio airtime.

LeMorin has made appearances at Lincoln Center in connection with his work on Karen Kramer's film *Children of Shadows* (screened at the World Film Festival in Montréal, 2001), at Brooklyn College in a tribute to Haitian singer and composer Guy Durosier, and at the Pan Africa Festival USA in Maryland. On Christmas Eve in 2004 he acted and sang the part of the troubadour Anatole alongside Danny Glover on the stage of Avery Fisher Hall in Mapou Production's groundbreaking play, *How Papa Noel Forgot Haiti*. In 2005 Mapou Productions presented him again at Carnegie Hall—along with Glover, the band Tabou Combo, singer Léon Dimanche, and other notable Haitian artists—in support of *Replant Haiti*, a reforestation effort. He has toured in Japan, South America, the Caribbean, and Canada.

Michael LeMorin's music took on its current feel as he incorporated elements of Brazilian samba and bossa nova, and his current Pawòl–Anago band, which has played various New York venues in recent months, exemplifies both the jazz and the neo-troubadour essence of his work. In 2011 he recorded his album *Pawòl* (available [here](#)). In search of a modern take on Haiti's traditional twoubadou (troubadour) style, he composed "En Do Mineur" ("In C Minor"), one of the album's ten tracks. "En Do Mineur" best crystallizes LeMorin's ideas about the current and future direction of his work.

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See [Music page](#) for excerpts from the *Pawòl* album, including "En Do Mineur."

Photo by Anya Petrova