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## PRESS RELEASE

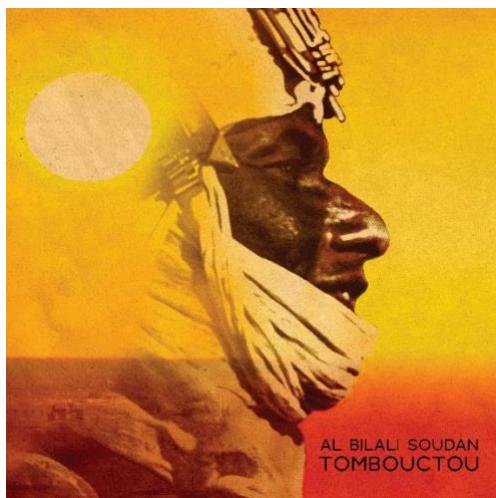
20 March 2020

### ALBUM RELEASE

Artist: **AL BILALI SOUDAN**

Title: **TOMBOUCTOU**

Release date: **17 April 2020**



From Tombouctou/Timbuktu, Northern Mali

**AL BILALI SOUDAN** release their second album "**TOMBOUCTOU**"

Griots, bards, forgeron, the bandmembers are:

Abellaw Yattara, Aboubacrine Yattara,

Mohamed Ag Abellaw, and Thialé Ag Aboubacrine

Fathers and sons, uncles and cousins

Their instrumentation is tehardenet/ngoni and calabash

Lightning fast, sometimes looping, sometimes lyrical

This is dance music, this is intense mastery

A traditional repertoire improvised and adapted

This is Saharan culture brought into the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Their lyrics mix Tamasheq, Songhai, French and English

They speak about heroism, love and above all a longing for peace.

Recorded in 2019 at Studio Bogolan, Bamako Mali

Mixed and mastered in New York

Released in vinyl, CD and digital formats.

Full credits and lyric summaries can be found at [www.clermontmusic.com/tombouctou](http://www.clermontmusic.com/tombouctou)

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CONTACT: Christopher Nolan, [chrisanolan3@clermontmusic.com](mailto:chrisanolan3@clermontmusic.com) +1 518 755 5089



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## PRESS REVIEWS

<https://www.popmatters.com/al-bilali-soudan-tombouctou-2646167935.html>

**Popmatters.com**

# Malian Folk Group Al Bilali Soudan Is Shockingly Electric on 'Tombouctou'

ADRIANE PONTECORVO

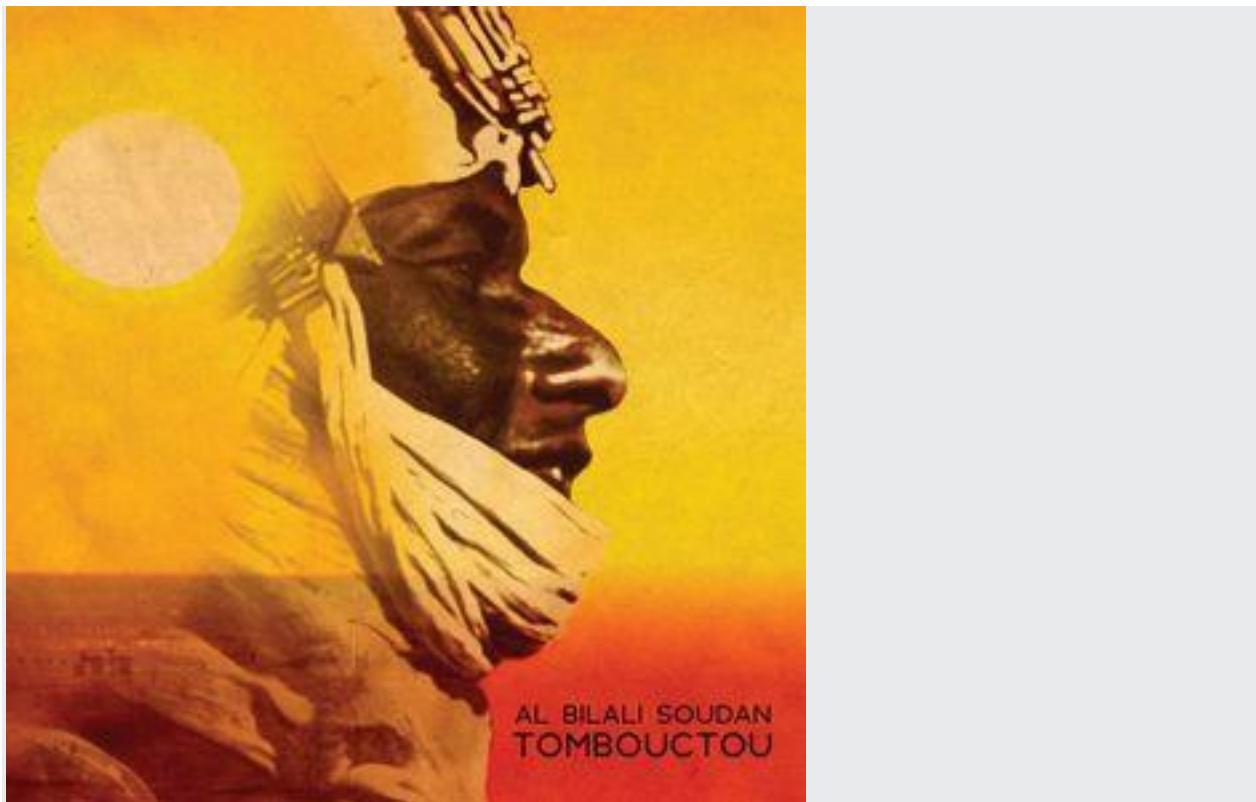
11 Jun 2020

Photo: Courtesy of Clermont Music

On *Tombouctou*, Al Bilali Soudan are amplified. The electronic buzz of plugged-in tehardent no longer sounds like the repetition of background music. Now, it starts a fire, fully energized, and with every member at full volume.



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**TOMBOUCTOU**

AL BILALI SOUDAN

Clermont Music

17 April 2020

In sharp contrast to contemporaries like Tinariwen and Bombino, quintet Al Bilali Soudan are known for taking a stripped-down approach to the arrangement Kel Tamashiq folk music traditions. Their self-titled 2012 debut album was all-acoustic, a mesmerizing introduction to their improvisational style of *téhardent* music, named after the Tamashiq term for the stringed *ngoni* often identified as the national instrument of Mali. With long, entrancing tracks and a rawness to the recording, it offered



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many around the world their first look at unadorned Kel Tamasheq roots music, older styles in contemporary settings.

On new album *Tombouctou*, Al Bilali Soudan are amplified. The electronic buzz of plugged-in tehardent no longer sounds like the repetition of background music. Now, it starts a fire, fully energized, and with every member at full volume. No longer simply atmospheric, Al Bilali Soudan is standing strong and moving forward, both tradition-bearers and modern performers. Metaphorically and literally, they resonate in new ways while paying tribute to a long lineage of musicians.

Largely, the songs on *Tombouctou* are ones of commemoration. They praise kind-hearted and beautiful individuals, revel at weddings and memorials, and recall traditional dances from the past before offering final hopes for local and global peace. Whole-hearted and full-throated, the band celebrates, every piece an ecstatic moment of musical collaboration between artists who share heritage and skill.

Like the lyrics, the music itself shows continuity and adaptation. Passionate vocals call out with a familiar underlayer of grit, making their way in and out of patterns woven by tehardent and calabash. Cutting through the electric droning tied to the tehardent, lead player Abellow Yattara's nimble fingers pluck intricate flourishes over solid percussion lines on tracks like opener "Khadeïdja", reminding his audience that the essentials are still there beneath the effects, the details still crucial in making outstanding music.



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Later, this is even more apparent. Wedding song "Djaba" opens with a blistering tehardent solo, razor-sharp and impossibly quick. Commemorative "Hoummaïssa" is full of ornate sonic loops and whorls. "Tabaïtara" starts with a brief, sedate string introduction that repeats throughout the song, grounding it behind the electric sheen of the lead instrument. As the album finally closes with finale "La Paix", Aboubacrine Yattara's unplugged bass tehardent alternates between playing in unison with the electrified lead and anchoring his improvised riffs. The result is a satisfying midtempo finish to the album marked by the album's only English lyrics: "We need peace / We need peace in Mali / We need peace in Africa / We need peace in the world."

Gentle messages of unity aside, *Tombouctou* is one of the most aurally intense albums I've heard so far this year, even without the addition of styles like the blues-rock or reggae that blend so well with folk in so much Kel Tamasheq pop. It has spikes, it has teeth, it shines almost too brightly, eschewing warm and earthy in favor of metallic blaze. To listen to it straight through takes a similar kind of stamina as seeing a live show would. These lovingly perpetuated Malian folk traditions are decidedly not for the faint of heart or ear. They are for moving forward at a breakneck pace, all while holding on to what matters, and for Al Bilali Soudan, such an approach points to an exciting, completely unpredictable future.

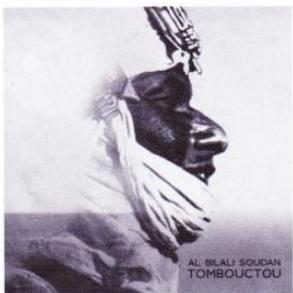
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## AL BILALI SOUDAN

*Tombouctou*  
CLERMONT

**F**or thorny, hyperactive West African desert dance music that holds up spellbindingly well after all these centuries, *Tombouctou* is a modern godsend. An old-fashioned adrenaline fest. A primordial rock album, thousands of years before the concept of rock was ever hatched. The experience is nothing remotely close to anything you'd stumble across in the mainstream—or any stream, tributary or backwater, for that matter.

Its source is Al Bilali Soudan, a power quintet built on ancestral Malian terms: three jacked-up tehardents (hand-carved, fretless proto-guitars) and a percussive pair of calabashes. Wielding their ancient axes like Stratocasters attacking ancient, traditional grooves, the Tuareg band is lord of the *takamba* scene around the fabled stronghold of Timbuktu (aka Tombouctou). Here, the hypnotic hotbed of frenzied riff and rhythm, tangled around bone-rigid voices, presents a significantly heavier, harder answer to their self-titled album of 2013. Performances don't flinch at running long, freely extending until "Hoummaïssâ" has had its fill of gyrating for eight dizzying minutes or "Apolo" deliriously blisses out for slightly less. Infused with all the raw, uninhibited charm of one of their local gigs, you could just as well be listening under a tent, partially sheltered from the nuclear sun but exposed to brash partying like it's 1499.

Never once does the intensity break its penetrating stare. Eleven tracks blur and feed into one, massively whirling freakout taken at a headlong pace. When nothing less than a trance will do.

DENNIS ROZANSKI

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## Al Bilali Soudan

Tombouctou

Clement Music / El mino



### Rough and ready Touareg blues

If you like your desert blues raw and unmediated and think Tinariwen are over-produced,

then Al Bilali Soudan is for you. Taking their name from an ancient name for the city of Timbuktu, some may remember their self-titled first album eight years ago and the sound here is just as wild and untamed. Led by Abellow Yattara, a virtuoso on the three-stringed fretless *tchardent* (the Tamashek word for *ngoni*), the band consists of a quartet of inter-related fathers and sons, cousins and uncles. Yattara is a veteran who played on Ali Farka Touré's first cassette recordings 40 years ago and he brings his long *griot* experience to bear on a set of mostly traditional songs, grittily proclaimed and chanted in Tamashek, Songhai and French over nothing more than a backing of two amplified *tchardents* and calabash.

The songs range from hypnotic dance tunes ('Yermakoi' and 'Tabaitra') to loping Touareg grooves ('Hoummaisa') and lightning-fingered work-outs infused with an almost punk-like energy ('Djaqba'). The production values are invisible, which is not a criticism for such intrusion would interfere with the authenticity of the experience. However, one might have appreciated a little more variation in the somewhat relentless monophonic onslaught.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

TRACK TO TRY *Djaqba*

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Catalog: CLE029  
Album Title: Tombouctou  
Artist: Al Bilali Soudan  
Format: LP, CD, DI  
UPC LP : 711574903818



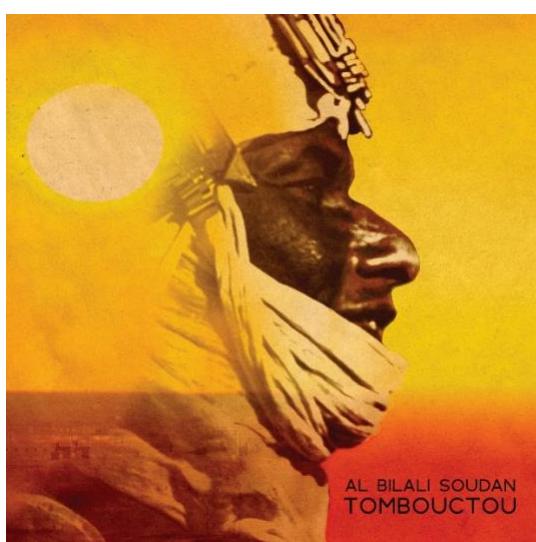
UPC CD : 711574897124



UPC DI : 194491600846



Release Date: 18 April 2020





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#### **LINER NOTES:**

Al Bilali Soudan are Abellaw Yattara, Aboubacrine Yattara,  
Mohamed Ag Abellaw, and Thialé Ag Aboubacrine  
Fathers and sons, uncles and cousins  
Forgeron, griot, bards  
From Tombouctou/Timbuktu, Northern Mali  
Instrumentation is tehardent/ngoni and calabash  
A traditional repertoire adapted and improvised  
Lightning fast, sometimes looping, sometimes lyrical  
This is dance music  
This is culture preserved  
This is to encourage people who have fled from their homes  
This is modern music performed on ancient instruments  
Like the polyglot region where they live  
Their lyrics are in Tamasheq, Songhai, French and English  
Al Bilali Soudan perform frequently at celebrations and festivals

Recorded in 2019 at Studio Bogolan, Bamako Mali

Full credits and lyric summaries can be found at [www.clermontmusic.com/tombouctou](http://www.clermontmusic.com/tombouctou)  
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#### **CD TRACKLIST:**

- |   |           |      |              |
|---|-----------|------|--------------|
| 1   | Khadeïdja | 7:26 | QMPGD2000002 |
| Khadeïja, a Tamasheq woman, helps anyone in need. She welcomes everyone equally irrespective of their status or background.                 |           |      |              |
| 2   | Addarajat | 5:10 | QMPGD2000003 |
| A traditional song that we preserve. We name the musicians in the group. Then we call to Aisha, Fati, Nana, Fadimata and many other people. |           |      |              |
| 3   | Djaba     | 4:29 | QMPGD2000004 |
| Their wedding day is a very special one for a bride and groom sings the griot.  |           |      |              |
| 4   | Mariama   | 4:21 | QMPGD2000005 |
| Beautiful Mariama, graceful and dignified, every man wants to marry her.  |           |      |              |
| 5   | Yermakoi  | 7:25 | QMPGD2000006 |



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The village of Takamba is where Songhai and Tamasheq meet. They come together from all around to dance the Takamba.

6 Hoummaïssa 7:51 QMPGD2000007

A beautiful necklace worn by a Tamasheq women. We remember our brothers and sisters from Kidal, Gao, Ifoghas, Tombouctu who are now in Bamako.

7 Tabaïtara 8:04 QMPGD2000008

A traditional dance for young Tamasheq who start to learn it at age 10. There is no Tamasheq who does not know this dance.

8 Tanghani 3:38 QMPGD2000009

A song for Nnana Walett Oumar. The griot sings Tanghani to call Nnana's close relatives to come.

9 Apolo 6:08 QMPGD2000010

In ancient times Bella danced to this song for the nobles. Today the Bella continue the dance saying simply treasure what you love.

10 Super 5:26 QMPGD2000011  
Instrumental

11 La Paix 7:07 QMPGD2000001

Al Bilali Soudan sing about their hope for peace in the Sahel, peace in Africa, and peace in the whole world.

#### **LP TRACKLIST:**

Side A

A-1 Khadeïdja 7:26 QMPGD2000002

Khadeïja, a Tamasheq woman, helps anyone in need. She welcomes everyone equally irrespective of their status or background.

A-2 Addarajat 5:10 QMPGD2000003

A traditional song that we preserve. We name the musicians in the group. Then we call to Aisha, Fati, Nana, Fadimata and many other people.

A-3 Djaba 4:29 QMPGD2000004

Their wedding day is a very special one for a bride and groom sings the griot.



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A-4 Mariama 4:21 QMPGD2000005

Beautiful Mariama, graceful and dignified, every man wants to marry her.

Side B

B1 Yermakoi 7:27 QMPGD2000006

The village of Takamba is where Songhai and Tamasheq meet. People from all over come to dance the Takamba.

B2 Hoummaïssa 7:51 QMPGD2000007

A beautiful necklace worn by Tamasheq women. We remember our brothers and sisters from Kidal, Gao, Ifoghas, Tombouctou who are now in Bamako.

B3 Tabaïtara 8:04 QMPGD2000008

A traditional dance for young Tamasheq who start to learn it at age 10. There is no Tamasheq who does not know this dance.

#### DIGITAL TRACKLIST:

Khadeïdja	7:26	QMPGD2000002
Addarajat	5:10	QMPGD2000003
Djaba	4:29	QMPGD2000004
Mariama	4:21	QMPGD2000005
Yermakoi	7:25	QMPGD2000006
Hoummaïssa	7:51	QMPGD2000007
Tabaïtara	8:04	QMPGD2000008
Tanghani	3:38	QMPGD2000009
Apolo	6:08	QMPGD2000010
Super	5:26	QMPGD2000011
La Paix	7:07	QMPGD2000001
Apolo (video edit)	4:14	QMPGD2000012



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**PERSONNEL:**

Abellow Yattara	vocal, lead tehardent
Aboubacrine Yattara	bass tehardent
Mohamed Ag Abellow	vocal, tehardent
Thialé Ag Aboubacrine	calabash
Hamadoun Afo Guindo	calabash

**CREDITS:**

Tracks 1, 5, 7, 8, 9 and 12 based on traditional adapted, written and arranged by Abellow Yattara.

Tracks 2, 3, 4 and 6 based on traditional adapted, written and arranged by Abellow Yattara and Mohamed Ag Abellow.

Track 10 composed, written and arranged by Abellow Yattara

Track 11 composed, written and arranged by Abellow Yattara and Mohamed Ag Abellow.

All tracks recorded January 2019 at Studio Bogolan, Bamako, Mali

Recording engineer: Yaya Diarra

All tracks mixed by Dave Cook, Area 52 Studios, Saugerties, NY

All tracks Mastered by Jon Cohrs, Bear Call Mastering, Kingston NY

Graphic design: Andrew Nelson, Down in the Valley Designs, Kingston NY

Cover photo: Chris Kendall / Liner Photos: Chris Nolan

Produced: Christopher Nolan III, Clermont Music, Germantown NY

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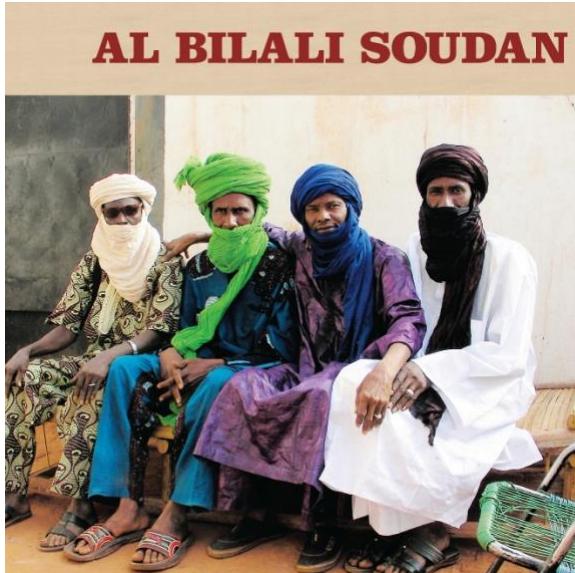
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## DISCOGRAPHY:

Al Bilali Soudan (CLE-01-2012) – 2012





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**LYRICS:**

**1. Khadeïdja 7:27 QMPGD2000002**

Khadeïja une femme Tamasheq  
De Gourma Rharous de Tombouctou  
Elle été très accueillante  
Aux gens qui vient chez elle  
Elle aiment trop les gens  
Donc un jour y'avait un Monsieur  
Qui est venir avec son griot  
Qui joue le guitare  
Donc ce monsieur à dit à son griot  
De chanter pour Khadeïja  
Le griot a commence  
Quand n'importe qui arrive chez Khadeïja  
Elles les accueille comme ses frères et ses soeurs  
Khadeïja est une femme célèbre  
Ouverte, souriante, très gentile  
Elle considère tout le monde à la même point d'égalité  
Elle ne fait pas la différence entre les gens  
Elle est une femmes tellement célèbre  
Que l' histoire de Khadeïja continue

**2. Addaradjat 5:11 QMPGD2000003**

Nous sommes le groupe Al Bilali Soudan  
Je suis leader du groupe, Abellow Yattara  
Avec moi on a Aboubacrine Yattara, Mohamed Abellow  
Et Thialé Ag Aboubacrine  
Nous jouons ce chanson Addarajat  
On chante Addarajat parceque  
Chez nous c'est de notre culture ancienne  
Quelque chose que nous aimons  
De jouer ce chanson Addarajat  
On appelle Aïcha et Fati et Nanna Fadimata  
Et nous appellons quelques d'autres personnes  
De rappeller que le morceau existe toujours



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We are the groupe Al Bilali Soudan  
The leader of the group Abellow Yattara  
With Aboubacrine Yattara, Mohamed Abellow, Thialé Ag Aboubacrine  
We play this song Addarajate  
we speak in the song Addarajate  
at home this is something that pleases  
That is why we played this song Addarajate  
At the same time we call Aisha and Fati and Nanna Fadimata  
These are just a few people we call in the song  
To remember so that the song still exists

**3. Djaba                    4:31                    QMPGD200004**

Le premiere jour d' un mariage  
Le griot est s'assis  
Il joue au marié de rappeller que  
Aujourd'hui c'est un grand jour pour lui  
Et au même temps pour sa mariée  
Quand on dit Djaba  
Pensez aux personnes varies  
Qu'on à fait le morceau de Djaba  
Comme Aïcha Laouale, Fadi Laouale,  
Nanna Laoule, la premiere  
Nous appellons aussi  
Les femmes de Tombouctou  
Et de notre village

Djaba is a song played for the first day of a man's wedding  
In our culture the griot plays for the groom to remind him that  
Today is a great day for him and his new wife  
When we say Djaba we think of real people  
For example Aisha Laouale , Fadi Laouale, Nanna Laoule  
We also call to the women of Timbuktu and the village

**4. Mariama                    5:12                    QMPGD200005**

Beautiful Mariama from the village  
Every man wants to marry her  
Because of her beauty and poise  
Griots sing songs about her  
They sing about her beauty



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That her skin is smooth and soft like milk  
That she has a heart like a sparkling diamond  
That her eyes are like silver and gold  
That her beauty is a precious jewel  
This is the story of the lovely Mariama

**6. Yermakoi 7:27 QMPGD2000006**

C'est un grand village  
Un lieu de rencontre de Songhai et les Kels Tamasheq  
Pour se rendre dans ce village qui on s'appelle Takamba  
On joue les instruments que nous jouons  
Ces instruments que vous les connaissez déjà  
Donc quand on dit Takamba  
Tombouctou vient a Takamba  
Gao vient a Takamba  
Kidal et les autres régions viennent a Takamba  
Comme Gourma-Rharous, Nansongo, Niafounke  
Tout les personnes viennent  
Pour se rencontrer dans ce village  
Car y'a la joie, la danse  
C'est pourquoi on s'appelle Takamba

Les paroles de ces chansons qui s'appelle Takamba  
À l'époque c'est un grand village un lieu de rencontre de Songhai et les Kels Tamacheq  
Pour se rendre dans le village qui s'appelle Takamba pour jouer l'instrument que nous jouons  
donc cet instrument tu le connais déjà donc quand on dit tombouctou vient à takamba gao  
vient Kidal les différents sortes de régions comme Gourma Rharous en songo niafunké... Tout  
ses personnes vient pour se rencontrer dans cette village car y'a la joie, la danse ce Pourquoi on  
appelle ça takamba jusqu'à nos jours sa existe ce village qu'on appelle takamba

The lyrics of this song recall a great village known as Takamba where Songhai and Tamashék  
meet. We sing that: Timbuktu comes to takamba; Gao comes to takamba; Kidal comes to  
Takamba; other regions like Gourma Rharous, Nsongo, niafunké - All these people come to  
meet in this village because there's joy there and to dance what we call the Takamba. Even  
today this village called Takamba exists.

**5. Hoummaïssa 7:53 QMPGD2000007**



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Hoummeissa

Un collier touareg porté par une femme  
cette femme est une belle femme  
elle se trouve à hambori  
on l'appelle les cinq doigts du Fatima  
Aujourd'hui quand nous jouons Hoummaïssa  
Nous pensons à nos frères et soeurs  
Qui se trouve à Bamako  
Jusqu'à Kidal, Gao, Ifoghass, Tombouctou  
C'est comme ça que ce chanson s'appelle  
Nous parlons des nobles de Tombouctou  
De Al Bilali Soudan  
Yar borthine tarey di ka ga Mali  
De Tombouctou

Hoummeissa

A Tuareg necklace worn by a Tamasheq woman  
this woman is a beautiful woman  
she is in Hambori  
she is called the Five Fingers or Fatima  
Today we play hoummaïssa  
We remember our brothers, sisters  
who are in Bamako, Kidal, Gao, Ifoghass, Timbuktu  
This is what this song is called  
We are talking about the nobles of tombouctou-  
Of Al Bilali Soudan tombouctou  
Yar borthine tarey di ka ga ma Mali  
Of Tombouctou

**7. Tabaïtara 8:05 QMPGD2000008**

Une danse pour les jeunes tamasheq  
On commence à danser à l'âge de 10an  
Chez nous il n'y a pas un jeune  
Qui danse pas ça  
C'est une danse traditionnel  
Bien connue  
Cette chanson la



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Nous appellons tout les tamasheq  
Qui se trouve  
dans toute les regions differentes du Mali  
A danser

A dance for the young tamasheq  
They start dancing at the age of 10  
With us there is not a young person  
Who does not dance to this  
It is a traditional dance  
Well known  
This song  
We call all tamasheq people  
Who are in all the different regions of Mali  
To dance.

**8. Tanghani 3:40 QMPGD2000009**

C'est un chanson faite pour Nnana Walett Oumar  
Y'avais une grande personne  
Qui a fait un appelle à un griot  
Pour qu'il joue un chanson pour la femme Nnana  
Et son tanghani  
C'est à dire la paranté  
Et le griot chantent en disant tanghani  
En appellant d'autres femmes  
Aussi qui était juste à côté de la femme Nnana

It's a song made for a woman called Nnana walett Oumar There was a great person who made a call to a griot to play a song for the woman Nnana and the sound tanghanii ie the paranté and the griot sing by saying tanghani in calll other women also who was right next to the nnana woman

**9. Apoulo 6:08 QMPGD2000010**

Aiye  
Ai na poulo  
A poulo ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba  
Gai rizo rene



75 Commons Road | Germantown NY | 12526 USA | +1.518.755.5089 | [admin@clermontmusic.com](mailto:admin@clermontmusic.com)  
[www.clermontmusic.com](http://www.clermontmusic.com)

Ai na poulo

Ai na poulo  
A poulo ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba  
Gai rizo rene  
Gai rizo rene

Ka reina poulo  
Ka reina poulo  
Djikareina rene  
Djikareina poulo  
A poulo ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba  
Djara ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba

A poulo ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba  
A djiro ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba

A poulo ni gaba

Hey na poulo  
A poulo ni gaba  
Cris ni gaba  
Yara ni gaba  
A poulo ni gaba

Yi wana gari  
Yi wana gari

This song is sung by Bella women who descend from slaves. They danced for their nobles. One of the songs the Bella women danced to was called Apoulo. The musician was called Faradji So the lyric says Faradji play Apoulo so we can dance for our nobles. Today the song lyric means simply that when you love something it is a treasure.



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**10. Super Instrumental**      **5:28**      **QMPGD2000011**

**11. La Paix**      **7:09**      **QMPGD2000001**

Bisimillah

Aitma

Aichetma

On veut la Paix

Aitma

Kidal

Anguelhok

Tessalit

Anderamboukane

Menaka

Gao

Bourem

Rharous

Timbuktu

Goundam

Lere

Niafounke

Mopti

Bandiagara

Douentza

Koro Bankass

Aitma Bisimillah

We need peace

Peace in Mali

Peace in Africa

Peace in the world.

Bisimillah l'Afrique

Aitma Aichetma

On veut la paix

On veut la paix

On veut la paix



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La paix au Mali  
On veut la paix  
La paix dans le monde  
La paix au Mali

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