

FROM THE GLOBAL BEAT OF THE BOROUGHES SERIES

BADENYA

MANDEN JALIYA IN NEW YORK CITY



Smithsonian Folkways Recordings



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Originally from Mali, Guinea, Gambia, and Guinea-Bissau, these artists are now part of the global beat of New York City's music scene. Though their music has a distinctively contemporary Afropop sound, they are all *jaliu*—practitioners of ancient performance traditions dating back to the 13th-century Empire of Mali. This exquisite recording showcases singing by masters of the soaring vocal style of *jaliya* and virtuoso instrumental playing on the *bala*, *kora*, *n'goni*, *tambin*, *djembe*, *dundun*, guitar, and bass. A testimony to the vitality and creativity of immigrant communities in America, this music and its performers seamlessly combine contemporary life in urban New York with ancient African traditions.

EXTENSIVE NOTES, PHOTOS, 11 TRACKS, 65 MINUTES.

- 1 **FAKOLI** (MALI) 6:03 ■ 2 **JIGIYA** (MALI) 6:52 ■
3 **KINZAN** (GUINEA/MALI) 6:03 ■ 4 **NANFULEN**
(GUINEA/MALI) 6:45 ■ 5 **JANJON** (MALI) 5:57 ■
6 **SIDI YELLAH** (GAMBIA) 6:20 ■ 7 **SORI**
KEMEDON (GUINEA) 5:12 ■ 8 **KEME BUREMA**
(GUINEA) 5:00 ■ 9 **ALLAH L'A KE** (GUINEA-BISSAU)
5:14 ■ 10 **DINIYA** (GUINEA) 6:25 ■ 11 **DJIU DE**
GALINHA (GUINEA-BISSAU) 5:44

PRODUCED BY THE CENTER FOR TRADITIONAL MUSIC AND DANCE

TRADITIONAL
MUSIC
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Smithsonian Folkways Recordings

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MANDEN JALIYA IN NEW YORK CITY

by Tom van Buren

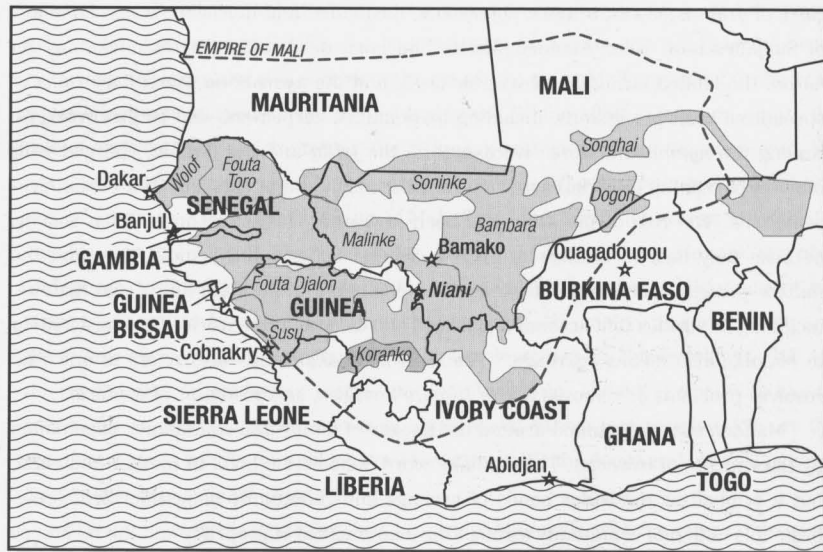
This recording presents the sound of the collective energy and artistry shared by a unique network of musicians and singers living in New York City. Hailing from the nations of Mali, Gambia, Guinea, and Guinea-Bissau, they are united by the common cultural heritage of the Manden world of West Africa. The artists are all *jililu* (sing. *jali*), members of a hereditary musical caste whose ancestry and artistic lineage go back to the 13th century. Now they make their homes in New York City and have recast the deep traditions of their culture into a contemporary setting, employing time-honored musical practices while embellishing their music with new sounds, lyrical subjects, and innovative musical ideas.

Since 1997, these musicians have been participants in a program called *Badenya*, which grew out of collaboration among the Center for Traditional Music and Dance, artists, and Manden community arts advocates in New York City. From 1997 to 2000, the collaboration produced four major concerts of African music in venues from East Harlem to Lincoln Center. Among the performances presented, the Manden form and repertoire known as *jaliya* was a key expression. Some of the finest exponents of this art form in New York City now appear on this album.

Jaliya in the Manden World

The social and artistic origin of the *jililu* lies in the founding of the Empire of Mali in A.D. 1225 under the rule of Sunjata Keita. United from the remnants of the northern

kingdom of ancient Ghana (ca. 700 to 1076), this empire covered a large part of the Sahel, the savanna southwest of the Sahara. It united peoples from the forests of present-day Ivory Coast in the south to the city of Teghazza at the edge of the Sahara in the north, and from the western Atlantic coast to Timbuktu in the east. (See map.) These societies had long established an economic base in the trade of salt from the north and



The Empire of Mali at its greatest extent during the reign of Mansa Souleyman, grandson of Sunjata Keita, ca. A.D. 1350. Shading illustrates linguistic areas.

gold from the south. The empire controlled the key routes and access to sources of these goods. The faith of Islam spread along these routes from North Africa, across the Sahara and throughout the savanna to the south of the desert.

Internally, the Empire of Mali developed a system of keeping records, genealogy, and history. The *jalilu* played a key role in this system. The establishment of a hereditary caste of oral historians, orators, counselors, mediators, and musicians was a hallmark of Sunjata's new order. Manden society had been divided into castes, including the *horon*, the landed farming and warrior class, and the *nyamakala*, hereditary clans of specialized craft professions, including blacksmiths, carpenters, and leather workers. Among the *nyamakala* were "wordsmiths," the *jalilu* and the *finahlu*, charged with matters pertaining to verbal arts, memory, the resolution of conflicts, and official presentations. The role of the *jalilu* has been immensely important in Manden society, because they deal in matters of dispute, rumor, history, and justice. They and the *finahlu* possess specialized knowledge and command of spiritual and social matters, including impurities that account for the evil and discord in the world. The word *nyama* in Malinke also means "garbage." The term *nyamakala* thus also refers to one who resolves problems or removes evil or impure energies, as a mediator of conflicts.

Manden society is united around the lineage of family and community, exemplified by the concept of *badenya*. This Malinke word denotes the bond of mother and child, but it symbolizes the wider bonds of heritage and community obligation. *Jalilu* celebrate this notion of community through the maintenance of propriety and the reverence for heritage. At the same time, they sing epic ballads and moral tales of heroic ventures abroad, motivated by the contrasting male concept of *fadenya*, which symbolizes the

forces of conflict and competition, and which must be mitigated for the common good.

The origin of the *jali* caste is described in the Epic of Sunjata, the primary historical text learned and sung by *jalilu* in ballads and recitations about the founding of the empire. One of the first written translations was made by African historian D. T. Niane, from a version sung by *jali* Mamadou Kouyate in the 1950s. According to this version, when Sunjata's father, Naré Maghan, was at the end of his life, he presented the young prince with a *jali* named Balafaseke, saying: "From his mouth you will hear the history of your ancestors and you will learn the art of governing Mali according to the principles which our ancestors have bequeathed to us" (Niane 1960:17). In addition to the role of oral historian and counselor, the *jali* was a musician. Citing the same epic, *jali* Abou Sylla (who appears on this recording) explained: "The first *bala* [xylophone] was that of Sumaoro Kanté, the first king of Mali. This king made his *bala* as a fetish. He was his own *jali*. After the battle at Kirina, Sunjata took everything. He took this *bala* and gave it to Balafaseke who became the ancestor of the Kouyates [a prominent *jali* family]." These stories recount the historical origin of the empire, its social order, and the *jalilu*'s place within it. *Jali* Mamadou Kouyate described his role as follows: "We are the repositories, which harbor secrets many centuries old. The art of eloquence has no secrets for us. Without us the names of kings would vanish into oblivion. We are the memory of mankind. By the spoken word we bring to life the deeds and exploits of kings for younger generations" (Niane 1960:1).

At the end of the 16th century, the Empire of Mali suffered from internal divisions and succumbed to challenges from the neighboring Fulani people, but its legacy has continued to influence the region and its diaspora. As a political entity, Mali was defeated

at the battle of Jenne in 1599, and split apart. The practice of *jaliya* had spread throughout the Empire, and *jalilu* continued to serve the powers and dynasties that dominated the various kingdoms within the former empire. The repertoire of regional *jalilu* reflected the perspectives and ensuing histories of the different regions. Thus, the *jalilu* of the Gambia in the west often include songs about their historical leaders, such as “*Kelefaba*,” the praise-song for the first king of the western Mandinka Empire, and “*Keme Burema*,” a song about the French government’s betrayal of the son of Samori Touré, the anticolonial leader of the southern Wassalou people, who briefly reunited the Mali Empire in the 1870s.

The Manden world was diminished further by Portuguese incursions into what is now Guinea-Bissau beginning in the 15th century, more than three centuries of the Atlantic slave trade, and conquest and direct rule by the French and British after the European division of Africa in 1885–86. The Europeans violently challenged physical resistance to their rule, and targeted the *jalilu* because of the social power of their role as keepers of history, knowledge, and custom.

With the dissolution of the center of local traditional power, there emerged newer accommodations to colonial domination, such as the Islamic Mouride brotherhoods—social and economic organizations of the late 19th and 20th century in what is now Senegambia. Centered in the northern district of Fouta and Cayor, and the cities of Touba and Tambacounda, the brotherhoods were led by religious leaders known as marabouts, and are rooted in the teachings of African Muslim saints. Since the colonial period, some brotherhoods developed a strong mercantile component throughout West Africa. These continue to exert significant influence in postcolonial African society.

Meanwhile, the *jalilu* were left to subsist on the village level, or to attempt to expand their role and repertoire as modern musical entertainers. Over the past century, they have adapted their roles to contemporary settings, but many have crossed over into popular urban settings, and have established successful international careers.

The Manden Community of New York

From the late 1970s onward, significant numbers of African people have been migrating to New York from Mali, Senegal, Guinea, Burkina Faso, and the Ivory Coast, and in lesser numbers from the Gambia, Sierra Leone, and Liberia. By the mid 1990s, a thriving network of communities had been established throughout New York City, but most notably in Harlem and the Bronx. The Manden communities of New York are known by national origin and linguistic and ethnic group. The languages spoken in the Manden region are Wolof and Serer in Senegal, Susu and Fula in Guinea, Mandinka/Malinke and Soninke in the Gambia and Mali, and the Bambara/Bamana dialect of Malinke (the term used in Mali for *Mandinka*) in eastern Mali. To the south, regional languages of northern Sierra Leone, such as Kuranko, are part of the linguistic complex.

The Manden communities of New York City were first established by immigrants from Senegal and the Gambia. Senegalese forged a path to New York in the early 1980s, establishing an economic base in networks of street vendors, whose organization was controlled by the Mouride Islamic brotherhoods. The brotherhoods aided in the process of migration and the establishment of communities abroad. Certain brotherhoods became dominant in different countries and cities. Long before the New York migration, the brotherhoods of Fouta and Tambacounda led in the Senegalese settlement in France

and other parts of Europe. In New York, the vendors were highly organized through the Hul Pular brotherhood in Brooklyn and the Modou-Modou brotherhood from Baol and Cayor in Harlem. The vendors received assistance in obtaining visas, transportation, and lodging in southern Harlem; they also received financing and access to wholesale merchandise.

English-speaking Gambians began to arrive in New York during the early 1980s, often through similar channels as the Mouride vendors had followed. The Gambians included distinct subgroups, including Mandinka, Soninke, and Sarakoulay, who came in search of work or trade opportunities and settled at first in Manhattan single-room-occupancy hotels or with friends. Eventually, Gambians began to settle in the Bronx, where they established a significant community with religious leaders and mutual-aid organizations, such as the Gambian Society of New York.

Immigration from other Manden countries followed two paths, according to language. English-speakers from Liberia settled predominantly on Staten Island, while immigrants from Sierra Leone settled primarily in Queens. Settlers from the Francophone West African nations of Guinea, Mali, and the Ivory Coast have arrived more recently, as immigration to France was substantially curtailed in the 1990s, and as other earlier migrants from these areas began to establish the community infrastructure and contacts necessary to permit wider settlement. These groups tended to follow the Senegalese into Harlem and go from there into the Bronx.

The communities of Mandinka, Wolof, Susu, and Fula peoples are found in Harlem, the west Bronx, parts of Queens, central Brooklyn, and the Richmond Hill area of Staten Island. Population statistics are quite unreliable, given the significant number of undoc-

umented people, and the lack of distinction in the census among the communities and cultures in subsaharan Africa. Recent census and immigration statistics suggest that the Manden population of New York is approximately twenty thousand. Each national community maintains one or more active community associations, including the Guinean Sigiri regional association and the Haute Conseil des Maliens de New York. The Wolof and French-language "African Time" radiobroadcast, the Sierra Leone *Times* newspaper, and other community media also have a local presence.

Jaliya in New York

Since the 1980s, *jali* have visited the Manden communities of New York City. Some of these musicians arrived in the company of touring bands and dance troupes and have made New York their permanent place of residence. Since 1990, there has been a marked increase in the numbers of *jali*, particularly from Francophone West Africa. Their knowledge of African and European languages, experience with travel, and facility with music and storytelling make them natural cultural ambassadors of the Manden world. *Jali* residing in New York City recognize the legacy of their ancestors' historical role, but they also reflect the intermediary colonial and postcolonial experiences of West Africa. Most of them have traveled or resettled within Africa before coming to the United States, experiencing the effects of urbanization and nationalism there. They have been involved daily in adapting the legacy of their caste role to the conditions facing their communities in new contexts, in Africa and the United States.

Of the *jali* who have migrated to the United States, many maintain links to their former role in Manden society, and yet there is a significant historical and psychic

distance between the period in which their caste originated and the present day. The descendants of ancient Mali in New York City share a common history, the Malinke language, and a musical and oral tradition. In ceremonies, community gatherings, and public events, *jalilu* still recite the histories, customs, and genealogies of the Manden peoples; they sing praises to patrons, help resolve social conflicts, and entertain. In these ways, they maintain ties between the migrant communities and their home cultures, while establishing new contacts and bonds among their communities, other ethnic groups, and the general public life of New York City.

The Songs

The songs on this album present a range of *jaliya* as it is practiced in New York City. They cover a historical frame of almost eight centuries, depicting the history of the founding of the Empire of Mali, treating 19th-century subjects, and developing contemporary themes. These songs are all good examples of how New York-based *jalilu* draw from deep tradition, combine musical ideas and instruments from the range of their history and experience, and bring their culture to life on a daily basis.

The first five selections, “Fakoli,” “Jigiya,” “Kinzan,” “Nanfulen,” and “Janjon,” present the sound of Super Manden, an ensemble backing the voices of Abdoulaye Diabate and Adjaratou Tapani Sissoko of Mali. They offer examples of the oldest repertoire from the Sunjata epic, as well as modern songs of praise, counsel, and blessing. They were arranged collaboratively by Diabate and *bala* player Abou Sylla. Except for “Janjon,” the songs were recorded in a single session at Ornette Coleman’s Harmolodic Studios in East Harlem. This session seems to express a magical fusion of ancient and

modern African experiences and cultural sensibilities.

The remaining pieces on the album fill out the compilation with a range of performers who offer a wider perspective on the Manden sound and experience in New York. These include Mahamadou Salieu Susso’s “Sidi Yellah,” in which he sings of the good works of a 20th-century religious leader. The *bala* artistry of Abou Sylla and Famoro Diabate shines through in their duet, “Sori Kemedon,” evoking the historical precedent of their instrument as the first to be associated with *jaliya*. Master *tambin* flutist Bah Baillo performs “Keme Burema,” a song that addresses the sorrow of the colonial experience as the French defeated the great leader Samori Touré by persuading his own son to betray him. “Diniya,” a percussion-based vocal song arranged by Abou Sylla and sung by Djefalima Diabate of Guinea, exhorts youth to mind their elders and their responsibility.

Finally, the album offers a range of the extraordinary work of *kora* player and singer Keba Bobo Cissoko of Guinea-Bissau, who has inspired audiences and fellow musicians in New York with his powerful vocal style and the deep pathos of his words. He performs a traditional invocation, “Allah l’a Ke,” known to all *jalilu* of the western Manden world, and the closing “Djiu de Galinha,” an anticolonial protest song by singer Jose Carlos, adapted in New York to evoke memories of Africa and appeal for peace. Cissoko shows here that the *jalilu* of New York are as mindful of the present circumstances of their community as they are grounded in the great moral and dramatic traditions of the Manden and Islamic past.

The instruments in the recording are classic Manden lutes and idiophones. These include the *n’goni* lute of Mali, played here by Fousseny Kouyate; this is the oldest type

of instrument of the ensemble, dating to the hunters' lutes of Old Mali. The *bala*, an equiheptatonic (tuned in equally spaced seven-tone scales) xylophone, is the most widespread instrument of the Manden region, where it is played alone, in multiple-part *bala* ensembles, and ensembles of mixed instruments. The twenty-one-string *kora*, perhaps the best known of the instruments, is played mainly in the western Manden region; the most recently developed, it was first documented in the 18th century. The end-blown *tambin* flute originated with the Fulani people in what is now western Mali and northern Guinea; performance involves extensive overblowing and singing through the flute, making it an ideal instrumental translation of the vocal repertoire.

Over time, these four instruments have come together in various ensembles, in which musicians have developed modes of interplay, as exemplified on this recording. This interplay surrounds and carries the vocal performance without drowning out words. The *djembe* and *kenkene* drums heard on "Diniya" and "Janjon" were traditionally played for dance, rather than for *jaliya*, but are now commonly included within ensembles. In many of these performances, the guitar and the bass serve the same musical function as the traditional instruments, as they subtly modernize the sound without resorting to electronic effects and sophisticated editing. The spontaneous strength of *jaliya* performance shines through.

The Artists

Abdoulaye Diabate (vocal) is a member of an eminent family of *jaliya* from Kela, in the Bambara linguistic region in southern Mali. He received *jaliya* training from his father, Yamadu Diabate, and other family members. He learned the guitar and popular styles from his brother, the well-known singer Kasse Mady. In 1973, he moved to Bamako to perform with the Tentemba Jazz Band and the Koule Star Band of Kouchala. He also



ABDOULAYE DIABATE



ABOU SYLLA



MAHAMADOU SALIEU SUSU

performed with Mory Kante, Salif Keita, Ousmane Kouyate, and Kante Manfila. In 1976, he moved to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where he founded his own twelve-piece band, Super Manden; two years later, he released its first recording, *Wahabia-Ke Daschi*, and he performed with it throughout the 1980s. In 1992, he joined the world-renowned Ensemble Koteba under the direction of Souleymane Koli as a singer and guitarist, and in 1996, he accompanied the popular female vocal trio Les Trois Gos with this ensemble for a North American tour. Since coming to America, he has been a participant in the New

York and East Coast African music scene, and has reformed his Super Manden band with musicians from Mali and Guinea.

Abou Sylla (*bala*) is from Kindia, a district capital in the southern coastal area of Guinea. Born into a local *jali* family, he learned the *bala* from the age of seven, and began performing with his father. In 1980, he was invited to join Les Ballets Africains, the national dance-company of Guinea. He worked with the company for two years, but illness forced him to return home. In 1990, after a long period of recovery, he rejoined Les Ballets Africains under the direction of Aleppa Bangoura and artistic director Mohamed Kemoko Sano. Sylla also performed with Sano's company, Les Merveilles d'Afrique. In 1992, he joined Les Ballets Africains to perform an extended choreography entitled *Silô* ("The Path") on a European tour. In 1993, the company brought the same program to the United States. Sylla returned to the U.S. with Les Merveilles d'Afrique in 1995 and settled in New York. Since then, he has been performing and teaching Manden music in workshops and residencies throughout the United States.

Keba Bobo Cissoko (*kora* and vocal) was born in the Bafata region of Guinea-Bissau and began learning the *kora* at an early age from family members, including his grandfather, Bouly Gelissa. In 1981, he moved to Conakry, Guinea, where he joined the National Instrumental Ensemble. He also formed his own band, Le Tamalalou ("The Traveler"). In 1986, he met Kemoko Sano, the choreographer of Les Ballets Africains, who widened his musical practice from the *jaliya* repertoire to the more diverse styles of performance required of a national repertory ensemble, in which performers play several instru-

ments and take dramatic roles from different regions. Cissoko learned to play other instruments, including the *dundun* bass drum, the *djembe*, and the *bala*, and in 1989, he joined Les Ballets Africains. After six years in the company, he toured Europe and the United States. In 1996, he settled in New York, where he rejoined Les Merveilles d'Afrique. He is noted for an emphatic singing style and florid *kora* playing. In 1998, he founded a New York-based version of his Le Tamalalou. The band joins *jalilu* and North American musicians in a combination that translates the western Manden repertoire into an interculturably accessible music.

Adjaratou "Tapani" Sissoko (vocal) was born in the city of Kaye, Mali, in 1972. Her father was a drummer and her mother a singer. She grew up learning the *jali* repertoire and role. As a teenager, she was recruited into the National Instrumental Ensemble of Mali. After several years, she joined Kandia Kouyate's group but continued to perform with Sekouba Bambino in Africa and Sekouba Kandia Kouyate in Guinea and New York. She has toured with Toumani Diabate in Europe and the United States. She now resides in New York City, where she performs for the Malian community with Super Manden and other ensembles of *jalilu*.

Mahamadou Salieu Suso (*kora* and vocal) grew up in Kerewan, Gambia. He began to play the *kora* at the age of eight, studying and later performing with his father. During the 1980s, he traveled and performed in Nigeria and other areas of West Africa, and in Europe. In 1989, he came to New York to join the Papa Susso Manding Music and Dance Society. In 1994, he founded African Jaliya Kafo, an ensemble of Gambian *jalilu* who

have performed at Gambian community events and major festivals. In 1992, he recorded his own album, *Griot*, for Lyricord Discs, from which the selection on this album was taken. He has also collaborated on various projects with African-American artists, including guitarist James “Blood” Ulmer and the poet Jayne Cortez, whose album *Taking the Blues Back Home* features his *kora* playing.



KEBA BOBO CISSOKO



ADJARATOU "TAPANI" SISSOKO



FAMORO DIOUBATE

Bah Bailo (*tambin*) is from a musical family of the Peule ethnicity of the Fulani region of Guinea. His mother is Vietnamese, and his father met her while serving in the French colonial army in Indochina in the 1940s. Bailo learned to play the *tambin*, the traditional Fulani end-blown flute, from his grandfather in his home village. One day his grandfather called the townspeople together to declare his retirement from playing and the succession of his grandson to his art and tradition. During the ceremony marking this occasion, Bailo played through the night until sunrise. At the age of fifteen, he left his village to go to Dakar, Senegal, to find work as a musician. He remained there for

several years, performing extensively in traditional and contemporary contexts. He also traveled throughout the Manden region, performing in the Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, and Sierra Leone. In the late 1970s, he relocated to Abidjan, Ivory Coast, where he was invited to join the Ballets Koteba, to work alongside Abdoulye Diabate. He participated in numerous productions of the company, including the recent Manden opera, *Waramba*. He has also performed at festivals, on recordings, and on world tours. In 2000, he relocated to New York City.



BAH BAILO

Famoro Dioubate (*bala*) is from Kankan, in the heart of the Manden region of Northeastern Guinea. He is a grandson of the legendary Djeli Sory Kouyate, one of the most renowned musicians in Guinea, and the leader of the National Instrumental Ensemble of Guinea during the 1960s and 70s. Like his grandfather, Famoro Dioubate is a master of the *bala*. He also performed with contemporary musical ensembles and artists from Guinea and Mali, including Sekouba Bambino, Mory Kanté, and Sekouba Kandia Kouyate. He participated in artistic residencies in France in 1994, and since coming to New York City in 1999, he has collaborated in educational programs at the Juilliard School. He is a regular performer with Keba Cissoko's Tamalalou and with Sekouba Kandia Kouyate, with whom he has also recorded.

Note: Song lyric transcriptions are written in a phonetic form simplified from that used in the Bamana language text, *An Ka Bamanankan Kalan* by Charles Bird, John Hutchinson, and Mamadou Kanté.

Bloomington: Indiana University Linguistics Club (1977). Accents approximate language tones. As the lyrics of the songs are in Bamana, Mandinka, and Malinke dialects, variations do occur.

1. FAKOLI (MALI)

Super Manden: Abdoulaye Diabate, voice; Abou Sylla, bala; Foussey Kouyate, n'goni; Yacouba Sissoko, kora; Mamadou Diabate, kora; Chiek Barry, bass; Moussa Sissoko, guitar

A song of the Sunjata epic cycle about a key ally to the emperor, the sorcerer and warrior Fakoli.

Aluyé sila bila: Fakoli natòle; mofa fenne aikun. / Aluyé sila bilasa; soðmalu natò Nyawulenba sèbè leye aikun. / Malien nuyé nankama min kofòla, wo bélébéle lenin didè. / Laginè kaluyé nankama min kofòla; wo bélébéle lè barana. / Ivoirien nuyé nankama min kofòla. / Wo bélébéle lenin didè. / Tunyala mòkana bila Fakoli la Maninka kè tè silan nadé. / Kòròndo mòluye dianfaba minkèrila, wò dianfa wotè sélila. / Telebe mòluye dianfaba minkèlila, wò dianfa wotè sélila. / Miri kònòma tasibali kònòma, hankili makònòmale woti nò minala. // N'bafo tunyalé mòkana bila Manden kalu, Maninka kè tè silan nadé. / Bila koroma di mòla bòn biri-biri, Adi mòla lò yòrò kélé. / Fakoli di mòla bòn biri-biri; aledi mòlalò yòrò kelen Fakoli tè silan nadè. // Tunyalé mokana bila Fakolila, Maninka kè tè silan nadé...

Clear the way: Fakoli is coming; he has great and magical powers. / Clear the way; the sorcerers are coming. / The veteran sorcerers carry amulets. / Malian notables talk of someone with great experience and dexterity. / Guinean notables talk of someone with great experience and dexterity; here he is. / Ivoirians talk of someone with great experience and dexterity. / That is the truth; don't provoke him; Maninka people are not afraid. / That which your enemies do will not affect you. / That which the people from the West do will not affect you. / Ignorant people and ingrates can be set on the right path by wise leaders. // I say that that is true. Don't provoke the Maninka, they are not afraid. / Fakoli can cast his enemies aside; he can stop a person in his tracks. // That is the truth; don't provoke him; Maninka people are not afraid...

2. JIGIYA (MALI/BAMBARA)

Adjaratou Tapani Sissoko, voice, with Super Manden (see track 1)

A praise-song sung to a benefactor.

Jigiya nyuma nyo koite, nate moro min fe. // Nate moro min fe, jigiti la funo ke nyo man te moro min fe. / Wolo den nyoi man te moko min fe. / Nate moro mina jigitila Boleme nyuman to moke mina. / Anye tele min no bi tele juguba; ni jigite moko mina ika dinya mandi. / Jigiya nyuma nyo ke koite, nate moro min fe. // Ahah, ah, ibara tunya fo: / Jalimuso jigiya te mano mina. / Tapa wo tigi te dunya diyabo...

If you don't have support, life is not good. // Your life is difficult; you have to have support. / Children need support, for life to be good. / Support of family is good. / The sun shines down and gives us life; we need support like that to live. / If you don't have support, life is not good. // Yes, yes, listen to these words: / The *jalimuso* [Tapani Sissoko] sings of support. / Tapa knows the truth...

3. KINZAN (GUINEA/MALI)

Adjaratou Tapani Sissoko, voice, with Super Manden

A song about coming of age and courtship in Mali. The name *kinzan*, from the French *quinze ans* (fifteen years), refers to a rhythm and dance associated with coming-of-age ceremonies.

Naluyé goroya makalana Sudan, fò aluyé Malien musolé fudu. / Koko-koko dalaka, dalaka cheriho, Allah lenò ila diya n'nyè. / N'ko naluyé goroya makalana Sudan, fò aluyé Guineen musolé fudusa. / Naluyé goroya makalana Sudan, fò aluyé, Gambia musolé fudu. / Naluyé goroya makalana Sudan, fò aluyé. / Abijan musolé fudu. / Koko-koko dalaka, dalaka cheriho, Allah lenò ila diya n'nyè dè. / N'ko sanu mara mansa, ani wori mara mansa. / Hòrò musso kankelenti n'nye wolé nyinina. / Sonu mara mansa, ani wori mara mansa. / Buna adama kankelenti n'nye wolé nyinina ha ha dallaka n'neye. / Allah diyanamò dalaka, bè nikamò dalaka. / Saa muluku musso dalaka dalaka cheriho Allah lenò ila diya n'nyesa.

If you want a certain status in Sudan, you have to marry a Malian woman. / My dear, my dear, open the door, it's thanks to God that I have your love. / If you want a certain status in Sudan, you have to marry a Guinean woman. / If you want a certain status in Sudan, you have to marry a Gambian woman. / If you want a certain status, you have to marry a woman from Sudan. / If you want a certain status, you have to marry a woman from Abidjan. / My dear, it's God's will that I love you. / Some are rich in gold or money, but I am looking for someone who is sincere. / Some are rich in gold or money, but I am looking for someone who is sincere. / Open the door to me. The one whom God loves, open the door. / Someone admired by all, open the door. / Someone graceful like a serpent, open the door. / My dear, it is God's will that I love you.

4. NANFULEN (GUINEA/MALI)

Abdoulaye Diabate, voice, with Super Manden

A 20th-century anthem of celebration of freedom, this version is sung as a praise-song to a patron in Abidjan.

Iye n'malon te, n'malon ho. / Adama denula mana mana kuma wolenò mògò tinyena mòma, Woyi nanfulen. / Ah, Djaka, la malo mandinyè kinibili dusu fè tanti / Iye n'malon tan, n'malon ho. / Bimòlu mana mana kuma wolenò mògò tinyena mòma, Woyi nanfulen. / Kamara bana, la malo mandinyè Kinibili dusufè, nanfulen. // Konye wala Djaka bara / N'ko n'ne watò Djaka lefè fina den kuru bè jigiyi leledi. // Woyi nanfulen. / Ah Djakala kasi mandinye / Kinibili dusufè tanti. / I bemba kòròma nara sookè sarakadi. / Bè laduba diabiri lema. / Kamara, musu ledi. // Lolo n'mari tallah bè kaïra kura kinyè / N'mana karifa ila / Kònò nidina n'nalo bi wo fò n'nye. / M'bara miri m'bara miri m'bara kònòrò ban / N'ne nyante n'fila nin nyòna / Ja saya ye tunyadi. / M'bara miri m'bara miri m'bara kònòrò ban. / N'ne nyante n'wolo na bèrèla. Ja saya manyi / Allah biri bunyè, jon ti dòyala / Famalé Allah di latè ka kòrò jòndi woyi...

I don't know, I don't know. / The loose words people say undermine the trust between us, *nanfulen*. / I don't want to disgrace you, Djaka; don't be angry with people, madam. // The Kamara [the clan of Djaka], I don't want to disgrace you, *nanfulen*. / Don't be angry with people. / I am going to visit Djaka, I am going to be near Djaka. / All the *finalu* have confidence in her. // *Nanfulen*, I don't want to see Djaka cry. / Don't be angry with people, madam. / Your ancestors have sacrificed for you, / So that good things will come to you. / Kamara, you are a great woman. // Every day, God grants you goodness. // I confide in you, but if you know you will disgrace me later, let me know. / I have reflected on it again and again until I can do no more. / I don't see my confidante. / Death is absolute. / I have reflected again and again until I can no more. / I don't see my mother anymore. Death is terrible. / God respects you as no one else can. / God is great, destiny is (older) greater than oneself...

5. JANJON (MALI)

Abdoulaye Diabate, voice; Abou Sylla, bala, dundun; Famoro Dioubate, bala; Yacouba Sissoko, kora; Fousseny Kouyate, n'goni; Peter Fand, bass; Fodé Bangoura, djembe

Another song of the Sunjata Epic cycle of the founding of the Empire of Mali, about the heroic struggle of Sunjata Keita. *Janjon* is a term for a popular dance rhythm.

Jan jonba, jan jonba dòn kelu ooh... / Jan jonba dòn kelo wo ooh, / Jan jon ne nindi. / Nin fora bula mansa si soluyé: / Soro bula Fakoli den, / Baya bila Fakoli den, / Bati bila Fakoli den, / Batimanan bila Fakoli den, / Deme nyòna gon ye Fakoli yéii. / Ani Dionara koladan na fòlò fòlò? / Siramanba Koita le nin masòsòdio, / Turaman Nin Kante Jan, Muke Mussa, / A Nin Muke Datuma: / Ani woluka koladè fòlò fòlò / N'nyéyè Nin yòrò fòla. Fakoli Kumba, Fakoli Daba...

Janjon dancers, janjon dancers, / Dance to the rhythm of janjon. // This rhythm was played for the chief with five names: Great-great-grandson of Soro Bula Fakoli, / Great-grandson of Baya bila Fakoli, / Grandson of Bati Bila Fakoli, / Son of Batimanan Fakoli, / Fakoli the Protector. / With whom did he first collaborate? / With

Siramanba Koita, the righteous, / With Turaman Nin Kante Jan, beyond reproach, / The brothers Muke Mussa and Muke Datuma: / they all were together from the beginning. / When I say this, I speak of Fakoli the proud, Fakoli the Speaker of Truth...

6. SIDI YELLAH (GAMBIA)

Mahamadou Salieu Susso, kora and voice.

(Courtesy of Lyrichord Discs)

A modern elegy to Sidi Aidara, a highly regarded religious and community leader in Gambia, during the 1920s.

Sara gallau, sara gallau, bai nal kef wonunu, sara gallau. / Sidi yella, Sidi yella, kara Burama fama alene Sidi kumbo. / Sidi yella, Sidi yella, Sidi yella, Sahel linko. / Sara galla, Sara galla, Sara gallau, wo, Sara galla bai nal kef wonunu, sara galla. / Aidara banin Quraes nin banin Has Minka alina sidifo kumba Aidara. / Sidifobe larim, Sidifobe, larim, Aidara ah, Sidi yella. / Sidifo yella lumena dibo dunta sanji manke. / Satano lu luba kumbo la Sidi yella, Ji nolu ba kumbo la Sidi yella. / Jinolu bakumba la Subhana Allahi-wa...

Indeed he was, indeed he was a scholar of the Qur'an. / Sidi has died, Sidi has died, the father of the Marabout Ibraihim has died. / Sidi has died, Sidi has died, Sidi from the Sahel has died. / Indeed he was, indeed he was a scholar of the Qur'an. / He was kin to Muhammed from Quarase and from Has Minka, in the region of Mecca, let's mourn for Aidara / Sidi lay down, Sidi lay down, Sidi has died. / The day Sidi died, a dark cloud covered the Earth / Even Satan and the jinn are mourning too; Sidi has died. / All the jinn give praise to Allah...

7. SORI KEMEDON (GUINEA)

Abou Sylla, Famoro Dioubate, bala: xylophone duet.

One *bala* is played without the characteristic buzzing resonator, lending a contrasting voice to the balance of the instruments.

8. KEME BUREMA (GUINEA)

Bah Bailo, lead tambin; Sylvain Leroux, second tambin; Keba Cissoko, kora; Famoro Dioubate, bala

A 19th-century historical song about how the French turned the son of Samori Touré against him. Some of the original lyrics are sung through the flute.

9. ALLAH L'A KE (GUINEA-BISSAU)

Keba Bobo Cissoko, kora and vocal

A Mandinka invocation to God and a moral lesson.

Ye Allah l'a Ke, Silan wo don m'a ke. / Kuo be kari bayi le Allah baro, djonte bayi la // Jaliya le n'yo mada; jaliya mo kan kèlèntidi. // Jali ke nin ke te kèlènti baba tunya ri dio; / Jalimuso nin te kèlènti na tunya ri dio. // Kònò du saba le dunya rotero hara baden kònò le wosabe dandi. // Kero kònò nin wode dunya jama tutukoro tunyala ko. / Hara bade kònò be kasi mo ninfina. / Woyie terela komindo tonò te wola / Tefili fana ta manyama fanaba cursi dom / Adi brin kanta, Adi tama mese mese / Adi wi lo bundala / "Kombara kuman kura kura me." / Yenin foli ke leleyen kata moyen, "Yenin foli yen badenya le ma" / Ada g'na wulu ku walaka / Ado fo felen silama / Adi badenya wo janfa / Adi manamana-kan tola / Na bana naola adi si fonya di janfa / Wo kaffiri da sibo kaju to le korondoba // bolo dun i yèrèro. / Jaliya la n'yo mada, jaliya mo kan kelentidi. // Jali ke nin ke te kelenti baba tunya ri dio. / Jalimuso nin kelenti na tunya ri dio. /

All praise to God, God who created all things. / What God has created, cannot be taken away. // *Jaliya* is different; *jaliya* is one voice. // *Jali* men are different from other men; / *jali* women are different from others too. // There are three birds (spirits) in the world. / The human spirit is the last. // If there is someone you don't know / You can't sympathize with him. / You can tell a liar, he hides in his costume and listens at the door. / "I heard something new," he says, but he doesn't know what he hears. / "I'll tell you a secret, because we're family." / That's the way the liar is, that's the concern of the community. / That's loose talk. / When he's finished his lying he'll need to go out for some air. / Before you talk about others, take care of yourself. / *Jaliya* is different, *jaliya* is one voice. // *Jali* men are different from other men. / *Jali* women are different from others too. /

10. DINIYA (GUINEA)

Djefalima Diabate, voice; Abou Sylla, bala, dundun; Fodé Bangoura, djembe

A song appealing to youth to respect their elders.

Denmisen nu—an nye sòbe don sòrònba kola /
Ka wola baraka nyinin kan, / Wole ye diamana
la sabatila // Ite tòròla. / Mò baya tuma ni den-
misen nyatè kelen di. / Alu miri soronba koma
yandi. / Mò baya tuma ni denmisen nyatè kelen
di. / Alu miri solon jamana kéma yandi. Ah. / Ja
deninya bantòle. / Ila diamana kèrò, ila dia-
mana kè banto. / I nani falu wolu telen na
telene mirila dinin. / Ifana ye lala, ila diamana
ke diban. / Idò ni kòrò wolu telena telena miri-
la dinin. / Ifana yelala ko ila diamana ke diban.
Ah. / Dia kò ambe sòma le dinin. / Ila diamana
kèrò, Ila diamana ke diban...

Young people—submit to the will of your par-
ents, / For the sake of the community. // You
won't regret it. / Age and youth are not the
same. / Think of your elders. / Age and youth
are not the same. / Think of how you are using
your time. Ah. / Your youth will fade one day. /
Your life will end. / Your parents remember
their youth. / You too will grow old one day. /
Those younger than you always take their
youth for granted. / But you too will be sure to
grow older. Ah. / Good night until tomorrow,
my child. / The good times of youth will end...

11. DJIU DE GALINHA (GUINEA-BISSAU)

*Keba Cissoko, kora and voice; Famoro Dioubate, bala; Chikako
Iwahori, voice; Sylvain Leroux, guitar; Rufus Cappadocia, cello;
Peter Fand, bass; Stefan Monssen, djembe*

A Mandinka-Portuguese creole song from the
early 1960s by José Carlos. Originally sung about
a Portuguese political prison, it is adapted by
Keba Cissoko into a contemporary antiwar song.

Djiu de Galinha /// Niyao ajiu de Galinha. //
[Creole] Manera Kolabaderos techoro tchuba,
Asin tamben kunta pensa dinya terra. / Manera
ku piskaduros tattera marel, asin tamben
kunta pensa dinya terra. / Manera kufiju majo
ta pensa dise familias, Guinea-Bissau, asin
tamben kunta pensa dinya terra. / Manera ku
familias ta pensa di se fidjju majo, asin tamben
kunta pensa dinya terra. [Solos] Keba Bobo
Cissoko de Guinea-Bissau bostar de. / En talem
bura Gabou sara no vala mego. / En talem bura
di Bafata Bijimi. / En talem bura Binka Badora. /
En talem bura di Kan Chunko sowodi. / En
talem bura di Buba Kidi. / En talem bura di
Komosi farin beju dindin banko. / En talem
bura Bulama, capitale antigu. / En talem bura
di Bissau, capitale nandu. / Amin di Cose Galu
Mara bobo... / Naam o Africa /// Nin am mira
Liberia un la kele bambo le Africa. / Nin am
mira Sierra Leone la kèlè bambo le Africa. / Nin
am mira Guinea-Bissau la kèlè bambo le Africa. /
Alina kaïra dua Africa banko ende duniya? //
Na naniya dua jabole beo numo, Africa? /
Nata'aro kolu fere kaïra sina n'yame, Africa. /
Africa fana dolu tenkun tekerin de duniya. /
Nata'aro kolu fere kaïra sina n'yame, Africa.

Galinha Island /// I remember Galinha Island. //
Like the farmers waiting for rain after the dry
season, I long for my country. / Like the fisher-
men wating for a catch, I long for my country. /
Like the migrant worker who travels far from
Guinea-Bissau and misses his family, I long for
my country. / Like the family that misses its son
away for work, I long for my country. / [Solos]
Keba Bobo Cissoko from Guinea-Bissau greets
you. / I remember the Gabou Sara region / I
remember Bafata Bijimi. / I remember Binka
Badora. / I remember the wealthy Kan Chunko
district (where the good hospitals are). / I
remember the district of Komosi. / I remember
Bulama, the old capital. / I remember Bissau,
the new capital. / I come from Cose Galu Mara. /
Africa is calling me. / Oh Africa is calling me. /
I'm thinking of what is happening in Liberia. /
When is war going to end in Africa? / I'm think-
ing of what is happening in Sierra Leone. /
When is war going to end in Africa? / I'm think-
ing of what is happening in Guinea-Bissau. /
When is war going to end in Africa? / Why don't
we pray for peace and come together as one in
Africa? // We pray for peace together in Africa. /
In Africa, we don't have tranquility. / Let's get
together and bring peace to Africa.

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CREDITS

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