

Youssou N'Dour – History (2019)

Written by bluelover (Bogdan Marszałkowski)
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1 *Habib Faye* 2 *Birima (Remix) Featuring – Seinabo Sey* 3 *Confession* 4 *Ay Coono La* 5 *My Child Featuring – Babatunde Olatunji* 6 *Macoumba* 7 *Salimata* 8 *Hello (Remix) Featuring – Mohombi* 9 *Takuta Featuring – Babatunde Olatunji* 10 *Tell Me* Sikiru Adepoju
Talking Drum Mike Bangerz Arranger, Programming Alexandru Cotoi Guitar, Vocal Arrangement Augustine Huche Ezra Programming, Vocals (Background) Moustapha Mbaye Percussion Youssou N'Dour - vocals Babatunde Olatunji Drums, Percussion Alain Rodrigue Oyono Saxophone, Vocals (Background) Thierno Sarr Bass, Guitar (Acoustic), Guitar (Bass), Lead Seinabo Sey Vocals Spotless Programming, Vocals (Background)

It's useful, but not crucial, to know that *History*, the latest recording by the worldrenowned Senegalese vocalist Youssou N'Dour, honors the past—both his own and that of people who've inspired him. Among those falling into the latter category is Babatunde Olatunji, the late Nigerian drummer, whose influence on both other African artists and many in the West (just ask Carlos Santana and Mickey Hart) is incalculable. Two tracks on *History*, “My Child” and “Takuta,” feature the voice of the late Olatunji—the former is an easy-rolling, poignant dance number, the latter is a unified meld of hypnotic, circular African rhythm and Western groove that grabs from the first beat and never lets go. “Habib Faye,” meanwhile, the album's opening track, is dedicated to N'Dour's late bassist and musical director of that name: packed with percussive accents, it provides the first of several moments within the album that juxtapose the leader's intoxicatingly expressive, gutsy delivery and ethereal, lithe wails. N'Dour takes a song to an unexpected place every last time. Some songs on *History* are remakes from his own catalog, often featuring younger guests and remodeled from the bottom up. Remixes of “Hello,” featuring Swedish-Congolese singer Mohombi, and “Birima,” with Sweden's Seinabo Sey, would, in any just world, top the R&B sales charts. There are new tunes on *History*, N'Dour's first new album in four years, as well: consistent with the older material and remixes, they show him to be on top of contemporary musical and production trends while losing none of his signature vocal style or allegiance to the culture that birthed him. While it's not a groundbreaker on the order of his work from the '80s and '90s, *History* leaves no doubt that Youssou N'Dour is still a giant of African music. ---Jeff Tamarkin, relix.com

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