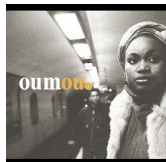


Oumou Sangare – Oumou (2004)

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CD1 1.Ah Ndiya 2.Waiyeina - (previously unreleased) 3.Mogo Te Diya Bee Ye - (previously unreleased) 4.Magnoumako - (previously unreleased) 5.Dugu Kamelemba 6.Saa Magni 7.Woula Bara Diagna 8.Yala - (previously unreleased) 9.Djorolen - (remix, previously unreleased) 10.Denko CD2 1.Maladon - (previously unreleased) 2.Diaraby Nene 3.Sigi Kuruni 4.Ne Bi Fe - (previously unreleased) 5.Laban - (previously unreleased) 6.Kaya Ni Wura 7.Sabu 8.Djorolen 9.Baba 10.N'Guatu

Personnel: Oumou Sangare (vocals); Boubacar Diallo, Baba Salah, Nitin Sawhney (guitar); Mike Williams (flute, alto saxophone); Malik Mezzadri, Abdouleye Fofana (flute); Pee Wee Ellis, Jean Toussaint (tenor saxophone); Paul Jayasingha, Graeme Hamilton (trumpet); Winston Rollins (trombone); Simon Burwell (keyboards); Amadou Ba Gundo, Colin Bass, Guy N'Sangue (bass); Brice Wassy, Frank Tontoh (drums); Ibrahima Sard, Basidi Keita (djembe); Thomas Dyani (percussion); James Thompson (programming).

Following *Worotan*, Oumou Sangare's third album for World Circuit, she decided to take some time to devote to her family and also to focus her efforts on bettering her own country rather than continuing her path to international stardom. After nearly eight years since that last stateside release, World Circuit is reintroducing her with the *Oumou* compilation. But this is much more than a simple "greatest-hits" package, as six of the tracks come from Sangare's most recent album, released on cassette only in Mali in 2003, and two others are previously unreleased. Sangare is not only a fabulous singer with a great band, she is an important social commentator, addressing many aspects of Malian society with a forthrightness never before heard from a Malian woman. Her basic sound is rooted in Wassoulou, a modernized version of an ancient hunters' musical tradition, which featured the kamalengoni, a six-stringed African harp. Sangare blended that with violin, electric guitar, bass, and her powerful, passionate lyrics, taking Mali by storm in the early '90s. As time went on, she incorporated some outside influences, but never abandoned her deeply Malian sound. In fact, some of the material from the most recent cassette release is virtually indistinguishable from her first album. On the other hand, she successfully integrated Pee Wee Ellis and his horn arrangements on *Worotan*, and while the drum programming on "Yala" might be a bit disconcerting at first, she points out in the liner notes that the song was intended as a message for young people, and where better to get

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that message out than the dancefloor? (That song and "Ne Bi Fe," with its almost trip-hop flavor, represent the only real stylistic departures on the collection.) The intelligent, non-chronological sequencing makes the collection flow nicely. Informative liner notes outline the origins of Wassoulou as well as Sangare's history, and Oumou herself provides track-by-track commentary. This is a great package of amazing music from one of Mali's most important artists. ---Sean Westergaard, Rovi

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