

## **A To Ala Ma**

**Ethnic group:** Dioula

**Language (dialect):** Dioula

**Country:** Burkina Faso

**Recording date:** August 20, 2014

**Recording location:** Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso

**Total Recording time:** 14:33

**Technician:** Brian Nowak

### **Group members:**

Fousseini Traoure - Balafon, ngoni

Salia Sanou - Djembe, vocals

Issouf Sanou - Doundoun, vocals

Abdoulaye Dembele - Djembe, guitar

Arouna Zapre - Marakasse (metal scraper)

Alidou Sanou - Djembe, guitar

Barakissa Berth - dance, vocals

### **Track names -- duration**

1) Saabu - 7:46

2) Kele - 4:25

3) Salia Sanou Interview - 2:22

### **Group introduction:**

Representing the many clusters of young men that form music groups in neighborhoods throughout Bobo-Dioulasso, A To Ala Ma are friends that live in a spacious compound together. As the group's size and ambition grows, the changing members now compose, perform, and offer drum and balafon lessons to mostly European tourists. Several members also make and rehabilitate drums.

These two examples show stylistic differences in music typical to this generation of young men's ensembles. The *djembe* group calls-out group members' names and rotates solos to allow for individual appreciation and expression, both important values for this tight-knit group. Then, hanging out in a bedroom, the group performs a song reflecting the youths' desires for peace after a violent conflict in neighboring Mali.

### **Recording context:**

The large outdoor compound encompasses many rooms with enough space for large trees and quiet areas despite the number of people living there. The young men of A To Ala Ma rent several of these rooms

and occupy an obvious area under a large mango tree next to a couple of the rooms they rent, where they performed the first song outside.

This is a place for hanging out, rehearsal, tourists, resting around the house, shade, parties, drum classes, laundry, and more. So pulling up the more than available chairs for a quick song would be along the lines of a familiar welcome routine for any visitor that may come to hang out, drink tea (the entire group does not drink alcohol) or take drum or dance classes.

The second song captures a more casual and insider-like feel; all friends and visitors gone, so just hanging out, or, perhaps sheltering from the rain. These are the moments when songs or other creative moments occur, like the creation of this new song inspired by stories from a war in neighboring Mali.

Being close, concentrated, with casual or creative discussion, music serves to solidify bonds and shared moments, earn some money, and in many ways occupies a large amount of time for otherwise unemployed young men.

**Notes on Language Use:**

The simplistic lyrics of calling names one by one, are ideal for a beginner learner, and appropriate, considering the group's experience with lessons for visitors or foreigners working in the city.