

Farafina

Ethnic group: Jula

Language (dialect): Jula

Country: Burkina Faso

Recording date: August 20, 2014

Recording location: Bobo Dioulasso, Burkina Faso

Total Recording time: 10:20

Technician: Brian Nowak

Group members:

Seidou Denbele- lead balaphone

Track names -- duration

1) A Ni Ce Waralu - 3:46

2) Seidou Denbele interview - 6:34

Group introduction:

The third generation of this popular balaphone orchestra continues to bring the idea started by the group's founders into the international arena. Farafina can best be translated as Sub-Saharan Africa, and this adaptation of a traditional Dioula balaphone ensemble uses more balaphone players to create layers of percussive tones. The group's lyrics often rejoice in everyday activities and values important to the lives of rural Burkinabe.

The group also sends a message to the youth to be proud of the traditions and cultures of their country as they adapt to the modern world. Lead balaphone soloist Seidou Denbele is an expert in the diverse balaphone traditions of Western Burkina Faso and is also one of the most respected balaphone makers in Bobo Dioulasso. This song was recorded during a regular rehearsal session in Bobo Dioulasso.

Recording context:

In a courtyard, just off a paved road, they squeeze the balaphones as close as necessary to feel them and practice at stage-performance quality. The entire surrounding area is relaxed with one or two standing around staring, a few small kids, and others grabbing chairs. They go from one song to another. The eight-person percussion ensemble is tight and prefers to face each other while rehearsing. They lined up for this recording near the end of a two-hour practice.

Notes on Language Use:

The use of a lion to represent farmers links the savage wild forests and its animals with the king of the land by another association: agriculture. The images, contexts, interpretations, and status of farmers is changing as different socio-economic classes in a changing Burkina Faso find new lifestyles and urbanize. "A Ni Ce Waralu" (meaning "Thank to you lions") allows the title of farmer to be interpreted as kingly and proud, reaffirming an agricultural identity in a changing society with new challenges and values.