

Mamou Kamissogo

Ethnic group: Malinke

Language (dialect): Malinke

Country: Guinea

Recording date: August 18, 2014

Recording location: Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso

Total Recording time: 19:38

Technician: Brian Nowak

Group members:

Mamou Kamissogo - Vocals

Tougoumagni Diabate - Balafon

Moustapha Sissoko - Djeli ngoni

Idrissa Coulibali - Djembe

Niajequessin Ouattara - Flute

Track names -- duration

1) Ala Taanu - 7:25

2) Yereko - 7:42

3) Mamou Kamissogo Interview - 4:31

Group introduction:

From the Mande Jeli (griot) tradition, Mamou inherited ancient songs from her grandmother and other relatives from the Malinke traditions of Guinea, where she was raised. Now residing in Bobo-Dioulasso, the second largest city in Burkina Faso, she performs inherited songs and also modern compositions.

She straddles the span of a modern griot performing at weddings and also recording modern music videos. When asked to share some of the "old songs," she was happy to share deeply traditional songs since modern music is becoming more popular in the musically rich city of Bobo-Dioulasso.

Recording context:

Along the wall of her living room, Mamou performed two songs from the rich Jeli tradition of Guinea with a group of expert musicians. With open double doors, a tapestry, and Mecca, the command of musicians outplays the casual, at-home arrangement.

The Mande flute bounces along the bottom and sings out to pierce at times, complementing a great balaphone, lute and flute section with large, thoughtful djembe. The lute wanted a big amp sound for his

additional-string glissandos, forcing Mamou to keep up with the band's volume. She astounds even without a microphone.

Notes on Language Use:

Malinke (Guinean variety of Mandekan) and Jula (the main Mandekan variety spoken in Bobo-Dioulasso), are mutually intelligible dialects of the same language. This allows Mamou to perform freely within the realm of the Mande homelands, regardless of political borders. Given today's national borders, Mamou's speech literally transects the Mande language area from Guinea, through, Mali, and then Burkina Faso, not approaching Ivory Coast, where Dioula is also spoken in the North.

Interestingly, due to a lack of Mande griottes in Niamey, Niger, ethnic Mandekan diaspora families (Dioula, Bambara, Malinke) residing in Niamey contract her to make the seventeen-hour bus ride to perform for a day at a wedding as Niamey, and Niger, are not part of the Mande homeland. This arrangement demonstrates the importance of this casted social class's role in Mande society's diaspora in West Africa.