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TOURE KUNDA-Biography

Toure Kunda (which means "the Toure family" in the Senegalese Soninke language) is an African Rock band led by three Senegalese brothers: Ismaila, Sixu Tidiane and Ousmane Toure. The group was started in France in 1978 by Ismaila Toure, and originally included a fourth brother, Amadou, who died tragically in 1983. Their music is a contemporary rendering of traditional styles of the Casamance region of Senegal, in particular its Jamba Dong initiation music.

The brothers Toure are all singers and percussionists, and appear on stage and on record with various backing musicians. They have become very popular in Europe with their blend of Senegalese, Caribbean and European musics. They toured Africa (Ivory Coast, Mali, Senegal and Gambia) in the winter of 1984, appearing before a crowd of 25,000 in Dakar, where they were also received by the President of Senegal.

Toure Kunda has released five albums in France: Emma-Africa (1980), Turu (1981), Amadou Tilo (1983, dedicated to Amadou Toure), Casamance Au Clair De Lune and Live: Paris-Ziguinchor (both 1984).

CORE ARTS

321 E. 10th St. Suite 8
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Senegalese
recording artists
TOURE KUNDA
for brief US tour:

Celluloid Records is pleased to announce that in support of their three current Celluloid releases; Casamance au Claire de Lune [CELL 6102], Amadou Tilo [CELL 6104], and TOURE KUNDA "Live," Paris-Ziguinchor [CELL 6106] TOURE KUNDA will be in the United States for six dates:

April 7th - Boston @ the Channel

April 8th - Minneapolis @ the 1st Avenue Club

April 10th and 11th - New York City @ SOB's

April 12th and 13th - Washington DC @ Killimanjaro.

Along with the three Toure brothers will be a dynamic seven piece band. They will arrive at these shores hot from a month of European dates. TOURE KUNDA is not only one of the most popular African acts in Europe but also one of the most popular acts in Europe of any musical persuasion. Their sold out Parisian dates earlier this month had 20,000 people on their feet over the two days of their concerts. TOURE KUNDA's African pop combines the lyric and vocal loveliness of say an Earth, Wind and Fire at their best with a montage of Senegalese polyrhythms - the result is pure joy.

If you do not have all three of TOURE KUNDA's Celluloid releases please contact me at the above number. I will also be able to provide photos and naturally access to the dates in your area.


Margot Core, for celluloid Records

S.O.B.'s

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PRESS RELEASE

APRIL 10th & 11th

TOURE KUNDA

The African Invasion continues in New York as S.O.B.'s proudly presents the U.S. debut of Senegal's TOURE KUNDA. Once again, S.O.B.'s is the venue for an unprecedented event, as no Senegalese band has ever performed in the U.S. until now. The Senegalese sound is the most international of all African styles, for it bridges the musical worlds of North and West Africa as well as being influenced by Arabic and European music.

TOURE KUNDA was formed by the three TOURE brothers, and features their sweetly-blending voices, backed by a powerful and inventive 12-piece band. The roots of the group's sound are in the traditional Jamba Dong music, which accompanies that culture's initiation rites. This music is brought into more modern settings with contemporary arrangements and the tasteful use of electronic sounds, blended effectively with the authentic percussion instruments of their homeland.

These S.O.B.'s performances coincide with the release of their new Celluloid LP, NATALIA. This, their sixth album, is a brilliant statement of cross-cultural African-based music. Produced by Bill Laswell (of Material fame), NATALIA showcases the great abilities of the TOURE brothers, and demonstrates their incredible musical range as they shift smoothly from style to style. At times the groove is distinctively African, but moments later the listener is engulfed by the thicker, percussive pulse of reggae.

Do not miss this great premiere of the very first Senegalese band to play New York City. Come and be swept away by the beautiful melodies and hypnotic rhythms of contemporary Africa as TOURE KUNDA appears at S.O.B.'s for two nights, Wednesday and Thursday, April 10th and 11th.

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TOURE KUNDA-BIOGRAPHY

Ismail, Sixu Tidiane and Ousmane are the three Toure brothers from Senegal, West Africa, known as TOURE KUNDA. Toure Kunda translates from the Soninke dialect as "the Toure family", or "the family of elephants". Each of the brothers sing and play various African percussion instruments, and lead an exciting performing band with other singers, dancers and musicians.

Originally from the Casamance region of Senegal, Toure Kunda have been based in Paris, France since 1978. Their music has its roots in traditional Senegalese music, in particular the "Djamba Dong" or "Dance of the Leaves", an initiation dance that is performed at the passage from childhood to adult life. Toure Kunda's music however, is heavily influenced by Western musics such as rock and reggae. This combination of a rich musical tradition with contemporary influences has made Toure Kunda Europe's best selling African band.

Toure Kunda are a large family, and each brother was born of the same father but of different mothers. In fact, Ismail and Sixu Tidiane were born on the same day, but since Ismail was born earlier, he is the family leader. The Casamance region of Senegal (located below Gambia, which divides the country in two) is a very rich region, in both agriculture and the arts. Thus, it was a major step for Ismail to travel to Paris in 1975 to begin the development of Toure Kunda.

After spending a year in Paris adapting himself to European culture,

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TOURE KUNDA (page 2)

Ismail sent for Sixu, and the the eldest brother, Amadou. Before Amadou's arrival, Ismail and Sixu recorded two albums mixing reggae and African music, but they were poorly distributed, and were not made under the name of Toure Kunda.

When Amadou arrived in Paris, the brothers began using the Toure Kunda name, and recorded an album called Toure Kunda, for Celluloid-France. In January of 1983, Amadou died during a performance at Chapel des Lombards in Paris. The official cause of death was listed as a heart attack, although there is some question about this. Apparently, Amadou had been over exerting himself, and the club was particularly smoky that night. He went outside to get some air and asked some security people to get an ambulance for him, but they didn't believe at first that he was so ill. By the time an ambulance did get him to a hospital he had died, but not before urging his brothers to continue on.

After Amadou's death, the younger brother Ousmane was called on to join the group, and he brought with him a new strength and spirit to the band, which gave them the will to continue after Amadou's death.

In the Spring of 1983, Toure Kunda recorded their tribute album to Amadou: Amadou Tilo (CELL 6104). This LP proved to be very popular, and the band embarked on extensive tours of Europe and Algeria, leading up to their most important tour yet: their return to West Africa.

The Paris-Ziguinchor tour of West Africa, the results of which can be heard on Toure Kunda-Live (CELL 6106), was a monumental undertaking. Technically, they overcame the problems of the lack of infrastructure and power supplies by using a flatbed truck that opens to become a

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TOURE KUNDA (page 3)

stage, making them a self-contained unit. There were also difficult administrative problems that had to be overcome, but in the end the tour was an enormous success. They performed eleven concerts in four countries (Ivory Coast, Mali, Gambia, and Senegal), including a concert at Demba Diop which drew over 20,000 people. They were also received by the President of Senegal. A film crew was on the tour, and they produced an hour-long film for French TV.

After their return from Africa, Toure Kunda recorded Casamance Au Clair de Lune (CELL 6102), their most traditional LP. By now, they are major stars in France, where they have been awarded gold records, and where they drew 23,000 Parisians to a recent concert.

In January 1985, Toure Kunda went into the studio with producer Bill Laswell of Material to record Natalia (CELL 6113). In April of this year Toure Kunda embarks on their first American tour.

TOURÉ KUNDA: KINDRED CHAMELEONS

Although born and raised in Senegal, the brothers Touré — Ismaïla, Sixu Tidiane, and Ousmane — live and work in Paris, following a long and fruitful line of French-colony Africans who have benefitted from exposure in and to the cosmopolitan capital. Like other performers in that line (Manu Dibango and Black Blood, for example) the brothers have assimilated up-to-date trends in Continental and American black music; more important, they have picked up the crucial pop idea of varied programming. This urbanity helps explain why, with four albums released on domestic Celluloid, Touré Kunda (as the group is called) have yet to make a weak or redundant LP. The brothers are irrepressible pace changers and eclectics: the vigorous drumming and chants of Senegal remain central to their Afropop, but Touré Kunda often pile rhythmic and instrumental embellishments drawn from pure pop and even hip-hop. Their trio of studio albums demonstrates their increasing refinement.

The fancy title of *Casamance au Clair de Lune* is misleading, because the performances themselves are just the basics: close-harmony vocals, percussion, and snippets of guitar from the Touré brothers; flute and traditional stringed instruments by Jean-Claude Bonaventure and Loy Erlich. The album showcases various stark, folkish arrangements with lyrics in several languages. This format doesn't have to be delicate (the *a capella* chant of "Fass Bougnoul" is robust indeed) or dry (there's a startling touch of raga in "Amadou Tilo"), but *Casamance* works best as a supplement, rather than an introduction, to the other records. For example, on the group's first electric full-band record, "Amadou Tilo" reappears as the title cut. Michel Billiez's dusky saxophone solo takes over the bridge that was sitar-tinged on *Casamance*; and that makes an apt

lead-in to his huffing tenor as it kicks off "Casa di Mansa," which bustles along like a mutant jump-band stomp. But *Amadou Tilo* shifts farthest uptown with "Utamanda." Here, the Tourés show how they overcome the narrow harmonic range of their voices: the beginning choruses keep rolling as the brothers ping-pong leads while scooting in and out of unison with female back-up singers, who drop out entirely as the men start a feverish scar-syllable exchange that in turn gives way to a tidy drum break suitable for any disco dance floor. The terse, relentless changes keep the musical fabric opulent, even over a skeletal melody. Samson Goustillas's buzzing, fusionoid piano workout at the climax of the number adds another textural treat to a song crammed with them.

The urbanity quotient is even higher on the new, Bill Laswell-produced *Natalia* (Celluloid), a bit of Afropop sleek and hip enough to rival Black Blood's mid-'70s classic, *Amanda*. The horn-section licks on the first cut, "Touré Kunda," are acerbic, almost mean, and they threaten to push the song toward an unseemly brusqueness until their riffs melt and the brothers soften the mood with a docile interlude plucked out on what sounds like a kora. And though a bit of the song's early ferocity returns at the end, the mellowness remains, with an elastic synthesizer figure replacing the horns' crackle. The tactic of breaking up Laswell's thickened dance grooves with affable quasi-folk interventions works again and again on *Natalia*, especially on the title track and "Nidiaya."

Still, the first Touré Kunda album to get is *Live Paris-Ziguinchor*, which was recorded early last year at concerts in Senegal. Saxophonists Billiez and Ben Bellings turn in remarkably taut, zesty accompaniment, and drummer Michel Abiassira is a tireless whirlwind of cross-rhythms, but it's Ismaïla, Sixu Tidiane, Ousmane, and back-up singer Seynabou Diop who incarnate the bumptious elation of an Afropop dance concert. Their coiling voices gush forward so effortlessly that the hooks on tunes like "Baounane" (already pretty juicy) turn into potential American radio fare. The acid test, however, is the last song, "Em ma," an outright reggae that remains a triumphant African rave-up. Even the most worldly Afropop performers tend to go slack on Jamaican borrowings, lapsing into reductive skank to please audiences that increasingly expect it from Third World bands. In the Touré brothers' mouths, the gracious lilt of "Em ma" becomes another good-will message from internationalists to whom nothing is alien. (*Touré Kunda* will perform at the Channel on April 7.)

— Milo Miles

CELLULOID

Toure Kunda Arrives Afro-Pop's Last Hope?

By Martin Keller

AT WHAT level can African pop music survive in America? That's the question many music industry buffs have been asking themselves ever since Nigeria's King Sunny Ade and his 22-piece band, The African Beats, landed on these shores two years ago. Heralded as a polyglot of Western and African influences, Ade's enlightened fusion of traditional Nigerian folk forms and Anglo-American rock, country and jazz stirred the biggest reaction among music critics since Bob Marley arrived to deliver reggae music to the international market. Since then, African pop, in its many divergent forms, has had a hard go of it with record labels and outside the larger metropolitan areas along the East Coast.

April 8 at First Avenue, the question about the viability of Afro-pop will be raised again — at least at the nightclub's door. Continuing its series of contemporary African concerts, the renowned showcase club will feature Toure Kunda, a 10-piece rock band that is easily the most accessible African group ever to visit the Twin Cities. Toure Kunda is led by three brothers from Senegal: Ismaila, Sixu Tidiane and Ousmane Toure.

The Toure brothers (Kunda means family in the brothers' Soninke tongue, a Senegalese dialect) sing and add percussive elements behind a mixture of African and French players. Formed in France in 1978, Toure Kunda has since set up home base in Paris. The group



Toure Kunda: doing for Afro-pop what UB40 did for reggae

has released six albums to date, five of them French imports on the Celluloid label. This month Celluloid's domestic branch in New York is issuing *Natalia*, Toure Kunda's most modern-sounding blend of polyrhythmic pop, Euro-disco and Afro-Caribbean influences to date.

Natalia is produced by Bill Laswell, currently one of the music industry's most sought after sound senders. Laswell's recent credits, among them Mick Jagger's solo outing, ensure a certain amount of instant recognition, and with Talking Heads' unsung keyboardist, Bernie Worrell, manning the synthesizers, *Natalia* sounds rinsed in Western techno-pop, an enveloping aural field of timely counterpoint to the group's Senegalese singing techniques.

Not unlike Manu Dibango, whose Afro-Franco connections were for years the closest Americans could get to Africa on vinyl without buying expensive imported LPs from Europe or the mother continent itself, Toure Kunda

enhance their roots by layering a myriad of proven global pop devices. Rhythm sections churn, hinting at funk; horns pepper the rhythmic phrases, echoing R&B charts; syncopated bass and guitar lines render reggae and rock figures that aggressively play off each other. The Toure brothers' singing blends traditional West African harmony with the most blatant of pop hooks.

"The band is heavily influenced by Bob Marley," noted Celluloid spokesperson, Doug Keogh. "They're very interested in putting their music into a Western time frame by using pop meters and reggae. As a label, we see a lot of growth potential for them in terms of expanding the market already opened by King Sunny Ade, Tabu Rochereau and others [bands that invaded the U.S. record and concert circuit in the last two years]."

If King Sunny Ade opened the door in America for African pop music, he's since gone back through it, leaving behind one of the most

impressive North American landings — in terms of sheer musical magic — ever. Late last year, Ade and his American record company, Island Records, parted company. He recorded three superb albums for Island, *Juju Music*, *Synbro System* and *Aura*, last year's work that featured Stevie Wonder on one track. The Wonder cut was designed to create more awareness for Ade's music both in the black and white communities, at record stores and on the airwaves. Unfortunately, few new fans were made.

"Stevie Wonder briefly and barely turned any heads by appearing on Sunny's album," admits Ellen Smith, Island Records' national director of publicity in New York. "Ade's problems in America were mostly with numbers; while we were pleased to be able to sell 50,000-100,000 copies of each of his Island LPs, Ade was unhappy he couldn't expand those figures. In Africa he sells millions of records, he gets airplay, people understand the language.

"Here, of course, no one knows what he's singing and he gets shut out consistently on radio. Plus touring here was very hard for him and his very large entourage. He was not used to the accommodations at Holiday Inns; his titles of prince and king in Nigeria meant little to people in this country, but in his homeland, he really does live that way."

Ade's first appearance in America, in support of *Juju Music*, was met with a "blaze of publicity," according to Smith. Yet his first and subsequent appearances in the Twin Cities at First Avenue were not money makers, says club promotional manager Steve McClellan. Neither were later concerts by Zaire's Tabu Ley Rochereau or Nigeria's Sonny Okosuns.

Part of the problem is that the Twin Cities is logistically too far off the concert route, not only for large African-pop bands, but also for the newer, more obscure groups that only the cognoscenti have heard of, McClellan says.

"It took three tours through the Midwest into Minneapolis by Ade before he played Chicago, which has a much larger ethnic base

than here. Any band — whether it's a big African ensemble or a group like Jah Wobble or Snakefinger, even Gil Scott-Heron for that matter — that can't generate either record company hype or support or radio hype has big problems booking the Midwest."

Does that mean African pop will suffer the same fate as its reggae music counterpart — successful as a cottage music business but lacking an international star of Marley's magnitude to boost the trade to more than a specialty item? Perhaps the answer lies in the momentum, or lack of it, in the music business itself. The advent of "new wave" music in the American recording industry relied on a veritable explosion of independent record labels, each with regional designs. New wave promised variations on rock, whether it was Husker Du's atomic hardcore, or England's Two Tone bands that fused Jamaican ska with Anglo rock in the early '80s.

But when the independents disappeared and many of the best non-aligned groups suddenly appeared on major labels, the impetus toward a more democratic music scene — one that could fill halls for reggae mainstreamer Jimmy Cliff one night and rock careerists The Cars the next — made new wave an empty term. New music was nothing more than the latest breaking video on MTV. Radio, relying on MTV's poor examples of "new music," bought the gift, kept the wrapping and threw out the contents.

Hence, there was plenty of room for Billy Ocean (who affects but doesn't deliver an Afro-Caribbean, Euro-disco sensibility), but no room at all for Sonny Okosuns (who sings in English and blankets a panorama of pop styles), plenty of airtime for Sade (an Anglo-Nigerian pop star worthy of a wide following), but little interest in playing more challenging Laurie Anderson pieces. College radio and

public (i.e. community) radio became "new music's" last best friend, and so the last soundboard for Afro-pop artists as well.

"I wish there were more of these public service stations," opines former *Village Voice* music editor, Robert Christgau. "But record companies [like Rounder, Shanachie, Alligator, Nighthawk] today who release Afro-pop albums — or even reggae for that matter — don't do it for the money. They do it because they enjoy the music.

"Naturally, it's much harder to sell in Minneapolis. It's unfair to blame the commercial radio for ducking either reggae or the various African bands. The question comes down to what's more salable of the African bands who've been doing it, putting out American albums and touring.

"We have no big band music left in this country because they simply couldn't tour anymore behind their records; economics

prohibited it. But for King Sunny Ade and his big entourage to be dissatisfied with the way he was received in America also says something about him; let's not forget his ego, or his greed for that matter."

If there's a thin logic to what kind of Afro-Caribbean-influenced music works in America and specifically in the Twin Cities, perhaps UB 40, England's racially mixed reggae-rock band, embodies it. While reggae masters Linton Kwesi Johnson and Mutabaruka can mean dollar losses at First Avenue (and before that the pre-disco-video Duffy's), UB 40 is a break-even proposition or better, McClellan notes.

When the racially mixed, tri-continental sounds of Toure Kunda go onstage next Monday night at First Avenue, more than a few people will be watching to see and hear if this is the Afro-pop band to finally secure a firm hold on the American pop landscape after making their initial splashdown. □

Africa for USA

by David H. Adams

Someone moved First Avenue Monday night. Not even the Royal Purple Spell could keep the club anchored to the corner of 1st Avenue & 7th Street. The musical/emotional/spiritual power of Toure Kunda (love that thundering name) swept the club away from its cool Midwest confines and transported it to somewhere in the Casmance region of Senegal, West Africa.

The 10-piece, racially mixed Toure Kunda (from the Soninke dialect meaning "the Toure family," or "the family of elephants") played with a vision and esprit de corps that surpassed even their latest live album, *Paris-Ziguinchor* (on Celluloid). The band fuses traditional percussion-oriented Casmance folk music (particularly the Djamba Dong or "dance of the leaves," an initiation ritual performed when passing from childhood to adult life) with reggae, funk, and salsa to create a swirling rain forest of richly melodic sound led by the sweet harmonies of the three drumming Toure brothers and

singer/dancer Nabou Diop.

The group, formed in Paris in 1978, started the show with "Amadou Tilo" ("the sun of Amadou"), a tribute to the fourth Toure brother, Amadou, who died of a heart attack during a performance in January 1983 at Chapel de Lombards in Paris. The song opened with African xylophone and congas before the group segued into the bleating saxophone driven "Casa Di Mansa." Up next was "Fode," a rollicking reggae-cum-Latin number whose melodies careened back and forth while two of the three Toure brothers danced like elves. The band also played "Nidiaye," a melodic reggae cut from their new Bill Laswell-produced album, *Natalia* (Laswell just finished producing Jagger's *She's The Boss*). The final number of the first set was from their more traditional LP; *Casmance Au Clair de Lune*. It began with an eerie bamboo flute, then a capella four-part vocal harmonies before breaking into a serious dub-wise skank. The packed First Avenue crowd flipped.

Yet considering Toure Kunda's music is a reflection of the day-to-day reality of their socio-cultu-



Photo/Greta Priatt

The Toure brothers have an elephantine good time

ral life, what happens when you wrench it from the bosom of the Mother continent and try to sell it in the world's biggest marketplace, America? No, the music doesn't necessarily lose its ability to move you, but it does lose its indigenous, substantive meaning. In addition, Toure Kunda is gonna have to be able to break down the language/culture/race barrier that has driven even "King" Sunny Ade back to his native Nigeria. Afro-American artists playing so-called "non-mainstream" music like jazz, are still having problems getting airplay on "white" radio stations (not to mention the rightward-shifting "black" stations). So how is Toure Kunda gonna get on the air?

Those thoughts flashed through my mind as the group kicked off the second set with the hit-bound groove of "Toure Kunda." With its giggling guitar, disco-funk bass, and busy percussion, the song comes off like an Africanized version of Michael Jackson's "Don't Stop 'Til You Get Enough." The feeling of the song was similar, and neither the dedicated fans nor performers wanted to stop until someone turned on the lights at one a.m. As the audience participation

KUNDA to 14

KUNDA from 10

chant echoed in the background, I stepped out into the night air, and I could've sworn I saw an elephant doing a cha-cha down Hennepin Avenue.

•••

Azymuth keyboardist, producer, and leader Jose Roberto Betrami (Bert) calls this Brazilian pop-jazz trio's music *samba doido* (literally "crazy samba"); a self-coined buzz word to describe the lightly rippling, tropical noodling that's been featured on the group's nine LPs (six by the group, one solo by each member) since 1979. Now being as how "fusion" is a term that'll have most legit jazz critics reaching for their guns, I'd have to come down in the camp that says Latin rhythmic invention is 'bout the only thing savin' the genre from bein' declared wallpaper for my mother's den. I mean the '70s did see its share of jazz-rock hacks.

For me, Azymuth's latest LP, *Flame* (late summer '84) is their most interesting because of the airy soprano of fellow Brazilian Flora Purim. She makes tracks like "The Textile Factory" seem organically carved from nature. Overall, *Flame* seems to display a rootsier sense of Bert & Co.—closer to early Return To Forever than \$pyro (sic) Gyra.

The group did 'six extended "pieces" during their 50-minute opening set for Toure Kunda—striking a mild groove between the most Europeanized bossa nova and the more African *samba da roda*, but they failed to generate any genuine excitement until the last track, the foot tappin' "Make Mine Guarana" from *Rapid Transit*.

Most of the set was a ho-hum affair bordering on the banal. Bassist Alex Malheiros spent a majority of the night tryin' to wow us with stale glissando while searchin' for the Spirit of the Funk. Bert meanwhile laid down his best Bob Jamesisms on "Partido Alto" from their debut, *Light As A Feather*, and "The Prisoner" from *Flame*. His Stevie Wonder-like vocorder came in handy on "Dear Limmertz" from '80's *Outubro*, and "May I Have This Dance" from '82's *Telecommunication*. Drummer Ivan Conti is the best musician of the three. His trap drum work and cymbal shading kept me from falling in my Manhattan, but the gig woulda went down smoother had I been on the beach in Rio. ●

The Pop Life | Jon Pareles

Familial Beat Enlivens Toure Kunda

THE NEW YORK TIMES, WEDNESDAY, APRIL 10, 1985

EUROPE'S most popular African band is a family that plays together: three Senegalese brothers — singers, guitarists and percussionists — now based in Paris. Toure Kunda (which can be translated as "the family of elephants"), sells out stadiums in France and in Senegal; the Toure brothers appear with such fellow African superstars as King Sunny Adé on the benefit single "Tam-Tam Pour L'Ethiopie." The band makes its New York debut tonight and tomorrow at Sounds of Brazil, 204 Varick Street, at Houston Street.

Toure Kunda has an international lineup. Along with Ismaïla, Ousmane and Sixu Tidiane Toure from the Casamance region in southern Senegal, Toure Kunda includes musicians from Cameroon, Martinique and France, and a dancer from the Ivory Coast. Its music is informed by reggae and American soul, but its central element, Ismaïla Toure said, is Senegalese — rhythms from a coming-of-age ceremony called Djamba Dong, or "Dance of the Leaves."

"Djamba Dong is a training for young boys and young girls from 8 to 16," Mr. Toure said. "During this initiation there is a lot of music — when they want the initiates to make some promenades, or go to eat, or have a siesta. That music is where we take our inspiration. There is percussion, and a chorus, and balafon," an African xylophone. "In Senegal we also use kora" — a harp-guitar — "and molo, a small African guitar. When we play with our musicians, we ask them to make the same sounds with electric guitars and synthesizers."

"When you hear the different rhythms through the Djamba Dong," Mr. Toure said, "you can find many kinds of music. That's why people hear inside our music some reggae, some calypso, some salsa or some highlife and Afro-beat."

Ismaïla, Ousmane and Sixu Tidiane Toure are actually stepbrothers; their father has five wives. They grew up singing together with a fourth stepbrother, Amadou, who was part of Toure Kunda in its first years but died in 1983 of a heart attack. One of the band's trademarks is the brothers' close harmony singing.

"If you are not brothers it takes at least 10 years to learn to sing together," Ismaïla Toure said. "Sometimes it is very hard to work together with the family. But in Africa they teach us to live together and to fight together, too."

Toure Kunda has made seven albums since the band started in

France in 1978, singing in such African languages as Wolof and Mandingo. "Senegal was a French colony," Mr. Toure said. "We decided to go back and colonize them with Senegalese culture."

The band's American tour coincides with the United States release, on Celluloid Records, of Toure Kunda's four most recent albums. "Casamance au Clair de Lune," recorded by the Toure brothers and two French musicians, pays homage to Senegalese traditions. Most of the songs are backed with various percussion instruments; there are segments of traditional-style drumming and songs in which voices and multiple balafon patterns are interwoven.

"Amadou Tilo," a tribute to Amadou Toure, looks outward; it samples reggae, Ghanaian highlife, Congolese rumba, soukous from Cameroon and American-style funk. Its most compelling song, "Salya," features a lead vocal by Amadou Toure.

The band's two latest albums are even better; they show Toure Kunda approaching a synthesis. "Live," recorded during a tour of Senegal, includes one song modeled on the griot songs of the Gambia, in central Senegal, which have long vocal lines and the fast, twinkling counter melodies of the kora, and another that recalls the traditional balafon music. And the tunes on the crisply produced "Natalia" take off from reggae and American funk, complete with soul-style horns, and end up with a groove that is buoyantly pan-African — or, perhaps, global.

The
New York
Times

CELLULOID



SOB'S

BAR • RESTAURANT • CLUB

PRESS RELEASE - JUNE 28th 1985

The KOOL JAZZ FESTIVAL and SOUNDS OF BRAZIL PRODUCTIONS proudly present the Festival premiere of AN EVENING OF AFRO - BRAZILIAN music at Carnegie Hall, JUNE 28th at 7:30 p.m. For the first time at a New York festival, three of the finest groups from Brazil and Africa will perform music that is regional in origin, yet crosses all geographic boundaries through the universal appeal of rhythm and melody. The artists appearing on this very special evening are FLORA PURIM, and AIRTO MOREIRA (from Brazil), ALCUE VALENCA (Brazil, U.S. debut), and TOURE KUNDA (Senegal, Africa).

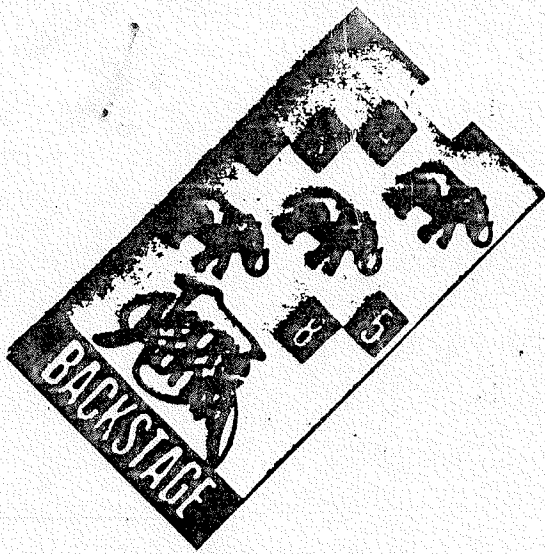
FLORA PURIM, along with AIRTO MOREIRA, are the duo that opened up the U.S. and European music scenes to the intensely creative sound of Brazilian Jazz. Her sensual, ethereal vocals feature lyrics in both Portugese and English, and his percussive improvisations have netted him every imaginable jazz and pop instrumentalist award. Their work has had a pronounced influence on the careers of such reknowned American jazz superstars as Chick Corea and Return to Forever, Miles Davis, and Weather Report. FLORA and AIRTO return with their acclaimed 8 piece band to New York to perform their original Brazilian jazz and samba stylings, and to invite the Kool Jazz audience on a free-flight into their special world of vocal and percussive improvisation. They will premiere material from their upcoming Concord jazz release.

ALCEU VALENCA is appearing on a U.S. stage for the very first time. Originally from the North East Brazilian state of Pernambuco, he is a major figure in both Brazil and Europe, where he stunned audiences at the Montreaux jazz festival with his electrifying performances. Nicknamed "the magician", VALENCA's background in such diverse fields as Law, athletics, theatre and poetry has enabled him to develop a persona that commands attention from all who hear him perform. His incendiary compositions, described as majestic and Hallucinatory, are brilliant statements which attempt to harness all the energies and possibilities in music today.

TOURE KUNDA are the first band from Senegal, Africa, to perform in the United States. They have successfully demonstrated to hundreds of thousands in Africa and Europe that the Senegal sound, known as the most international of all African styles, is completely universal in its appeal. TOURE KUNDA Features the beautifully -blending voices of the three Toure brothers, who have created a pan-cultural sound incorporating their homeland's traditional music as well as Arabic, European, and Caribbean influences. Their 12-piece band mixes the sounds of modern electronic instrumentation with those of the traditional percussive instrumentation from Senegal. TOURE KUNDA's new release is NATALIA (Cellulois), their 6th LP.







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TOURE KUNDA

In support of **TOURE KUNDA**'s most exciting record to date, the **Bill Laswell** produced lp; Natalia, the Senegalese group will be touring the United States this summer.

in Washington DC

@

THE WARNER THEATRE
13th and E Streets NW

Saturday, June 29th

@

8pm

the phone number for tickets is
[202] 385 - 0044

tickets are

\$15.50 + service charge

available from all Ticket Centers [Hecht Stores]

also appearing will be, from Brazil, **Alcen Valenco**

For any and all information regarding **TOURE KUNDA**, this date, interviews, press photos, and promotional records ring me

Margot Core for Celluloid Records @ [212] 598-4781

locally

Mike Schriebman 703] 237-9500

All other call Celluloid Records @ [212] 714-0033



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