

TOURÉ-TOURÉ

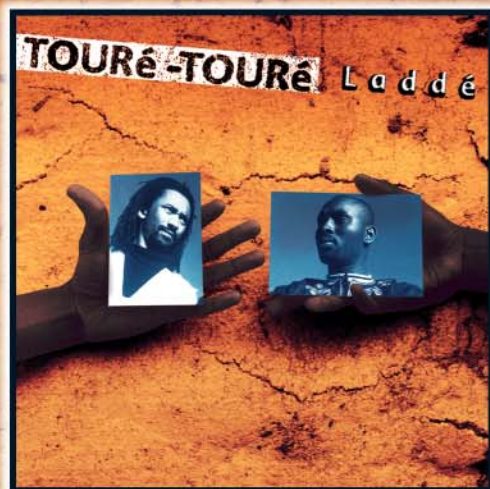
Artist: Touré Touré

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Touré Touré, led by Omar and Daby Touré, the next generation of musicians from the extended family that gave the world Touré Kunda, the Senegalese Afro-pop band that helped launch the current World Music boom. Their debut album, "Laddé", combines the slick Afro-pop savvy of Paris with the bedrock rhythms of Casamance, the region of Senegal where these talented cousins grew up. The album is a shimmering gem, full of luminous harmonies and the simple elegance of Daby's acoustic guitar stylings.

Laddé Laddé

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Track Listing...

- | | | | |
|------------------|------|----------------|------|
| 1. Yorro | 3:30 | 7. Sanio | 3:31 |
| 2. Laddé | 3:42 | 8. Bané | 3:56 |
| 3. Seydu | 5:01 | 9. Casamance | 4:28 |
| 4. African Woman | 3:26 | 10. N'Gummoden | 3:19 |
| 5. Lemmé | 3:01 | 11. Neneh | 4:33 |
| 6. Almudo | 3:35 | 12. Léminé | 4:08 |

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Touré Touré: The Next Generation of African Popular Music

While American pop stars like David Byrne and Paul Simon have been busy borrowing from the music of Africa, a new generation of African artists are looking West, hoping to expand their audience and their horizons, by tapping into the vibe of international pop music. Based mainly in Paris, these forward looking musicians are shaping a new pop sound, a blend of Arabic and African music that also utilizes the rhythms of hip hop, rock and dance music for inspiration.

One of the leading bands of this new generation is Touré Touré, led by Omar and Daby Touré, the next generation of musicians from the extended family that gave the world Touré Kunda, the Senegalese Afro-pop band that helped launch the current World Music boom. Their debut album, "Laddé", combines the slick Afro-pop savvy of Paris with the bedrock rhythms of Casamance, the region of Senegal where these talented cousins grew up. The album is a shimmering gem, full of luminous harmonies and the simple elegance of Daby's acoustic guitar stylings, but theirs is no overnight success story.

"We worked on this recording for a year," Omar said. "We were familiar with live performance, and the studio took some getting used to. But David Godvais (the producer) was very passionate about the music, so we took our time. We knew people would compare us to our fathers and uncles, so we wanted something that would honor the family name."

The Touré family name is one of the brightest in African popular music. Touré Kunda, which loosely translated means "Family of Elephants," has lived up to their name, laying down a strong stomping beat for most of the past two decades. Founded by brothers Amadou, Ismaila and Sixu Touré in the early 80s, they were the first African band to make an impression on the American market, and their mix of African and Caribbean beats made them major stars in France and West Africa. When Amadou died in 1983, another brother, Ousmane stepped in and the music continued to evolve. In the late '80s Ousmane left the band and Séta - Daby's father - took his place before leaving to begin a solo career.

"We grew up surrounded by our extended family," Daby explained. "Some Tourés (including my immediate family) live in Mauritania and some (like Omar's family) in the Casamance region of Senegal. Our grandfather came from Mali, and settled first in Mauritania. He had many children, but they were poor. We grew up surrounded by the music of Senegal and Mauritania, but it was the traditional music that's a part of your life, not pop music. You always sing in the family. When you eat, for example, you share a song as well as food. And when we were older, we'd go out and play percussion on the street, to impress the girls and to flirt. Anything you can find, a cardboard box, a trash can lid, you'd flip it over and play."

"When we were 14 or 15 we heard the albums Touré Kunda was making and saw how they combined traditional music with more commercial aspects. And we listened to the radio and liked music from the USA; Stevie Wonder, Michael Jackson, The Police. Sometimes the uncles would send us cassettes from France too, but they mostly sent Touré Kunda cassettes."

Eventually Daby moved to France to live with his father. It was then he got serious about music. "My dad would come home with other musicians to rehearse, and they'd leave their guitars around, maybe three different instruments. Since I couldn't afford a guitar of my own, I'd cut school and come home and play the guitar. My father told me I wasn't allowed to touch [the guitars,] so I never had any influences. I just picked up the guitar and taught myself."

While still working his "day job," Daby began meeting with a group of like minded friends and jamming. When Omar arrived in Paris, things started moving faster.

"My father was an engineer, not a musician, and I came to Paris to study," Omar said. "I never thought about playing music for a living. I'd played percussion to impress the girls [in Senegal,] but so did everyone else I grew up with." Omar began singing with the informal group, and the harmonies he created with his cousin worked magic. Things started taking off when Daby and Omar began composing songs.

"At first we were just playing to relax and have fun, but when we began performing concerts at the local high schools and colleges, we got a good response." After the inevitable shifts of personnel, Touré Touré settled down and began working on their career.

"We often played with a jazz band called Sixum," Daby said. "They were produced by David Godvais for the Pygmalion label. They brought David to hear us and he agreed to do an album with us."

Godvais worked hard on the album, adding a subtle studio gloss to the compositions of Daby and Omar. Members of Sixum, Orchestra National de Barbès and other friends, gladly stopped in to the studio to add their licks to the project. The resulting album, dubbed "Laddé" after one of its strongest tracks, is a stunner. Its European release was met with critical raves, with one critic hailing it as "the debut of the African Beatles."

"When we started the band, we knew people would be watching us, because of the family name," Daby said. "Now that we're getting good reviews, we don't mind people comparing us, since people are saying we have our own sound."

"Since we live in Paris, we're surrounded by music from all over the world and there's no doubt that affects the music. We're a new generation of African musicians and we've had a different evolution than our fathers. We still rely on traditional music for inspiration, but we have input from countries in black Africa, Europe, America and Arabic Africa. Our music is an accumulation of everything we've heard and experienced, since we were young. Like all people, we start with our family influence, then reach out to the world."