

fROOTS

KALA JULA

Mande Kulu Buda Musique 860307

The members of this quartet have varied ethnic musical backgrounds. There is Vincent Zanetti, the Swiss percussionist, guitarist and zena-player. The zena ? Well, it's a sixteen-string adaptation of the kora designed and made by the French luthier Gweltas Simon. He describes it as a « harpe à chevalet » if that helps. It is quite prominent in these recordings. A long-term associate of Vincent's is the Malian jali Samba Diabaté on guitar and n'goni. They are joined by the famed Breton fiddle player Jacky Molard and the bassist Hélène Labarrière. She has played on albums by both Molard brothers, Jacky and Patrick, especially when they are performing in their experimental rather than Breton traditional mode.

It would be fair to describe the resulting musical mix as being inspired by, rather than based on or derived from, the Manding tradition; the exception would be the short but exquisite track of Samba playing a solo on the n'goni. Another high spot comes on a very sensitive interaction between Samba's guitar and Vincent's djembe playing on *Les Bouffons*, but in truth Samba's guitar provides interest throughout, especially if you try to play a game of « spot the influences » in his playing. That he sounds at times like a fellow-Bamako resident guitarist Djalimady Tounkara should not surprise anyone but licks and runs that derive from Django Reinhardt certainly do!

Searching the booklet for photography credits does not seem to produce a result but it should do. The shots of Malian landscape and village scenes as well as studio photos of the musicians are all excellent.

Vic Smith, *fRoots Magazine* n.408, Mai 2017