

NO FORMAT!



BALLAKÉ SISSOKO & VINCENT SEGAL
CHAMBER MUSIC
No Format NOF 5321442
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For any musician, playing as a duo is an intense experience. The art of conversation based on understanding, on the attentiveness of one musician towards the other, is explored on **Chamber Music** by kora player **Ballaké Sissoko** and cellist **Vincent Segal** to an almost astounding degree of exactness. Former stable-mates at now defunct French label Label Bleu, the two men met and took time to forge a close, personal bond of friendship. The idea of working together on an album germinated in Ballaké Sissoko's mind a few years ago; Sissoko had been present at a concert given by Bumcello at the Amiens Jazz Festival, where Vincent Segal had been playing with Cyril Atef, the other half of the explosive Bumcello duo. As the Malian musician says, "*It was important to get to know each other musically. For quite some time we got together at Vincent's home whenever I was in Paris, and we also played a few concerts. We built our complicity step by step. Today, when we play, we understand each other without saying a word: one look is enough. Our hearts are together.*" So, in May 2009, they finally decided to record together in Bamako, applying principles dictated by a simple, illuminating common ethic, one whose terms Segal describes succinctly as: "*You just look for the pleasure of music where you can.*"

Chamber Music was recorded in one bare room in Salif Keita's Moffou studio in Mali, in three recording-sessions without overdubs. Sheltered from the rest of the world, Ballaké Sissoko and Vincent Segal chased out of their minds all consideration of genre and style concentrating on the essence of their music. Their complicity is such that the kora and the cello, far from resulting in an overly formal exchange of rejoinders, seem to express themselves here with a single voice. What the listener hears in **Chamber Music** is both rare and precious: two sensibilities in unison, on the same wavelength, creating music that literally, flows naturally.

The same feeling of concord also inhabits the dialogue between the friends who Sissoko and Segal invited to join them on **Chamber Music**. The voice of singer **Awa Sangho** drapes the solemn song *Regret*, composed as a tribute to vocalist Kader Barry, in a fine veil. *Houdesti* features **Mahamadou Kamissoko** (ngoni) and **Fassery Diabaté** (balafon), both fleeting but significant presences. On two titles, **Demba Camara** causes the traditional karignan to crackle with all the science of a master of fire. In recording this album, Vincent Segal says that musicians like songwriter Nick Drake or pianist Annette Peacock came to mind. The resulting album is one of crystal purity and put simply, quite, quite stunning.

LIVE DATES

June 20th – 6pm Ciné Lumière, Institut Français

July 2nd – support for Bassekou Kouyate, Barbican

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