

Habib Koité & Bamada Afriki

Cumbancha CMDCD5

Full Price (46 mins)

★★★★

Long awaited follow-up from questing griot



If you've been wondering what the gentle giant of Malian music Habib Koité has been doing since his beautiful album, *Baro*, was released six long years ago, he quietly sneaks a fresh dose of acoustic Mali onto the market. Listening to the record is like having an old friend coming to visit, full of great tales and smiles. Only a few minutes into the album you almost

forget that it hasn't always been part of your record collection. It brims with all those comforting things that set the experimental *griot* Koité apart from most of his contemporaries. The husky voice, catchy choruses, trickling guitar patterns and clever jigsaw of Mali's myriad musical traditions – all are there. Even the quality of the mix reflects his earlier works. Koité was one of the first artists to break the mould of the thunder-voiced song and ancient repertoire associated with the Mande griots, Mali's traditional praise singers. He preferred to search the length and breadth of his home country, collecting ideas and inspiration from a huge variety of traditional sounds. Others have since followed in his footsteps, yet Koité's musical universe remains entirely his own. On *Afriki*, almost every corner of the country is nodded to in the intricate guitar and percussion patterns that carry all of his songs. There are touches of desert blues, of the *griot's ngoni* (lute), and even an eerie chorus of hunters' antelope horns that softly caresses the clever arrangement of 'Nta Dima' and lifts it to a rare level of musical bliss. A slice of heaven wanting to be owned.

**TOP
OF THE
WORLD
ALBUM**



Katharina Kane



Habib Koité couldn't
be any happier