

MODIBA Productions

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Vieux Farka Touré – The Debut Album

“Vieux Farka Touré's beautifully realized debut recording both honors and extends the life work of his father, Ali Farka Touré: to explore and promote the rich music of Mali's desert north.” -Banning Eyre (Senior Editor, Afropop Worldwide)

Modiba is proud to present *Vieux Farka Touré*: the self-titled worldwide debut by the son of and successor to the late international superstar and two-time **Grammy Award-winner Ali Farka Touré**. *Vieux Farka Touré* (Modiba/World Village) hits US shelves in early 2007.

Vieux's stellar debut features Ali himself on two remarkable pieces. These tracks are the only existing recordings of father and son playing together, and are amongst the final recorded material of Ali before his death. The record also features two magnificent guest performances by the **Grammy Award-winning kora master Toumani Diabaté**.

Vieux's debut represents an **historic passing of the torch from father to son**. A highly talented guitarist, singer, songwriter, and percussionist, Vieux has crafted a global-minded style all his own. With flourishes of rock and reggae amidst Saharan Blues and traditional Malian melodies, Vieux Farka Touré ushers in the **next generation of Mali blues**.

Recorded on location in Bamako in the storied **Studio Bogolan** by award-winning engineer Yves Wernert, *Vieux Farka Touré* offers stirring performances by a number of veteran recording stars from Mali including Bassekou Kouyaté, Seckou Touré, and Hassy Sarré. Also featured are many of Mali's brightest young talents in Mamadou Koné, Adama Diarra, and the sensational vocals of **Issa Bamba**, who has been hailed by many in Mali as the next Salif Keita.



Ten percent of proceeds from the album will go towards Bée Sago **to fight against malaria** in Niafunke, the home region of the Farka Touré family in Northern Mali. **Bée Sago**, a local award-winning organization affiliated with **UNICEF**, specializes in the manufacture and distribution of **insecticide-treated mosquito nets** to children and pregnant mothers in Mali.

Modiba Productions is a music production company and record label committed to the **social and economic empowerment of Africa and its Diaspora**. They are the creators of *ASAP: the Afrobeat Sudan Aid Project*, which has **raised over \$130,000** for the refugees of the crisis in Darfur, Sudan.

TRACKS

- 1) Sangaré
- 2) Dounia
- 3) Tabara ft. Ali Farka Touré
- 4) Ana
- 5) Ma Hine Cocore
- 6) Touré de Niafunke ft. Toumani Diabaté
- 7) Diallo ft. Ali Farka Touré
- 8) Wosoubour
- 9) Courage ft. Issa Bamba
- 10) Diabaté ft. Toumani Diabaté

MUSICIANS

Vieux Farka Touré: electric and acoustic guitars, vocals, calabash, percussion
Ali Farka Touré: electric guitar
Toumani Diabaté: kora
Issa Sory Bamba: vocals
Bassekou Kouyaté: ngoni
Seckou Touré: vocals
Mamadou Fofana: bass guitar, flute
Adama Diarra: djembe
Tim Keiper: drums, percussion
Hassey Sarré: njarka (spike fiddle)
Mahamadou Koné: tama (talking drum)
Princesse Prisca Benita: backing vocals
Alou Coulibaly: calabash
Eric Herman: guitar, bass guitar, vocals, glockenspiel, percussion
Dave Ahl: organ, clavinet, glockenspiel
Matt Hilgenberg: trumpet
Reinhardt Schuhmann: tenor saxophone
Joe M.F. Wilson: alto saxophone

The Vieux Farka Touré “Fight Malaria” Tour

Vieux Farka Touré is one of the world’s most thrilling and talented new artists. He is the successor to the **internationally celebrated legacy** of his two-time **Grammy Award-winning** father, Ali Farka Touré. Blending **rock, funk, and reggae** with the **Saharan Blues** of his native Mali, Vieux is pioneering an **electrifying new global sound**. A brilliant guitarist, singer, and songwriter, Vieux brings the energy and charisma that has mesmerized audiences in Europe to the US for the first time. His band unites African and American musicians, creating a **spectacular mix of styles and sounds**.



Malaria awareness and relief are major driving forces behind the *Vieux Farka Touré* project. **10% of all proceeds** from album sales are being given to a UNICEF-affiliated **Fight Malaria campaign** in Mali. Modiba is also using the album and its accompanying tour as an opportunity to help spread awareness about malaria, the **number one killer of children in Africa**. At each stop on the tour, people will be provided with information and encouraged to learn more about the malaria epidemic and what they can do to help fight it.

The Vieux Farka Touré “Fight Malaria” Tour promises to be the most exciting global tour in world music of 2007. The tour will include 30-40 dates in 7 countries including France, England, Italy, Germany, Spain, Mali, and the United States.

A review of *Vieux Farka Touré* by Banning Eyre

Before he died, Mali's most celebrated guitar troubadour, Ali Farka Touré, told his musician son that as he ventured into other musical worlds, he should let tradition be his compass. Based on this sterling debut, the son has learned well.

These ten spare, powerful, concisely arranged tracks certainly echo the famously bluesy strains of northern Malian traditions, as well as the melodious elegance of Mande and other Malian ethnic styles. But there's a distinctive voice at the center. From the opener, "Sangaré," rich with the trademark hypnosis of Sonrai music, young Vieux's voice carves through a heady swirl of acoustic guitars and percussion with robustness at once akin to and distinct from his father's unmistakable, keening tenor.

Sometimes the echoes are more than echoes. The late father actually plays lead on two tracks, and notable Ali collaborators, Toumani Diabaté on kora, and Basekou Kouyaté on ngoni, also turn up on a pair of tracks each. "Ana," among the more unusual tracks, morphs desert blues into reggae with a warm brass section arrangement by North American producers Eric Herman and Dave Ahl. Herman also composes as well as sings and plays guitar on the loping, meditative "Courage."

This album covers a lot of stylistic ground but coheres wonderfully, aided by Herman's subtle arranging touches, allowing a voice to emerge here, a backing guitar or flute melody there, just enough to provide shape without disturbing the music's jammy, organic essence. Ali also bequeathed his son the moniker "Farka," which means donkey. Ali earned the tag for his stubborn capacity to survive childhood illness, unlike his older siblings. Too soon to know whether Vieux will match his father's tenacious survival skills, but this is a very good start.

Banning Eyre has written about international music, especially African guitar styles, since 1988. He comments and reports on music for National Public Radio's *All Things Considered*, and contributes regularly to *The Boston Phoenix*, *Guitar Player*, *Rhythm*, *Folk Roots*, *The Beat*, *CD Now*, *CMJ*, *New Music Monthly*, and the *Music Hound* and *All Music Guides*. He has traveled extensively in Africa and has produced many programs for the public radio series *Afropop Worldwide*. In 1995, Eyre co-authored *AFROPOP! An Illustrated Guide to Contemporary African Music* with Sean Barlow. Eyre's book focused on Malian guitar styles, *In Griot Time, An American Guitarist in Mali*, was released by Temple University Press (2000) and in the UK on *Serpent's Tail* (2002). The companion CD Eyre compiled, *In Griot Time: String Music from Mali*, is available on Stern's Africa.

Vieux Farka Touré biography

“When I first met Vieux, I was stunned by his casual virtuosity and commanding presence. He played like his father, the great Ali Farka Touré, but with a more modern sensibility. I left Mali determined to bring Vieux to the world...”—Producer Eric Herman

Since his infancy, Bouriema “Vieux Farka” Touré has been enamored with the music of his father, Ali Farka Touré. He grew up both in Mali’s capital city, Bamako, and in his father’s home-town of Niafunké in the Sahara desert—both teeming with rich musical life. During his childhood, Vieux proved himself a precocious talent as a percussionist, particularly on the drum kit and on calabash. Ali quickly took note of his son’s musical gift and grew concerned about his future. Having suffered in the music industry, Ali did not want his son to follow his path as a musician. He forbid Vieux to play music and ordered Vieux to become a soldier instead. Stubbornly, Vieux began to play along with his father’s recordings in hiding, determined to pursue his musical aspirations.

In 1999, Vieux—now a young man—decided to take his destiny into his own hands. He enrolled in the National Arts Institute in Bamako, openly defying his father’s wishes. It was there that Vieux discovered his musical calling and began to play guitar and compose music. By the time he left the Arts Institute, he was a locally celebrated guitar virtuoso, able to emulate his father’s playing near-perfectly. Word began to spread throughout Bamako that Ali’s successor was emerging. It was then that Toumani Diabaté—the world’s premiere kora player—first took notice of Vieux, and brought him into his performing ensemble. Recognizing Vieux’s gift, Toumani urged Ali to accept his son’s chosen path. So Ali entrusted Toumani with the reins of Vieux’s career. Under Toumani’s guidance, Vieux flourished artistically; he performed in France and South Africa and he even began accompanying his father on guitar. Furthermore, he began to compose stunning pieces that brought new sounds and influences into the tradition of desert blues from Northern Mali.

In 2005, Vieux reconnected with his friend Eric Herman, a North American musician and producer with whom Vieux had played while he was a student at the Arts Institute. Both Vieux and Eric realized that it was time that Vieux record his debut album. They quickly got to work in the studio. Toumani agreed to contribute his awesome talent on two of the tracks. Meanwhile Ali—growing increasingly sick with cancer—offered his final recordings to Vieux’s album, an expression of his ultimate approval of his son’s path, passing him the torch with which to light his way.

ABOUT MODIBA

Modiba Productions are the creators of *ASAP: the Afrobeat Sudan Aid Project*, which has raised over \$130,000 to fund humanitarian groups¹ working on the ground in Darfur to relieve the suffering of the beleaguered survivors. These groups not only distribute the food, water, and medical treatment so critically needed now, but also offer the economic assistance and education needed to provide the survivors with futures.

ASAP hit #1 on the iTunes Music Store world charts and #24 overall, and the *ASAP* story has continued to generate an enthusiastic buzz in the national and international media. It has been praised by Pitchfork Media as "a phenomenal introduction to current Afropop" and was listed in Afropop Worldwide's Top 10 for 2004. Milwaukee Magazine hails "the next generation of musicians that have inherited a way to move minds, hearts and bodies like a riptide. Buy it for everyone you know."

ASAP has also been covered by MTV, the Philadelphia Inquirer, Business Week Online, the Boston Herald, the Hartford Courant, and Eye Magazine. It has been featured on Canadian Broadcasting Company (CBC) radio and on over 100 independent and university stations throughout the US. Modiba ran a promotional campaign with Urban Outfitters distributing free postcards with information about Darfur and *ASAP* in UO stores nationwide, and was UO Online's featured album in February, 2005.

Modiba was founded in 2004 by Eric Herman and Jesse Brenner while studying together at Wesleyan University. Both Herman and Brenner spent time living and studying in Africa, and their time there had a profound and lasting impact on them. Herman, studying music in Mali with some of the country's most renowned musicians, found himself immersed into one of the world's most vibrant and storied music cultures. Brenner, a music writer and student of political philosophy, focused on the effects of modernization in Botswana viewed through the lenses of culture, development, and ecology.

Modiba's mission is focused on empowering Africa through music, which includes:

*creating new avenues through which the vibrant beauty of African musical culture can reach the experienced and uninitiated alike.

*bringing the world's finest musicians together with local African talent while making use of cutting-edge music and film production.

*raising global awareness about life and society in today's Africa and educate about current political challenges faced by its many diverse cultures.

*cooperatively helping in developing locally-based music and film productions in order to generate funding for local societal improvement initiatives (e.g. employment training, infrastructure development, poverty relief projects,...)

A major goal of every Modiba project is to generate money and awareness for pressing African causes.



¹ Modiba's charitable partners include: the Kebkabiya Smallholders Charitable Society (KSCS), an Oxfam-affiliated organization based in Darfur; and **Save the Children's** Sudan Relief fund.