

BLUESRAG

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TERAKAFT

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Fact: The sands of the Sahara extend down 200 feet. That's deep. But the African desert reaches even greater depths in the hypno-grooves of a small guitar-army that roams the Malian dunes above. With nothing more than guitars, a bass, more guitars, and a whole lot of juju, the four-man Terakaft rhythmically submerge. Their Touareg blues unfurl in extended trails of layered, moody notes that sound just a few ancestral chromosomes removed from Junior Kimbrough's trances. Electrified lines crest and fall and repeat in cycle—oscillating in synch with the vocal mantras—until breaking free to snake low, soar high, and do both at once. And why merely sing about love and loathing and love of sand when you can power-chant it with every Tamashek tongue swarming in call-and-response? It's a strange brew—and all fantastically sublime. So prepare for departure, as you're involuntarily drawn into the corkscrewing drone of "Intidgagen" that incants over a freedom-fighter,



while "Ténére Wer Tat Zinchegh" exerts its gravitational pull by way of reverb-slathered maneuvers. "Amdagh" prefers a slow, methodical crush. Part spider web and smoke trail, part locomotive and thunderclap, this splinter-group off of Tinariwen is as fragile as they are fierce. And once in your head, Terakaft refuses to leave. Ah, but therein lies the mechanism of action of this blue hypnosis—to which there is no known defense.

Dennis Rozanski