

Trousa

I

my

guitar

(E.T.C.)

No.  
2



Hello!

I was trying for ages to mash all the things i wanted to write about into some kind of theme for the second issue of ITMG... but i guess the headache of searching for a cohesive theme for something that i do totally for fun was starting to put me off wanting to write it at all! SO what i've ended up with is a jumble of ideas and thoughts on the music i love.

I've been interested in hearing African music lately that uses keyboards and electronics - not cus i've got anything against guitars (obviusly!!i play guitar every day!) but with this zine im interested in a kind of new-ness...I want to write about stuff that totally blows my mind and changes the way i think about music.

A lot of electronic produced music like dance, pop and disco doesnt always export so easily as its not so classifiabile as highbrow 'world music' - cus essentially its not, its just as flimsy and tacky as the stuff we have over here - but that makes it even more fun to find out about, when its under the -radar and ephemeral... Also as much as i love the guitar its great to hear people approaching new sounds and new instrumets, esspecially within African music where the guitar usually dominates so much.

Its fascinating to see how traditional styles of playing are appropriated and twisted into more modern and stylish grooves, from hip hop to 90s pop i've included some old school inovators like William Onyeabor and some nu cutting edge superstars like the Angolan trans rap-goddess TITICA!! But there's also a reveiue of Group Inereane who are totally guitar heavy but whatever!!



I do

this zine

for

FUN

and love

and primarily to focus my interest in African music and force myself to research stuff, i often don't know what im talking about and use the interenet to gather 80% of my info - so dont get shirty with me if i get stuff wrong! instead send me an email to

[rachel.aggs@gmail.com](mailto:rachel.aggs@gmail.com) !!! <3 <3

and if you want to HEAR any of the stuff im on about then also get in touch and maybe i'll get my act together to make some mix CDs

William

Onyebor



Sometime last year i was in a car going from London to Glasgow (anyone not from the UK, this is a pretty long car journey!!!) listening to mixtapes that my friend had made. A song came on that blew my mind - it was this totally lo-fi sounding spacey track that had these double old school synths on it, but it was also unmistakably Nigerian, the rhythms the vocals, there was everthing there that i recognise as that sound - except the guitars.

I asked my friend what it was and all i could remember him saying was that it was some guy who had studied in Russia as a film-maker and then returned to Nigeria and set up a record label and started making weird synth music. I think he also told me the record was really rare.

Anyway, obviously i was instantly intrigued so i when i got home i looked up ONYEABOR and searched the internet for ages before i finally found some of his music to download. I think the track i heard in the car must have been either Everyday or When The Going Is Good cus i remember it being really sparse and weird - like nothing i'd ever heard before, no guitar or bass just relentlessly wonky keyboard arpeggios and kind of goofy hand-clap sounds.

His most successful track in Nigeria was Atomic Bomb i think, that song fits in more comfortably with what i'd expect from 70s Nigerian funk - although i much prefer the more minimal synthy stuff its still a pretty weird song about nuclear war and i really like this Fela-kuti kind of songwriting that has a crazy huge scope to take in end of the world issues like bombs and international power-play. I also really like the anti-imperialist lyrics to "You Better Change Your Mind" which is another hit song featured on the

Strut Nigeria 70 compilation - he sings

"America,  
you ever think this world  
is yours?"

if you're thinking so

my friends,

better change your mind"

William has now been crowned a High Chief in Enugu, where he lives today as a successful businessman working on government contracts and running his own flour mill.

Amazing huh!? What a weirdo!!!

NOW ( i wrote this a long time ago) you can buy an LP aptly titled "WHO IS WILLIAM ONYEABOR?" from Luaka Bop, i can't afford to buy it but YOU SHOULD!

# TSONGA!!



Tsonga is a super joyous pop-disco party sound that combines the traditional call and response singing style of South African pop and roots music with a disco-influenced beat. Its a proto-electro sound that pre-dates whats now pretty trendy to listen to all round the world, the super-high octane Shangaan sound.

THOMAS CHAUKE is one of the fathers of the new tsonga disco sound. He's made an album a year for his whole career and they are all titled "beautiful women" which is a bit creepy!!! but he made over 30 (!!) and it seems like they're pretty consistently brilliant. The Shinyori sisters are made up of an assortment of wives and daughters of Chauke, maybe also a bit creepy but it depends -

REDACTED!

miss-information

im just gonna say -

they SOUND fucking beautiful and leave it at that. Theres this way that the guitars and the singers exchange melody lines that gets me every time - everything about the production on a Chauke record is so super preceise, i think if you were being pretentious youd say it was pretty naff and comercial sounding but i think thats what i like about it. the precision of the electronic keys and drums push the guitar style into this wierd space, the tone is totally clean which i also love - and it still sounds traditional and unmistakably South African but its much faster than usual and the heavy electronic bass beat kind of flips everything on its head and makes it sounds so danceable and fun.

I was young and dumb when I wrote this...

Although Tsonga often includes keys, an electronic bass beat and funny squelchy wah-guitar sounds, it still relies heavily on a more traditional lilting and sunny guitars, Shangaan does away with the trusty axes and goes completely electronic. The results are totally insane. Using electronics means that shangaan producers are able to speed up and up to such un-playable speeds that it really makes your head spin listening to it. A lot of the scene is also built around live shows with massive sound systems and dancing competitions, you should look up shangaan videos on the internet, the dancing is incredible.

Honest Johns recently released a compilation of new south african dance music "Shangaan Electro, New wave dance music from South Africa and Nozinja, from Nozinja Music Productions says in the sleeve notes

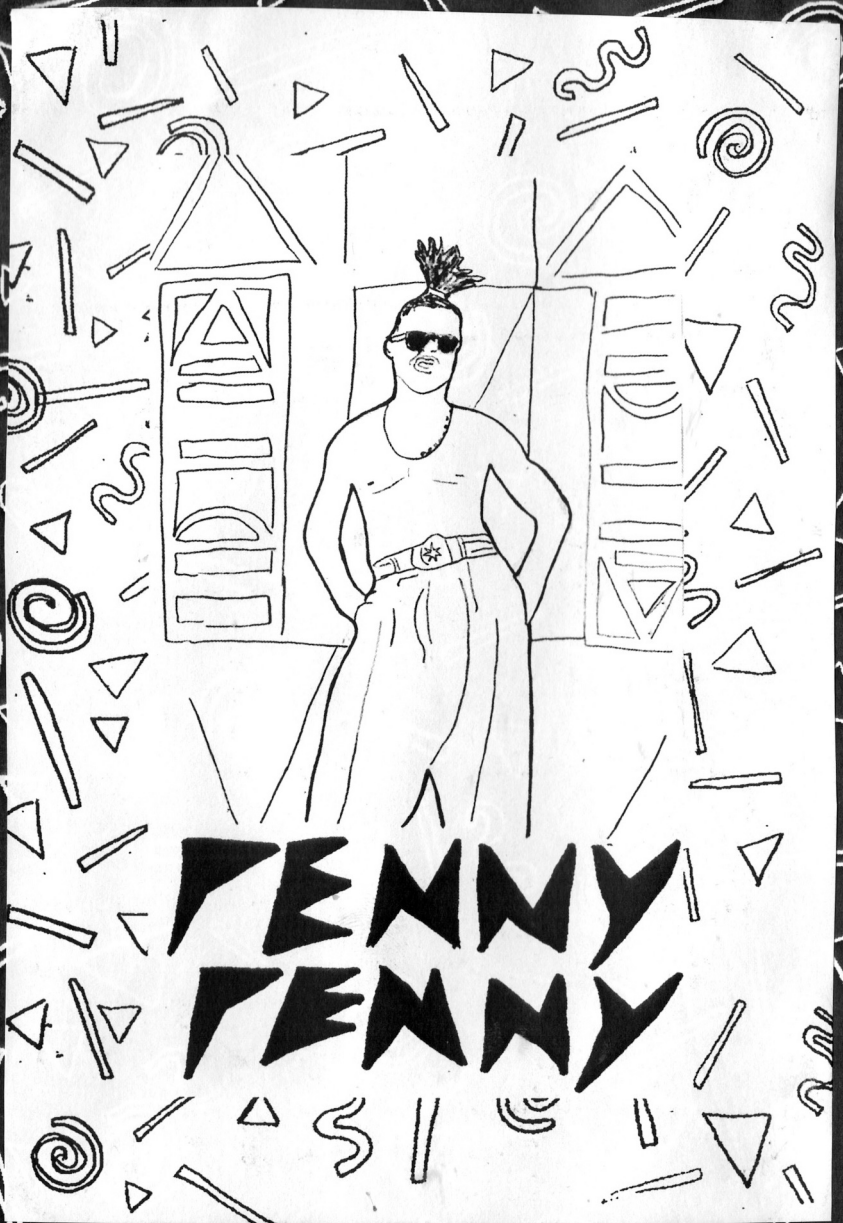
"Shangaan dancers, they dance, they can go on for almost an hour with that speed, without getting tired.



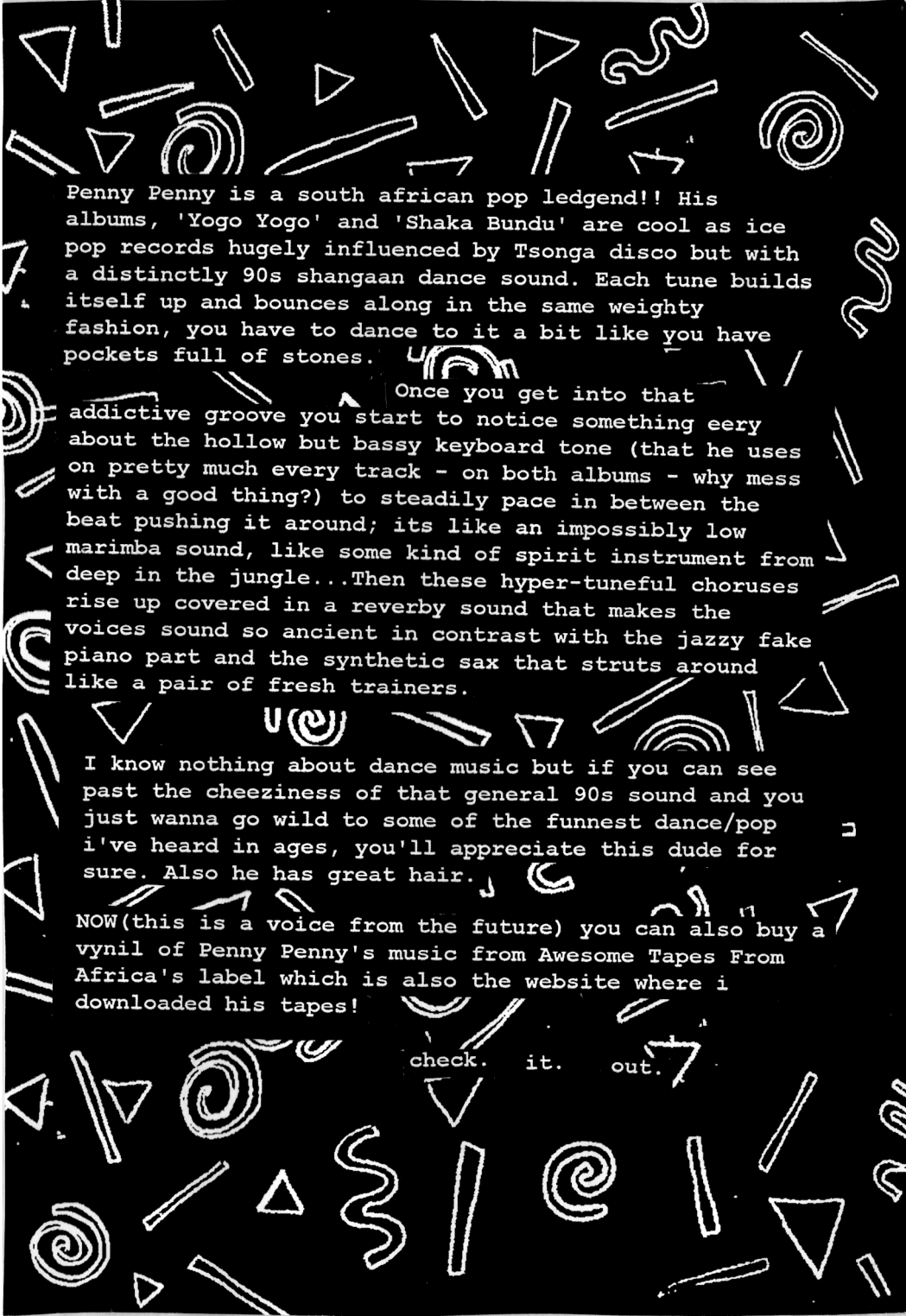
# SHANGAAN

When you see them dance  
you feel like they have got  
no bones."

Also somebody really clever had the idea of combining the live show with a traditional african clown show which i think freaked out UK audiences when the Tesheta boys toured Europe this year (annoyingly i was too poor to get a ticket)but it goes down a treat in South africa, making the relatively new genre wild fun for all the family.



**PENNY**  
**PENNY**



Penny Penny is a south african pop ledgend!! His albums, 'Yogo Yogo' and 'Shaka Bundu' are cool as ice pop records hugely influenced by Tsonga disco but with a distinctly 90s shangaan dance sound. Each tune builds itself up and bounces along in the same weighty fashion, you have to dance to it a bit like you have pockets full of stones.

Once you get into that addictive groove you start to notice something eery about the hollow but bassy keyboard tone (that he uses on pretty much every track - on both albums - why mess with a good thing?) to steadily pace in between the beat pushing it around; its like an impossibly low marimba sound, like some kind of spirit instrument from deep in the jungle...Then these hyper-tuneful choruses rise up covered in a reverby sound that makes the voices sound so ancient in contrast with the jazzy fake piano part and the synthetic sax that struts around like a pair of fresh trainers.

I know nothing about dance music but if you can see past the cheeziness of that general 90s sound and you just wanna go wild to some of the funnest dance/pop i've heard in ages, you'll appreciate this dude for sure. Also he has great hair.

NOW(this is a voice from the future) you can also buy a vynil of Penny Penny's music from Awesome Tapes From Africa's label which is also the website where i downloaded his tapes!

check. it. out.



UPSET !!  
THE RHYTHM  
BRING YOU

# GROUP INERANE



FLOWER  
CORSANO  
DUO

+  
HALO HALO

+  
I TRUST MY GUITAR ZINE  
DJ SET!

@ PLAN B, BRIXTON

WEDNESDAY 30<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER

8PM £10



GROUP INERANE + FLOWER/CORSANO + HALO HALO LIVE!!

THIS HAPPENED A LONG TIME AGO NOW But i wanted to write about it cus its pretty rare that shows this special come around and i get to go!

Group Inerane are from the Agadez region of Western Sahara and they are made up of travelling Tuareg musicians who are involved in a super exciting guitar band scene (Group Bombino, Group Doueh) that Sublime frequencies have been dedicatedly following and documenting over the years,

its the best

and most exciting

guitar

music

ive

ever

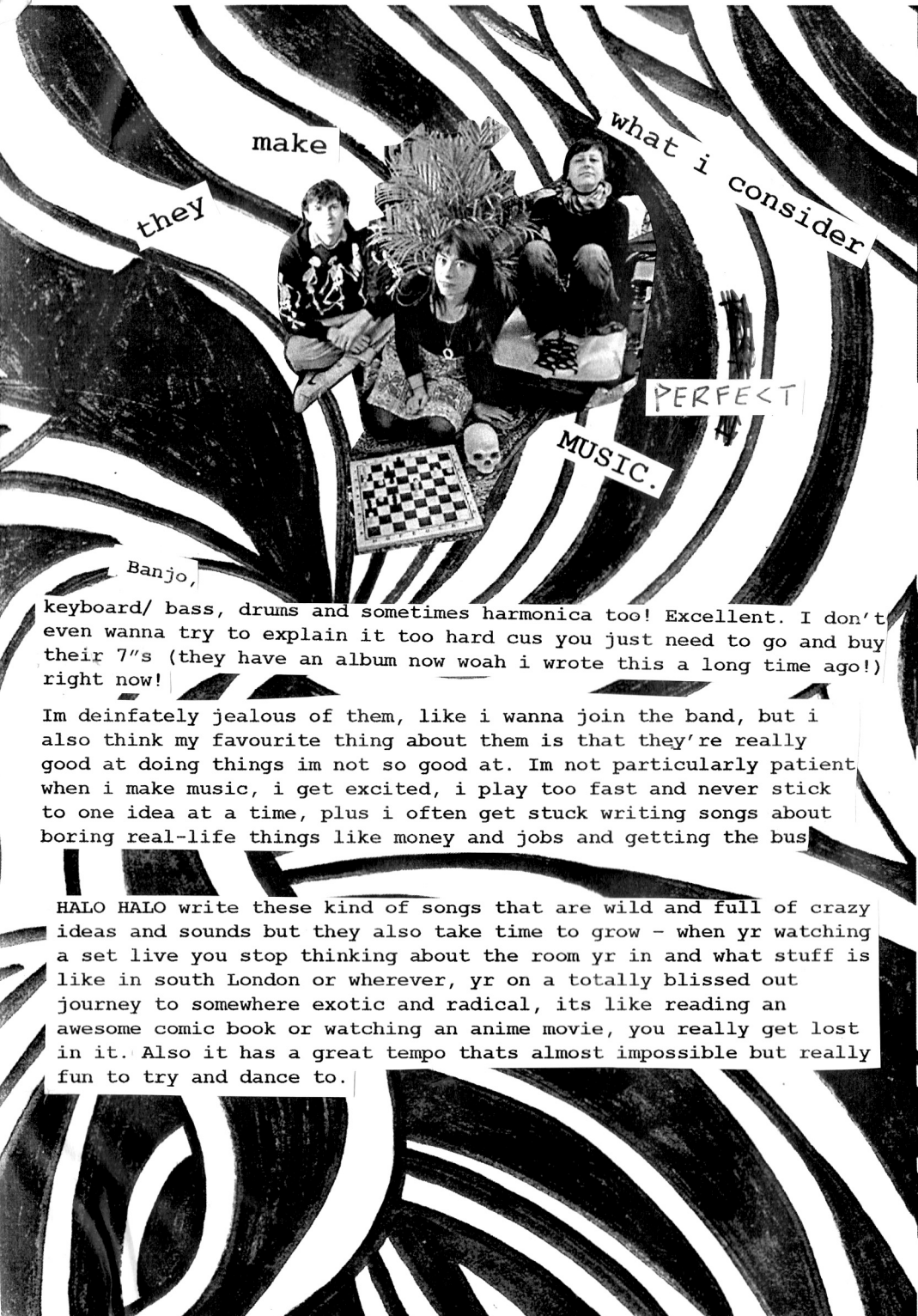
heard.

seriously!!

Not only was i WAY too excited to see Group Inerane on tour in the UK for the first time but they played for my friends Chris and Claire who run Upset The Rhythym and put on really fun/ non pretentious and relaxed shows so i knew straight away it was gonna be doubly awesome. They were touring with Mike Flowers and Chris Corsano who i also had never seen before. Chris asked my best friends Halo Halo to support and i guess he knew how excited i was gonna be cus he asked me to do a dj set and draw a poster TOO!!

It was my first time dj-ing in a proper venue and i was nervous!! Maybe it was cus Hisham Mayett from Sublime Frequencies was standing right next to me the whole time... he kept asking where stuff was from and most of it i had no idea - or only a really vague idea. I also gave him a zine and then realised i'd photocopied that batch all wonky! Embarrassing! Anyway, I got more into the dj-ing thing eventually and it was pretty cool hearing all my favourite weird music coming out those massive speakers... i'd like to do it again some time but i can't really imagine if i started a weirdo afro-disco night many people would turn up... would they? Would you??

So the thing about HALO HALO is i've been friends with and playing in bands with Rachel and Jack (banjo and drums) since what feels like the beginning of time (probably only about 6 years tho) and i also lived with them for a while so im pretty biased BUT



make

they

what i consider

PERFECT

MUSIC.

Banjo,

keyboard/ bass, drums and sometimes harmonica too! Excellent. I don't even wanna try to explain it too hard cus you just need to go and buy their 7"s (they have an album now woah i wrote this a long time ago!) right now!

Im deinfately jealous of them, like i wanna join the band, but i also think my favourite thing about them is that they're really good at doing things im not so good at. Im not particularly patient when i make music, i get excited, i play too fast and never stick to one idea at a time, plus i often get stuck writing songs about boring real-life things like money and jobs and getting the bus

HALO HALO write these kind of songs that are wild and full of crazy ideas and sounds but they also take time to grow - when yr watching a set live you stop thinking about the room yr in and what stuff is like in south London or wherever, yr on a totally blissed out journey to somewhere exotic and radical, its like reading an awesome comic book or watching an anime movie, you really get lost in it. Also it has a great tempo thats almost impossible but really fun to try and dance to.

## FLOWER/CORSANO DUO

I guess i've heard Chris Corsano drumming on record a lot and appreciated it as awesome drumming, so i was already a fan - but i guess you have to be in a certain mind set to take in music that's that free and weird when yr just sat in yr room... Live it was totally right tho. It felt ecstatic and exciting. The time flew by too, i have no idea how long they were playing for but it was all one improvised set so when they stopped suddenly i had to run back to the dj booth and panicked a bit about what on earth to play after my mind had been so blown!

Chris C congratulated me on my song choices later tho which was pretty cool. I gave him a wonky zine too. He asked me if the zine was named after the Magik Markers album (yeh it is) and then he said he thought that the drummer from Group Inerane played a lot like Pete Nolan from the Markers, something about drum fills - i think i know what he means?? The way they are messy but still end up into the right place, its like tripping up and regaining balance in a really cool kind of effortless way..it was really cool that Chris could see a connection between the African music i like and the other kinds of weird noisy music im into.

## GROUP INERANE

So just before Inerane were due to play i told the sound guy to turn the music down when they came on stage cus i wanted to escape from the DJ booth in time to get right to the front, i wanted to be able to reach out and touch the stratocasters!!! Anyway it was kind of embarrassing when the sound guy totally FAILED to turn it down when Hisham came on stage to introduce the band, Sir Richard Bishop was still playing in the background - like it was- intentional introduction music - aaaarg as if it wasnt embarrassing enough already how many sublime frequencies related records i'd been playing!! haha.

Anyway Inerane completely slayed, and it was even better than it sounds on record too. I really like the lo-fi sound of the Guitars from Agadez records but live they sounded much fuller, heavier and - (i can't think of a better word) groovier!! We danced. And danced. And danced.

I was really sad to hear that Koudede Maman one of the guitarists from the band passed away earlier this year when he was in a car crash on his way home from a gig. Sublime frequencies said this about him on their website:

pillar of the Tuareg

music and culture,

Koudede has always defended

peace through his songs and his words.

Culture

must be

kept

as he said.



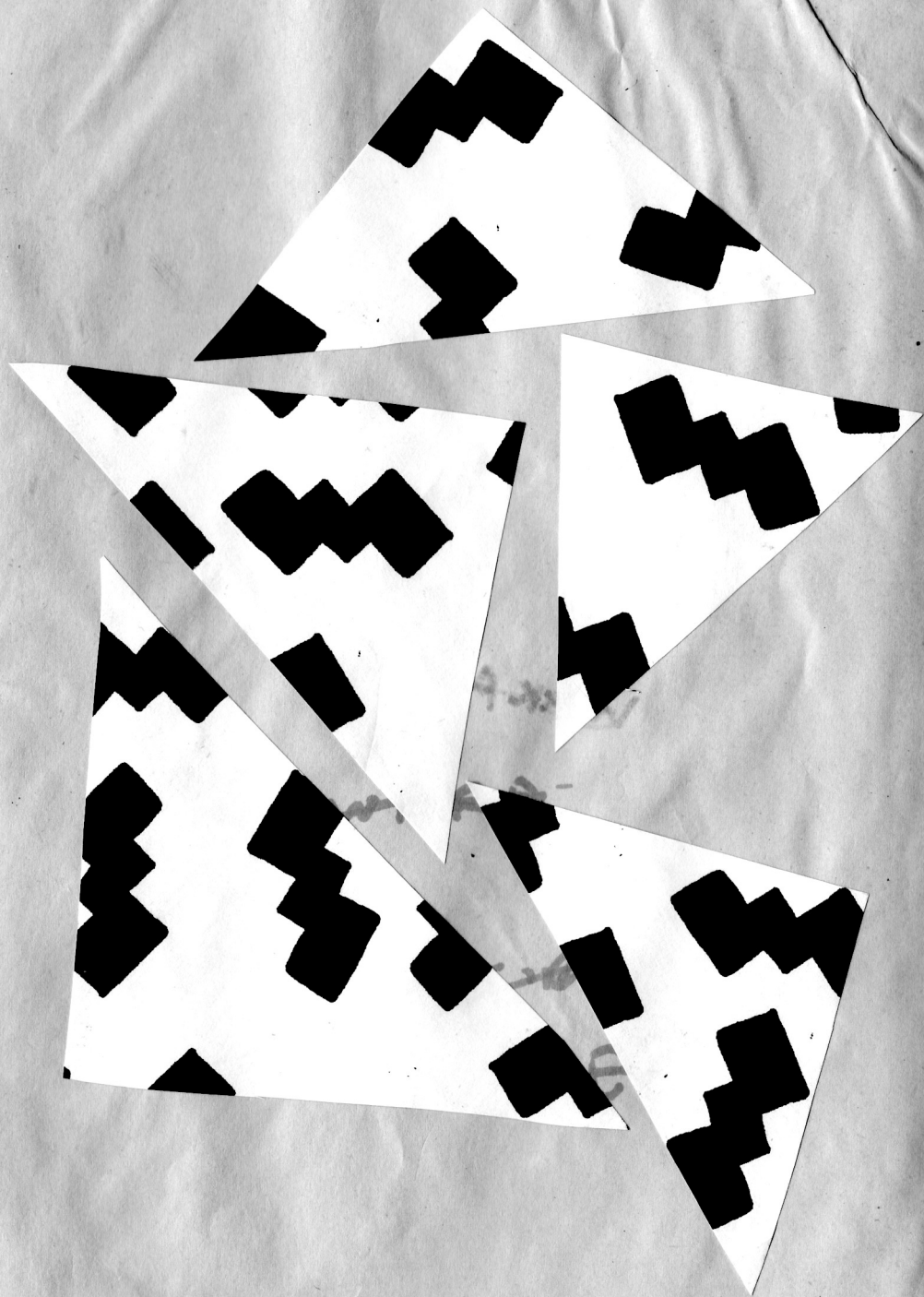
His work

will endure

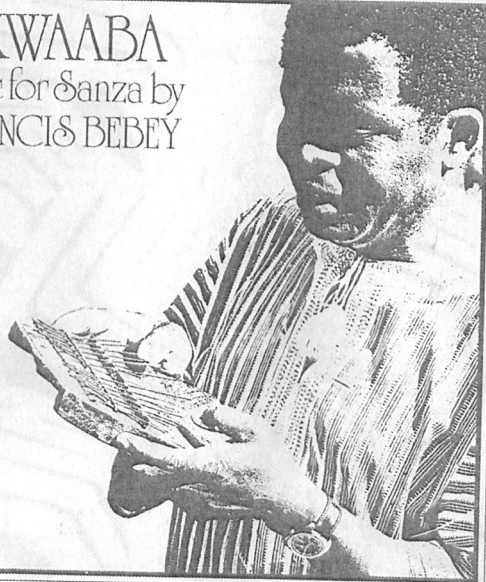
forever.

i feel so lucky to have been at this show!!





AKWAABA  
Music for Sanza by  
FRANCIS BEBEY



FRANCIS BEBEY

This guy is a total game-changer and wierd-sound-maker that's gone on to influence people like Ultra-cool duo Peaking Lights even name-checked him in an interview i read the other day or the now world famous Konono n01 - and they might not have his name tattooed on their necks just YET but there are dance producers the world over that i reckon owe this guy everything.

this music has a weirdness that is more avant-garde than the other pop music in this zine - i dont wanna say its more sophisticated cus that makes me sound like i think pop isn't sophisticated - its just that Bebey makes a more 'academic' sounding music. Kind of like delia derbyshire you can imagine Bebey at times, on 80s tracks like "Super Jungle" being in a laboratory rather than a studio maknig this music.



not in a soulless robotic way but communicating the kind of boundless sense of wonder at discovering new sounds that early electronic recordings preserve so well. It's definitely picking up on the kind of year zero future utopianism of kraftwerk or something - even the title makes me think of some kind of crazy techno-enhanced african jungle.

It does depend on what track you listen to with this guy tho, some of it - like "the coffee cola song" is just a great pop and the electronics sound almost a bit 8-bit and flimsy, or my favorite "New Track" is an amazing mixture of sophisticated and minimal sanza thumb piano and electronics with also a great tune. on New Track he he also has these great inspirational talky bits that i rly like

"its my belief that there is something wrong with the system.. new track! that's what we need!"

I don't know enough about his life (there's not that much information about him out there) to know whether or not its a specific system or experience he's talking about but i actually really like that in a song, when it's vagueness makes it possible for every listener to either take it personally or just to dance, have fun and feel free- especially when he sings stuff like "give me bananas and freedom to dance on the new track!" you can't help but feel some revolutionary JOY! yeah! thumb pianos! 8 tracks! bananas! new tracks! whatever system he's against if Bebey's proposing a new super-tuneful electro/afro free one then i want in cus its sounds GREAT!



## ALHAJA QUEEN SALAWA ABENI

I came across the waka queen when i was looking up Fuji music from Nigeria on the internet. I think a good description of Fuji is that it is essentially JuJu without guitars - which probably makes no sense if you dont know what JuJu is! And im not being smug, its just one genre i happen to know about cus i bought a bunch of King Sunny Ade records a while ago... Ade is the king of modern JuJu and he broke Europe in the 80s big time so thats probably why there are so many of his records kicking about in second hand shops in london.

A juju sound is typified by a bubbling rhythm section made up of sakura drums and all manner of other percussive business and Fiji essentially sounds like a sakura-heavy and guitar-less version. Thats about the limit of my knowledge tho! Wikipedia tells me that Fuji music is derived from an islamic type of yorobu played to wake fasting muslims during ramadan and it definitely has a hypnotically spiritual feel to it. It started out with artists singing improvised vocals made up of passages of the Quran, traditional proverbs and other improvised ornamented, free-rhythmic lyrics.

Fuji evolved into a super popular danceable version of this trad style in Lagos and beyond - apparently Nigerian Hip-hip producers tend to use Fuji beats as the main hook in most tunes. Anyway, WAKA is a simillar kind of style but seems to be more like a fusion of all of the above and mainly sung by women.

Waka seems kind of like a rap - the singing is part call and response and part freestyle, rly loud, there are no guitars just drums (occasionally cool keyboard sounds on recordings) and all the songs go on for AGES.

Queen Salwa Abeni's sound is so great, i have downloaded a record from Global Grooves called "Queen Salwa Abeni and Her Waka Modinizer" which is great, its been taken off the web now but if you go on youtube you can hear the whole thing that somebody's uploaded i think + "Cheer Up" is really really good and on that wesbite too. The sound is messy and wild, and her voice is so huge - it always seems to be almost TOO loud, distorting whatever wierd tape or dodgy vinyl i downloaded - its totally intense and hypnotic.

Also apart from making brilliant music, the reason i wanted to include Salwa Abeni in this zine is cus as a feminist and a musician myself im always conscious of writing about a load of dudes - and

Abeni is also the first female artist in West Africa to have sold over 1 million copies of a record!

pretty cool.

It does seem tho that waka hasn't rly travelled so well overseas, its been quite hard for me to find recordings and find out about stuff all the way in over in soggy london. There's a really brilliant video i found somewhere where Abeni gets into a car and the number plate says "waka queen" and she's wearing shades a lot also a rly cool 80s yellow track suit, that video got deleted tho and i've never been able to find it since - shame! we need more Waka over here!!



TITICA!!!!

So anyone that knows me can tell you i know next to NOTHING about rap music. Usually this thing happens at parties where people assume that im street cus im not white and they expect me to be rly into whatever hip hop they're listening to. It always disappoints and embarrasses everyone involved when i have to confess its not rly my bag. There's no musical genre that i'd ever totally shut out but i must admit i only started opening my ears to rap in recent years, people judge me cus of how i look but i spent my whole youth living in the countryside and listening to folk music - so think again!

ANYWAY Kuduro music from Angola has apparently been cool for AGES and im totally not cool for not knowing about it till now! its a really hard and fast dance/ rap style that actually reminded me a lot of M.I.A when i first heard it - ironically i was looking at M.I.A's youtube page just now and she made a song called 'Sound Of Kuduro'! ha! in 2007. See? im so slow with stuff like this. Anyway she collaborated with some Angolan rappers like the rly cool lady mc. Saborossa and did an amazing video with people doing incredible street dancing. (Man, how is she so cool?!?) Anyway im rly glad i came across TITICA cus she is probably (please let me know if there are others!!!!) Africa's only popular Transsexual performer and i think she's pretty amazing. Not just cus she's trans but also cus the music is great.

She started out as a dancer in Kuduro videos for male rappers then started releasing her own music in 2011 - now they already call her Angolas Kuduro Dance QUEEN! and seriously, watch the videos, she is FIERCE! Seeing as Kuduro seems like quite a male dominated scene, its quite aggressive and hard sounding - to have a trans woman being super assertive, sexy and confident in her music videos and spitting out her lyrics like that is so so cool.

In Angola homosexuality is still technically illegal and punishable by hard labour - although no convictions are really made anymore and things look to be changing in discrimination laws there, i imagine public opinion is still only slowly turning towards accepting people like TITICA as the GLBT cultural icons that they could be - for instance it seems like she often shies away from discussing her sexuality in interviews and prefers not to shout about it - but it seems like a great start that people are commenting on internet forums things like 'i dont care what gender she is, i like her music' I hope we see much more of her in the future and she inspires many more gay and trans performers in Africa and all the world over!!!

THANKS FOR READING!!!

email me:

rachel.aggs@gmail.com

winter 2013/14

XXXXX

