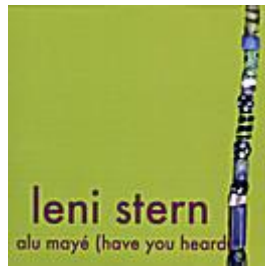


Mp3 Leni Stern - Alu Maye (have You Heard)



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Down-to-date guitarist/singer/songwriter with a serious groove. 5 MP3 Songs WORLD: African, JAZZ: World Fusion Details: Guitarist/singer Leni Stern has found inspiration amid the sands of Mali, and the collaborative result is the further evolution of a truly unique artist. 'Alu Maye (Have You Heard)' features four original tracks written and performed by Leni Stern, Bassekou Kouyate, Ami Sacko and Haruna Samake. The EP also features a cover of Bob Dylan's 'It Ain't Me Babe'. The EP juxtaposes Stern's trademark inventive guitar and vocal explorations with the indigenous sounds of accomplished African instrumentalists and singers. The result is at once haunting, exuberant, cinematic, personal and resoundingly assured. Stern has discovered her surest artistic footing in the sahel and savanna of Africa. AllMusic's Thom Jurek has described Stern as "a musician of uncommon caliber and vision" -- her new EP is sure to validate such an assertion. Stern's strong bond with Mali was chronicled in a Guitar Player Magazine photo essay last year. The photos and first-person commentary described Stern's visit to Mali's Festival In The Desert: guitarplayer.com/story.asp?storyCode=13913 In March of 2006, Stern returned to Mali to collaborate with Kouyate, Sacko and Samake, and recorded her EP at Salif Keita's Bamako studios. The legendary Keita overheard the sessions one day - - a collaborative friendship developed, and Keita invited Stern to join in with his band, perform all-night concerts leading up to New Years Eve in Bamako, and more On 'Alu Maye (Have You Heard)', Stern is joined by a community of renown musicians including the late Michael Brecker, Mike Stern, Mah Soumano, Dally Kouyate, Omar Kouyate, Moussa Bah and many more. The EP will be released March 13th. Stern shares her journey to 'Alu Maye (Have You Heard)' in the following song notes: 'Alu Maye (Have You Heard)' have you heard, have you heard, oumou kouyate is here! those are the african words in the song my name is oumou alu maye is a phrase often used in traditional griot songs. in the time of sunjata keita the great king of mali, the griots of

west africa were what our news channel are today. they told everybody what was going on, they kept records of who and what belonged to whom. to this day no marriage or baptism can take place without them, and for a price they will still sing your praise like they did a thousand years ago. the kouyate name belongs to one of the oldest griot families. i met bassekou kouyate and his family at the festival in the desert. we started playing together in their tent and i invited bassekou, his wife ami and his little brother andara to join me in my performance on stage at night. i felt as if we had played together for years. bassekou is malis most famous ngoni player. he has toured and recorded with ali farke touree, taj mahal and many others and very often when i play with a great musician it feels easy and familiar like this. but the ngoni is also an ancestor of the blues-guitar. some people (taj mahal) even say that the blues came from mali on the slave ships . from the southern region, around the city of segou, were bassekou was born. i have spent a lot of time with the earliest blues recordings that were made a short while after the african people were brought to america. so while the rhythms in africa still spin my mind, the melodies and guitar-lines sound familiar. just before i returned to america, bassekou invited me into the kouyate family and after a short discussion it was decided i should be named oumou, like his little daughter who was named after oumou a great grandmother and famous singer. i was almost named fatumata after the muslim saint, but i guess me and my stratocaster dont look like saints to anyone. ami, bassekous wife would teach me how to sing like a griot when i return. i came back in march to record with bassekou and his family and friends. 4 ngonis in the bass, cello, viola and violin range, a different kind of string quartet. 4 percussionists and 3 singers. i had written my name is oumou before i returned to mali, when i showed the song to ami she had the idea to add the african chorus and the voice solo that is in the griot style. she says that i am from america, that my husband s name is michael, that i am the oldest girl in my family (an important distinction in Malian society) that now i will be a member of the kouyate family and that everybody is glad that i have come. ousmane my friend ousmane daou is the son of amari daou, a famous Malian philanthropist. the football stadium in segou is named after him. amari supported a large number of griots. they would gather in the familys house in segou to sing and play. ousmane was a little boy then. we spent a lot of time together during my stay in mali and often the musicians i worked with recognized him. they would get very exited and say ah the son of amari daou! and theyd hug him and stroke his head like you would do with someone you have known since he is a child. bassekou was one of the musicians playing for amari daou. so in keeping with family tradition ousmane gave bassekou 2

large bags of cement for the construction of his new house on the occasion of my first recording in mali. and in keeping with african tradition, i called the family marabu (he came in a mercedes benz) and payed for the sacrifice of a sheep and a ceremony to bless our recording. he agreed to pick the sheep out for me, i would have changed my mind had i seen the poor animal. i found comfort in the knowledge that the meat goes to the poor, that cannot feed themselves. i sing to ousmane, ami sings to his father. she names all his wives (he had 3) his brothers, praises his generosity, remembers how great he was. michael brecker loved african music. i was so happy when he decided to record with us. we planned for many more songs. i didnt know that this would be our last recording together. ite ta ninje from the window of my hotel room in bamako i can see the niger river. my favorite time a day is early morning, when you can see a red sun come up and clouds of mist rise from the water. i started writing the words to this song in my room looking out over the river and the city of bamako. when i invited ami to come over to finish the song together she came with 2 kids, her sister, her sister in law and her child, a friend, and her husband's younger brother saro as a chaperone. it is hard to feel alone in africa. the session worked out great, in spite of the obvious obstacles. everyone listened attentively while ami and i searched for the right phrases. when bassekou heard our song for the first time, i could tell from the look on his face that the bambara lyrics were a little too sexy for his taste and saro, the younger brother got scolded for not watching out better, he was supposed to keep us in check. maybe my husband felt something similar because he picked this song to play on. maybe he felt the need to make his presence known. saya saya means death in bambara. during our rehearsals for this recording i got the news that don alias, who was one of my close friends and collaborators had died from an asthma attack in new york. he was the one who turned me on to the yoruba tradition, who showed me how jazz is related to african music, he knew all the old african songs to the saints django and yemaya, obatala and ojun, elegua and orula. we travelled through europe and canada together, we played in new york city for years. ami found me crying in a corner and we decided to record a tribute to him in the traditional african fashion. ami speaks to me in the song, dont cry she says. we all come here and we all go. no one stays, not even the prophet mohammed who brought us the word of god stayed. every body comes and everybody goes. it is written in the book of life. don alias illah. go in peace. it aint me babe i grew up in munich germany. we learned english in school, but i think i really learned it listening to the songs of bob dylan. i used to love singing his songs when i first started being a musician. later on i found the recordings of great musicians like jimi

hendrix and joni mitchell doing just that and i started feeling a little shy. haruna samake is malis best camela goni player. the camelagoni is also called the hunters harp. the hunters are a mystic group of musicians in africa, healers as well as performers, since they spent a lot of time in the forest and know all the plants. some of the hunters posses strange powers. it has been a while since haruna has been to the forest, he spends most of his time in the recording studio and on stage with salif keita for whom we both play. he is a magician on his harp though. 'Alu Maye (Have You Heard)' all songs by leni stern, bassekou kouyate and ami sacko except it aint me babe by bob dylan leni stern - guitars and vocals ami sacko - vocals mah soumano and dally kouyate - backing vocals bassekou kouyate - jelli n'goni omar kouyate - n'goni moussa sesoko - n'goni andara kouyate - n'goni bas haruna samake - camelagoni moussa bah - tama and jembe alu couliba - calabas djelibah diabate - dun dun superimpose michael brecker - tenorsax on ousmane and saya michael stern - guitar solo on ite ta ninye deron johnson - fender rhodes on my name is oumou recorded march 2006 at moffou in bamako, mali by jean lamoot, assisted by abu cisse additional recording and mix in new york city, usa by dick kondas special thanks to michael stern and salif keita

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