

This is the English translation from the article in IN-ROCKS magazine, the Rolling Stone of France.

## The Wadi Mysteries

### **The Tuareg singer-guitarist BAMBINO emerges from the dunes of the Sahara with his desert folk dancing in the flames. Absolutely magical.**

"I can assure you that patience is not good," sings the Tuareg from Niger, Omar "Bambino" Moctar on Tazidert. To listen to his first official album – brought out this week in a download on a French label – we had to be patient, to prick up our ears, to become initiated to some secrets of the music of the desert. Agamgam is one of the best African discs of the year and without doubt the most magical. Bambino is not a young camel of the year, surfing on the waves of the revival of Tuareg music -from the first album of Tamikrest to the performance of Tinariwen for the opening ceremony of the World Cup, 2010 is a big year for the style. The 10 songs of Agamgam were recorded in 2004.

During the recent years, some songs began to leak out: on the Ishumar compilation, an album published by the label Sublime Frequencies (without permission from the musician who denies it furiously). We could hear a camel braying, a camp fire crackling, the wind blowing; then an acoustic guitar dancing in the flames, a melancholic voice and an hypnotic rhythmic pulsation, that seems to be born from the earth, aspirated by the sky and inspired by the elements. Shamanic creation, horizontal vertigo, ideal harmony. The folk-blues from the desert in natural décor, at the source, far from the production artifices, as we rarely hear on a disc (we should refer to Alan Lomax recordings to find this depth in the interpretation, this elusive truth).

Agamgam is not a disc like any other. First, Bambino doesn't sound like other Tuareg musicians. He has his own style, his personal guitar playing, his recognizable voice. Then, because Agamgam is a photo album, a document, capturing a unique moment.

In 2004, a bivouac in the wadi of Agamgam in the Tenere desert. Spanish people are filming a documentary. Bambino is accompanying the group, not as a musician, but as an assistant cook. At night, the Tuaregs play guitar and sing around the fire. The film's sound engineer is recording. We will never hear about the film, but Bambino's legend is growing, spreading out.

Sedryk, the French producer of the album, and benefactor of the Tuareg culture via his label Reaktion and his site [tamasheq.net](http://tamasheq.net) (see above): "When I received the recording of Bambino, I fell in love right away. We met during some of his stays in France; he is a very gentle man, very calm, easy going. He is extremely popular among the Tuaregs from Niger, very much in demand for weddings and baptisms. He doesn't think in terms of career or soliciting producers, he doesn't try to find a manager; he simply follows the opportunities. It took me three years to release the disc, because I never knew where Bambino was. In USA, in Niamey, in Burkina... he is always on the move."

After the initial bewitchment of Agamgam, we should encounter Bambino's music during the next months: the American production company Zero Gravity is on the verge of releasing a documentary film and a new double album- and electric –Bambino doesn't play only campfire folk music, he is also a fearsome desert rocker. All of which we cannot wait to discover, no offense to Bambino.

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