

Tiken Jah Fakoly, The African (Wrasse)

Bamako, the Malian capital, is home to an extraordinary number of great musicians. But right now, the most popular performer in the city is not actually a Malian citizen. Tiken Jah Fakoly is an exile from the Ivory Coast and has built his reputation thanks to his soulful reggae style - a reminder that reggae is still a potent force in Africa - and his thoughtful, angry and controversial songs. Here, he tackles subjects from his opposition to circumcision to demands for changes in immigration laws, to the tough lives of those who do make it to Europe (on African in Paris, a reworking of Sting's Englishman in New York). The most poignant track is the lament for My Ivory Coast, on which he is joined by kora star Toumani Diabate. It's an impressive album, thanks mostly to his lyrics,
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