

continent-wide portrait where presidents riveted to their seats and intellectuals fleeing into exile to the north argue about their thousand-year-old history, which is no longer recognized or recognizable. You have to dance to denounce, smile to be taken seriously. Having seen how Gangbé lives while on tour, accommodating themselves to their uncompromising individualities, getting organized like an army without weapons, you can try to understand what has brought about the group's impertinent success. Warriors in a wild uniform, they seem to be enjoying themselves. But they are, in fact, deep in concentration.

You listen to this highly sensual record with the enthusiasm of someone making a great discovery. You wander among church choirs ("Awhan-Ho"), skin-deep blues ("Segala"), the heavy and pulsating rhythms of the tuba and trumpeting trombones. And one of the most disturbing moments is when the music takes on the exact shape of a living being. In concert, the Gangé, Brass Band evokes in its melodic architecture the memory of imperial Benin, the smoke-filled atmosphere of Cotonou. And their ambition is to ensure that no one else describes better than they do this down-to-earth language in which the night beats to trance-inducing rhythms.

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