

**MASTER THESIS**

**Composing Afropolitanism:  
Music in the Feature Films of Abderrahmane Sissako**

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**“Beware my body, beware my soul.  
Do not fold your arms in the sterile stance of a spectator.  
For life is not a spectacle.  
For a screaming man is not a dancing bear.”  
— Abderrahmane Sissako —**

## Abstract

Abderrahmane Sissako's films are among the most renowned African films in Europe, winning many awards, including a César for Best Original Music. Although his work gained much attention from African studies scholars and film scholars alike, the music within Sissako's films is hardly spoken of, let alone analysed under a single theoretical concept. The difficulty here lies in the fact that Sissako's filmmaking goes against classical film aesthetics; he presents multiple non-related narratives in one film and does not construct a certain time and space. Furthermore, his choice of music is quite peculiar. We find a string quintet of Schubert side by side with African jeliya and a French folksong; Chinese karaoke is paired with Afro-Cuban standards. However, this sounds somehow very logical and familiar to both Western and African audiences. This has to do with the fact that Sissako's films articulate what Achille Mbembe terms "the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa."<sup>1</sup> This type of awareness called Afropolitanism has been brought up in connection with the narrative, but never used as a concept to analyse the music, which leads to the question: in what ways is Afropolitanism applicable to the (use of) music in Abderrahmane Sissako's feature films *La Vie sur Terre* (1998), *Heramakono* (2002), *Bamako* (2006) and *Timbuktu* (2014)? By using a combination of Michel Chion's audiovisual analysis method, Michael Pisani's theory on the functions of film music, and an explanation in terms of Afropolitanism, we can provide answers to the question above. In this thesis I argue that the music within Sissako's films comments on the Afropolitan discourse, either by musical style or song text. Afropolitanism clarifies the representation and reception of music in Sissako's films and seems to be the underlying objective of other film readings as well.

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<sup>1</sup> Achille Mbembe, "Afropolitanism," in *Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent*, ed. Simon Njami (Johannesburg: Jacana Media (Pty) Ltd, 2007), 28.

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## Introduction

My never-ending curiosity towards other cultures consistently marks my choices in cultural consumption. Somehow, my preference list on Netflix always seems to exist of films and series made in the margins, despite the platform's strong algorithms desperately trying to put my mind on (Hollywood) mainstream films. Through the soundtrack of the Egyptian series *Secrets of the Nile* by award-winning composer Amine Bouhafa I ended up with watching *Timbuktu* (2014) by the African director Abderrahmane Sissako. In turn, Sissako's directing style, marked by long shots, a slow pace and few words, immediately captured my attention. His films convey a strong message that is not expressed through words or a single guiding narrative, but through a combination of images, music and sound.<sup>2</sup> My earlier research on *Timbuktu* revealed that Bouhafa's music does not create the idea of a certain place, time or culture. Yet, it comments on the scenes at hand and assists in the construction of the general narrative of the film.<sup>3</sup> However, these conclusions were neither explanatory, nor satisfying. What is the general message that Sissako tries to evoke that aroused so much controversy in the reception of the film?<sup>4</sup> And does Bouhafa's soundtrack not represent more than simply 'world music'? This is how my current quest started: analysing more of Sissako's films and finding an appropriate theoretical framework that explains his peculiar use of music.

Sissako's works are among the most renowned African films in Europe and North-America, having won many awards, including a César for Best Original Music for the soundtrack of *Timbuktu*. Sissako was born in Mauritania but spent most of his childhood in Mali. He received his formal training in Moscow at the VGIK and lived for twenty years in France, before returning again to Mauritania. He is one of the few African film makers that became known internationally and his work has thus gained a lot of attention from film critics and scholars within the fields of film theory and African studies. However, due to the fact that he lived and worked on multiple continents, it is difficult to find a single theoretical framework that suits Sissako's films. Furthermore, despite the extended analysis of his feature films focusing on a wide range of subjects, the music within his

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<sup>2</sup> According to Sissako himself "[c]inema is not what you say; cinema is image." Michael Guillén, "Hidden Certainties and Active Doubts. An Interview with Abderrahmane Sissako," *Cineaste* 40, no. 2 (Spring 2015): 43, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43500786>.

<sup>3</sup> Annemarie Koppelaar, "*Timbuktu* (2014): Music You Can't Resist" (research paper, Utrecht University, 2019).

<sup>4</sup> See Odile Cazenave et al., "*Timbuktu* – The Controversy," *African Studies Review* 59, no. 3 (2016): 267-293, doi: 10.1017/asr.2016.91; and Phyllis Taoua, "Abderrahmane Sissako's *Timbuktu* and Its Controversial Reception." *African Studies Review* 58, no. 2 (2015): 270-78.

films is rarely touched upon.<sup>5</sup> Winning an award for Best Original Music has not spurred any research on behalf of film music studies either. Therefore, we can conclude that his work deserves more attention from musicologists.

Music theoretical analysis can give us answers to questions concerning the rhythmic and melodic features of the music, its texture and timbre, and the development of themes throughout a film. This can aid us with an audiovisual analysis regarding music-image relationships and a functional analysis explaining the role of music within a film. However, we still cannot explain the social, cultural, political, economic or religious context of the music, and how it is paired with the images. This is where the methodological approach of ethnomusicologists Ryan Skinner and Bonnie McConnell, and film theorist Dayna Oscherwitz might be of use.

Oscherwitz demonstrates that Sissako's films "dispute the universal narrative on globalisation and concomitantly root themselves in the specific context of francophone Africa" by comparing them to Afropolitan novels.<sup>6</sup> These novels reflect on an African identity that is defined by a certain awareness of the "presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa," which is termed Afropolitanism and will be explained further on.<sup>7</sup> McConnell applies Afropolitanism to African-Australian music and argues that it can be used "as a tool to investigate complexity and multiplicity in African-Australian experiences and identities, which are not adequately captured by binary conceptualisations of diaspora, or notions of a singular African-Australian identity."<sup>8</sup> Furthermore, Skinner shows in his analysis of Sidiki Diabaté's music video 'Djeliya' that Afropolitanism can explain the representation of music in an audiovisual project.<sup>9</sup> This leads to the

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<sup>5</sup> For more on expatriation, intellectualism, and genre, see Akin Adesokan, "Abderrahmane Sissako and the Poetics of Engaged Expatriation," *Screen: The Journal of the Society for Education in Film and Television* 51, no. 2 (2010): 143-160. For more on the influence of Spaghetti Westerns, see Tsitsi Jaji, "Cassava Westerns: Ways of Watching Abderrahmane Sissako," *Black Camera* 6, no. 1 (2014): 154-77. For more on violence in Sissako's films, see Nyasha Mboti, "Violence in Postcolonial African Film," *Journal of Literary Studies* 30, no. 2 (2014): 38-48, doi: 10.1080/02564718.2014.919101; and Victoria Pasley, "Beyond Violence in Abderrahmane Sissako's Timbuktu," *African Studies Review* 59, no. 3 (2016): 294-301, doi:10.1017/asr.2016.92. For more on orality and performance, see Alison J. Murray Levine, "Words on Trial: Oral Performance in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*," *Studies in French Cinema* 12, no. 2 (2012): 151-67, doi:10.1386/sfc.12.2.151-1. For more on genre and gender, see Rachael Langford, "Resistant Representations? Genre and Gender in Francophone African Film," *Transnational Cinemas* 9, no. 2 (2018): 181-96, doi:10.1080/20403526.2017.1419551. For more on authenticity, see Sarah Hamblin, "Toward a Transnational African Cinema: Image and Authenticity in *La Vie Sur Terre*," *Black Camera* 3, no. 2 (2012): 8-30, doi:10.2979/blackcamera.3.2.8. For more on Sissako and the subaltern, see Stephen Morton, "The Wageless Life of the Subaltern," *Cultural Studies* 30, no. 5 (2016): 754-73, doi:10.1080/09502386.2016.1168111. For more on acculturation, see Alice Burgin, "Acculturation and Imagination As Social Practice in *Heremakono*," *Journal of African Cinemas* 3, no. 1 (2011): 51-64, doi:10.1386/jac.3.1.51\_1. For more on Sissako as auteur, see Rachel Gabara, "Abderrahmane Sissako: On the Politics of African Auteurs," in *The Global Auteur: The Politics of Authorship in 21st Century Cinema*, ed. Seung-hoon Jeong and Jeremi Szaniawski (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 43-60.

<sup>6</sup> Michael Gott and Thibaut Schilt, eds., *Cinéma-monde: Decentred Perspectives on Global Filmmaking in French* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 15.

<sup>7</sup> Mbembe, "Afropolitanism," 28.

<sup>8</sup> Bonnie McConnell, "Afropolitan Projects: Music, Representation, and the Politics of Belonging in Australia," *Popular Music and Society* 3, no. 3 (2017): 2, doi:10.1080/03007766.2017.1413618.

<sup>9</sup> Ryan Skinner, "An Afropolitan Muse," *Research in African Literatures* 46, no. 2 (2015): 27.

following research question: in what ways is Afropolitanism applicable to the use of music in Abderrahmane Sissako's feature films *La Vie sur Terre* (1998), *Hera Makono* (2002), *Bamako* (2006) and *Timbuktu* (2014)?

To answer this question I have divided my thesis in three chapters. The first part deals with the academic relevance of my topic. It explains my choice of the four aforementioned feature films. I will argue why existing musical analyses are unsatisfactory and explain why other theoretical frameworks are not suitable to analyse Sissako's Francophone African films. The second chapter focuses on Afropolitanism itself. I will give an outline of the academic discourse and argue how this framework can be used to analyse film music. The third chapter presents case studies in which my hypothesis will be tested. Not only will I demonstrate that Afropolitanism clarifies the representation and reception of music in Sissako's films, but also that other theoretical concepts used to analyse his works can be considered as part of the Afropolitan discourse.

## What about music? Analysing the feature films of Abderrahmane Sissako

### Defining the subject

Because Sissako has directed and produced almost twenty films in total, we have to limit our scope in order to analyse some of his films in depth. Usually, a choice by film genre works very well, but as Alison Murray Levine has shown, Sissako employs elements from both documentary and fictional genres; he makes use of both actors and non-actors, scripted and unscripted material and fiction and non-fiction at the same time.<sup>10</sup> Therefore, choosing only his documentary films or fictional films is not an option.

A second method of choosing could be the length of the film. According to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences a short film has a running time of forty minutes or less, while a long film or feature film must exceed this.<sup>11</sup> According to these criteria, Sissako's oeuvre encompasses seven short films and five long ones: *Rostov-Luanda* (1995), *La Vie sur Terre*, *Heremakono*, *Bamako*, and *Timbuktu*.<sup>12</sup> Usually, *Rostov-Luanda* is described as a documentary, whereas the other four are designed as fiction films. As Akin Adesokan has argued, this has little to do with the film's characteristics, but is largely due to the production context. *La Vie sur Terre*, for example, was made as part of the international series *2000 As Seen By ...* and needed "to depict, in fiction, the moment of transition to the year 2000."<sup>13</sup> Following the film-industry's terms and conditions I have chosen to analyse the music in Sissako's four fictional feature films *La Vie sur Terre*, *Heremakono*, *Bamako*, and *Timbuktu* and thus exclude the documentary *Rostov-Luanda*.

*La Vie sur Terre* depicts life in Sissako's childhood village Sokolo in Mali at the approaching turn of the millennium. We loosely follow the character Dramane (played by Sissako himself) visiting his father and wandering around the small town, while encountering local residents and listening to the radio. *Heremakono* takes place in the Mauritanian fishing town Nouadhibou. Abdullah awaits his passport while staying at his mother, before going to Europe. His troubles with identifying himself with his Mauritanian heritage, along with themes like migration and movement form the backdrop of the other narratives that Sissako presents. *Bamako* stages a fictive trial in a local courtyard in Bamako, Mali. The World Bank and International Monetary Fund are held

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<sup>10</sup> Alison J. Murray Levine, "'Provoking Situations': Abderrahmane Sissako's Documentary Fiction," *Journal of African Cinemas* 3, no. 1 (2011): 94, doi:10.1386/jac.3.1.93\_1.

<sup>11</sup> "Rules and Eligibility," Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, accessed August 7, 2019, <https://www.oscars.org/oscars/rules-eligibility>.

<sup>12</sup> Sissako's short films are: *Le Jeu* (1989), *Octobre* (1993), *Le chameau et les bâtons flottants* (1995), *Sabriya* (1996), *Le rêve de Tiya* (2008), *N'Dimagu "La Dignité"* (2008), and *Je vous souhaite la pluie* (2010). Because these short films cannot be accessed easily, I have chosen to stick with the more widely available long films.

<sup>13</sup> As cited by Adesokan, "Abderrahmane Sissako and the Poetics of Engaged Expatriation," 153.

responsible for the exorbitant debt that disrupts African society. Parallel to this, we see the marriage of night-club singer Melé and her unemployed husband Chaka slowly falling apart. *Timbuktu* centralises the jihadist invasion in the north of Mali in 2012-2013 and its impact on local life. A quarrel between local fisherman Amadou and nomadic cattle-herder Kidane demonstrates how age-old problems continue nevertheless. Moreover, music is a sensitive topic, because it is forbidden according to the jihadist's laws.

### **Music analysis in the readings of Sissako's films**

Looking at the current academic material about the aforementioned films we can conclude that the analysis of music within these films is highly superficial. There are several authors who mention the use of music in one or more of Sissako's films, but an audiovisual analysis (revealing sound-image relationships) or functional analysis (explaining the purpose of the music) is often missing.

According to Adesokan "the therapeutic soundtrack from Salif Keita's 'Folon' [in *La Vie sur Terre*] matches the vast landscape of the drought-stricken Sahel, tracking Dramane's walk through the rice fields against the background of the poetic recitations."<sup>14</sup> Furthermore, "the snip-snip sound of the scissors of the barber [...] flows into the photographer's gestures as he waits for an appropriate moment, as if the sound of the scissors were that of a clock ticking, cueing the click of the shutter."<sup>15</sup> Although Adesokan makes an attempt at an audio-visual analysis, combining the sound of the song 'Folon' with the image of the Sahel, and showing that the scissors have become the sound effect of the photo camera, he does not proceed in explaining the function of the music and what it represents. These are simply examples to support his arguments on the portrayal of local village life.

Levine does the same. She refers to the process of composing by comparing Sissako's directive strategy she calls "provoking situations" to "a kind of voicing. Like a composer, who parcels out the parts of his composition to different instruments, Sissako places characters in a setting, then lets them speak for themselves in the grammar of their own suffering."<sup>16</sup> However, Levine never transcends her metaphor by addressing the actual music within *La Vie sur Terre*, *Heremakono*, and *Bamako*. Furthermore, she compares the speech of Aissata Tall Sall, a Malian lawyer, with "stylistic techniques used [...] in the musical forms of African oral literature," but

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<sup>14</sup> Adesokan, 157.

<sup>15</sup> Adesokan, 154.

<sup>16</sup> Levine, "Provoking Situations," 104.

never explains what these forms are and how these techniques parallel each other.<sup>17</sup> Again, these are empty examples supporting a bigger scheme.

In their detailed analyses of specific films other authors perform even worse. Sarah Hamblin does not mention music at all in her exploration of “the interplay between photographic documentation and cinematic imagination to reveal the constructed nature of images” that goes against “the logic of authenticity” within *La Vie sur Terre*. The same goes for Stephen Morton.<sup>18</sup> He argues that *Bamako* gives a voice to the subaltern by means of oral performance.<sup>19</sup> He situates this within the cultural tradition of the griot (an oral storyteller) but fails to mention that the griot’s most important form of expression is music. Phyllis Taoua, focusing especially on the controversial reception of *Timbuktu*, does mention the act of singing and playing music in the film. She refers to the main characters who continue to express themselves musically even when they are being punished for that, but there is no account of what kind of music this is and how this influences the reception of the narrative (which we will see later is quite profound).<sup>20</sup>

Tsitsi Jaji, with her analysis of diegetic music focusing on live song as a leitmotif, is one of the first authors to take the music in Sissako’s films seriously. Her analysis of children’s songs and music lessons within *La Vie sur Terre*, *Heremakono*, and *Bamako* is quite extensive, but she omits, for example, the music Radio Colon plays live. She notices the songlike speech of Zegué Bamba in *Bamako*, but does not mention the griot who interrupts the trial by announcing a wedding.<sup>21</sup> Like Rachel Gabarra, Jaji registers the song of the Asian man Tchu, but fails to make a comment on the political aspect of what he sings, as well as his ‘exotic’ appearance in an African village. Although her musical analysis is a good attempt, we still miss a lot of information on the context of the music she investigates. Kenneth Harrow works along the same lines. He argues that in *Timbuktu* music wins metaphorically over dogmatic violence, but never mentions how.<sup>22</sup> By referring to Baz Lecocq’s study of the Tuareg rebellions, he quotes that “Kidane’s guitar illustrates the role of music and poetry in negotiating and translating the realities of the transition,” and that his music is part of a genre called “desert blues.”<sup>23</sup> More importantly, Harrow acknowledges the important role that Bouhafa’s music plays in the narrative’s engagement with resistance. Furthermore, he argues that

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<sup>17</sup> Alison J. Murray Levine, “Words on Trial: Oral Performance in Abderrahmane Sissako's *Bamako*,” *Studies in French Cinema* 12, no. 2 (2012): 162, doi:10.1386/sfc.12.2.151-1.

<sup>18</sup> Hamblin, “Toward a Transnational African Cinema,” 26-27.

<sup>19</sup> Morton, “The Wageless Life of the Subaltern,” 758-59.

<sup>20</sup> Taoua, “Abderrahmane Sissako’s *Timbuktu*,” 272.

<sup>21</sup> Jaji, “Cassava Westerns,” 171-74.

<sup>22</sup> Cazenave, “*Timbuktu* – The Controversy,” 270.

<sup>23</sup> Cazenave, 282-83.

the Mande song ‘Timbuktu Fasso’ is developed during the course of the film.<sup>24</sup> To my astonishment, Phyllis Taoua calls this “a discussion of music and musicians,” which is definitely highly overrated; Harrow never really analyses the music itself and leaves out, for example, the melodies at the beginning of the film that also return during the final shots.<sup>25</sup>

Victoria Pasley, on the other hand, is the first author that tries to analyse the music on its own. She makes comparisons between *Timbuktu* and Sissako’s other films, and notices that Sissako’s “cinema language is [...] created through music and sound.”<sup>26</sup> She gives an account of the instruments being used in *Timbuktu* and argues that “unlike a traditional film score, which is matched to the action and follows the events, the music in the film is more subtle and often absent as the silence speaks.”<sup>27</sup> She even concludes that the pacing of the film is determined by the music.

We can, therefore, conclude that music is a guiding principle within Sissako’s fictional feature films and that it deserves some proper attention. Moreover, Sissako himself said that “the music [for *Timbuktu*] needed to be like choreography for the film.”<sup>28</sup> However, when considering a theoretical framework to analyse the film’s music, we encounter new obstacles.

### **Identifying an appropriate theoretical framework**

While traditional music-analysis is based on thematic development and tonality, the music within films often does not follow these principles. Especially when we are dealing with a compiled score (as in *La Vie sur Terre*, *Heremakono*, and *Bamako*) that consists solely of pre-existing music, and, in the case of Sissako, mostly African music that is not based on Western music-theory principles at all.<sup>29</sup> According to Kofi Agawu, to analyse African music one can use every analytical method that suits the object at hand, whether this is from the field of ethnomusicology or music theory.<sup>30</sup> He states that the idea that you should be African to be able to analyse African music is quite old-fashioned. This belief originates in the Enlightenment when a “presumption of difference” was a means to “dominate at the cognitive and intellectual levels.”<sup>31</sup> Despite the fact that tonality

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<sup>24</sup> Cazenave, 285.

<sup>25</sup> Cazenave, 288.

<sup>26</sup> Pasley, “Beyond Violence in Abderrahmane Sissako’s *Timbuktu*,” 298.

<sup>27</sup> Pasley, 298.

<sup>28</sup> Guillén, “Hidden Certainties and Active Doubts,” 45.

<sup>29</sup> Gregg Redner, *Deleuze and Film Music: Building a Methodological Bridge between Film Theory and Music*, (Bristol, UK: Intellect, 2011), 19.

<sup>30</sup> Kofi Agawu, “How Not to Analyze African Music,” in *Representing African Music: Postcolonial Notes, Queries, Positions* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 356.

<sup>31</sup> Agawu, 331.

nowadays is a regular *African* mode of expression,<sup>32</sup> which should prevent the establishment of a strict Western-African dichotomy, imposing thematic development and tonality upon African music is still often seen as an act of colonialism.<sup>33</sup> Therefore, it is not being recommended to analyse African music solely along the lines of harmony and tonality. According to Agawu, there are other opportunities to enhance a theoretical analysis. We might think of the analysis of non-tempered scales, the hierarchical organisation of the melody, rhythmical patterns, overtone singing, echo-chamber effects, and counterpoint.<sup>34</sup>

Although this kind of analysis provides us with a lot of information on the content of the film's music, it does not tell us how the music interacts with the images. Therefore, we will use Chion's audiovisual analysis method that is based on four seemingly simple questions: "What do I hear? What do I see? What do I hear from what I see? What do I see from what I hear?"<sup>35</sup> With these questions in mind we can truly "audio-view."<sup>36</sup> An analysis of the camerawork and the consistency of the soundtrack, synch points, auditory extension, the narrativity of sound, and points of contradiction-counterpoint, gives us information on the way music and images interact.<sup>37</sup> Furthermore, following the audiovisual analysis methods of Chion, Claudia Gorbman, and Aaron Copland, Pisani proposes to analyse film music along four functional categories:

- I. Music identifies attributes of culture, time, place, and character.
- II. Music increases the spectator's involvement and receptivity to the film narrative.
- III. Music adds psychological complexity to the spectator's understanding of the characters and dramatic situations.
- IV. Music assists in organising and shaping the narrative aspects of the drama.<sup>38</sup>

Despite the fact that this approach seems promising, it does not explain why the use of music seems logical and sounds familiar to both African and European audiences; that is, why the music in Sissako's films is received in the same way by audiences with a different cultural background.

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<sup>32</sup> Kofi Agawu, "Tonality as a Colonizing Force in Africa," in *Audible Empire: Music, Global Politics, Critique*, ed. Ronald Radano and Tejumola Olaniyan (Durham: Duke University Press, 2016), 350.

<sup>33</sup> Agawu, "Tonality as a Colonizing Force," 318.

<sup>34</sup> Agawu, "How Not to Analyze African Music," 350.

<sup>35</sup> Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, ed. and transl. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 192.

<sup>36</sup> Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen*, 207.

<sup>37</sup> Chion, 205-13.

<sup>38</sup> Michael Pisani, "Teaching Film Music in the Liberal Arts Curriculum," in *Teaching Music History*, ed. Mary Natvig (Aldershot [ect.]: Ashgate, 2003), 139-140.

Because Sissako's films contain an amalgam of European, Asian and African music, we also encounter questions of representation.<sup>39</sup> Why is a quintet from Schubert presented as diegetic music on local African radio? How can music made by a Norwegian jazz-saxophonist, a Tunisian oud-player and a Pakistani tabla-player be interpreted? To surpass the idea of "exoticism" in music, of analysing "manifestations of an awareness of racial, ethnic, and cultural Others captured in sound," where Other music only exists as "the subordinate half of a binary opposition,"<sup>40</sup> it seems tempting to use the "hybridity theory" to explain this mix of "musics from different 'cultures.'"<sup>41</sup> "Hybridity" could be argued as what Homi Bhabha calls the "third space":

This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom. The process of cultural hybridity gives rise to something different, something new and unrecognisable, a new area of meaning and representation.<sup>42</sup>

However, according to Taylor the analysis of this "third space" often gets entangled in the construction of "binary, asymmetrical power relations," as was the case with "exoticism."<sup>43</sup> "Hybridity" has come to stand for a new type of authenticity.<sup>44</sup> It is this fixed concept of "authenticity-as-hybridity" that Hamblin and Rachael Langford refer to when stating that "hybridity" is not sufficient to explain the "transnationalized African national identity" that is represented in *La Vie sur Terre*,<sup>45</sup> or to understand "the inflections of film genre in postcolonial contexts" in *Bamako*.<sup>46</sup> We, therefore, need a theoretical framework that "emphasises fluidity, flux, and changeability" to answer questions concerning representation and reception.<sup>47</sup> Furthermore, as Melissa Thackway has argued, when analysing African film we have to take into account African

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<sup>39</sup> In *La Vie sur Terre* we find music of European composer Schubert and Malian singer-songwriter Salif Keita. There are multiple compositions used by Tunisian composer Anouar Brahem and we find balafon music from Guinea and Cameroon. In *Heremakono* music of Chinese composer Chi Zhiqiang, a French children's song, and traditional Malian music make up for the film's soundtrack. *Bamako* contains music of European composer Ludivico Einaudi featuring African kora player Ballaké Sissako, Afro-Cuban pop, and *wassoulou* song. *Timbuktu* has a soundtrack made by Tunesian composer Amine Bouhafa that incorporates a symphony orchestra, duduk, oud, bansuri, and kora, amongst others.

<sup>40</sup> Timothy Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism: Western Music and the World* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2007), 2 and 9.

<sup>41</sup> Taylor, *Beyond Exoticism*, 140.

<sup>42</sup> Homi Bhabha, as cited by Taylor, 145.

<sup>43</sup> Taylor, 157.

<sup>44</sup> Taylor, 143-44.

<sup>45</sup> Hamblin, 25.

<sup>46</sup> Langford, "Resistant Representations? Genre and Gender in Francophone African Film," 191.

<sup>47</sup> Taylor, 150.

film's history, the postcolonial political climate in which it resided, and the socio-economical and cultural context in which African films are made today.<sup>48</sup>

A solution might be found in the use of the philosophy of Deleuze. According to Gregg Redner "Deleuze suggests that all musical invention proceeds via [...] a becoming-other, 'since music is the deterritorialization of the refrain and deterritorialization is itself fundamentally a process of becoming.'" <sup>49</sup> A "refrain" consists of a point of stability, a repeated feature of music (such as the rise of a third or a 6/8 metre) that forms a certain "territory." However, the simple repetition of a "territory" does not result in a new piece of music. It is the negotiation of multiple different territories, or "the deterritorialisation of the refrain" that results into a new composition. This negotiation is a process of "becoming." "Becoming" is unique in a sense that it is not a confrontation of two opposites (f.e. African and Cuban music) or the evolution of one new "hybrid" (Afro-Cuban music), but a manifold process of different "becomings" (both African and Cuban music are in a continuous process of change). Although this seems to solve our problem of the analysis of music that is formed by multiple musical cultures, it does not address its representation or reception.

Christopher Letcher proposes another solution for the analysis of what he calls "musical ethnographies."<sup>50</sup> He argues that "both 'Western' and 'indigenous' musical elements can be used to narrate for both the local and international audiences the film is addressed to, and both musics *can* be dramatically potent without setting up symmetrical hierarchies between musics or cultures."<sup>51</sup> Although this seems promising, addressing both the representation and reception of music, Letcher presumes the existence of two different musical worlds in order to apply his analysis of "marked" and "unmarked" music.<sup>52</sup> But as we have seen earlier, Sissako's soundtrack consists of multiple musical worlds (f.e. Chinese, Malian, Tunisian) that in themselves are negotiations of multiple musical styles.

However, there is one solution left. In our list of articles that analyses Sissako's films there is one specific article that does use an African perspective - which is indispensable according to Thackway - which both addresses the representation and reception of a type of music that is in itself fluid. Oscherwitz uses Afropolitanism, briefly defined as "the presence of the elsewhere in the here

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<sup>48</sup> Melissa Thackway, *Africa Shoots Back: Alternative Perspectives in Sub-Saharan Francophone African Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 179-80.

<sup>49</sup> Redner, *Deleuze and Film Music*, 115.

<sup>50</sup> Christopher Letcher, "Post-Apartheid Cinema," in *The Routledge Companion to Screen Music and Sound*, ed. Miguel Mera, Ronald Sadoff and Ben Winters (New York: Routledge, 2017), 322.

<sup>51</sup> Letcher, "Post-Apartheid Cinema," 322.

<sup>52</sup> Letcher, 322.

and vice versa,” as a tool to analyse the narrative of Sissako’s films.<sup>53</sup> Again a thorough musical analysis is omitted, but as McConnell and Skinner have shown, using Afropolitanism as a musicological analytical tool is a means of addressing both film music’s composition, its representation, reception, and social and cultural background.<sup>54</sup>

Therefore, our method of analysis will be threefold: a combination of music theoretical analysis and audiovisual analysis provides us with information on the content of the music and its relationship with the images. A functional analysis gives us clues on music’s role within the film, while Afropolitanism should answer questions concerning music’s representation and its reception. In order to start applying this method on Sissako’s four feature films, we first have to define Afropolitanism as a theoretical framework.

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<sup>53</sup> Dayna Oscherwitz, “Globalisation, Cinéma-Monde and the Work of Abderrahmane Sissako,” in *Cinéma-Monde: Decentred Perspectives on Global Filmmaking in French*, ed. Michael Gott and Thibaut Schilt (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2018), 86.

<sup>54</sup> See McConnell, “Afropolitan Projects: Music, Representation, and the Politics of Belonging in Australia,” 1-19; and Skinner, “An Afropolitan Muse,” 15-31.

## Afropolitanism: a theoretical framework

### An overview

Afropolitanism is a theoretical concept which was invented around the same time by both novelist Taiye Selasi in 2005, and philosopher Achille Mbembe in 2006. Whereas Selasi coins the term to explain the position of a generation of young Africans who live and work both inside and outside of the continent and, therefore, “belong to no single geography, but feel at home in many,”<sup>55</sup> Mbembe focuses more on a type of awareness that incorporates a political, cultural and historical sensitivity towards Africa’s place in the world and the influences of the world on Africa’s politics, cultures and socio-economical structures:

Awareness of the interweaving of the here and there, the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa, the relativisation of primary roots and memberships and the way of embracing, with full knowledge of the facts, strangeness, foreignness and remoteness, the ability to recognise one’s face in that of a foreigner and make the most of the traces of remoteness in closeness, to domesticate the unfamiliar, to work with what seem to be opposites - it is this cultural, historical and aesthetic sensitivity that underlies the term ‘Afropolitanism.’<sup>56</sup>

Accordingly, Afropolitanism is not one ‘thing.’ It is, to use the words of Skinner, to “cultivate a sense of self in the world mindful of heritage and tradition,”<sup>57</sup> or, as Minna Salami, also known as MsAfropolitan described it: “a balancing ideology where the traumas of the African experience [...] are restored with the marriage of symbolic, inquisitive, humanist ancestral knowledge systems with contemporary technological processes, art and science.”<sup>58</sup>

Because Afropolitanism cannot be pinpointed in a few words, the invention of the term gave rise to many different interpretations, turning Afropolitanism into an academic discourse itself. This discourse evolved along two lines of thought. One incorporates authors that either strongly reject Selasi’s definition of Afropolitanism, or defend her by placing these rejections into perspective. The other incorporates authors that concern themselves with the definition of Mbembe, tracing it back in

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<sup>55</sup> Taiye Selasi, “Bye-Bye Barbar,” *Callaloo* 36, no. 3 (2013): 528.

<sup>56</sup> Mbembe, “Afropolitanism,” 28.

<sup>57</sup> Skinner, 17.

<sup>58</sup> Minna Salami, “My views on Afropolitanism” (blog), *MsAfropolitan*, accessed 6th July 2019, <https://www.msafropolitan.com/my-views-on-afropolitanism>.

discourses on cosmopolitanism and Pan-Africanism, and using it as a theoretical framework for the analysis of literature, film and music.

In February 2013, Stephanie Bosch Santana wrote a blog in which she reacts to the lecture of Kenyan editor and writer Binyavanga Wainaina at the African-Studies-Association-UK-2012 conference. In that lecture Wainaina tries to get rid of the idea of Afropolitanism, because it has become a “brand [that is] infused with political consciousness;”<sup>59</sup> this commodification is strongly opposed by him. Bosch Santana shows that Afropolitanism, presented as a “new promising theoretical lens,” soon turned into an “empty style and culture commodification” due to mediatisation of the term by magazines and the fashion industry.<sup>60</sup> She concludes by arguing that Pan-Africanism would be a better foundation to argue about a new type of African genre fiction that focuses on social and economic issues, because this theory would not be easily exploited as something stylish.

Emma Dabiri shares Santana’s concerns. She argues that “[w]hile Afropolitanism may go some way in redressing the balance concerning Africans speaking for themselves, the problem lies in the fact that we still do not hear the narratives of Africans who are *not* privileged.”<sup>61</sup> Only the African elite, which is able to move around continents freely and escape immigration policies, has the power of constructing an image of being African.<sup>62</sup> Those living in small villages without access to global media are not being heard. Dabiri suggests that a “continental African internationality” as a new form of Pan-Africanism might be the solution to repair this incomplete image. However, she also questions whether there is not a chance of a reinvention of Afropolitanism because its notion of African fluidity still bares great potential.<sup>63</sup> (Note that this is another argument why Afropolitanism is a good theoretical framework for analysing ‘fluid’ music.)

Chielozona Eze argues along the same lines. He demonstrates that Afropolitanism is not without its flaws, but concludes that its potential lies in the moral topography of the concept, which breaks away from earlier constructions of African identity. “[Before] identity was conceived in terms of opposition, whose justification was rooted in resistance, the present-day definition of

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<sup>59</sup> Stephanie Bosch Santana, “Exorcizing Afropolitanism: Binyavanga Wainaina Explains Why ‘I Am a Pan-Africanist, Not an Afropolitan’ at ASUK 2012,” *Africa in Words* (blog). February 8, 2013, <https://africanwords.com/2013/02/08/exorcizing-afropolitanism-binyavanga-wainaina-explains-why-i-am-a-pan-africanist-not-an-afropolitan-at-asauk-2012/>.

<sup>60</sup> Bosch Santana, “Exorcizing Afropolitanism,” (blog).

<sup>61</sup> Emma Dabiri, “Why I Am (Still) Not an Afropolitan,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (2016): 105, doi: 10.1080/13696815.2015.1100066.

<sup>62</sup> Dabiri, “Why I Am (Still) Not an Afropolitan,” 106.

<sup>63</sup> Dabiri, 107.

African identity is based on complementarity, and its justification is in the flourishing of life for everyone.”

Bosch Santana, in a revision of her initial blog, concludes that it is the term Afropolitan itself that is the problem, not what it entails. The term Afropolitanism suggests a new type of African cosmopolitanism that has existed much longer. According to Wainaina “we do not need new names for these enduring practices;” the old term Pan-Africanism is just fine.<sup>64</sup> Mbembe, however, argues that we are in need of a new term, because unlike Pan-Africanism, Afropolitanism “no longer focuses on the tension between self and other but rather ‘the problem of *self-explication*’.”<sup>65</sup> Afropolitanism, therefore, rejects the idea of binary oppositions and musical “exoticism.” Furthermore, “Pan-Africanism was fundamentally rooted in the idea of a belonging to a particular racial grouping,” whereas Afropolitanism is non-racial.<sup>66</sup> According to Bosch Santana, the “problem of self-explication” that Mbembe describes as the core of Afropolitanism, is essentially the same as Selasi meant to put forward in her call for recognition as an African of the world.

The detachment of Afropolitan’s contents from the controversy around the term opened up a renewed discussion of Afropolitanism. Like Santana, Gehrman focuses on multiple works of Mbembe, showing that his concept became much more nuanced over the years and that his current theory transcends the much debated “brand” Afropolitanism.<sup>67</sup> She analyses three Afropolitan literary works to see whether the concept is still valuable and concludes that Afropolitan literature is not as “superficial” as the media suggest.<sup>68</sup> Like Gehrman, Donald Morales also analyses Afropolitan books. He emphasises the position of writers who strongly reject classification and, therefore, seek refuge in Afropolitanism. Unlike Gehrman, Morales does not put Selasi’s concept and the “brand” Afropolitanism on one level. He nuances Selasi’s concept and argues that she tried to give fellow artists a voice, which has mainly been wrongly interpreted as a celebration of the African cultural elite.

Until now, most writing on Afropolitanism was limited to the theoretical concept itself and the analysis of literature. However, scholars like Skinner and McConnell have used the concept as an analytical method to analyse the music of African and African-Australian musicians respectively.

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<sup>64</sup> Stephanie Bosch Santana, “Exorcizing the Future: Afropolitanism’s Spectral Origins,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (2016): 122.

<sup>65</sup> Bosch Santana, “Exorcizing the Future,” 122.

<sup>66</sup> Achille Mbembe and Sarah Balakrishnan, “Pan-African Legacies, Afropolitan Futures,” *Transition: An International Review* 120, no. 120 (2016): 30.

<sup>67</sup> Susanne Gehrman, “Cosmopolitanism with African Roots. Afropolitanism’s Ambivalent Mobilities,” *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 28, no. 1 (2016): 64-66.

<sup>68</sup> Gehrman, “Cosmopolitanism with African Roots,” 69.

Furthermore, Oscherwitz expands the concept towards analysing film, specifically the films of Sissako. She argues that there is a “central divergence among Afropolitan novels, Sissako’s films, and the films of cinéma-monde.”<sup>69</sup> According to Oscherwitz “[Sissako’s films] reject, however, the rising plot structure and developmental narrative paradigms of Afropolitan novels in favour of a migratory and circulatory structure more in keeping with the narratives of cinéma-monde.”<sup>70</sup> She therefore continues to analyse his films by using the concept of cinéma-monde, analysing themes like “circulation, migration, multiplicity, and exchange.”<sup>71</sup> However, we see clear similarities between Mbembe’s notion of “Afropolitanism [as] a geography of circulation and mobility,”<sup>72</sup> and Oscherwitz analysing the concepts of “circulation” and “migration”. Therefore, I would argue that Oscherwitz’s analyses can be read as an Afropolitan endeavour as well. This supports my argument that Afropolitanism is a suitable theoretical framework to analyse the feature films of Abderrahmane Sissako.

### **Afropolitanism as a musicologist’s analytical toolkit**

As Kofi Agawu has aptly described: “[the q]uestion is not who invented [Afropolitan] theory or for what initial purpose but whether it can be put to intelligent use in areas not initially envisioned by its first users.”<sup>73</sup> McConnell has shown that Afropolitanism can be a tool to explain the “multilayered African influences in [performers’] music, and forge solidarities across difference, in order to articulate belonging.”<sup>74</sup> By quoting African-Australian musician Lamine Sonko she questions the act of labelling an instrument according to its country of origin: “a musical instrument does not have [an] idea of African or Australian, you know, it just responds to whoever is playing it.”<sup>75</sup> Through an analysis of musical style, lyrics and images McConnell demonstrates that binary constructions do not fit to explain music that is connected with three or more countries at the same time, and a combination of both traditional and popular music.<sup>76</sup> An “Afropolitan elasticity” is needed to explain music that has “unchangeable roots,” but grows entirely new ‘plants’ from these roots at the same time.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Oscherwitz, “Globalisation, Cinéma-Monde and the Work of Abderrahmane Sissako,” 86.

<sup>70</sup> Oscherwitz, 87.

<sup>71</sup> Oscherwitz, 91.

<sup>72</sup> Mbembe and Balakrishnan, “Pan-African Legacies,” 34.

<sup>73</sup> Agawu, 355.

<sup>74</sup> McConnell, 2.

<sup>75</sup> McConnell, 7.

<sup>76</sup> McConnell, 10.

<sup>77</sup> McConnell, 15.

Whereas McConnell's research material was mainly auditory, Skinner uses Afropolitanism to make audiovisual analyses. By referring to Mbembe's notion of "the presence of the elsewhere in the here,"<sup>78</sup> and Chion's analysis of "negative images and negative sounds,"<sup>79</sup> he analyses the "absent presences" in a Malian music video.<sup>80</sup> He shows that while a certain "cultural morality" is made visible on the screen, there are other "[environmental, political, economic, religious] morsels of meaning that suggest a more broadly urban, postcolonial, and diasporic frame of analysis."<sup>81</sup> These "absent presences" can inform a video's reception highly. A certain camera-viewpoint can either invite the audience into the space that is created on the screen, or create a fourth wall by presenting cultural-specific material that bypasses the knowledge of the spectator.<sup>82</sup> Furthermore, the West African concept of *jatigiya* (hospitality) explains the interest in, and incorporation of other musical cultures. Others are invited to share in a Mande "cultural mode of being [that is] grounded in heritage and domesticity" but not merely reduced to it.<sup>83</sup> Whoever you are is defined both by "the moral social position of the family and culture to which one belongs by birth" and by the choices and risks you take as an individual to achieve your own status.<sup>84</sup> In the words of Mbembe it is the "relativisation of primary roots and memberships, and the way of embracing [...] strangeness, foreignness and remoteness" that defines the work of West African musicians which in turn can be called Afropolitan.

We can, therefore, conclude that an Afropolitan framework can shed light on both the representation, as well as the reception of (African) music in Sissako's films "because [these films] engage in multilayered processes of 'self-explication' while also examining the position of Africa and Africanness in the world."<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>78</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>79</sup> Chion, 192.

<sup>80</sup> Skinner, 18.

<sup>81</sup> Skinner, 23.

<sup>82</sup> Skinner, 20.

<sup>83</sup> Skinner, 20.

<sup>84</sup> Skinner, 21-22.

<sup>85</sup> McConnell, 6.

## Four case studies: composing Afropolitanism

In this chapter I will analyse the music of Sissako's films *La Vie sur Terre*, *Heremakono*, *Bamako*, and *Timbuktu* according to the methodological approach outlined above in order to answer our main research question: in what ways is Afropolitanism applicable to the (use of) music in Sissako's films? A quick glance at our descriptive audiovisual analyses raises even more questions (see appendix): Why do we find a Chinese song, a Western tune and a string quintet of Schubert in an African film? What message do these pieces evoke when they are paired with images of Africa? And why does Sissako sometimes omit part of the subtitles or a translation of the lyrics of a song? Does this alter the reception of the film in favour of an African or European audience? Furthermore, Sissako's use of music is quite limited, focusing on a few pieces and choosing music from only a handful of composers. What kind of meaning does music have when the amount of it is limited? And does the silence narrate as well? With these questions in mind, I will now start to explain how Abderrahmane Sissako made use of music in his four feature films and whether this comments on the Afropolitan discourse.

### I. *La Vie sur Terre* (1998)

#### 'Folon' - Salif Keita

The title song 'Folon' by the Malian singer-songwriter Salif Keita is prominently present in the film *La Vie sur Terre*. It marks the beginning and ending of the film and, therefore, creates a strong sense of unity. Sissako chose deliberately to omit subtitles or a translation of the lyrics (see appendix). During the musical intermezzi, we hear a voice-over, but when Keita starts to sing inserting subtitles would have been possible. Therefore, the reception of the scene, will be entirely different from the perspective of a Malinke native speaker than for an audience who is not proficient in the language of the song. A non-native speaker hears a repetitious song with several verses and a bridge that accompanies images of daily life in Mali (see figure 1). Meanwhile, the voice-over speaks about returning and leaving, which is made audible in the cyclical nature of the music, repeating a descending line towards C over and over again. The images end with a broadcast of Radio Sokolo,

leaving the spectator in doubt whether this was diegetic music or part of the film's soundtrack.

Fô - lon étégni-ni - ka Fô - lon nétégni-ni - ka Fô - lon a tounbékètè dé Fô - lon kokotounbé

8  
kè Fô - lo - n mô-gôma-ko - tè Fô - lon kokotounbé kè Fô - lo - n mô-gôma-ko - tè

15  
Kou - madou-ma bé mô-go mi ko - nô Hè-rè bimô-go mi ko - nô Kon-kò bémô-go mi na -

21  
aa aa Fô - lon kokokounbi la Fô - lon étountéséko fô Fô - lon Fô - lon oomo-gôma-ko - té

Figure 1 'Folon' - Salif Keita

However, a Madinke-native speaker is probably aware of the connection between the images and the music. The first two verses are about the past when African people had little influence on their lives. This part of the song is provided with images of cycling, herding cows, and transport on a wooden boat. I would say that these images support a view of life that is stuck in the past. The third verse is about the fact that even if you were intelligent, you could not say so, because nobody cared. This verse is paired with images of books and papers lying on a table and an old man reading a book. This supports the idea of intellectualism within Africa that was mainly disregarded during the colonial decades, but is now acknowledged again. The last verse is about the present, saying that Africans now do have a voice and are being addressed. We see images of people listening to the radio, a photographer waiting for customers, and a radio host that directly addresses the spectator: "Bonjour!" So Sissako skilfully edits the images to the music, conveying a special message that is only available for his compatriots.

Yet, the song itself is not specifically African or Malian. We hear a combination of instruments that can be used just as easily in a European pop song as in an African or Asian one. The diatonic stepwise motion of the melody, characterised by descending scales, can be argued as an identifier of a typical African kora playing-technique called *bolomanboni* (running up and down the strings), but can also show the influence of the characteristic descending lines of the theme song of the musical *The Phantom of the Opera*, to name something improbable.<sup>86</sup> The Phrygian scale of the song could refer to either flamenco guitar or jazz, but it also occurs frequently in African

<sup>86</sup> Skinner, 17.

repertoires.<sup>87</sup> Furthermore, the use of an AABA form and a 4/4 metre, with a slight shift of the internal accents at the bridge, is something we find in almost every type of music. It is the language of the song, and the pairing with the images that depict it as an African song.

In the composition of the song, therefore, we encounter a form of Afropolitanism. We clearly see “the presence of the elsewhere in the here”<sup>88</sup> or as Levine explains: “[it is] neither here nor there, neither one thing nor the other.”<sup>89</sup> Furthermore, the song and supporting images are about the past, the present and the future which is all part of daily life in Mali during the millennium celebrations. This strongly supports the Afropolitan idea of an African identity that “cultivate[s] a sense of self in the world” that is strongly rooted in the past.<sup>90</sup> Moreover, the return of the song at the end of the film can be argued as what Deleuze calls the “eternal return.”<sup>91</sup> At the final scene of the film the last lines of the song are added, resulting in another reference to the past after pointing to the future. Here a certain “contemplation of the action”<sup>92</sup> takes place. This contemplation is “at once moment and cycle of time.”<sup>93</sup> Because space and time have moved on, the music must be regarded as something different. The song in itself has become “heritage” over the span of the film. This can be argued as an Afropolitan heritage “that looks back as it moves forward.”<sup>94</sup>

### **Quintet in C: *adagio* - Franz Schubert**

This string quintet seems really out of place amongst a combination of traditional (balafon, kora, kamele n’goni) and popular music (Keita, Brahem) that is rooted in Africa (see appendix). According to the functional theory of Pisani the music can, therefore, be seen as an identifier of culture, time and place. However, this string quintet is not represented as something European but as diegetic music of Radio Sokolo, as part of daily life in Mali. According to Sarah Hamblin this is the problematisation of the authentic image that was inferred to the film from a postcolonial viewpoint of “African cinema as a site for cultural authenticity.”<sup>95</sup> Sissako himself brings the act of framing to the foreground by suggesting that African men listen to European classical music. He

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<sup>87</sup> Kofi Agawu, *The African Imagination in Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 292.

<sup>88</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>89</sup> Levine, “Words on Trial,” 163. Although Levine never uses the term Afropolitanism, her explanation of the concept of liminality as “a creative tension between two roles rather than an agonistic differential of power,” can be easily argued as an Afropolitan approach. See Levine, “Provoking Situations,” 103-104.

<sup>90</sup> Skinner, 17.

<sup>91</sup> Deleuze, in turn, drew this concept from the philosophy of Nietzsche. For Deleuze the “eternal return” is a form of becoming, because through returning a new “deterritorialization of the refrain” takes place. See Redner, 84-85.

<sup>92</sup> Redner, 86.

<sup>93</sup> Redner, 86.

<sup>94</sup> Skinner, 18.

<sup>95</sup> Hamblin, 10.

shows that these men are not just local villagers, but members of a global capitalist system.<sup>96</sup> They are Africans who, according to Mbembe, can “hardly be understood outside of [their] entanglement with multiple elsewheres.”<sup>97</sup> They are Afropolitans.

Again the music is precisely edited to the images. The first manifestation of the theme is coupled with images of men standing against a wall, listening to their radio’s, while we hear a man expressing his gratitude to someone living in exile (presumably in Europe) who sent him aid. This relative tranquillity is soon disrupted; the music moves from the tonic to the subdominant. We see and hear about the problems on the fields and the problems of communication. Daily life is never certain; the music is not stable while we move from F# to f# to E with a major seventh. At the return of the main theme (starting again with the tonic), the man again emphasises his expression of gratitude. The pizzicato of the violin aurally resembles the sewing machine’s needle ‘picking’ both the upper thread and bobbin thread. Interestingly, the music does not stop at the tonic, but at the dominant, leaving the music unfinished and the narrative open-ended.

Whereas native speakers were slightly privileged at understanding ‘Folon’, it is now a European audience that Sissako seems to address, giving them the Afropolitan opportunity to “recognise one’s face in that of a foreigner and make the most of the traces of remoteness in closeness.”<sup>98</sup> The music of Schubert becomes the voice of the expatriate, talking back from Europe to the man in Africa. By choosing music that is distinctly different from the other compositions of the soundtrack, Sissako adds psychological complexity to his narrative. He highlights the presence of Africa in Europe through the person living in exile, and the presence of Europe in Africa through books and music. Again we encounter the Afropolitan notion of “the presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa.”

Ultimately, Sissako’s main purpose with *La Vie sur Terre* is to give Africans a voice, to explain the ways of life in Africa from an Afropolitan viewpoint which emphasises heritage but “cannot be reduced to mere tradition.”<sup>99</sup> This resonates strongly with the message of composer Salif Keita, who made it his life purpose to give African albinos a voice and publicly speak about the horrors unfolding itself in Africa. It is visible in the compositions of Anouar Brahem who is, according to his website, “one of the rare composers and musicians that is capable of inventing music that is on the one hand fully anchored in an ancestral highly sophisticated culture and on the

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<sup>96</sup> Hamblin, 10-11.

<sup>97</sup> Mbembe and Balakrishnan, 31.

<sup>98</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>99</sup> Skinner, 18.

other hand distinctly contemporary in his universal ambition.”<sup>100</sup> And we see it in the representation of the string quintet by Schubert that shows the presence of Europe in Africa and vice versa.

## II. *Heremakono* (2002)

### Birds of comment

At first sight the musical pieces in *Heremakono* seem quite randomly chosen to suit the mood of a certain scene. However, when we start looking at the lyrics and titles of the different songs we see that birds is a common leitmotif. The songs ‘Petit oiseau’ (little bird) and ‘Djorolen’ (the worried songbird), and the piece *Regard de mouette* (look at the seagull) are quite literary about birds (see appendix). When interpreting more broadly, the iron bars mentioned in the prison song ‘Tie Chuang Lei’ can be seen as a bird’s cage that prohibits the freedom of the bird. According to *wassoulou* singer Oumou Sangaré the songbird (*kono*) is a metaphor for the freedom of expression.<sup>101</sup> “In my culture the songbird is the singer - I am talking to my public, asking them to remember the poor, those who have no power, no voice, no hope.” Khatra is the first in *Heremakono* who is denied to ‘sing’. At the end of the film he even literally loses his voice when he is trying to wake up Maata. However, it is not the act of singing but the text of the song that causes the disturbance. It is the proudness of an African identity (*l’amour du pays natal*) that Maata fears to speak out loud. Sissako, however, gives the little boy his voice back through the song of Oumou Sangaré. The lyrics tell us that Khatra is now an orphan. Although Sissako omits the subtitles again, privileging the local audience in the understanding of this extra narrative layer, the previous image of Maata not waking up has made this clear as well for non-native speakers. Through foregrounding the act of self-explication, Sissako again evokes an Afropolitan message.<sup>102</sup>

Another ‘bird of comment’ in Malian society is the griot, who comments on the events that happen in daily life and embodies the history of her people, that is made known to her by oral tradition.<sup>103</sup> The ‘Comfort song’ of the griot Nema (see appendix) is a literal example of this. When Abdallah leaves his mother we witness the execution of a set of rituals but nothing is being said. It is Néma and Mamma who sing about the reason of his departure and the emotions that this evokes, thus clarifying the scene. However, the provided subtitles do not cover for the entire song. In this

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<sup>100</sup> Original text: “[Anouar Brahem est] l’un des rares compositeurs et musiciens capables d’inventer une musique à la fois totalement ancrée dans une culture ancestrale hautement sophistiquée et éminemment contemporaine dans son ambition universaliste.” See <https://www.anouarbrahem.com/fr/bio/>.

<sup>101</sup> Lucy Durán, “Mali’s Songbird, Oumou Sangaré, & Radio As Research,” *BBC Radio 3 Documentary* (2003): 5, [https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/radio3/worldmusic/duran\\_sangare\\_radio\\_piece.pdf](https://downloads.bbc.co.uk/radio3/worldmusic/duran_sangare_radio_piece.pdf).

<sup>102</sup> See Bosch Santana, 122.

<sup>103</sup> See Durán, 5-6.

way Sissako invites the spectator into the cinematic image to provide his own commentary. I would like to argue that the presence of the spectator both inside and outside the cinematic image is another form of Afropolitanism.

### **Exotic birds: ‘Tie Chuang Lei’**

Like in *La Vie sur Terre* we find exotic ‘birds’ in the soundtrack of *Heremakono*; musical pieces that really seem out of place amongst the traditional music of Mali, here provided by Oumou Sangaré and the griot Néma Mint Choueikh. The song ‘Tie Chuang Lei’ was composed in 1988 by Chinese actor Chi Zhiqiang, to describe his life in prison in the 1980s.<sup>104</sup> Amongst others, this song spurred the emergence of a new genre called “prison songs” that came to articulate “the experience, worldview, and emotions of the marginal *getihu* (private entrepreneurs) and provided them with both a sense of identity and a voice.<sup>105</sup> Again we see that freedom of expression is at stake here, but this time disguised in the ‘exotic’ voice of Tchu. What stands out here is the reaction of film character Nana. She does not seem surprised at all by hearing this non-African music. According to Mbembe this is because the sight of an Asian man is not uncommon in contemporary Africa: “We have people who are Africans but they are Africans of European origin [...] of Middle Eastern origin [...] [a]nd more and more we have Africans of Chinese origin.”<sup>106</sup> I want to argue, therefore, that Tchu is an Afropolitan who “belong[s] to no single geography, but feel[s] at home in many.”<sup>107</sup>

The song ‘Tie Chuang Lei’ is preceded and concluded by music of Tunisian composer Anouar Brahem. It is through the pairing of these compositions that Sissako prepares his audience for the sudden change of style and tone that ‘Tie Chuang Lei’ creates.<sup>108</sup> The violin in *Regard de mouette* resembles the sound of the erhu in ‘Tie Chuang Lei’, whereas the Dorian mode that is used in ‘Sull lull’ simulates the pentatonism of the Chinese song (see figure 2). I would argue that this is a super-extended version of Chion’s concept of “auditory extension:” the overlap of sound that establishes temporal continuity between two different scenes.<sup>109</sup> Like ‘Folon’ in *La Vie sur Terre*, these pieces cannot be investigated as identifiers of a certain culture, time and place. The Dorian mode can denote either a stylistic feature of jazz music or the use of the Indian raga’s *kafi* or

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<sup>104</sup> Personal interview with Qian Han, July 2019. See also Rocky Wen, “Chi Zhiqian Case: An Illustration of China in the 1980s,” *Global Times*, October 5, 2009, <http://www.globaltimes.cn/content/429853.shtml>.

<sup>105</sup> Nimrod Baranovitch, *China’s New Voices: Popular Music, Ethnicity, Gender, and Politics, 1978-1997* (California: University of California Press, 2003), 29.

<sup>106</sup> Mbembe and Balakrishnan, 30.

<sup>107</sup> Selasi, “Bye-Bye Barbar,” 528.

<sup>108</sup> Levine, “Words on Trial,” 160.

<sup>109</sup> Chion, 208.

*kharaharapriya*. The rhythmical accompaniment of the tabla can be seen as a sophisticated version of a 4/4 metre or as the ‘easy’ Indian metrical cycle *tintal*. Additionally, the Arabic overtones played by the violin in the piece of Brahem strongly contrast with the scenes that are cut in Europe. Again Sissako plays with the Afropolitan idea of “embracing [...] strangeness, foreignness and remoteness.”<sup>110</sup> The Chinese prison song is a clear example of the Afropolitan ability to “domesticate the unfamiliar, to work with what seem to be opposites.”<sup>111</sup>



Figure 2: ‘Sull lull’ - Jan Gabarek/Anouar Brahem

### III. *Bamako* (2006)

In *Bamako* we only hear music during the fictional scenes of the film, not during the trial. Therefore, music provides the soundtrack for the events of daily life that Sissako portrays. Like in *Heremakono* music has the role of providing commentary to the action on the screen. ‘Saa Magni’ (O Death) predicts the death of the refugee that is left behind in the desert (see appendix C4), and ‘Se Houe’ signals the future of Melé in Dakar, where she will find other men to listen to her instead of Chaka (appendix C8). Moreover, the composition ‘Sigi’ serves as a leitmotif to announce death. Through the repetition of the song ‘Naam’, and the compositions ‘Sigi’ and ‘Se Houe’, Sissako employs music to provide continuity and organise the narrative.

Although this seems quite straightforward, we find a duality in the message that Sissako evokes with the trial, “in which [Western] international financial institutions stand accused of systematically under developing Africa and exacerbating the suffering of its people,”<sup>112</sup> and the type of music he chooses to add to the images. This music consists of multiple musical styles (minimalism, Afro-Cuban pop, Western film music, *wassoulou* song) that seem to annihilate the idea of ‘the West’ versus Africa. The soundtrack and, as Jaji has argued, the insertion of a Spaghetti Western, rather promote globalisation.<sup>113</sup> In ‘A l’ombre’ we hear an Italian pianist-composer of minimal music playing together with a Malian kora-player. Neither of them make concessions on their musical style; they simply co-exist. By doing so we witness what Deleuze calls the “becoming” of a new composition, or what Levine describes as “liminality”: “a creative tension

<sup>110</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>111</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>112</sup> Ryan T. Skinner, *Bamako Sounds: The Afropolitan Ethics of Malian Music* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015), 30.

<sup>113</sup> Jaji, 158-160.

between two worlds rather than an agonistic differential of power.”<sup>114</sup> This denial of a certain hierarchy is extremely at odds with the dominance of institutions like the World Bank and the IMF whose structural adjustments have paralysed local life. On the contrary, it marks the Afropolitan message that Sissako evokes: “the marriage of symbolic, inquisitive, humanist ancestral knowledge systems with contemporary technological processes, art and science.”<sup>115</sup>

However, the other musical pieces of the soundtrack do not explicitly reflect on “the interweaving of the here and there.”<sup>116</sup> In *Bamako* it is not so much on the level of individual music pieces, but on the level of the complete soundtrack (i.e. the compilation that Sissako made of different musical pieces) that an Afropolitan message becomes visible. By viewing the score as a whole we see that Afro-Cuban standards exist side by side with *wassoulou* song; Western film music can be easily paired with traditional kora and minimal music. This resembles the interweaving of different film genres as Langford indicates them; she sees both elements of the crime narrative, western, soap opera, documentary-reportage as well as medical realism in the film.<sup>117</sup> The interweaving of Western film music is thus no “whimsical stylistic rupture” but “an auteur’s signature”, something that belongs to the directive style of Sissako and the Afropolitan identity he tries to display.<sup>118</sup> Through music, Sissako feeds us just another image of contemporary life in Bamako; an African city where Afro-Cuban standards are played in the night clubs, Westerns can be watched in the cinema and playing kora is a common leisure activity. Sissako makes this “absent presence” of a global African identity, of Afropolitanism, visible through music.

#### **IV. *Timbuktu* (2014)**

Soon after the last notes of *Timbuktu*’s opening melody have sounded, a man announces through his megaphone: “Cigarettes are forbidden. Music is forbidden. [...] Women must wear socks and gloves.” In hindsight we immediately conclude that music is, therefore, loaded with meaning. In the first scene, Sissako mocks with the beliefs of the jihadists by deliberately adding music, and, therefore, undermining their authority. *Timbuktu* is pervaded with these instances of “contradiction-counterpoint.”<sup>119</sup> Some of them are quite obvious. When Fatoumata starts singing while being flogged for making music, the spectator is highly aware of the ban on music and the consequences

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<sup>114</sup> Levine, “Provoking Situations,” 103.

<sup>115</sup> Salami, “My views on Afropolitanism,” (blog).

<sup>116</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>117</sup> Langford, 187.

<sup>118</sup> Jaji, 155-156.

<sup>119</sup> Chion, 191.

that this restriction has. Sissako literally gives her a voice in a moment when she cannot speak. Another example is the pairing of an imaginary football game with orchestral music. The music not only highlights the kicking of the imaginary ball, but it is added to account for an overt message of non-verbal resistance from Timbuktu's inhabitants. Other scenes are more complex. While a couple is stoned to death by the jihadists, one of them escapes his duties and performs a spiritual dance to the music he hears in his head. Sissako here not merely mocks the beliefs of the jihadist, but also shows the struggles of these men, who need to deny their moral heritage, in order to execute their beliefs. The music demonstrates that the jihadist is not only a perpetrator, but a victim as well. We witness a moment where he cannot deny his (musical) heritage any longer. The combination of strings, piano and oud represent him as an African of the world, an Afropolitan, whose beliefs are determined by both local and global influences.

Because Sissako draws highly on the involvement of the spectator, on the way the audience composes their own narrative out of the images and music that he provides, the reception of this film also aroused quite some controversy. The main critique that *Timbuktu* received came from a largely African audience who disapproved the portrayal of violence. Most of these spectators thought that Sissako's image of physical violence was too soft, because they had experienced worse.<sup>120</sup> However, as Mboti has argued for *Bamako* the subject here is not actual physical violence, but systematic violence. Sissako focuses on the whole structural system of violence, that prohibits the freedom of expression on multiple levels, of which instances of physical violence, like flogging and stoning to death, are mere reproduced fragments.<sup>121</sup> Like the many instances of silence expressing the prohibition on music, it is the instances of physical violence that speak of the grander scheme of violence that is executed by the jihadist regime. These "absent presences" are silent witnesses of the connections between what is happening onscreen and offscreen. They are witnesses of the Afropolitan idea of the "presence of the elsewhere in the here and vice versa."<sup>122</sup>

Although the music in *Timbuktu* has many functional roles, adding complexity to the narrative and heightening the spectator's involvement, I cannot agree with Pisani's theory that music identifies a certain culture, time or place. The combination of 'indigenous' instruments like n'goni, kora, duduk, bansurui, and oud; and a 'Western' symphony orchestra are, according to Bouhafa, "a mixture of local and universal identities."<sup>123</sup> These instrument groups do not exist side

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<sup>120</sup> Cazenave, 268-270.

<sup>121</sup> Mboti, "Violence in Postcolonial African Film," 43.

<sup>122</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>123</sup> Original text: "C'est un mélange d'identités locales et de tendances plutôt universelles." Amine Bouhafa, "Interview Amine Bouhafa / Timbuktu d'Abderrahmane Sissako," interview by Benoit Basirico, *Cinezik*, May 24, 2014. Audio 6:16. <https://www.cinezik.org/infos/affinfo.php?titre0=20140524141141>.

by side to represent two different groups of people (i.e. the jihadists and local people) by establishing two different musical worlds, as Christopher Letcher would argue. They intermingle and come to represent Africans of different backgrounds. In the first scene, Sissako uses the duduk to establish an image of ‘traditional’ Africa. However, the instrument also creates a musical image of the Haïtian Zabou, who is an outsider in the city, as well as both Kidane and Amadou, who are each others opponents. The duduk, therefore, does not identify a certain character, culture, time or space, but it gives a voice to all of the victims of structural violence. Its ‘voice’ not only foresees and comments on death and destruction, but it creates an Afropolitan identity where there is place for both cultural heritage and “strangeness, foreignness and remoteness.”<sup>124</sup> This is how a ‘Western’ symphony orchestra can become the voice of young African boys who resist the ban on playing football. This is how a combination of piano, strings and oud becomes the ‘prayer’ of a jihadist struggling with his own beliefs. Again Sissako does not fall back on stubborn stereotypes, but he draws on the ability of the spectator to take on an Afropolitan perspective and recognise “one’s face in that of a foreigner.”<sup>125</sup>

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<sup>124</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>125</sup> Mbembe, 28.

## Conclusion

### Becoming Afropolitan

Although the usual methods of analysing film music (i.e. music theoretical analysis and audiovisual analysis) give us some interesting insights on the composition and the functional role of music in Sissako's films, they do not serve to answer questions about the representation and reception of music. According to Thackway, these films "embrace both Western and African influences and cultural forms that exist side by side in contemporary African society."<sup>126</sup> Therefore, an African perspective is needed to reflect on Africa's position in the world and addresses the representation and reception of music that in itself is 'fluid.' Whereas the philosophical concepts of Deleuze gave us information on a type of music that is not easily pinpointed as an identifier of culture, time or place, we did not find answers on questions concerning the representation and reception of music. And although Christopher Ledger's method of analysing 'musical ethnographies' shows us that both 'indigenous' and 'Western' music can narrate and address both local and international audiences, the musical worlds his theory is based on are static. They do not show signs of being both rooted in heritage and subject to change at the same time. Therefore, we used Afropolitanism as a theoretical framework to explain the (use of) music in Sissako's four feature films. This theory is based on a "cultural, historical and aesthetic sensitivity" towards the intermingling of both African, traditional and non-African influences that can have seemingly contradictory meanings.<sup>127</sup> We have shown that this concept can be a tool for the 'Western' musicologist to be able to view Sissako's films from an African perspective that steps aside from binary constructions and accounts for a multiplicity in music. Whereas "exoticism" is always based on a distinction between two different musics (or instruments) to represent opposing characters, cultures or spaces, Afropolitanism embraces foreign influences and promotes multiplicity. The identity of an Afropolitan is, therefore, not solely decided by her social and cultural heritage (her *jamu*), but by the individual choices she makes (her *tògò*), adopting other ethics, musics and the like that make her stand out as an individual.<sup>128</sup> Afropolitanism is thus "to be of African and other worlds at the same time."<sup>129</sup>

I have demonstrated that understanding the lyrics of a song in *La Vie sur Terre*, *Heremakono*, and *Bamako*, highly influences the reception of a certain scene. In the act of providing subtitles Sissako chose deliberately to either inform his audience or to withhold clues about the

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<sup>126</sup> Thackway, 181.

<sup>127</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>128</sup> Skinner, "An Afropolitan Muse," 21-22.

<sup>129</sup> Simon Gikandi, as cited by Eze, 240.

contents of a song. Therefore, the audience becomes an active agent by reflecting on the scene and providing their own commentary. Moreover, instrumental music, being it either in *La Vie sur Terre* or in *Timbuktu*, has the same narrative quality as the songs Sissako adopts. It depends on the engagement of the public, on their ability to give meaning to a piece of music, whether music becomes an active character or not. By providing the images with types of music that do not seem ‘logical’ in an African film, he encourages the spectator to look outside the box, to “domesticate the unfamiliar,” to become aware of the fact that it is possible to “recognise oneself in the face (and music) of a foreigner.”<sup>130</sup> Or, to put it more straightforward, Sissako simply challenges his audience to become Afropolitan.

Furthermore, we can conclude that Sissako’s message becomes more and more indirect over the course of his oeuvre. In *La Vie sur Terre* there are much more changes of shots and music than in *Timbuktu*, where the pacing of the film is much slower, but where single scenes are also loaded with more information. The narrative quality of the music, therefore, becomes higher because daily life is not penetrated with music, like in *La Vie sur Terre* and *Heremakono*. In *Timbuktu* an instance of music becomes immediately an active character in a society where the freedom of expression is limited. This freedom of expression, the act of self-explication, of having a voice, is the central Afropolitan message that Sissako tries to evoke. It is through the use of music, being it the music itself, or the pairing of specific compositions, that Sissako ‘composes’ a voice for the ones being denied one.

### Further research

Finally, one last note on the choice of analysing films from a “niche” genre.<sup>131</sup> Film music studies is still a relatively new field within musicology, and musicologists, therefore, have been working hard to catch up, analysing the major block busters of the last two centuries. However, I like to challenge new film music scholars to look beyond the mainstream selection into more “niche” film genres.<sup>132</sup> I do think that we should prevent the existence of an ethnomusicologist’s strand within film music studies. Even more so than music, film is a global genre that asks for a general methodology that is suitable for all types of film, whether they are made in New York, Brasil, Afghanistan or India. A

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<sup>130</sup> Mbembe, 28.

<sup>131</sup> The term niche here, does not say anything about the scale of a certain film industry. Nollywood and Bollywood are still designated as niche genres, although their production rates surpassed Hollywood at least ten years ago.

<sup>132</sup> See, for example Germán Gil-Curiel, ed. *Film Music in ‘Minor’ National Cinemas* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016); Ralph A. Austen and Mahir Saul, eds., *Viewing African Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Art Films and the Nollywood Video Revolution* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2010); Kenneth W. Harrow and Carmela Garritano, eds., *A Companion to African Cinema* (Hoboken, NJ: Wiley Blackwell, 2019); Jayson Beaster-Jones, *Bollywood Sounds: The Cosmopolitan Mediations of Hindi Film Song* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015).

certain awareness is needed when watching, teaching and researching film music that focuses on diversity. This can be as simple as choosing both examples from Indian, African and American films when teaching a concept like “auditory extension.”<sup>133</sup> Whereas the general public is provided with a popular selection on film platforms, it should be the teacher’s and/or scholar’s task to look into niche genres and provide insights in films that usually do not find its way into the media. Unfortunately, major streaming services like Netflix are still not fully up-to-date on the great films that have been produced outside a certain neighbourhood in Los Angeles.

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<sup>133</sup> Chion, 208.

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## Appendix

### I. *La Vie sur Terre* (1998)

#### Lyrics 'Folon' - Salif Keita

Fôlon, é té gninika	In the past, no one questioned you
Fôlon, né té gninika	In the past, no one questioned me
Fôlon, a toun bé kè tè dé	In the past, that's how it used to be
Fôlon, ko ko toun bé kè	In the past, whatever happened
Fôlon, môgò makotè	In the past, no one wanted to know
Fôlon, ko ko toun bé ké	In the past, whatever happened
Fôlon, môgò makotè (2x)	In the past, no one wanted to know
Kouma douma bé môgo mi konò	People who had suggestions to make
Hèrè bi môgo mi konò	People who could think for themselves
Konkò bé môgo mi naaaaa	People who were hungry
Fôlon, ko ko koun bi la	In the past, whatever happened
Fôlon, é toun té sé ko fô	In the past, you could not speak about it
Fôlon...fôlon oo mogò makotè	In the past...in the past, no one wanted to know
Sissan, é bé gninika	Today, you are supposed to take part
Sissan, né bé gninika	Today, I am supposed to take part
Sissan, an bè bé gninika	Today, we are all supposed to take part
[Sissan, ko ko doun bé kè	[Today, whatever is happening
Fo élé lé ka gninika	we are all asked to take part
Sissan...sissan môgô mako bè é la	Today...today people want to know
Fôlon...fôlon môgò makotè	In the past...in the past no one wanted to know
Fôlon...fôlon môgò makotè]	In the past...in the past no one wanted to know] <sup>134</sup>

<sup>134</sup> The lyrics in between brackets are only sung at the end of the film. The translation comes from a youtube user: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nv6AWNbed2I>.

## Cue-table

Cue	Time code (approx.)		Description music	Description visuals
Name	IN	OUT		
C1. 'Sadir' - Anouar Brahem	00:02:06	00:03:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oud improvises: first we hear a line of seven single notes. Then the line is repeated with a slightly different ending.</li> <li>• More notes are added with vibrations and embellishments. The long notes become faster and more rhythmical, while the music descends towards the lowest register of the instrument.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dramane Sissako is ascending on an escalator in a big supermarket. (MS, slight slow motion)</li> <li>• We see the crown of a big tree against a blue sky. The camera slowly zooms in onto the branches. Screen turns black, followed by the title of the film</li> </ul>

C2. 'Folon' - Salif Keita	00:04:39	00:08:02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We hear a guitar playing some accompaniment.</li> <li>• Then it plays the main theme of the song 'Folon'.</li>   <li>• Salif Keita starts singing the first verse of 'Folon.' (see transcription 1)</li>   <li>• In a short musical intermezzo the synthesizer joins the guitar.</li> <li>• Keita sings the second verse.</li>   <li>• Another musical intermezzo: the synthesizer has a more prominent role.</li>   <li>• Keita sings the third verse.</li>   <li>• Musical intermezzo featuring especially the guitar.</li> <li>• Keita sings the fourth verse, but the last sentences of the song fade out.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A truck heavily loaded with people and goods drives through the dessert at sunrise (MS/WS).</li> <li>• A man appears from the desert with a bag on his shoulder (WS) Voice-over (VO): "Leave. My heart was bursting with fire and ardor. Leave. I'll arrive fresh and young in my country and tell this country whose dust has penetrated my flesh:..."</li> <li>• An old man is sitting on a bed praying with his tabish (MS). VO: "I wandered for a long time. I now return to your hideous open wounds."</li> <li>• The man (Dramane) is coming closer (WS). Adults and children are herding cows towards the camera. In the reflection of the water we see a woman (Nana) cycling through the shot (MS). A small wooden boat appears (MS). VO: "As I arrive, I'll say to myself: 'Beware my body, beware my soul.'</li> <li>• We see Dramane with his bicycle in the boat, rowed by a child (MS, camera now moves with the boat). VO: 'Do not fold your arms in the sterile stance of a spectator. For life is not a spectacle.</li> <li>• For a screaming man is not a dancing bear.' Nana is cycling on the river bank, passing pedestrians (WS).</li> <li>• Cows are herded across the village (MS). VO: "I will try to film that desire." Dramane is writing in a notebook, his bicycle behind him (MS). VO: "To be with you, to be in Sokolo. Far away from my life here and its mad rush." Camera moves away across a table with papers, books and radio to a bed with the old man now reading a book (MS). VO: "Far away from 'that Europe', as the poet said:</li> <li>• 'Europe convulsed in screams the silent currents of despair fearfully pulling itself together and proudly overestimating itself.'" (auditory extension of VO against song lyrics) Nana cycles through town (MS). Dramane cycles through town (WS).</li> <li>• VO: "I sent some books to Maiga for Radio Sokolo. I hope he still does his on-the-air-library."</li> <li>• Goats walk through the shot. Behind them men sit in the shadow of a tree listening to the radio, and a photographer waits for costumers while listening to the radio (WS). A sign reads Radio Colon La Voix du Riz Sokolo FM 104.2 (CU). Radio host: "This is Colonial Radio, voice of the rice fields, hello." (music stops, synch point)</li> </ul>
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C4. 'Solo de balafons' - prod. Gerard Kremer	00:08:15	00:13:39	We hear a solo piece for balafon. It starts with a few scales, introducing the range of the instrument, after which a melody is played and varied in 4/4 metre. Later on the playing style becomes more percussive with slow repeated notes in an irregular metre.	Two men are riding donkeys across the square (camera follows them), where other men are listening to the radio in the shadow of a great tree, next to a man with a little stall (MS). We see the sign of Radio Colon (CU). The radio host announces the reading of a passage from the book <i>Discourse on Colonialism</i> by Aimé Césaire (MS). Someone is turning the wheel of a bike, with a radio behind it. (CU). We see Dramane walking next to his bike (WS). The radio host reads along when the book passage is read (MS). Dramane is in a bike workshop, listening to the radio there (MS). More people joined the men under the tree (WS). We see the men of the post office at work, while listening to the radio (MS). A woman is calling to her relatives, telling them about the ploughing of the field, repeating her message multiple times (MS). We see an antenna, against a blue sky (CU). Nana is riding her bike through the village (camera moves along WS), camera stops and Dramane appears on his bike, catching up (WS). They talk shortly about what brings them to the village (MS, switching point of view) and cycle further while talking to each other (WS). They disappear in the distance (WS). The photographer is preparing his machine (MS) and putting up a cloth as background (MS). We see Nana through the open door, the tailor is taking her measurements (MS). Shot alternates between a smiling Nana and photographer, combing his hair (MS). Women are riding donkeys crossing the main street, while a man walks slowly to the camera. A man crosses carrying a radio on his shoulder listening to the radio host (WS) who talks about the millennium celebrations and announces his guest (MS). The guest looks around the radio office. (MS). The camera shows the picture of the royal family prince Charles, princess Diana and prince William (CU). We see the radio host, his guest and the radio technician who changes the music after the host gives him a sign from another angle of the room (WS).
C5. 'Die'/'Horonya'/'Tigne' - Sidi Drame	00:13:40	00:14:48	We hear a kamele n'goni playing a short fragment ending on the same note over and over again, while varying the beginning of the fragment.	The radio technician turns on the music, adjusting the sound (MS). We see the square with the sign of Radio Colon, the photographer and the men under the tree (WS, high angle). Camera slowly moves to the left, revealing the tailor at work outside his workshop. Dramane cycles across the square (diagonally left to right). Nana cycles across the square (other diagonal). A man walks towards the photographer. Two men are herding a herd of goats. Three buffaloes walk across the square. We see the tailor at work (MS), while the goats pass by. The man brought a magazine with him, showing the photographer the latest SUV model.

C6. 'Die'/'Horonya'/' Tigne' - Sidi Drame	00:15:58	00:16:47	We hear the follow-up of C5. A man now starts to sing in a nasal manner on the accompaniment of the kamele n'goni.	The post office man (Bina) rolls his wheelchair to his desk to pick up the phone (MS). A young boy is writing something while listening to the phone conversation (MS). Bina hangs up and fills out some papers (MS). The photographer receives a cigarette, lit by the man at the little stall on the square. He walks towards his stand. (Camera follows him, MS).
C7. 'Die'/'Horonya'/' Tigne' - Sidi Drame	00:17:10	00:17:53	Music from C5 and C6 proceeds. A man is singing nasally on the accompaniment of kamele n'goni.	Radio technician turns music on again (MS). We see a young boy walking through the small streets behind a football, first coming towards the camera (MS, framed by small subway), then running away from it (MS). The ball comes to a stop against the bed of Dramane's father (WS). We see the shadow of the boy who stops just out of the camera's frame (WS). A man asks to call someone at the post office (MS).
C8. 'Solo de balafons' - prod. Gerard Kremer	00:21:00	00:23:20	We hear the beginning of the music in C4.	A woman poses for the photographer who sets up his camera (WS). We see the woman through the camera lens (MS). We see the photographer in a mirror taking a picture while hearing the scissors of the hairdresser (CU). The hairdresser watches the photographer (CU). We see two men cycling with their heads just above the walls of the houses (WS, high angle). The radio technician is manipulating the sound (MS). The radio host interviews a farmer about the quelea birds that threaten the rice harvest (MS). The group of men is now sitting against the wall of the square, listening to the radio (WS). Someone riding a running camel crosses the image (WS). A man cycles fast on the outskirts of the village trying to catch up to someone while shouting at him/her (WS, high angle).
C9. 'Kora' - ?	00:24:30	00:26:51	We hear multiple kora's playing a four-note motif (A-C#-E-A) in unison. After two repetitions the motif is played twice more, but a fourth lower, starting on E. This 2+2 cycle forms one melody that is played 11 times in total. After playing the melody twice, some kora's start playing the melody as an ostinato accompaniment, while another takes the lead and improvises, employing fast ascending and descending scales and embellishments on the melody.	The men are listening to the radio, moving their seats closer to the wall to sit in the shadow (WS). We follow Dramane cycling through the village (CU). A donkey runs across the street, followed by a dog. A man riding another donkey appears (WS). People on donkeys ride past the men now sitting with their chairs immediately against the wall (MS). We see people washing clothes and bathing themselves outside the village in several small lakes (WS). Big groups of people are riding donkeys and cycling. Others are giving their animals water (WS). The camera follows someone dressed in dark clothes along the water (MS). We see young boys driving small carts pulled by donkeys transporting people (WS). Another view of the main street: someone cycles across, children are walking, a boy rides a donkey (WS). We see a sign of the telephone exchange saying: "Our priority, a telephone for everyone" (CU). The post office man tries to reach someone for an Arabic-speaking man (MS, music fades).

C10. 'Frère Jacques'	00:29:08	00:29:21	A young boy is humming the song 'Frère Jacques'.	The telephone operator tries to contact someone for Nana (MS). Nana looks up smiling (CU). Bina looks up from his booklet as well (CU). We see a young boy sitting on his heels against the wall with his football beside him, busy putting a stamp on some papers (MS).
C11. 'Biworo Fani' - Sababougnouma	00:30:48	00:32:15	We hear balafons playing a melody consisting of four motifs. After two times they are joined by djembe, drums and maracas repeating and improvising on the melody over and over again.	The group of men now sits against the wall, following the shadow and listening to the radio (WS). A man walks by with a chair (WS). A man cycles through the streets a radio strapped to his chest (WS). A man is washing himself putting soap on his head and face (MS). A young boy is dancing in the street (MS). Dramane comes along on his bicycle asking the showering man how long he will stay (MS). A little girl (Tamini) is dancing to the music beside them (MS). Dramane cycles through the village (MS, high angle). Nana is cycling to a fair (WS, music fades).
C12. 'Vague /E la nave va' - Anouar Brahem	00:33:25	00:36:51	We hear part of the piece <i>Vague/E la nave va</i> . The piano plays a melody in a 4/4 bar with a Cuban rhythm (3-3-2) in g minor, accompanied by the oud which sometimes takes the lead as well, embellishing notes of the melody in a jazzy style. The piano and oud are occasionally joined by the accordion which accentuates the melody notes with strong crescendi and descendi.	Dramane cycles through the desert, alongside men herding animals. We hear the voice-over: "And here, at daybreaks' end, is my manly prayer. May I hear neither laughter nor shouts. My eyes are fixed on this city whose beauty I foresee." (WS, camera in fixed position). A woman draws water from a well (WS). A man leads a horse, children walk on the street. "Give me the wild faith of a witch doctor. Give my hands the strength to sculpt. Make my soul a steely sword. I will not slip away" (WS). Dramane's father is reading on the bed. "Make me a rebel to vanity yet docile to its genius like the fist of an outstretched arm." Camera moves from him across a table to Dramane, who is writing (reversed shot from C2). Fixed shot of father reading. We see piles of books, newspapers, and articles on the table with the radio on top (CU). Coulibaly is talking to another man sitting on the bench waiting for customers. "Make of me the creator of high works" (WS, high angle). The tailor looks outside and returns to his sewing machine. "The time has come to gird our loins, like valiant men" (MS). Dramane is cycling up a hill towards camera. "But in doing so, my heart, keep me from hate. Make not of me the spiteful man whom I despise. If I confine myself to this unique race you know the tyranny of my love" (WS/MS/CU). Nana cycles from the desert towards town (WS). A woman is looking out over the fields. "You know it is not hatred of other races that makes me the plowman of my own" (WS). People are working in the fields in the distance. "What I want is for universal hungering, for universal thirsting" (WS). Shot of quote by Aimé Césaire: "My ear to the ground, I heard tomorrow pass" (CU).

C13. 'Barzakh' - Anouar Brahem	00:41:05	00:42:40	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We hear the beginning of <i>Barzakh</i>. A violin starts playing solo performing long melodies using arabic overtones.</li> <li>• The oud takes over by alternating two notes (D-G).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Women are getting water from the well. Bina appears from behind the well, using his crutches, walking towards the camera. Children are playing around the well with a ball. (WS) The tailor walks over to the photographer who is listening to the radio in his hand. (MS) The picture of Nana lies in a tub of developer-fluid (CU). The tailor asks: 'Is Nana's photo ready?' 'There it is.'</li> <li>• 'I didn't know she was so sad. I want a copy.' 'Wait till she comes back.' Another CU of the photo in the tub. The young boy runs outside to play with his football.</li> </ul>
C14. Quintet in C: <i>Adagio</i> - Franz Schubert	00:44:12	00:46:59	<p>We hear the beginning of the second movement of Schubert's Quintet in C, ending halfway through bar 16 on a b minor chord.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bar 1 - 4 (theme in E)</li> <li>• Bar 5 - 8 (theme modulated to F#)</li> <li>• Bar 9 - 14 (again in F#, modulating back to E in bar 12)</li> <li>• Bar 15 - 16 (first theme in E, first violin plays pizzicato)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The men listening to the radio now stand with their backs against the wall in the last strip of shadow (WS). We see a bicycle standing against a wall with a straw hat on the bicycle handlebars and several books on the bicycle rack (MS). A man is dictating a letter: 'I received your letter along with your gifts. They made use very happy' (MS). Someone on a bike followed by someone on a motor cycle flash through the shot.</li> <li>• We see a man talking, with a woman breastfeeding and a boy dressing himself in the background. 'Dramane's return is a good opportunity for me to write back to you' (MS). CU of the man: 'This year has seen problems on the land and on the fields. The price of water and upkeep has almost doubled. It has been hard to bear.' Another shot of the bike. 'If you send nothing, I don't know what will become of us' (MS). The young boy walks by with his football under his arm. 'Life in the bush is only possible with assistance' (MS).</li> <li>• The telephone operator tries to put through a call to someone for the mayor's guard. He hands the phone over and the mayor's guard takes off his sun glasses and cap while talking (MS). We see the tailor working on a sewing machine through the door opening (MS). 'There's also the problem of medicine. Life is not without its illnesses. As head of the family it's my responsibility.'</li> <li>• We see the man sewing from inside the house (MS). 'We send our gratitude.' CU of the little boy in the background. 'Thanks again.' The camera moves upward to the baby who is sitting on her mother's lap. 'There's nothing like being able to help a hand' (MS). The mother lays the baby down. 'If we don't help each other the family cannot prosper' (MS).</li> </ul>

C15. 'Barzakh' - Anouar Brahem	00:47:17	00:47:50	Again the beginning of <i>Barzakh</i> . The violin plays long slow melodies with arabic overtones.	<p>We see the empty streets of the village (WS, high angle). The young boy sits on a trunk, with his ball now flat, looking sad. Another child walks by, walking away from the camera (MS). We hear the voice-over of Dramane: "And so I came. Once again this life hobbles before me. No not this life, this death. This senseless, merciless death, this death in which grandeur comes to naught. The devastating pettiness of this death..."</p> <p>A large group of men marches from the field into the village with grim faces (MS, camera stays in position). "...hobbling from one pettiness to the next."</p> <p>Children make space when the men appear in the main street men are shown from behind, WS).</p>
C16. 'Diversion' - Anouar Brahem	00:49:59	00:53:44	We hear a long, slow, rhythmical cycle played on the darbuka while the ney plays long melodies.	<p>Nana lays her head on her arms waiting for a phone call (MS). We see the heads of the marching men just above a wall (WS). Children make way walking into a niche (WS). The men pass by (MS). Two women briefly halt pounding millet, while the men walk by (WS, men walk away from the camera). When they have moved along, the women continue pounding (WS). We see a small street around the corner of a wall (MS). The man continues to dictate his letter: 'Just do what you can.' He swallows before talking further. 'It would lighten our load' (MS). We see the young boy sitting, crouched, with his ball under his arm, drawing in the sand. 'These days you are the only one who can help us' (WS). The men move away from the wall, taking up their chairs and tea pots, walking away in different directions, leaving a bare wall with a door (WS). We see the outside walls of the village (WS). A man carries a baby through the streets, seen just above a wall. 'Thanks again' (MS). Women pull up water from the well. Children try to get on a donkey. 'Thank you for helping your family' (WS). The man on the square sits still behind his little stall, looking to the right. The photographer is packing up his stuff in the background 'We know it's not easy. Just a little help' (WS). Nana is sitting on the trunk outside the post office, the boy sits crouched around the corner. A child with a stick walks by. Nana picks up her bicycle and goes away (WS). A buffalo appears in a doorway. The camera follows it walking across a square following other buffaloes. 'Believe me, we know how hard it is for you' (CU-MS). We see the animals drinking from behind a tree, watched by a little boy. 'I know that living in exile is difficult in itself, but the difficulties are not the same' (WS). We see an empty alley with an open door in the corner. 'May this New Year bring less hardship than the last.' A man on a motor cycle appears, driving towards the camera. 'May God ensure that it brings much less hardship, much less pain than last year' (WS). We see the man talking. 'If only for the children' (MS).</p>

C17. 'Die'/'Horonya'/' Tigne' - Sidi Drame	00:53:45	00:55:00	Again we hear a man singing to the accompaniment of kamele n'goni, as in C5, C6 and C7.	The man stares in front of him (MS). We see a swarm of quelea birds flying up, while a man is walking towards them waving a plastic flag (WS, high angle). We see the birds hovering above the fields (WS, camera moves along). A man is standing in the field shouting and beating on a plastic bag with a stick (MS). A swarm of birds flies up (WS). A man walks along the field holding a plastic flag on his back. Another man cycles by (MS). Another shot of the birds flying around and swooping down on the rice in the fields (MS). The young boy walks through the fields waving a plastic flag and shouting (MS). The birds fly into the air (MS). Men are walking on a small path through the fields (MS). Birds are flying up from the fields (WS). Nana is pumping air into the bicycle tire (CU, music stops, auditory extension).
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C18. 'Folon' - Salif Keita	00:55:17	01:00:25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We hear a guitar playing some accompaniment. Then it plays the main theme of the song 'Folon'.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We see a swarm of birds in the air (WS, low angle). Dramane and his father are walking through the fields. We hear the voice-over: "We are standing now, my country and me, our hair in the wind, my tiny hand now in its enormous fist.. (WS)" We see the head of a man just appearing above the field. He points to the sky. "and strength is not in us, but above us, in a voice piercing the night, like the sting of an apocalyptic wasp." The man walks out of the frame (WS). We see a single quelea bird sitting on the crops (MS). We see empty fields stretching out as far as we can see. "The voice proclaims that for centuries, Europe has fed us lies and sent us plagues. For it is not true that man's work is done..." Dramane and his father appear in the upper right corner of the screen. "...that we have no place in this world, that we teach this world, that we have to walk in step with the world. Man's work has only just begun. Man has to conquer the forbidden stilled in the recesses of his fervor. No race has a monopoly on beauty, on intelligence, or on strength. Everyone must find his place when the conquest comes. Now we know that the sun revolves around our Earth illuminating the area our will alone has chosen and that every star shoots from heaven to Earth at our command, without limits." (WS, high angle)</li> <li>• The men are still strolling in the fields, disappearing from the shot in the left corner (WS, high angle). We see the bike pedals and chain moving while Nana walks beside her bike (CU). The camera zooms out, Nana gets onto her bicycle, with a suitcase on the bicycle rack, cycling away towards the horizon (WS).</li> <li>• The screen turns black and the credits start rolling.</li> </ul>
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salif Keita starts singing the first verse of 'Folon.' (see transcription 1) In a short musical intermezzo the synthesizer joins the guitar. Keita sings the second verse.</li> <li>• Another musical intermezzo: the synthesizer has a more prominent role. Keita sings the third verse. Musical intermezzo featuring especially the guitar. Keita sings the fourth verse, this time complete. The music ends when the film ends.</li> </ul>	

## II. *Heremakono* (2002)

### Lyrics 'Petit oiseau' - Paul Niger

Petit oiseau qui me chantes

L'amour du pays natal

Je te porterai à manger les graines que je choisirai

Et qu'il te plaira croquer

(Petit oiseau qui me chantes)

(Bamako, octobre 1944)<sup>135</sup>

Little bird that sings to me

About the love for the native country

I will bring you the seeds of my choice  
to eat

And you will like them to chew on

(Little bird that sings to me)

### Lyrics 'Tie Chuang Lei' - Chi Zhiqiang

speaking:

In life nothing is more tragic than to lose one's freedom.

In life nothing is more painful than to lose one's friends and loved ones.

Without a shining and moving voice. I am full of sincerity on this beautiful evening.

I am going to sing this song straight from my heart for my friends and loved ones.

In front of the ironclad window, I raise my eyes to contemplate the twinkling stars that look like my mother's eyes and make me lower my head, devoured by guilt.

singing:

Doors of iron, windows of iron, chains of iron.

Through the bars I look outside where life is so beautiful.

When will I go home?

When will I be able to go home again?

### Lyrics 'Comfort song' - Néma Mint Choueikh and Mamma Mint Lekbeid

You know how I feel sorry for you.

You, source of my torment.

You are upset now.

And do you know why you are upset?

It comes from me.

Because I haven't changed towards you.

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<sup>135</sup> Paul Niger, "Petit oiseau qui me moquais ou le paternalisme," *Initiation*, edited by Pierre Seghers, 6. English translation is mine.

## Lyrics 'Djorolen' - Oumou Sangare

“The worried songbird | cries out in the forest. | The worried songbird | her thoughts go far away. |  
For those who have no father | her thoughts go out to them.”<sup>136</sup>

### Cue-table

Cue	Timecode (approx.)		Description music	Description visuals
Name	IN	OUT		
C1. 'Sull lull' - Jan Gabarek/Anouar Brahem	00:03:02	00:03:50	We hear a melody in C in Dorian mode played firmly in unison on oud and tenor saxophone (see transcription). Then the tabla joins them with a virtuosic rhythmical accompaniment playing <i>tintal</i> ; all playing the melody twice more.	Khatra watches tumbleweed fly in the air on the outskirts of a city. Abdallah walks around a fully loaded car, with the hood and doors open (WS). He takes place in the drivers seat and switches the radio off (MS, music stops.)
C2. 'Le petit oiseau' - Paul Niger/Pierre Seghers	00:07:06	00:07:22	Khatra sings part of the song 'Petit Oiseau', stopping when Maata calls him.	A woman is hanging out the laundry (MS). Khatra walks underneath it, coming towards the camera (MS). Maata forbids Khatra to sing the song again.
C3. 'Le petit oiseau' - Paul Niger/Pierre Seghers	00:08:29	00:08:50	Khatra sings part of the song 'Petit Oiseau' again, now singing one more line.	Khatra pulls a wire across the roofs while singing (WS).
C4. 'Song of the griot' - Nèma Mint Choueikh/Mamma Mint Lekbeid	00:11:08	00:13:32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We hear a kora playing a repeating pattern.</li> <li>• A girl starts singing asking a question: 'How many souls have you satisfied with your songs?' A woman answers her ('Your voice is unique') and her vocal lines are repeated by the girl while being accompanied on kora. ('And nothing, nothing can match it.') Sometimes the line is repeated again when the girl doesn't succeed in accurately repeating it. (Further subtitles are left out.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abdallah's mom is putting some incense on her head and arms (MS). We see Abdallah's slippers standing outside in front of the door (first CU, then MS). Abdallah looks out through a small window. (CU)</li> <li>• Outside a man is leading a donkey pulling a wooden cart. Another man pulls up a bucket on a string. Someone else walks by (framed by the window).</li> <li>• We see a girl (Mamma) and a woman (Nèma) playing a kora and singing (MS). The shot alternates between Mamma and Nèma (CU and MS). Abdallah is standing in the door opening (MS). His mother sits inside, using her <i>tasbeih</i> to pray (MS). Shot changes back to Abdallah and then again to Mamma and Nèma singing.</li> </ul>

<sup>136</sup> Durán, 25. Unfortunately I have not found the original lyrics of this song, but only this partial translation.

C5. 'Sull lull' - Jan Gabarek/Anouar Brahem	00:18:06	00:19:22	We hear a melody in C in Dorian mode played firmly in unison on oud and tenor saxophone (see transcription). Then the tabla joins them with a virtuosic rhythmical accompaniment playing <i>tintal</i> ; all playing the melody twice more.	Makan is digging in the sand just outside town (WS). We see the sand piling up (CU) and the man digging (WS). A light bulb is visible through a small opening in a wall (CU). Abdallah is reading a book (MS). The light suddenly flickers and turns off. Abdallah walks towards the wall to move something aside so the light can enter his room again. (MS) He goes back to reading (MS).
C5. 'Tie Chuang Lei' - Chi Zhiqiang	00:30:32	00:33:27	We hear the xiao playing long repeated notes.  A Yang Qin (Chinese dulcimer) starts playing some accompanying chords together with synthesizer. A man starts speaking accompanied by the instruments. The erhu takes over playing a melody when the man stops speaking. After this intermezzo the man starts singing, and the other instruments return to play the accompaniment, joined by the drums.  Again an intermezzo with the erhu performing a melody, slowly fading away.	We see a big containership and a small fishing boat on the sea (WS). A spinning-top spins on a wooden frame (CU). Two men (Makan and Sidi?) are watching the top (alternating CU). Nana is sitting on a couch in a club fiddling around with a stuffed duck (MS). An Asian man (Tchu) starts speaking a text to the musical accompaniment (MS). Shot alternates between Nana on the couch and the man. Camera zooms out showing them both, including the television that seems to emit the music (WS). Tchu and Nana have dinner (MS and alternating CU of both of them). A waiter serves another table (WS). Shot of the television showing CU of the inside of a bell. Tchu starts singing (WS). Alternating CU of television and WS of Nana on the couch and Tchu singing. We see a large boat lying in the harbor by night (WS). Khatra is watching through a small kaleidscope (MS).
C6. 'Regard de mouette' - Anouar Brahem	00:36:16	00:37:31	Violin playing solo with characteristic gliding notes.	Picture of a little girl (CU) in the hands of Abdallah. Alternating shots: picture in Abdallah's hands, Abdallah and Nana in conversation in a small alley. We see a flashback of Nana from a train station when she talks about her lover Vincent. (WS framed by train window). A woman walks along a fence (MS). CU of steam from a train. We see a brown door (CU), then a dress hanging on a pendant and a notice board next to the door (MS). Nana is lying on a bed in a hotel smoking (MS).
C7. 'Tie Chuang Lei' - Chi Zhiqiang	00:38:34	00:38:58	The Asian man is singing part of the song 'Tie chuang lei' to himself.	Tchu is walking along the sea on the cliffs (MS). We hear a voice-over from Nana talking about her lover, Vincent.

C8. 'Aon aon' - Pascal Tabu Ley Rochereau	00:39:12	00:40:41	<p>We hear wah-wah guitars playing a short riff (in E-flat) in rumba rhythm over and over again. Trumpets and brass instruments join the guitars to play a melody, together with percussion on congas. We hear Tabu Ley whistling a melody. He then starts singing the melody he was whistling.</p>	<p>Abdallah is smoking and looking through his small window (MS). We see the feet of a woman and a man walking by the house (CU). A photographer is pre-setting a camera (MS). Two men are posing in front of a photo booth (MS). Three other men are sitting in the waiting room, reading and talking, urging the other two to hurry up (MS). Shots alternate between other men posing and photographer (MS). Abdallah is standing in front of a door dressed in traditional clothes (MS). Someone lets him in and shuts the door (MS, synch point).</p>
C9. 'Kora lesson' - Néma Mint Choueikh/Mamma Mint Lekbeid	00:53:26	00:54:50	<p>We hear kora playing a repeating pattern. The playing stops: the griot is showing the girl an easy pattern. The girl is repeating her playing. We hear the pattern once more from the beginning.</p>	<p>We see Nana and a man going inside her house (MS, watched through clothes). Abdallah is watching them standing outside his door, then moves inside (MS). We see Néma and Mamma playing kora (MS). Abdallah is lying in his room looking outside (MS). His mother urges him to go see his uncle (alternating shots between Abdallah and his mother MS). We see people walking by framed by the window (MS). Abdallah shortly leaves and returns to read a book (WS). Again look outside framed by the window (CU).</p>
C10. 'Song of the little griot' - Néma Mint Choueikh/Mamma Mint Lekbeid	00:58:21	01:01:04	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We hear kora playing in the background.</li> <li>• The little girl uses the soundbox of the instrument as a percussion instrument.</li> <li>• She starts singing accompanied by the kora and herself playing some percussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Four women are meeting Abdallah. Shot alternates between Abdallah (CU) and women (MS and CU) having a conversation about the local dialect Hassanya. Abdallah leaves to buy cigarettes (WS, high angle).</li> <li>• We see the griot playing kora and the girl playing percussion on the soundboard of the instrument.</li> <li>• CU of the girl singing.</li> </ul> <p>We see Maata and Khatra leaving in a little boat (WS, music stops when boat starts turning).</p>

C11. 'Party'	01:03:30	01:06:03	<p>The griot is singing accompanied by the kora.</p> <p>Then we also hear women clapping and a percussionist playing. The griot also starts singing.</p>	<p>Makan and Chatra are walking across the beach at night carrying a long wire and a lightbulb (WS). Camera zooms in (MS). We see three boats lying in the harbour at night (WS). Abdallah is reading in his room by the light of an oil lamp (WS). We see a man sitting outside playing drums surrounded by women (MS). A big group of women, sitting down, is clapping to the music (MS). Abdallah tries to read ignoring the noise from outside (WS). We see a woman dancing (WS, high angle). Shots alternate between women dancing (WS) and women clapping (MS). Abdallah lays his book aside and gets up (WS). Alternating shots of the women celebrating (CU/MS). Abdallah is dancing outside (MS). We see the griot singing and playing kora (MS). Alternating shots of women celebrating and Abdallah dancing.</p>
C12 'Petit oiseau' - Paul Niger	01:11:47	01:12:21	<p>The boy sings the first two lines of the song. He continues singing from the second line, murmuring the following lines, stopping after the repetition of the first line that sounds clear again.</p>	<p>Khatra kneels next to Maatra lying in the desert, trying to wake him up (MS, low angle). He starts singing, asking Maata to tell him to stop doing that. Khatra continues singing. He caresses Maata's cheek (CU).</p>
C13. 'Comfort song' - Nèma Mint Choueikh/Mamma Mint Lekbeid	01:13:57	01:15:18	<p>The girl is singing the lines the griot says to her: "You know how I feel sorry for you. You, source of my torment. You are upset now."</p> <p>The griot and girl start singing together: "And do you know why you are upset? It comes from me. Because I haven't changed towards you."</p> <p>The griot and girl sing in call-and-response (MS).</p>	<p>Nèma and Mamma are singing again with the kora laying to the side (MS). Abdallah is packing his suitcase (MS). Shot alternating between Nèma and Mamma (CU).</p> <p>Abdallah looks sad (CU). His mother watches him (CU). We see Abdallah sitting on his bed with his suitcase closed on the table next to him (MS, high angle).</p>

C14. 'Djorolen' - Oumou Sangaré	01:16:22	01:17:09	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A kamele n'goni is playing some short introductory notes. Then the electric guitar starts playing a regular accompaniment based on C-F-G and C-F-A chords, together with a shaker accentuating the first beat and electric guitar.</li> <li>• A flute starts playing a short fragment of a melody (G-A), while the kamele n'goni improvises.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We see a lightbulb drifting on the waves (CU). Khatra watches the lightbulb from the beach (MS).</li> <li>• We see the lightbulb drifting next to large shipwrecks (MS). The camera zooms out showing both Khatra on the beach, the lightbulb and the shipwrecks (WS). The lightbulb washes ashore (CU). Khatra catches the lightbulb (music stops) and walks away (WS).</li> </ul>
C15. 'Djorolen' - Oumou Sangaré	01:18:42	01:19:23	The flute starts playing again mainly alternating two long notes (G-A), accompanied by the guitar, shaker and kamele n'goni. We hear Oumou Sangaré singing (For those of us who have no father, her thoughts go out to them.)	Khatra walks across the road carrying the lightbulb in his hand (MS). Khatra is standing on a road (CU). We see a little blue overall hanging amongst other clothes (MS). Khatra starts smiling (MS). We see Khatra from behind, standing in a shop full of clothes looking at the overall (WS, high angle).
C16. 'Little griot singing' - Mamma Mint Lekbeid	01:19:23	01:20:52	The little griot is singing to herself.  After the little conversation with Khatra she starts singing again.	Khatra wearing his blue overall walks through the small alley next to Abdallah's house coming towards the camera (MS). He stops at the front door digging up the key (WS). Mamma is singing and playing with the sand. Then she asks Khatra what he's doing (CU). Khatra asks what she's doing (CU). She tells him she's learning music (CU). Khatra tells her that she must do that and leave him alone (CU). Mamma starts singing again (CU). Khatra is trying to install the lightbulb in the house (MS). Mamma is watching him from the door opening (MS). Khatra sits on the bed, looking at her through the kaleidoscope (MS). We see the girl through the kaleidoscope (CU). She asks if she can have a look.
C17. 'Djorolen' - Oumou Sangaré	01:27:37	01:31:27	A woman starts singing acapella, now and then accompanied by kamele n'goni in call-and-response mode.  Now the flute joins the kamele n'goni and singer.	We see a sand dune (WS). Khatra appears above the dunes (WS). He walks towards the camera (MS). The camera zooms out (WS). Khatra stops walking (WS). We now watch Khatra from behind (WS). He slowly walks away (WS).  The credits start rolling.

### **III. Bamako (2006)**

#### **Lyrics 'Saa Magni' - Oumou Sangaré**

O death; O death Death is so harsh Death is so cruel  
Death who struck down Amadou Ba Guindo  
But death spares no creature  
Nothing can stop it  
Not even fame  
Or having many children  
Great riches and many friends  
Amadou is gone  
And when I go to Douentza I will not see him again He will never be  
seen again in Bamako In Douentza Tenin OngoTna cries for you  
Whilst in Bamako Amadou cries for you As Adja' cries for you  
Your widow Fanta cries for her missing husband For  
Guindo has disappeared, struck down by treacherous death  
In Bamako your old friend Alou Tracre misses you  
How bitter is death, how bitter separation  
It is hard to break the links (of friendship)  
How it is hard to be separated from one's people  
Guindo  
But death spares no one  
The Grim Reaper of hope did not spare Amadou  
Guindo  
If it did not spare the Prophet Mohammed  
Just as it struck down Amadou Cherif  
Leaving his father Bouba in pain  
May his soul rest in peace  
How harsh is separation, how harsh death  
And merciless death strikes without distinction  
Villainous death crouches at a bend in the path  
Lying in wait for us  
May God preserve us from it  
But death spares no one

It strikes in the prime of life  
 Perfidious death crouches at a bend in the path  
 O death; O death  
 You did not spare Guindo  
 No creature can escape you  
 O death, O death, how you are cruel.<sup>137</sup>

### Cue-table

Cue Name	Timecode (approx.)		Description music	Description visuals
	IN	OUT		
C1. A l'ombre - Ludovico Einaudi/ Ballaké Sissako	00:01:36	00:03:10	A piano plays an easy melody in C consisting of eight bars in question-answer structure two times, with accompaniment in the left hand. The kora joins the piano with soft tunes doubling the accompaniment. Third time the kora and piano start improvising. Fourth time some notes of the melody are highlighted. Music stops when door slams. (synch point)	Melee puts on make-up in her dressing room. A police officer questions a visitor and admits him to the courtyard to attend the trial that is taking place there. Melee asks Bei (a brother-in-law) to help her dress in front of the judges and public in the courtyard. We see shots of the public and judges waiting. Melee walks across the courtyard and leaves. Her husband Chaka watches her. We hear the door slammed.
C2. Naam - Christy Azuma	00:04:57	00:06:39	A woman sings the first two lines of the song Naam (acapella) in free rhythm. Then the band joins her with percussion, drums and electric guitars in a funk rhythm. Fragment ends with instrumental intermission played by saxophones and trumpets.	We see a shot of a bridal picture of Melee and Chaka, while we hear someone singing. Melee is singing with a band in a restaurant/club. Shot changes between Melee (CU) and whole band (MS), her child sleeping in bed, and her husband fallen asleep in a chair outside of the house.
C3. Girl's song	00:25:05	00:25:46	Girl sings first two acapella lines of the song Naam, followed by some lines of the refrain.	A little girl soothes a baby girl who is crying. A ram on a leash and a lawyer of the world bank pace outside of the courtyard. The lawyer talks to someone on the phone: "Yes". Shot changes back to children. Alternating both shots: Ram tries to attack lawyer. Scene ends with lawyer saying "We speak again tomorrow, yes".

<sup>137</sup> Translation as provided in the liner notes of the album *Oumou* by World Circuit Ltd.

C4. 'Saa Magni' - Oumou Sangare	00:28:49	00:30:30	A violin plays a short melody, exploring a scale with Arabic overtones alternating long notes and tremolo notes. Kora and guitar take over playing more rhythmic accompaniment. After two times percussion joins with short slap on wood block in slow 4/4 meter. Violin plays two long notes, followed by vocal chorus singing Saa ya on these notes. Repeated twice. Oumou Sangare starts singing Saa Magni.	We see a flashback of a refugee: Shot alternates between dung beetles walking in the desert and CU of refugee and witnesses in the courtyard. We see a woman dressed as a man who is left behind, lying in the sand with bottle of water. Group of men is walking through the desert (WS).  Shot alternates with women who occasionally opens her eyes (CU) and men in the desert. Shot changes to dying cloth in courtyard (CU). Again WS of men walking in the desert now coming towards camera.
C5. 'Sigi' - Vincent Bruley	00:35:23	00:37:23	Melody played by accordeon. Short silence. Repetition of the melody.	On television a woman announces a film. WS: credits of the film. We see a man with cowboy hat letting his horse drink at a lake. Four cowboys on horses enter an African town. Shot alternating between a cowboy at the lake, and men riding through the city. (Names of actors appear) CU of a cowboy at the lake loading a gun. Cowboys in town are searching for the square.
C6. 'Sigi' - Vincent Bruley	00:40:37	00:41:13	Return of the accordeon melody.	Shot of one of the cowboys who has been shot with blood dripping from his mouth (CU). Another cowboy is walking through town searching for the killer (WS, title of film appears). Chaka sits outside his house smoking (MS). A woman fetches water from the pump in the courtyard (WS, high angle).
C8. 'Sè Houè' - Georges Toffohossou	01:15:40	01:17:00	We hear brass playing a slow melody accompanied by guitars and drums in a typical eight bar scheme.	Two lawyers are pacing outside the courtyard each of them on the phone. Mele is dancing with another man in the club where she sings. Shot alternates between Chaka teaching himself Hebrew at home and Mele dancing in the club.
C9. 'Naam' - Christy Azuma	01:41:28	01:44:02	A woman sings the first two lines of the song Naam (acapella) in free rhythm. Then the band joins her with percussion, drums and electric guitars in a funk rhythm. Fragment ends with instrumental intermission on saxophones and trumpets. This time played several times.	Chaka blows up a red balloon for Ina (MS). Mele is singing the song again in the night club but with tears in her eyes. (CU) Chaka is putting the little girl to bed. Shot alternates between Mele and Chaka. We see Chaka and the girl lying on the bed (MS). Shot of bridal picture (CU). Chaka puts an electric fan next to it.

C10. 'Sigi' - Vincent Bruley	01:44:35	01:45:22	We hear the accordeon melody played once.	We hear a gun shot and see Chaka falling down outside town. A men checks the tires of his car in the distance. A dog snifs at Chaka. We see Mele walking outside her house dressed in long garments crying, supported by another women.
C11. 'Sè Houè' - Georges Toffohossou	01:49:02	01:52:05	We hear brass playing a slow melody accompanied by guitars and drums in a typical jazz eight bar scheme. This time a man starts to sing the song Sè Houè.	Credits.

#### IV. *Timbuktu* (2014)

##### Lyrics 'Timbuktu Fasso' - Fatoumata Diawara

Ko o ye ne faso ye  
N balimalu Tonbuktu ye ne faso ye  
Mmm ko o ye ne faso ye  
Sinjilu, Tonbuktu ye ne faso ye  
Ko denmisennu be kasi la Ala  
Badenya, badenya dugu ye Tonbuktu ye  
Sinjiya, Sinjiya dugu ye Maliba ye  
Yankalu yan ye ne faso ye  
Oo bo oo boo ooooo

This is my homeland,  
My friends, Timbuktu is my homeland.  
This is my homeland  
my brothers and sisters, Timbuktu is my homeland  
The children are crying  
My brothers and sisters, Timbuktu is our homeland  
my brothers and sisters, great Mali is my homeland  
People from here, my homeland is here.

Ko o ye ne faso ye  
N balimalu Maliba ye ne faso ye  
Aw be kasi la mun na  
Denmisennu be ka si la mun na  
Aw be kasi la mun na  
Kamalennu be kasi la  
Maliba —don do be se —

This is my homeland  
My brothers and sisters, great Mali is my homeland  
you are crying, why?  
the children are crying, why  
you are crying, why  
young people are crying, why  
Great Mali is bound to win.

Ko yan ye ne faso ye  
N Sinjilu, Tonbuktu ye ne faso ye  
Ko sinijnesigi joro de be an na  
N ko denmisennu be kasi la yen  
Denmisennu be kasi la yen mun na  
Aw ye hami na mun na yen  
Aw kana kasi la Ala  
Maliba don do - be se -

My homeland is here  
My brothers and sisters, Timbuktu is my homeland  
We are afraid of the future  
The children down there are crying  
The children down there are crying, why  
You are so much worried, why?  
Don't cry, Allah  
Great Mali is bound to win.

Aw be - aw be kasi la yen mun na yen  
N ko anw be kasi la eee mun na n ba eee Ala-  
N ko denmisennu be kasi la yen Ala  
Maliba n ko don do be se

You are crying - you are crying down there, why?  
You are crying down there, why Allah?  
The children down there are crying, why Allah?  
Great Mali, I tell you, is bound to win.<sup>138</sup>

<sup>138</sup> Lyrics provided with French translation by World Circuit Ltd. Translation in English is mine.

## Cue-table

Cue	Timecode (approx.)		Description
Name	IN	OUT	
C1. <i>Shooting the statues</i>	00:01:58	00:03:28	Camera moving slowly around African statues being shot at by Abdelkarim and other jihadists (CU). Duduk plays melody in Cm, starting on the dominant in free rhythmic mode (see transcription fig. 1), percussion starts after final note adding a complex rhythmic layer. Shot change (MS): two jihadists lead a blindfolded, Western-looking man through sandy mountains. The oud plays the melody of the duduk. The melody is then repeated with piano adding Cm and Fm chords, and again with duduk joining oud and repeating the melody once more.
C2. <i>The Fisherman</i>	00:07:30	00:08:55	Issan is herding cows along the lake. Amadou is checking his fishing nets, warning the boy to stay away from the nets. The oud plays a melody in Cm based on a short motif (see first stave fig.2) After four motifs the bansuri joins in (second stave). The oud repeats its initial melody, this time alternated by the clarinet in call-and-response. The scene ends with the three instruments playing together the first motif of the second stave ending on D (shot changes towards Kidane and family in their tent.)
C3. <i>Zabou</i>	00:19:09	00:20:08	Abdelkarim leaves Satima and her daughter, after he has been turned down in making advances towards Satima. We hear the duduk melody from the beginning of the film, but without the first motif and played in Fm. The shot changes to Zabou, walking around in the city. The oud takes over the melody from the duduk playing together with percussion and piano. The second time strings are added doubling the bass line of the piano. The oud repeats the last motif twice to end the scene.
C4. 'Ya allahoo'	00:29:35	00:32:06	We hear fragments of the Mauritanian song 'Ya allahoo': first only the accompaniment by kora/oud, then a fragment of acapella singing, a fragment of bansuri, accompanied singing, and percussion with call-and-response singing. The jihadists are searching town at night to find the place where this forbidden music comes from, only concluding at the end of the scene that it is music for Allah and the Prophet and, therefore, they leave it.
C5. 'Tiyota'	00:32:07	00:32:40	Kidane, Satima and Toya are singing in their tent. We hear the beginning of the song 'Tiyota', a love song in Tamasheq, sung by Satima and Toya and accompanied on guitar by Kidane in G. The abbreviated melody only has the scope of a fifth.
C6. <i>Killing GPS</i>	00:32:50	00:33:36	Issan is herding the cows who walk through the lake. We hear very subdued pizzicato playing in the double bass. Suddenly the cow GPS escapes (piano plays two striking chords (Bm/Em). She runs right through Amadou's nets. (Strings are added playing long low notes.) Amadou takes up a fishing spear and throws it at into the neck of the cow. (The string section builds up a big crescendo while playing a rising scale starting on F# and ending with a Bm(maj7) chord with D on top.) The music stops abruptly when the spear hits the cow. (synch point)

Cue	Timecode (approx.)		Description
Name	IN	OUT	
C7. <i>GPS dead</i>	00:33:50	00:34:39	We see GPS falling down and taking a couple of last breaths. Blood is slowly dripping from the nostrils. The shot changes between the cow and Amadou and his wife, who are checking their nets and look at the dying cow. The duduk plays a four note motif (see fig. 3, the cow puts her head down). The second time a short embellishment is added (when we view Amadou). At the third repetition strings are added playing long notes (blood drips from the nose). The fourth time ends with a repetition of the last note (tight CU nostrils, eye, and legs).
C8. <i>Destiny</i>	00:38:54	00:39:16	Kidane walks away from the tent with his gun tucked away under his clothes. The shot alternates between him and his wife Satima who watches him leave through the tent cloth. The duduk plays the four note motif (fig. 3), this time starting on E with very soft strings in the background. Then the piano plays three chords (Em, Bm/D, Em) answered with F# in the strings.
C9. <i>Football without a ball</i>	00:43:02	00:44:55	Young boys are playing football, pretending to have a ball. Every time the ball is kicked we hear the Glockenspiel playing A. The strings start playing a long E, until the ball is kicked for the first time (Glockenspiel plays A). Then the strings play a quick pizzicato-like melody in Em (see fig. 4) in a strong 4/4 bar. Halfway the third repetition another, sostenuto played, motif is added (see fig. 5). After two times the motif is extended into a full melody (the boys are running for a longer stretch). This process is repeated but now the motif is extended even further (the boys make a goal and celebrate that), but this time the melody moves down in long notes modulating to Cm (two jihadists approach on a motorcycle). The boys immediately start to do physical exercises. The strings play a low dark motif based on the second motif (see fig. 6), also extending it twice.
C10. <i>The Lake</i>	00:47:15	00:48:31	Kidane runs away through the lake after accidentally shooting Amadou. The duduk plays a short melody in Bbm (see fig. 7) supported by a soft string accompaniment with kora and piano. When Kidane reaches the shore, and Amadou tries to get up one more time, the duduk starts another melody (see fig. 8) finishing off with the motif we heard in GPS dead (see fig. 9 and 3).
C11. 'Timbuktu Fasso'	00:51:32	00:52:02	We hear n'goni strings freely improvising. The jihadists are on patrol searching with torch lights where this forbidden music comes from. The shot changes towards a living room where we see two young guys playing the n'goni strings together with a young woman.

Cue	Timecode (approx.)		Description
Name	IN	OUT	
C12. 'Timbuktu Fasso'	00:53:47	00:55:33	The jihadists are either crossing the streets again ,or still looking for the source of the music. The shot changes towards the living room where we now see two young guys playing guitar and n'goni strings, improvising on a short motif in Em (see fig.10), together with two young women and a young man doing some body percussion. One of the women, Fatoumata, starts singing a rhythmically and melodically very free song about the fate of Timbuktu. Suddenly the Jihadists enter the room and the youngsters are trying to run away. The music immediately stops at this point.
C13. <i>Flogging</i>	01:05:38	01:06:00	Fatoumata is being flogged for making music and committing adultery. She starts singing a short song explaining why she is being punished.
C14. <i>Spiritual Dance</i>	01:10:21	01:13:04	In the middle of the town square a man and a woman are buried up to their necks in sand and are being stoned by the jihadists for committing adultery. The shot changes to the house of Zabou where one of the jihadists is performing some sort of spiritual dance to the music in his mind. We hear the strings playing a short motif in Dm (see fig. 11) followed by the oud improvising on the scale (see fig.12). Next to the string accompaniment motif, the strings play a line alternating A and G (the jihadist is now waving his arms like a bird, see fig. 13). Again repetition of the oud improvisation, but this time extended (see fig. 14, Zabou is watching the jihadist). The piano plays a short high melody in triplets, repeating it two times with slight alterations, ending with a broken Dm triad (see fig. 15, the jihadist is moving his arms above his head in a yoga-like movement and making pirouettes, one of the young jihadists looks around the corner and decides to leave again). Again the first oud motif (fig. 12) and a few repetitions of the initial motif (fig. 11) now with the whole orchestra. Another oud motif, but this time cut, (resembles first motif GPS dead, see fig. 3), ending the scene with a low Dm chord (the jihadist sinks to his knees, the man and woman are dead).
C15. Crying woman	01:25:18	01:25:49	We see a woman crying because she is forced into marriage. Two times we hear the piano playing three chords (Em, Bm/D, Em) answered with F# in the strings.

Cue	Timecode (approx.)		Description
	IN	OUT	
C16. <i>Run</i>	01:30:29	01:32:09	Toya is crying and running through the dunes, falling down repeatedly. The n'goni starts with short motifs consisting of embellished long notes in Cm (see fig. 16) When the third motif sounds, we also see Issan running and crying. The duduk joins the n'goni playing the melody from the beginning of the film (see fig. 1), together with percussion, oud and piano. The strings play a longer sequence alternating F and G (we see the water carrier on his motorcycle fleeing from the jihadists shooting at him from a truck.) The melody is repeated again by duduk, n'goni and percussion accompaniment (Toya and Issan are running). The music seems to stop at the end of the melody. We hear the oud improvising shortly on the first motifs (see fig. 16, water carrier is running now as well). The shots now alternate much faster between Toya, Issan, the water carrier and the jihadists running, accompanied only by percussion. At last we only see Toya (CU) running towards us.
C17. 'Timbuktu Fasso' (credits)	01:32:17	01:35:55	The credits are rolling. We hear a compilation of the song 'Timbuktu Fasso' together with the first duduk melody: we hear guitar, oud, kora and n'goni improvising on the accompaniment melody in Dm (see fig. 10). After five times the bansuri plays the melody that was formerly sung by Fatoumata. The 'strings' continue their accompaniment. Then the duduk plays the melody from the beginning, now starting on A instead of G (see fig. 1). The bansuri continues with the second part of the song melody. Duduk takes over again playing its melody together with the string orchestra. Then a more prominent improvisation of the kora, with the bansuri and n'goni improvising on the background. The 'scene' ends with the Duduk playing the first motif of its characteristic melody, thus ending the film on the dominant.

Schematic transcription of the main melodies and motives in Timbuktu (2014)



Figure 1 Shooting the statues



Figure 2 The Fisherman



Figure 3 GPS Dead



Figure 4 Football without a ball - A



Figure 5 Football without a ball - B



Figure 5 Football without a ball - B1 and B2



Figure 6 Football without a ball - C



Figure 7 The Lake - A



Figure 8 The Lake - B



Figure 9 - The Lake - C



Figure 10 - Timbuktu Fasso



Figure 11 - Spiritual dance - A



Figure 12 - Spiritual dance - oud



Figure 13 - Spiritual dance - strings



Figure 14 - Spiritual dance - oud



Figure 15 - Spiritual dance - piano



Figure 16 - Run