



**Mory Kante**  
*Akwaba Beach*

by Mike Berry

Every day we are regaled by the tales of woe and despair emanating from the African continent. The seemingly insurmountable problems of overpopulation, underdevelopment, famine, genocide and oppression provide us with a smug comparison, secure as we are in our 'First World' havens.

Yet, one aspect of African life and experience continues to shine through the murk and demonstrate most aptly the resiliency of the human spirit.

African music is the very antithesis of the bleak African economic and political picture. From all corners of the continent comes music remarkable in its drive and

spirit. Benga Beat from Kenya; Soukous from the Congo; High-Life from Nigeria and Ghana; Mbira from Zimbabwe; Rai from Morocco and Township Jive from South Africa are but some examples.

This diversity is brought home most resoundingly with the album *Akwaba Beach* by Mory Kante. Nothing less than superlatives can describe this album from a Guinean performer who is the proud heir to a Mandinka musical tradition that dates back over 800 years.

It takes little effort for me to call this the finest album of the year and one listen will show you why. Combining African rhythms — and these musicians define the term polyrhythm — with electric instrumentation and native melodies, Mory Kante has produced a certifiable winner.

Starting with "Yeke Yeke", which *must*

# FM 88 CJSR Weekly playlist

WEEK ENDING DECEMBER 28, 1988

THIS LAST WEEKS  
WEEK WEEK ON

1	1	5	R.E.M. - Green
2	3	3	Ministry - The Land of Rape and Honey
3	4	4	Waterboys - Fisherman's Blues
4	7	3	Katie Webster - Swamp Boogie Queen
5	6	5	Sonic Youth - Daydream Nation
6	11	2	Sons of Freedom - Self titled
7	2	6	Guerilla Warfare - Rhesus Pieces
8	10	2	Murray McLachlan - Swinging on a Star
9	20	2	Chet Atkins - CGP
10	17	2	Willie Dixon - Hidden Charms
11	-	1	Pixies - Surfer Rosa
12	9	2	Various Artists - Scrooged
13	-	3	Joe Ely - Dig All Night
14	5	5	Mary Margaret O'Hara - Miss America
15	-	3	Die Kreuzen - Century Days
16	-	1	Johnny Johnson - Blue Hand Johnnie
17	18	7	My Dog Popper - 668 Neighbor of the Beast
18	8	5	Public Enemy - It Takes a Nation of Millions
19	-	1	Suicidal Tendencies - How Will I Laugh Tomorrow
20	15	2	Desert Rose Band - Running

be song of the year, this album drives through myriad musical influences that most astute observers should recognise. The western technology helps — the album was produced in Paris — to broaden the appeal to all listeners. From the eerily Spandau Ballet-like bridging in "Deni", through the Caribbean (Zouk) sounds of the same tune, to the dynamic guitar in "Dia" (somewhat reminiscent of Carlos Santana), the music never stops. Even people with too much white bread in their diets will find something to tap their toes to. There simply is not a weak tune on the record and the African vocal stylings most effectively counterpoint the western production and electric contributions; the result simply cannot offend.

The terse percussion that begins "Inch Allah" gives way to a tasty, flowing melody, and "Tama" will have a dance

Mory Kante sings and plays the kora (or

floor packed in short order.

cora), a combination string/percussion gourd-like, long-necked instrument which is one of the truly classical instruments of Sahelian West Africa. (If you wish to examine it further, check an album by Toumani Diabate of Mali — true virtuoso; and stuff for the serious listener).

All in all a tremendous effort — the only other African performer lately who has so successfully melded African stylings with western technology in as competent a manner is Mami Dibango of the Cameroun.

Mory Kante deserves huge things from this record. If you only buy one African record in your life, this should be the one, but I'll bet if you do, it will merely begin you on the path of serious examination of what African music has to offer.

Oh yes! If you can't dance to "Yeke Yeke", check the mirror. You may be dead!

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