

Conti Bilong

Protean Artist

If you were lucky enough to go to the Olympia to see Manu Dibango Live in 2016 , or to the 2011 Nuit Africaine (African Night) at the Stade de France you would have definitely noticed this famously talented and charismatic drummer , gifted with an impressive ethnical tempo control. But what almost no one realised until now is that unlike his African, European, American Colleagues, Conti is also a singer. The magic takes place as his voice rises above the sound of his drum. The softness of the douala song , in French or English, which can only remind us of King Sunny Ade 's . But that's not all! Conti is not only an author but a writer and a composer he is also an arranger and a producer . The album "It's Time! "out on 22/03, reveals this whole artist.

About the Album

About a year ago Conti had decided to take some time off and he isolated himself into his recording studio where he single handedly composed and wrote this album, from the bass line to the harmonies of the piano , and from the melody of the Balafon to the rhythms of percussion. Later on requesting the presence of his personal guard to help with the recording he also had his partner Juliet Maerder as cellist, who managed to briefly take a break from the Parisian symphonic orchestra she was accompanied by Damien Ossart, guitar, Ntoumba Minka , bass Guitar, John handelsman, sax and Flute and Joran Cariou, keyboard. In turn each guest provided their own touch of fusalional warmth to an even more coloured arrangement : This recording is the capverdienne Marianne Ramos and the American Denise King also known as " the king of sing "(#9 & #10).The first extract is nothing else less than the video recording of the amazing retake of Gainsbourg:" L eau a la bouche ".

"This Album centered on my Cameroonian roots using its Makossa most famous beats. The strength of this album is the use of traditional Cameroonian musical instruments originated from West Africa such as Kora , Balafon and percussions often used in ethnic music . Occidental colouring is added to this rich African rhythm with the use of jazz harmony and the occidental instrumental (strings, brass, Spanish Guitar). Spanish guitar gives this little Flamenco's touch to Bounya and Dimatoungue songs, whereas the brass played in "Futur For my people " brings a more classical sound . Even retakes do not escape this dual influence. From Serge Gainsbourg " L' eau a la bouche " , with Ghana percussions, to All Blues , Miles Davis famous Latino jazz mixture and Bikutsi, Central Cameroon Bantou's ethnic traditional rhythm , which is where the title comes from All Blues Bantou Style.This Opus is unveiling my life Journey and feelings : This is my way to express my culture while staying open-minded over rhythm's worldwide whole beauty" .

An international Career

Born in 1970, Conti discovered Dave Weckl, Dennis Chambers, Billy Cobham at age 13 and developed a real passion for drums. It was in Douala's Club that He first began playing as a pro and started to take part in many recordings as musician or as arranger. 1990 was his first relevant escape outside Cameroon while touring in USA with Sam Fan Thomas this made him determined to keep improving his musical knowledge not only in Jazz and rock, but also in Afro Cuban and salsa s influences.

In 2000 Conti Bilong enrolled into the famous Bill Evans and Scholar Academic classes as he settled in Paris he established his core strength and reputation, In 2003 he joined Manu Dibango in Soul Makossa Gang Which led him to work with other great afro jazz stars: Mory Kante, Cheick Tidiane , Babaa Maal, Maceo Parker.He took part in many studio recordings such as "Kirikou et les betes sauvages"s soundtrack while working with Manu Dibango, and also Ray Lema's "99" album and more recently Gary Dourdan' s "mother tongue ". Conti has also been seen performing in all Capital Clubs , either on his own or as part of a collaboration (New Morning, Sunset , Comedy club..), but also in big stages such as Casino de Paris , celebrating 15 years of "Africa number 1" in 2007, stade de France (2011, Nuit Africaine) , Olympia(with Manu Dibango), Clud de France in Rio (2016 Olympic Games) , l'Apollo Theater in New York, Ronnie Scott in London, Evan Dunya Festival with the Philharmonic Orchestra in Rotterdam , Jazz in Vienna , Jazz in Marciac, Jazz sous les Pommiers (under the apple trees), Jazz in Porquerolles (with Cheik Tidiane) and so many more across Europe and Africa .

Besides being a multitalented musician , Conti Bilong is also a songwriter and an arranger. He produced many Cameroonian albums, and his own album too called " Bana", out in 2009, a Mosaic production. "It' s Time !" unveils the exact strength of his Life journey.

