



Vol. 52 #2 • Summer 2008



JUSTIN ADAMS AND JULDEH CAMARA
Soul Science
World Village 468076

Just moments after the opening rhythm – a muddy, hard beat molded by hands on skin – a high-pitched wail takes flight in every direction imaginable. It sounds as if played by a violin of many arms and shades; it turns out to be a one-stringed fiddle indigenous to West Africa, the *ritti*. The man setting fire to it begins to sing a song of warrior ancestry; the other man, pounding the drum, accompanies with an occasional guitar riff. This is not the meeting of worlds; it is an explosion of sound, an exploration of possibility. Both Gambian native Juldeh Camara and UK-based Justin Adams are accustomed to collaboration, but for both this particular marriage is one of their most fruitful. After the blaring strains of “Yerro Mama,” things really heat up – Adams turns his guitar four notches on “Ya Ta Kaaya,” a celebration of the feminine, matching his unforgettable work with Robert Plant and the late Tanzanian folklorist Hukwe Zawose. Adams craves the sound of old Moroccan cassettes, striving to recreate analog quality in a digital world. This is his soul science, and why he’s found a perfect partner in Camara, whose hearty voice and dexterous fiddle playing are on par with Adams’ six-string work. Throw in ex-3 Mustapha 3 percussionist and touring partner Salah Dawson Miller (as well as, in the studio, bassist Billy Fuller), and this album crosses continents and time like humanity was still walking among the mountains of Pangea, making devotional tunes for the dark and vast waters beyond. — DB