

DOWNBEAT

February 2010

Tinariwen: *Imidiwan-Companions* (World Village 468096; 62:37) ★★★★★ After recording three globally acclaimed albums in a Malian or European studio, singer-guitarist Ibrahim Ag Alhabib and his fellow Berber nomads recorded their new album literally in the great Saharan desert, connecting their deep-grooving blues in unexplainable ways to the arid, desolate beauty of their surroundings. Lyrics sung in Tamashek (English translations provided) lay bare pained human emotion with a hard-hitting vitality. Bonus disc: an interesting 30-minute film directed by Jessy Nottola.

-Frank-John Hadley