

Entertainment WEEKLY

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Tinariwen

Imidiwan: Companions

WORLD (WORLD VILLAGE)



A local music that has acted globally for half a century, the blues has traveled extraordinary distances

from its birthplace in the Mississippi Delta. Just how far becomes evident in the ringing guitars and plaintive chants of Tinariwen (translation: "empty places"), a nomadic troupe from the Sahara that patented their koan-like desert blues while standing at the conflict-ridden crossroads of Mali, Algeria, and Niger. Their fourth album settles into the spare, windswept synthesis that has finally given the wandering Tuareg people a voice in concert halls and cafés from here to Timbuktu. Their lyrics reveal the mysteries of true rolling stones. **A** —*K. Leander Williams*