

# BIM

## BENIN INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL



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/

**Benin International Musical - aka BIM - is a unique group that brings rock and rap back to their Voodoo roots. Each performance is a contemporary ceremony, a rare experience not to be missed!**

**Already boasting an international tour of over 80 dates in more than 20 countries in just three years (Europe, Africa, the United States, Canada), BIM offered a sold-out performance at the Performing Arts Center in New York in 2018. They were spotted by Angelique Kidjo who opened the doors of the legendary Carnegie Hall in 2019, which also sold out.**

**Commissioner Gordon Williams, American producer with 7 Grammy Awards (Alicia Keys, Lauryn Hill, Amy Winehouse, Steven & Damian Marley, Carlos Santana, Quincy Jones) signed the recording of the new single "Abobo" in 2020.**



*An ambitious project: to discover the rhythms that shaped modern popular music, from rock to rap. A band like no other.*

**ROLLING STONE MAGAZINE**

*A classy album, far from the hackneyed concept of world music, Le BIM is a bit like Charlie Parker's son, the distant cousin of a rapper like Kendrick Lamar.*

**LES ECHOS**

*Young people of today [...] have reclaimed the voodoo rhythms... a resolutely urban music.*

**FRANCE INTER**

*A musical slap from Benin.*

**OUEST FRANCE**

#### **Acknowledgements :**



Ambassade de France au Bénin, Institut Français du Bénin, France Musique, UER, RFI, NRK, RTS/ Couleur 3, HRT2, BBC, Monte Carlo Doualiya, ORTB, Radio Frissons, Infoconcert, Le Monde de la photo, Lumix



*The history of slavery and colonization explains the important place of Beninese cultural identity in today's music. It is indeed at the roots of major musical currents of the 20th century (jazz, salsa, rock, funk, hip hop...). Benin, the cradle of voodoo rhythms, is quoted by American rappers and major rock bands today (Arcade Fire, Franz Ferdinand, Vampire Weekend...) as a fascinating reference.*

**T**o reclaim the voodoo rhythms and the traditional Beninese songs through rock, folk and rap tones, such is the bet of the two initiators Hervé Riesen (Radio France) and Jérôme Ettinger (Togezzer Productions / World Tour Records).

Through a groove of their own, the seven artists of BIM pay tribute to the music of their ancestors and reflect the music of traditional "Ago" celebrations, ceremonies related to social events and the trendy clubs of Cotonou, as well as evangelical churches and convents where people invoke the voodoo deities.

The group's project is to contribute to the world's awareness of the musical wealth of this country by proposing concerts, practice workshops (percussion, singing, dancing), educational concerts, lectures on music and voodoo in Benin, or through the documentary film "BIM Experience".

# THE STORY...

2016 //

Discovery of Benin and its voodoo cults. Jérôme Ettinger and Hervé Riesen immerse themselves very quickly in the country and marvel at the musical and friendly power that the country and its people exude.

2017 // After several casting sessions, the group BIM was formed. Recordings began in nomadic studios created for the occasion by Jérôme Ettinger and the seven artists (musicians, instrumentalists, singers). The foundations of their first album are laid down.



January 2018 //

The first concerts took place in Benin at the French Institute of Cotonou and at the International Festival of Porto Novo, followed by a tour in France (spring-summer) supported by FIP, France Musique, TV5Monde, Rolling Stone Magazine, the French Institute and the City of Nantes.

June 2018 //

BIM was invited to perform at the famous Gnaoua festival in Essaouira with Maalem Hassan Boussou. A few days were enough for the Vodoun and Gnaoua rhythms to mingle and then join together on stage to ignite the 35,000 spectators present.



July 2018 //

They recorded their first album BIM#1 in only 3 days and went on the road for summer festivals in France.

September 2018 //

The musicians played at Purchase College of Art in New York where they were spotted by Angelique Kidjo. At the same time, they led dance and percussion workshops in Benin.

2019 //

An intense tour took them to the biggest festivals and venues in Europe, the United States and Canada (Sziget Festival in Budapest, Nuits d'Afrique in Montreal, Helsinki World Festival, Oslo World Festival, Nancy Jazz Pulsation).



2020 //

Despite the health crisis, the BIM performs in Benin, Ghana and the Ivory Coast. Gordon Williams and Jérôme Ettinger recorded the new single « Abobo » between New York and Cotonou.

2021 //

An intense tour took them to the biggest festivals and venues in France and workshops sessions.

# THE MUSICIANS



Tchegnon Brice Jimmyle – alias – **Jimmy Belah**

*vocals, drums, percussions (Sacla, Gons, Gangan)*

Astonishing voice, drummer and genius guitarist, Jimmy is a rhythm section on his own, embodying the Beninese polyrhythm par excellence. An unrivalled musician in his own country, he accompanied the greatest bands (Orchestre Polyrythmo de Cotonou, Africando Allstars, Gnonnas Pedro, Sessimè).



Houenou Gbetognon Jean – alias – **Yêwhe Yeton**

*vocals, percussions (Gon, Alèklé)*

Originally from the lakeside village of Les Aguégues, Yêwhe learnt music from his grandfather, a popular singer and follower of vodoun. An unmistakable rapper in Benin, he remains very committed to the promotion of organic agriculture with the cultivation of his 30 hectares of land.



Kiti Akpeedje Brigitte – alias – **Princesse Amessiaméy**

*vocals, tchékéré*

The sweetness of her voice and her maturity bring an almost celestial harmony to the group. Brigitte is a seamstress and Wax fabric seller in "Dantokpa" - Cotonou - the biggest market in West Africa.



Yelouassi Tetede Prisca Nadège – alias – **Nayel Hoxo**

*vocals, tchékéré*

Hoxo (read "Hoho" which means twin) is the Princess of Abomey, the historical city of Benin where the voodoo cult took root. A title linked to her twinhood, because in the country, twins are considered as beings apart, almost divine. Her voice allows her to sing everything (soul, jazz, pop, rap), which is why she is often compared to Lauryn Hill. Nayel founded the NGO "HOHO SOLIDARYTIE'S CLUB" which works, among other things, in training and social integration.



**Emile Totin – alias – Resinkpa**

*percussions (Kpézin, Sacla, Kpahlè, Ogbon, Gangan)*

Son of a healer, Emile is a "voodoo initiate". He taps faster than his shadow on his voodoo drums, "the twins", that he only is allowed to touch. In parallel, he continues to spread his good word during ceremonies and traditional festivals.



**Atcho Emmanuel Yaovi – alias – Tetanos**

*guitare, vocals*

His dexterity on the guitar earned him the nickname Tetanus from his friends, because when he plays, "he is deadly"! Yaovi masters Congolese rumba as well as rock and punk riffs, reflecting his rich musical culture that is not limited to Africa. He accompanies the greatest singers of Benin on stage. He is also an independent teacher and is involved in organic farming projects.



**Boni Obinti Babatoundé – alias – Lionel Bony**

*bass, vocals, percussion (Agomè)*

*Keep calm and just smile.* Lionel comes from Savè in the hills department. He is the image of his ethnic group which advocates silence, listening and peace. He is also a computer scientist and created a cyber café in the Cotonou region.

## THE BIM GALAXY

**Hervé Riesen**, deputy director of Broadcasting and content at Radio France in 2017, currently deputy director at FIP and President of the Eurosonic Group of the EBU (European Broadcasting Union).

**Jérôme Ettinger**, producer, composer and artistic director of the album BIM#1, founder of the label World Tour Records. Tour producer with Togezer Productions.

**Jean-Paul Romann**, sound technician on the concerts of the group. He has been accompanying Lo'Jo and Tinariwen for many years, and won a Grammy Award with Tinariwen.

**Axel Vanlerberghe**, videographer and photographer, joined the adventure from the beginning to document with art the creation and international development of BIM.

## WORKSHOPS



In parallel to the concerts, the artists are also engaged around the music and dances of Benin. Offering educational concerts, vocal and instrumental practice workshops, and "Voodoo dance" workshops, they place great value in transmitting their experience and knowledge to all audiences.

They already stopped in New York for intense encounters with students of Purchase College of Art during music and dance workshops, and led several workshops in the famous New York Alvin Ailey dance school.



In France, they led similar workshops in elementary schools, high schools, leisure centers and hospitals.

# DATES

## **BIM TOUR 2022 //**

7, 8 mars : Masa - Abidjan (Ivory Coast)  
12 mars : Alliance Française Nairobi (Kenya)  
19 mars : CCFM Maputo (Mozambique)  
26 mars : Institut Français Libreville (Gabon)  
15 avril : Institut Français de Parakou (Benin)

## **BIM TOUR 2021 //**

12/06 : Festi Chaumes – Chaumes en Retz (Fr)  
1/07 : Estran - Marennes (Fr)  
3/07 : Guinguette - Blois (Fr)  
4/07 : Transfert – Nantes (Fr)  
5/07 : Le Kiosque - Château d'Oléron (Fr)  
11/07 : L'été essentiel - Orléans (Fr)  
15/07 : Carré des Larons - Concarneau (Fr)  
20/07 : Cabaret Frappé – Grenoble (Fr)  
22/07 : Casteljaloux (Fr)  
23/07 : ZIC ZAC - Aix en Provence (Fr)  
24/07 : Fiesta Sète (Fr)  
25/07 : Panorama St Nazaire (Fr)  
19/11 : La Clé des champs - Plaisir (Fr)  
22/11 : La Nuit de la Voix – Paris - Radio France

## **BIM TOUR 2020 //**

10/03 : Africa Sound City – Cotonou (Benin)  
14/03 : AF Accra (Ghana)  
31/10 : Luxury Club Cotonou (Benin)  
12/12 : Insitut Français - Abidjan (Ivory Coast)  
31/12 : Golden Tulip Cotonou (Benin)

## **BIM TOUR 2019 //**

01/06 – Stoppested Verden - Hamar (Norway)  
09/06 – Afro-Pfingsten - Wintetturn (Ch)  
14/06 – Cabaret Sauvage - PARIS (Fr)  
21/06 – Fête de la Musique - Pau (Fr)  
28/06 – Mondo Sounds Festival - Trapani (It)  
29/06 – Fusion Festival - Larz (Germany)  
30/06 – Lafibala Festival - Chambery (Fr)  
03/07 – Festival les Hauts de Garonne - Bordeaux (Fr)  
05/07 – Musiques d'ici et d'ailleurs - Châlons en-Champagne (Fr)  
06/07 – Bizz'art Nomade - Dieulefit (Fr)  
09/07 – Bari Jazz Festival Bari (Italy)  
16/07 – Nuits d'Afrique – Montréal (Canada)  
19/07 – Wassermusik Festival - Berlin (Ger)  
20/07 – Les Zendimenchés Saint Hilaire de Chaleçons (Fr)  
28/07 – Zommer Van Antwerpen (Belgium)

01/08 – Festival Ördögkatlan (Hungary)  
02/08 – Hiesige & Dosige Festival - Wieselburg (Austria)  
03/08 – Weinturm Open Air - Bad Windsheim (Germany)  
11/08 – SZIGET - Budapest (Hongrie) Global village  
13/08 – SZIGET - Budapest (Hongrie) Caraïban Stage  
15/08 – ALIVE Festival - Thisted (Danemark)  
17/08 – HELSINKI World Festival - Helsinki (Finland)  
24/08 – Vidor Festival (Hungary)  
10/09 – 20 ans de la galerie Kamel Menour - Beaux Arts de Paris (Fr)  
20/09 – Festival Relache - Bordeaux (Fr)  
21/09 – Atlantikaldia Festival - Errentaria (ES)  
25/09 – Les Zébrures d'automne (Francophonie en Limousin) (Limoges) (Fr)  
04/10 – Le Tamanoir - Genevillier (Fr)  
13/10 – Nancy Jazz Pulsation - Nancy (Fr)  
16/10 – Le Dôme théâtre - Le Grand Bivouac- Alberville (Fr)  
19/10 – CARNEGIE HALL - NEW YORK (USA)

## **BIM TOUR 2018 //**

14/03 - TV5MONDE - Suresnes (Fr)  
19/03 - Les trois baudets - Paris (Fr)  
23/03 - Festival « AAAH ! les déferlantes » - Porte Lès Valence (Fr)  
02/04 - RFI - Emission « Musiques du monde » Paris (Fr)  
03/04 - France Musique « Ocora Musiques du Monde » Studio 105 - Maison de la radio – Paris (Fr)  
05/04 - FIP « LIVE à FIP » - festival les Nuits du Bénin – Nantes (Fr)  
14/04 - Astrolabe - Orléans (Fr)  
24/06 - Festival Gnaoua Feat Hassan Boussou - Essaouira (Morocco)  
30/06 - La Claranda - Serres (Fr)  
3/06 - Festival Convivencia – Ramonville sur Agne (Fr)  
6/07 - Festival Wasssan' Africa – Launac (Fr)  
29/09/18 : Purchase College - NEW YORK (USA)  
5/10 - Tribu Festival - Dijon (Fr)  
6/10 - Opéra de Lyon – Lyon (Fr)  
24/10 - Pan Piper - Paris (Fr)  
29/10 - VIP Saint Nazaire (Fr)  
3/11 - OSLO World Festival – Oslo (Norway)

## LA NUIT DE LA VOIX

November 2022 - Paris

Invited by the Fondation Orange BIM participated in the "Night of the voice" on November 22th, in the Auditorium of Radio France. An evening placed under the theme of African colors and animated by André Manoukian on the piano live on radio FIP.

The artists were on stage with André Manoukian and Angélique Kidjo, the master of Radio France, Oum, Ablaye Cissoko and some opera singers, including Axelle Fanyo and the orchestra "La Tempête".

Photo Credit : Daisy Reillet

On radio FIP :  
<https://www.fip.fr/evenements/la-nuit-de-la-voix-a-la-maison-de-la-radio-et-de-la-musique>

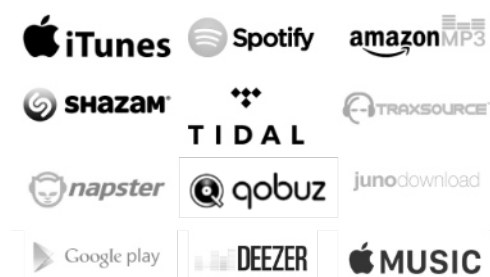


## BIM#1

1<sup>st</sup> album of Benin International Musical

release April 2019 ©WorldTour Records / Big Wax

Available on vinyl, CD,  
and on all platforms



## ACOUSTIC LIVE SESSIONS

Video content around the world

Followed everywhere they go by the photographer and video artist Axel Vanlerberghe, the BIM musicians have a rich and varied collection of audiovisual content.

The "Acoustic Live Sessions" are pieces of their repertoire performed acoustically, beyond the walls and in sequence, true musical nuggets that reflect the virtuosity of the group.



Find them on the **official YouTube channel of Benin International Musical**, as well as in numerous live excerpts, clips, and reports on tour.

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC-zlr5XHvVD8U8LrSNcKqoQ>

## BIM EXPERIENCE

**Documentary (52').** In partnership with FIP, EBU, URTI, Rolling Stone Magazine.

Directed by Axel Vanlerberghe and Jérôme Ettinger  
2019.

Private viewing links

(En): <https://vimeo.com/363391563/f5dc74e2ea>

(Fr): <https://vimeo.com/360267903/>

Benin International Musical tells you the genesis of this unusual musical project. From the first castings to the creation of the repertoire through concerts in Europe, Africa and New York, discover the adventure of a unique group through the story of each of its members.



Broadcast by TV5MONDE (TV5MONDE Europe, TV5MONDE FBS - France-Dom inclus, Belgique, Suisse, TV5MONDE Afrique, TV5MONDE Asie, TV5MONDE Pacifique, TV5MONDE Maghreb-Orient, TV5MONDE États-Unis, TV5MONDE Québec-Canada et TV5MONDE Amérique-Latine/Caraïbes).

**TV5MONDE**



## ORIGINAL CREATION AT THE GNAOUA FESTIVAL OF ESSAOUIRA,

Morocco, june 2018

In June 2018, the BIM was invited to the Gnaoua Festival of Essaouira for a musical creation with Hassan Boussou, great Gnaoua Maalem and his musicians.

In two days of rehearsal, the two ensembles got along, music spoke beyond borders. Moments of sharing deeply rooted in history.

On the big stage of the festival, the energy was there, the public was on fire!

See an excerpt from the meeting filmed by RFI:

<https://www.facebook.com/RFIMusique/videos/10155835658343666>



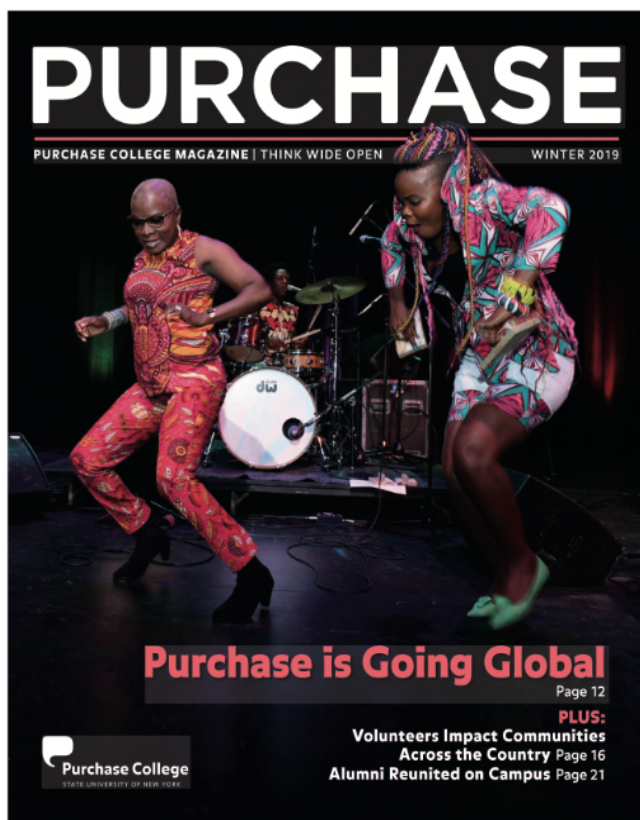
## BIM FLIES TO NEW YORK

September 2018

Concerts, cultural events

In September 2018, the BIM flew to New York for its first concert, invited by Purchase College for the Celebration of the Benin festival. After a series of workshops with students around dance and percussion, the concert was sold out. **Angélique Kidjo**, the Beninese diva who came for the event, fell under their spell.

She invited the BIM to return the following year to perform, this time, on the **mythical stage of Carnegie Hall**.



Video reports here :  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCbqmPnuubw&ab\\_channel=BeninInternationalMusical](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HCbqmPnuubw&ab_channel=BeninInternationalMusical)



## NEW YORK, ROUND TWO

October 2019

Concerts, cultural events, recording



In October 2019, this second New York concert took place at **Carnegie Hall**, also sold out.

During this second stay, the musicians also met **Comissionner Gordon, producer with 7 Grammy Awards**, who invited them into the studio to record the track Abobo (The Cry of Victory). The single, mixed by Comissionner Gordon, was released in December 2020, accompanied by a video clip (see p.15)



Find here a video extract of the concert:

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UznqA3JPHoM&ab\\_chann el=CarnegieHall](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UznqA3JPHoM&ab_chann el=CarnegieHall)



## ABOBO " THE CRY OF VICTORY "

Video clip. Released in December 2020

Directed by Axel Vanlerberghe

Invited by Comissioner Gordon, an American producer, the group met for a unique session at the Lalabela Music studio in Brooklyn where they began recording this track. After a few months, the French producer Jérôme Ettinger left for Cotonou to finalize the takes at the Africa Sound City studio.

The video was shot in the Plakodji district of Cotonou. "The cry of victory" is that of the slaves against their oppressors, of the African people against the colonizers, a cry that resonates universally. A voodoo-rock ode to ancestral values and their essential influence in the present world.

See the video: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqKfzDfx4Zc&ab\\_channel=BeninInternationalMusical](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KqKfzDfx4Zc&ab_channel=BeninInternationalMusical)



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