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## The ten best world music albums of the Noughties

David Hutcheon

### 10. *Made In Medina* by Rachid Taha

Now Africa Express's Monsieur Rock El Casbah, Taha began the decade fusing electro-punk, disco and Algerian rai and never to more thrilling effect than on this electrifying assault on taste. Barra Barra and Garab still sound like an approaching apocalypse.

### 9. *Nothing's In Vain* by Youssou N'Dour

The Senegalese superstar appeared a spent force in the 1990s, so his artistic rebirth came as some relief. With this acoustic album, he turned African artists' eyes inward, to celebrate and strengthen indigenous culture rather than chase foreign patronage.

### 8. *Très Très Fort* by Staff Benda Bilili

The Zaireans' back story involves polio, poverty and wheelchairs, but this was all about the funk. When these guys tell you to get up and dance like a sex machine, you know they won't take "Sorry, my feet are sore" for an answer.

### 7. *Specialist In All Styles* by Orchestra Baobab

The best old-style Cuban album of the decade came from a group of sexagenarians in Senegal whose heyday had been the 1970s. Reunited, they rolled back the years and happily discovered they were what the world had been waiting for.

### 6. *Fado Curvo* by Mariza

Mariza took a discredited old music (in this case, fado, the Portuguese blues), made it contemporary and sexy and sold it to an audience that had previously ignored it. One appearance on *Later With Jools Holland* and she was a star.

### 5. *Moffou* by Salif Keita

Keita loves to experiment – not always successfully - with unlikely musical genres, but this lush return to simplicity may be his masterpiece. His voice (and those of his backing vocalists) is simply astonishing, the arrangements are superb and the playing immaculate.

### 4. *Buena Vista Social Club Presents Cachaito*

The bass player was the unsung hero of the Buena Vista saga, but put centre stage he produced arguably the best album of the series. An eclectic, free-wheeling yet accessible odyssey into Cuban jazz, its inventiveness never fails to surprise.

### 3. *The Living Road* by Lhasa

Is it her circus background that encourages Lhasa de Sela to terrify her listeners from the safety of the shadows? Her second album, sung in Spanish, French and English found her making merry in Nick Cave and Tom Waits' territory.



Tinariwen impressed with The Radio Tisdas Sessions

## 2. *Dimanche A Bamako* by Amadou & Mariam

After 25 years making great soul-inspired albums, the husband-and-wife duo teamed up with the impish Manu Chao and let him rewrite their rule book. It's a hot Sunday in the Malian capital and everybody wants to party. This is the soundtrack.

### 1. *The Radio Tisdas Sessions* by Tinariwen

The Tuaregs' debut, recorded in a Saharan radio station, is the sound of the sands, stones and emptiness, filtered through a woozy wall of guitars. Today they are genuine rock stars, but this, in all its ragged glory, is the one.

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