

IN THE BLOOD

Portrait of a Griot



Ousmane “Zoumana” Dembele was born in Burkina Faso to a family of *djelis*, also known as *griots*—hereditary musicians and storytellers of West Africa. He learned the traditional djeli repertoire by playing the supporting calabash drums to his father’s fiddle.

Griot musical traditions are still passed from one generation to the next, although times are changing. The *djembe* drum, Zoumana's main instrument, has only recently come into use in griot repertoire. Widely versatile, Zoumana Dembele is one of the most gifted virtuosos of djembe music. He experiences a strong link between his work and the heritage of his forefathers.

In the Blood: Portrait of a Griot documents Zoumana Dembele's life and work in the town of Bobo-Dioulasso. It vividly conveys the dedication and joy with which griots approach their calling. This short documentary is meant to be an opening for a more extensive film project.

In the Blood received an Honorable Mention in Finland's Kinos05 Festival. The judges praised the film: “African rhythms and colors, and brilliant technical realization bring alive the lifestyle and philosophy of Burkina Faso's traditional musicians for the audience.”

In the Blood: Portrait of a Griot (25min.)

Directed by Aakusti Oksanen and Jari Järvi

Based on research by Aakusti Oksanen

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Aakusti Oksanen
www.djembepaja.fi
+358-45-655 55 58

Jari Järvi
jari@kaarnaproductions.com
+358-46-667 89 00