

SO KALMERY

'BENDERA'

artist: **SO KALMERY**

title: **BENDERA**

label: **TINDER RECORDS**

item #: **861012**

format: **CD**

FILE UNDER

CONGO / AFRO-POP



The life and music of So Kalmery are profoundly marked by two phenomena: His openness to all varieties of music and his quest for knowledge of African history and culture. His musical style assimilates the influences of blues, soukous, gospel, rumba, reggae, South African jive and more. His deep spirituality and musical talent blend these styles into a uniquely subtle and rich tapestry of contemporary African music.

TRACK LISTING

01. D.M. crazy 3:11
02. Find me free 3:22
03. Imane 3:34
04. Mackia 4:14
05. Kizunguzungu 2:56
06. Isfet 3:58
07. Bendera 4:32
08. Hotep 5:18
09. Everybody 3:02
10. Africa Tamery 3:39

Tinder Records

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BIOGRAPHY SO KALMERY BIOGRAPHY

The life and music of **So Mosolo Kalmery** are profoundly marked by two phenomena: His openness to all varieties of music and his quest for knowledge of African history and culture. His musical style assimilates the influences of the blues, soukous, gospel, rumba, reggae, South African jive and more. His deep spirituality and musical talent blend these styles together into a uniquely subtle and rich tapestry of contemporary African music.

So's own instrument is the guitar – his playing and arrangements have been compared to Taj Mahal's blues-folk music. He also plays the didgeridoo, and his compositions might employ the tabla and the oud alongside percussion, horns and flutes. So has been a lifelong student of ancient African cultures, and he studied with renowned Egyptologists Cheikh Anta Diop, Joseph Ben Jochannan and Théophile Obenga. He speaks and sings in 15 languages, including Swahili, Lingala, French, English and several ancient African languages, such as Mendu, Agu, Amharic and Mossi.

His spirituality and music are born of the *brakka* tradition, which he describes as: "In *brakka*, man is a sound, a note, and God is eternal harmony." It is also a type of music, which was born in ancient Egypt, and spread through the Nile valleys to the Great Lakes of East Africa. The word "*brakka*" means "beginning to swing to the infinite," and also refers to the sound produced by a precise number of drum beats. The *brakka* rhythm is traditionally played with marimbas, string instruments and bells, and is reminiscent of both reggae and the vocal harmonies of South Africa. In the 1960s and 1970s, bands in Katanga and Kinshasa played *brakka* as a way for young people to bridge tribal and ethnic divides.

Born in 1955 in the east of the Democratic Republic of Congo, So's life was marked by music and travel from the beginning. He grew up singing in church choirs and when he was 13, a Zambian bandleader took him on tour to Burundi. His life as a touring musician had begun. So traveled between Zaire and Zambia, performing with internationally known artists such as Letta M'Bulu and Dorothy Masuka, the leading woman of South African jazz. He formed his own band in Kenya in the 1970s, before returning to Zambia to play with other expats like Mbarga, Thimbana Club, Musio Tu Nia and, again, Dorothy Musaka. The late 1970s and 1980s found So in Kinshasa, where he played with Papa Wemba's band "Viva La Musica." He then toured throughout Europe with a variety of bands, eventually resting in Paris and forming his own group with musicians from several African countries.

So Kalmery now lives in Paris and Guadeloupe, while continuing to expand his musical and philosophical frontiers.