

◀ **Laye Sow Djamano**

Orange World Records

Full Price (49 mins)

★★★

*The gentler side of
Senegalese music*



Away from the fierce rumble of the *sabar* drums that quickly turns any open space in Senegal

into a throbbing dance floor, more subdued forms of Senegalese music have gradually asserted their calm but strong presence on the world music market. Laye Sow, a Fula musician from the North of the country, is one of the latest artists trying to win over audiences with a pared-down lineup of acoustic guitar, light percussion and voice.

Djamano, a smoothly flowing blend of Senegalese folk and American blues sensitivities, is an impressive debut. Sow's songs are clear, clean and striking in their simplicity and underpinned by a subtle web of blues, slide and finger-picked guitar patterns. He sings with the nasal tinge and vibrating falsetto that are typical for his home region and have been popularized worldwide by Baaba Maal. Indeed, Maal's image looms strongly over this record, and even though Sow doesn't quite possess his vocal strength and agility, he convinces through his sense of melody and arrangement.

Katharina Lobeck