

A Polyrhythmic Journey to Mali and a Tiny Symphony Inside a Light Bulb: Jayme Stone's Global Banjo Adventures

Jayme Stone keeps an ear to the ground. His curiosity and unlikely set of reference points started early with the quirky physics of the banjo, led to a mysterious librarian who stocked his local public library with a vast trove of banjo recordings, and landed him long-lasting lessons with a series of maestros, from **Béla Fleck** to **Bill Frisell**. Influenced by Japanese poetry and Brazilian literature and featuring what he calls a "tiny symphony that takes place inside an imaginary light bulb", Stone's album, **The Utmost**, won the 2008 **Juno Award** for Instrumental Album of the Year.

The most recent chapter in Stone's musical travelogue takes place in Africa. He went knowing what's still news to most: that the hide-covered instrument with an "extra" drone string we call the banjo actually comes from West Africa. He became particularly curious about the music that may not have made it across the ocean on slave ships headed west from Senegal and Mali in the 1700-1800's. An eight-week trip to Mali was supported by a prestigious **Chalmers Arts Fellowship** and found Stone sitting in with **Toumani Diabate** and the Symmetric Orchestra in downtown Bamako, lost in circles of Wassoulou polyrhythms and in a rural Dogon village with no electricity where he inadvertently discovered a banjo predecessor unheard of in the West. The resulting album, **Africa to Appalachia**, is a boundary-crossing musical collaboration with singer and kora maestro **Mansa Sissoko**. Produced by David Travers-Smith and featuring celebrated ngoni master **Bassekou Kouyate**, the recording won the 2009 **Juno Award** for World Music Album of the Year.

Stone is at work on new album that explores music based on folk dances from around the world: hornpipes, mazurkas, straphspeys and sambas from Sweden, Scotland, Brazil, North America and more. The album will feature fiddle pioneer **Casey Driessen**, gravity-defying guitarist **Grant Gordy**, Gaelic songbird **Julie Fowlis**, nyckelharpa craftsman **Olov Johansson**, trumpet great **Kevin Turcotte** and others. Recording is set for spring 2010 with an album release in fall 2010 (Canada) and spring 2011 (US and Europe).

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New Album e-card

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