

# Deconstructing the production techniques of music producers in Bamako, Mali

## Contemporary Music in Bamako:

- Malian music has a rich history that is world renowned for its unique sound and instrumentation.
- The stylistic range of contemporary Malian music is immense, blending elements found in Western pop and hip-hop with traditional tonalities.
- In the last decade, most music producers in Mali have transitioned from 20th century recording methods to digital recording using DAWs (digital audio workstations)(1).
- Using DAW-based recording and its built-in instrument technology allows music recording to be much more accessible to aspiring record producers
- As there is no formal music recording education in Mali, new producers must rely on YouTube tutorials and their local network of producers to learn the basics of music recording and signal processing (1).
- Distribution of studio equipment and technology in Mali is very sparse (1)
- Despite these limitations, the production quality of contemporary music coming out of Mali in recent years has been world-class from an arranging, creative, and performing standpoint.



Recording on a DAW in Abach Coulibaly's studio (A. Pras, 2022)

## Overview of Research:

- Ethnomusicologist and researcher Amandine Pras along with collaborator Emmanuelle Olivier set out to Mali in 2018 to discover the musical practices of young producers in the area
- In the early months of 2022, seven recording sessions from seven different music producers were filmed in Bamako, Mali
- These producers were intentionally chosen to display a large range of age, production experience, and musical style/genre.
- The project is centred around Eliézer Oubda, who has played a crucial role in developing audio engineering education in Mali.
- Oubda produced an instrumental song called "Damonzon Hope". This piece along with its individual MIDI tracks was given to the other 6 producers as inspiration.
- The result of this initiative is seven unique songs, each with their own style and genre.



(From right to left) Ethnomusicologists Emmanuelle Olivier and Amandine Pras, along with singer/rapper Kal B and his producer Abrahamane Keita (A. Pras, 2022)



Eliézer Oubda recording his instrumental track "Damonzon Hope" (A. Pras, date unknown)

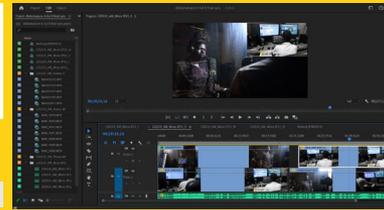
## Research Methodology:



- 1) Field researchers collect footage of the studio session using a SF12 ribbon microphone and several digital cameras.

Singer Salimata Diarra recording at Abach Coulibaly's studio (A. Pras, 2022)

- 2) Camera footage is synchronized with the audio files on Adobe Premiere Pro for each session.



Video and audio syncing for Kal B's session (August, 2022)

- 3) Adding markers at important points in the session to create a timeline of the song making process.



- 4) Analyze recurring production patterns across multiple producers and musical styles.

Time	Event	Time	Event
00:00:00	Session starts	00:00:00	Session starts
00:00:15	Recording begins	00:00:15	Recording begins
00:00:30	Marker added: Verse 1	00:00:30	Marker added: Verse 1
00:00:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:00:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:01:00	Marker added: Verse 2	00:01:00	Marker added: Verse 2
00:01:15	Marker added: Bridge	00:01:15	Marker added: Bridge
00:01:30	Marker added: Verse 3	00:01:30	Marker added: Verse 3
00:01:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:01:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:02:00	Marker added: Verse 4	00:02:00	Marker added: Verse 4
00:02:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:02:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:02:30	Marker added: Verse 5	00:02:30	Marker added: Verse 5
00:02:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:02:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:03:00	Marker added: Verse 6	00:03:00	Marker added: Verse 6
00:03:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:03:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:03:30	Marker added: Verse 7	00:03:30	Marker added: Verse 7
00:03:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:03:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:04:00	Marker added: Verse 8	00:04:00	Marker added: Verse 8
00:04:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:04:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:04:30	Marker added: Verse 9	00:04:30	Marker added: Verse 9
00:04:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:04:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:05:00	Marker added: Verse 10	00:05:00	Marker added: Verse 10
00:05:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:05:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:05:30	Marker added: Verse 11	00:05:30	Marker added: Verse 11
00:05:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:05:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:06:00	Marker added: Verse 12	00:06:00	Marker added: Verse 12
00:06:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:06:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:06:30	Marker added: Verse 13	00:06:30	Marker added: Verse 13
00:06:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:06:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:07:00	Marker added: Verse 14	00:07:00	Marker added: Verse 14
00:07:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:07:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:07:30	Marker added: Verse 15	00:07:30	Marker added: Verse 15
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00:08:00	Marker added: Verse 16	00:08:00	Marker added: Verse 16
00:08:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:08:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:08:30	Marker added: Verse 17	00:08:30	Marker added: Verse 17
00:08:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:08:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:09:00	Marker added: Verse 18	00:09:00	Marker added: Verse 18
00:09:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:09:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:09:30	Marker added: Verse 19	00:09:30	Marker added: Verse 19
00:09:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:09:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:10:00	Marker added: Verse 20	00:10:00	Marker added: Verse 20
00:10:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:10:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:10:30	Marker added: Verse 21	00:10:30	Marker added: Verse 21
00:10:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:10:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:11:00	Marker added: Verse 22	00:11:00	Marker added: Verse 22
00:11:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:11:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:11:30	Marker added: Verse 23	00:11:30	Marker added: Verse 23
00:11:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:11:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:12:00	Marker added: Verse 24	00:12:00	Marker added: Verse 24
00:12:15	Marker added: Chorus	00:12:15	Marker added: Chorus
00:12:30	Marker added: Verse 25	00:12:30	Marker added: Verse 25
00:12:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:12:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:13:00	Marker added: Verse 26	00:13:00	Marker added: Verse 26
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00:13:30	Marker added: Verse 27	00:13:30	Marker added: Verse 27
00:13:45	Marker added: Chorus	00:13:45	Marker added: Chorus
00:14:00	Marker added: Verse 28	00:14:00	Marker added: Verse 28
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00:14:30	Marker added: Verse 29	00:14:30	Marker added: Verse 29
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00:15:00	Marker added: Verse 30	00:15:00	Marker added: Verse 30
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00:15:30	Marker added: Verse 31	00:15:30	Marker added: Verse 31
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00:16:00	Marker added: Verse 32	00:16:00	Marker added: Verse 32
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00:16:30	Marker added: Verse 33	00:16:30	Marker added: Verse 33
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