



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**ACCLAIMED MALIAN ROCK BAND SONGHOY BLUES RETURNS OCTOBER 23RD
WITH HIGHLY ANTICIPATED THIRD ALBUM *OPTIMISME* ON FAT POSSUM**

**ACTIVIST GROUP TAKES A STAND FOR OPPRESSED WOMEN ON THE FIERY
NEW SONG "BADALA" (I DON'T CARE), [VIEW VIDEO HERE](#)**

Nashville, TN – Acclaimed Malian rock band Songhoy Blues are back with their most important album to date, *Optimisme* (French for optimism) coming out October 23rd on Fat Possum Records. The group just released their new incendiary track "Badala", which is Songhai for "I don't care" or "I don't give a shit". The song is written from the perspective of a woman freed from the domination and oppression of her man, and the men who dominate the West African country. The message is universal as are many of the themes in the music of multi-lingual band. The video for "Badala" is translated in three languages (English, French and Songhai). [VIEW HERE](#)

Songhoy Blues formed 10 years ago as refugees from the north of Mali forced to head south during a series of tumultuous events. The group has created a signature sound by blending Malian cross-rhythms with strong rock and punk influences from the West, along with a distinctive virtuosic guitar style. These elements come together seamlessly and have helped establish Songhoy Blues as a driving force in African Rock, a burgeoning scene taking place throughout the continent. Their sound gained the attention of Damon Albarn (Blur/Gorillaz), who discovered them during his "Africa Express" project, as well as Nick Zinner of Yeah Yeah Yeahs who came on to produce their 2015 debut, *Music In Exile*.

Optimisme is the third release from the quartet and was produced by Matt Sweeney (Stephen Malkmus, Run the Jewels, Chavez, Bonnie Prince Billy). Many of Songhoy Blues' songs reflect current situations taking place in their homeland where sharia law was imposed in the north and music was banned. "Fey Fey" (Songhai for division), speaks of the divide in Mali where some want the north and south to be separated, which is tearing the country apart. "Barre" (Songhai for change) is about inspiring the youth to make a difference by getting involved to help change corruption in their government, while "Kouma" (Bambara, a Malian language of the south, for speech) calls out political lies where deceit is the norm. Songhoy Blues may be addressing socio-political issues in their country, but they do sound and feel eerily familiar right now.

Songhoy Blues balance *Optimisme* between the political and the human. A song such as "Assadja" (Songhai for warrior) refers to the everyday warrior, the working class. They celebrate those who wake up and strive for a better life for their families and communities. "Pour Toi" (French/Songhai meaning, for you) is a love song about a man who pleaded for his woman to stay, and the painful memories of what he has lost. Released in June and resonating in the US and overseas, "Worry" is an inspiring song of optimism, hope, strength and vigilance during troubled times, and marks the first time Songhoy Blues has

recorded an original song in English. “Worry” was featured last week in *NPR’s “Heavy Rotation: 10 Songs Public Radio Can’t Stop Playing”*. See full track listing and meanings below.

Songhoy Blues has captivated massive audiences with their electrifying live performances that instantly become rousing communal affairs. They have brought audiences together on stages that include Bonnaroo, Pilgrimage Music Festival, Glastonbury Festival and The Royal Albert Hall. Their 2017 sophomore release, *Résistance* marked their next creative plateau and featured Iggy Pop and Elf Kid. *Résistance* garnered high critical praise that included *Rolling Stone* (“Best Albums of 2017”) *Mojo* (★★★★), *Uncut* (★★★★), *The Observer* (★★★★), *The Guardian* (★★★★), *Clash* (★★★★), *Drowned In Sound* (★★★★) and their second appearance on *Later With Jools Holland*.

Songhoy Blues are proud supporters of [WaterAID UK](#), [Tree Aid](#), and the [Great Green Wall Project for Africa](#), for which they kicked off the United Nation’s 2019 Climate Change Week in New York City.

Songhoy Blues – Optimisme Track List & Meanings

“Badala” (Songhai for “I don’t care”/“I don’t give a shit”)

*written in the voice of a woman freed from the oppression of her man, and men

“Assadja” (Songhai for “warrior”)

*celebrates the everyday warrior, the working-class person who builds families and communities

“Fey Fey” (Songhai for “division”)

*addresses the situation in Mali where some want the north to separate from the south

“Gabi” (Songhai for “forced”)

*in Mali, many young women are forced to marry someone they do not love

“Barre” (Songhai for “change”)

*calling on the youth to get involved to change the corruption in government

“Pour Toi” (French/Songhai for “for you”)

*a song about love, losing love and the nostalgia that haunts

“Bon Bon” (French for “candy”)

*the seduction of a better life away from Mali, that is not what you think upon arrival

“Worry” (English)

*sung in English, a universal song of optimism, hope and strength during adversity

“Korfo” (Songhai for “chains/strings/cables”)

*when the Europeans chained Africans in a line like animals to sell

“Dounia” (Songhai for “life”)

*why we let materialism and power destroy our relationships with fellow human beings

“Kouma” (Bambara for “speech”)

*calling out of politicians lies

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