

GARDEN & GUN

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Desert Blues

A genre-bending stunner from a West African powerhouse



Songhoy Blues
OPTIMISME

What would you get if Jack White and Afrobeat legend Fela Kuti showed up at Junior Kimbrough's juke joint to jam? Something like Songhoy Blues, an electrifying rock quartet from Mali. The

group's third album, *Optimisme*—released by the Oxford, Mississippi, label Fat Possum Records—pulses with frenetic desert blues, spellbinding guitar heroics, and urgent rhythms. The songs,

including the band's first in English, "Worry," are a call to continue to fight for equality for all races and creeds. It's some of the best-sounding protest rock you'll hear in 2020.—M.H.