



Interview with Seckou

Interviewer: Why did you produce the album Homeland: Chapter one?

Seckou: *I felt it was time to release an album that has a narrative about home and homeland. Why Chapter 1? There's many chapters. I don't know how many chapters, maybe two, or maybe more, because it's hard to fit everything in chapter one. But Chapter One is the basic. It's the starting point.*

Narratively, for me, it opens up the past, the now and looking forward to the future. Home to me is wide. I'm sure home to other people is wide. And it's a question that I always ask myself and have asked my own kids. It all started with that, because when you look at me and where I come from, my parents are not from Casamance to start with, but I was born there, raised there, grew up there and travelled around the world from there. My kids are not born there, and their mothers are not from Senegal, so it's that mix, those questions I ask to my kids. When I ask them, 'where do you come from?', it can take them a while to get the answer. They might pick up – 'well I've got a bit of that and a bit of that'. And there's not like a straight answer – 'Oh I'm from there'. There's never a straight answer. They might start, 'I'm from Birmingham, I'm from Nottingham, I'm from Bristol or I'm from Paris', but then they will start adding thoughts. So, this is why the answer is hard to reveal.*

From my end, the only way I can answer those things is in terms of musical language. So, creating, composing, music that is relevant to those areas that I've seen as partly home are important to answer my own questions, but maybe answer many questions, you know, coming from other people. So that's why, for me, homeland is important, as a chapter one. Going home every year, (when I say home I mean the landscape where I was born, the land which is homeland. Nottingham is home, Senegal is the land where I was born), I have this question. I have the same question being asked every time I am in different places. When I'm in Nottingham, people will ask, 'when are you going home?' When I'm in Senegal, people will ask after a while, 'when are you going home?' Of course, when I'm traveling touring the world, they say, 'when you gonna have a break, when are you going home?'

So where is home? People from home, from Nottingham ask me, When are you going home? From Senegal, they ask me, When are you going home? So home, is all over the place. For me, it was important to release music and work on this narrative, because I believe it is going to raise a lot of awareness and questions in our heads. You know, maybe not the right answers, but you know be aware more of where we are. We are all, many of us, nomads. We move. We were born to be able to move from one place to another, and that, for me, needs to be accepted, because we are all human.

Interviewer: Do you think it's important that children and young people have the chance to explore what they think of home and homeland?

Seckou: *Definitely. I think if this inspiration that I have today, if I had it in my childhood it would have made an impact on myself. So therefore, sharing it with those young ones, I believe, is going to empower them, you know, have an impact on them from an early age. They have those tools to see where they're going because some of them, maybe they know only one home so far, they haven't discovered the second or third or fourth or maybe fifth home. But then the music for me will take them far. There'll be more ready than maybe I was in my time, to discover who they are, if that makes sense.*

*Casamance is the region in southern Senegal where Seckou grew up