

"You may be high/You may be low/You may be rich, child/You may be poor..."

JAMES TAYLOR | JIM O'ROURKE



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RICHARD THOMPSON

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UNCUT MAGAZINE

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CHEIKH LO
Balbalou
CHAPTER TWO

7/10

Dreadlocked Senegalese singer's welcome return
The four albums Cheikh Lo made for World Circuit between 1995-2010 were joyously melodic exercises

in laidback West African funk with a spicy Afro-Cuban flavour. Despite a five-year absence and a change of label, the gentle caress of his voice and the insidious, serpentine rhythms remain little changed – but there are newly cosmopolitan nuances, too. The opening track “Bamba” adds plangent piano to the talking drums. “Degg Gui” features tango accordion; the jazzy title track floats on some haunting Miles Davis-influenced trumpet and “Doyal Nanniou” is a potent African protest song, the spirit of which evokes Youssou N’Dour’s version of Dylan’s “Chimes Of Freedom”.

NIGEL WILLIAMSON

