

# TEA

## **The Songs and Productions of Franck Balloffet and Phil Bunch**

Tea's second album, "Dreams," has just been completed. The first release is "Voyages du Jour."

Guitarist Franck Balloffet, from Lyon, France, and Southern California drummer/ keyboardist Phil Bunch first met as members of Los Angeles' premier African band, Bateke Beat, featuring multi-instrumentalist Fidel Bateke, formerly of Fela Kuti's ensemble from Nigeria. The group was the house band at the legendary L.A. club Flaming Colossus, as well as Malibu's Adobe.

In the early '90s Phil and Franck departed Bateke Beat to lead the soul-afrobeat Orchestra Shegemo and Savwa, which included saxophonist Ravi Coltrane and vocalist Sharlotte Gibson, for years a background singer with Whitney Houston, Chaka Khan, and Ricky Minor's band on American Idol. They emerged as the house band at infamous L.A. venues Po Na Na Souk and Bokaos.

Franck and Phil have currently been producing and collaborating with unique vocalists: Congolese vocalists Steve "Ikhaman" Ngondo (previously with Tabu Le Rochereau) and Ilongomo "Elo" Ememe, Marcel Adjibi, vocalist and percussionist from Benin (Manu Dibango, John Densmore), Amadu Sabali from Senegal and American multi-lingual vocalists Chana (Tambu International Ensemble) and Suyen Mosely.

Personnel on "Dreams" include legendary British keyboardist Brian Auger (Steampacket, Brian Auger's Trinity, Oblivion Express) playing Hammond B3 and Fender-Rhodes. Nigeria's Remi Kabaka (guest percussionist on the Rolling Stones' Winter 2002 West Coast tour, and the only African musician on Paul McCartney's "Band On The Run" album) is featured on talking drum and percussion. Bassists André Manga, from Cameroon (Angelique Kidjo, Manu Dibango, Josh Groban) and Bobby Tsukamoto (Neil Larsen, Michael Landau) are also included. as well as Cameroonian EMI studio guitarist Louis Wasson, saxophonists Randall Willis (Gerald Wilson, B Sharp Quartet) and Bobby English (Lou Rawls, the Spinners), as well as Frederic Meschin on trumpet, and Chris Darrow (Kaleidoscope, James Taylor) on slide guitar.

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