



RIVERS – from the Congo to the Mississippi

Released by Siamatungidi for SiamatungidiMusic in 2016

Siamatungidi's RIVERS Publicist page [HERE](#).

Excerpts of album reviews & features below. Full reviews [HERE](#).

RIVERS is on [PRI](#), WNYC, MPR, KFAI and many other stations and podcasts the world-over.

[Nigel Williamson's review for Songlines Oct 2016 \(page 45\)](#)

***Rivers* operates like a soundtrack to his journey, tracking the expansion of his musical vision far beyond his Congolese roots.** The global stew is best epitomized by the expansive opener 'Jungle Zombie', a throbbing melange of horns, tribal chants, swelling percussion, funk-fueled baselines and jazzy keyboards that defies geographical location. 'Sisili', 'Kueya' and 'Bolingo' draw more directly on the sweet harmonies and spiraling guitar tropes of soukous while 'Yele Yele' sways irresistibly to a South African township beat. But it's where non-African cultural imports join the fray that things get really interesting, whether it's the Indian veena of Nirmala Rajasekar, the cello of Jacqueline Ultan or the pedal steel of Joe Savage. They're all **instruments seldom, if ever, heard in African music but here they sound like a natural fit that was meant to be.**

[Banning Eyre's "RIVERS" review for Afropop Worldwide](#)

"There's a hint of Habib Koite's signature blend of melancholy and uplift here, but the overall soundscape is effortlessly its own... It's hard to say what makes such unlikely fusions feel enticing and organic, rather than gimmicky and strange, but **Siamatungidi has found that elusive alchemy here. For all its bold collaborative forays, this album feels personal. With humor, candor and confident musical playfulness**, Siamatungidi is reflecting on a life of motion and change, finding joy in his discoveries, but never losing a certain wistfulness for all that's been left behind."

Album of the Month: [Review by Rob Weir for Off-Center Views \(Rivers was album of the month for July 2016\)](#)

"Certainly one of the year's finest albums"

"Matungidi's vocals invite adjectives such as silky, spirited and sunny. You'll have trouble standing still...delivers you to unexpected places...Matungidi's vocals...as sexy as Barry White but with ten times more energy...sophisticated and moody..."

[Interview with Madanmohan Rao for World Music Central](#)

"[*Rivers*] features many musicians who play different styles...I could have invited a hundred more because **there are so many musicians I love playing with. It makes me want to live a long time so I can try everything.**...Growing up, we called traditional music, "old people music" but the more I learn other styles and the more I travel the more **I appreciate how much traditional music from DR Congo has influenced music all over the world...My music is a message about love and happiness...Everybody has a different purpose. Mine is to share love and make people happy...Let's create more positive music so negativity doesn't make us forget the good things in life. Art and music are very important.**"

[Alistair Johnston's "RIVERS" review for Muzikfan](#)

"Siam's career -- as he was in many of the key bands -- is central to my research...**[RIVERS] is a welcome return to the studio for one of Congo's unsung legends.**"

[Euan Kerr's feature for MPR](#) *(Link includes audio interview.)*

In guitarist's music, Mississippi flows out of the Congo

"The latest addition to the Minneapolis sound draws on a rich musical tradition from Africa — with flavors blended in from the rest of the world...**It's hard not to smile while listening to 'Rivers.'** Siam said he tries to live by something his mother once said to him back in Congo: 'You are responsible to make yourself happy....So when I play my music I believe I am sending a message of healing,' he said...It's a message Siam hopes will spread down the Mississippi and across the world."

[Interview with Baruch of Paradigms](#)

Alex Brown's review for Roots World

"Matuzungidi is making music that reflects the diverse community he lives in and the end result is a set of songs that breathe fresh ideas into a classic sound."

[Feature on KUOW / Seattle Public Radio](#)

James Nadal's "RIVERS" review for All that Jazz

"...recognized back in the Congo as a virtuoso soukous guitarist, and now has the opportunity to expand his horizons and spread his music...a prolific griot..He has accepted his global wandering as a destiny, and continues on the path he set for himself."

[Tad Hendrickson's feature for Star Tribune: "The Rise of Congolese Guitarist Siam is a Tale of Two Rivers"](#)

"People would meet him and remember his songs or a favorite club where he played and they would cry and call him a legend," says Dallas Johnson, a local singer and songwriter who is his collaborator and wife. "He never told me because he was too humble. He didn't have a discography of his works, so I spent dozens of hours online trying to pull it all together. It was just phenomenal what I found with the help of some record collectors who specialize in the music."

Alex Brown's review for Roots World

"Matuzungidi is making music that reflects the diverse community he lives in and the end result is a set of songs that breathe fresh ideas into a classic sound."

[Feature on KUOW / Seattle Public Radio](#)

[Ryan Dawes' Interview/Feature for KFAI MN Culture Series](#)

Check out this ~4 minute piece to a bit about soukous music, hear Siam's story about playing for Idi Amin (iyiyii) and hear the cool reason Siam named his new album, "RIVERS".

[Susan Budig's feature for MSHALE: Siam Matuzungidi to Shake the Stage at the Cedar May 31st](#)

"This renowned soukous player will collaborate with familiar Minnesotans such as gospel singer JD Steele, fellow McKnight Performing Artist Fellowships recipient, Jacqueline Ultan on cello, as well as others including Carnatic Indian singer and veena virtuoso Nirmala Rajasekar, master Tibetan multi-instrumentalist Tenzen Ngawang, and Joe Savage on a mean pedal steel, in total, well over a dozen musicians. **With Matuzungidi at the helm, their polyphonic and layered show promises a transformative experience.** Ultan said, upon first hearing Matuzungidi's music, **"I was immediately swept into a place of joy and beauty by his sound."**

[Hakeem Adam's "RIVERS" for Circumspecte](#)

"Recorded with the help of a host of Minnesota-based musicians who source their musical styles from different cultures, **Matuzungidi transforms his traditional Congolese dance rhythms into a dynamic, yet completely original sound that maintains the authentic flair that earned him his reputation over a long and prosperous career.**"

["RIVERS" review by WNYC for NPR/BBC World](#)

"...the juxtaposition of Siam's style and those of his background artists coexisting in a perfect mix which brings exuberant life to the listener.

[Feature in Color Magazine](#)

["RIVERS" review for Sun is Shining Dub and Chill](#)

[Feature in Broadway World](#)