

## MUSIC

# 'Bonjour Africa' offers listeners cool change of pace

Anyone who has raised their hips quotient in recent years by listening to world music will be pleased to learn that not all the radio stations in the Triangle are ignoring this category of music.

Every Sunday afternoon from 4 to 6 p.m. on WNCU radio (90.7 FM), Senegalese native Bouna Ndiaye hosts "Bonjour Africa," a radio program dedicated to the music of Africa. For those looking for some relief from the programmatic mediocrity of commercial

radio, "Bonjour Africa" offers a very cool change of pace.

Bouna was born in Senegal and grew up in the capital city, Dakar. Most Senegalese who go abroad to study travel to France, since Senegal is a former French colony and French is widely spoken in Senegal. Bouna, however, left his homeland to study in the United States.

"I was interested in studying English," he said. "I also took a

business class at the American Cultural Center in Dakar. The people who were teaching the class were the newly appointed Citicof managers. They were giving us the same courses one would get in school. They also taught us the different currencies and what currency fluctuations were all about. They gave us *The Financial Times* to read and encouraged us to speculate on stock market changes and think about what caused them. This experience gave me an insight into business and it sparked my interest as well and that made up my mind that the best place to study business was in the United States."

Bouna came to the United States in 1982 and eventually enrolled at N.C. Central University in business.

"First I went to a small Baptist college in North Carolina and I was not really happy there," Bouna recalled. "I'm a Muslim, like most everyone in Senegal and my vocabulary was not that good, particularly for praying like they were doing and at this little college they prayed for everything. They even prayed at the beginning of a class. Well, I did not pray with them and they began calling me

a pagan. I didn't know what this meant, so I went to the library and looked up the word. That was not an easy evening for me.

"Needless to say, I was much happier when I transferred to N.C. Central University," he added.

Bouna finished his business degree at NCCU in '86 and started in the MBA program in '87. Then he won a scholarship to attend the International University of Japan, where he did his MBA. Bouna worked as an international auditor in Africa after finishing school in Japan, then returned to Durham in 1996 to work at NCCU.

When Bouna returned to Durham, WNCU-FM had been on the air for about one year. In reading about WNCU radio, he noticed the station's commitment to multiculturalism and diversity, yet he also noticed that the station had no world music programming. When he inquired about this oversight, he was informed that the announcer who had hosted such a program had recently moved away from Durham. Bouna volunteered to fill the gap and "Bonjour Africa" was born.

"I try to get as much diversity as I can in my program, but at the same time I have to know my audience," Bouna said. "I don't want to turn away people who are not really initiated to African music, so I work with mostly Afro-pop. I don't think my audience has a favorite style



Senegalese native Bouna Ndiaye is the host of a new radio program, "Bonjour Africa," on WNCU Sundays from 4 to 6 p.m.

SUBMITTED PHOTOS

of African music. I keep bringing in new elements of the music, you know, to entertain my listeners as well as myself, like South African kwazo music.

"I've been doing the show since the end of 1996 and the listener response has been very positive," he added. "My listeners have shown a good deal of interest in learning more about African music."

When Bouna Ndiaye isn't spinning African tunes at WNCU-FM, he works for Duke

University as a program coordinator for the John Hope Franklin Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies.

"I've been doing this job since July 1 and I'm very excited about it," Bouna allowed. "I have some projects in the works, you know, and I'm waiting to hear about them."

Philip Van Vleck charts our world music from his office in Cary. Reach him at [vanvleck@nc.rr.com](mailto:vanvleck@nc.rr.com).



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