

Konono N°1 Biography



"Every so often there comes a record of such unlikeliness, of such overpowering rhythmic intensity and such majestic indifference to global musical trends that you're knocked sideways. This is one of them."
-Mark Hudson, *London Telegraph* (UK)

"Konono N°1 are the kind of band that remind us that music still possesses vast wells of untapped potential, and that there's virtually no limit to what can be developed and explored."
-Joe Tangari, *Pitchforkmedia.com*

Konono N°1 was founded over 25 years ago by Mingiedi, a virtuoso of the *likembé* (a traditional instrument sometimes called "sanza" or "thumb piano", consisting of metal rods attached to a resonator). The band's lineup includes three electric *likembés* (bass, medium and treble), equipped with hand-made microphones built from magnets salvaged from old car parts, and plugged into amplifiers. There's also a rhythm section which uses traditional as well as makeshift percussion (pans, pots and car parts), three singers, three dancers and a sound system featuring these famous megaphones.

The musicians come from an area which sits right across the border between Congo and Angola. Their repertoire draws largely on Bazombo trance music, but they've had to incorporate the originally-unwanted distortions of their sound system. This has made them develop a unique style which, from a sonic viewpoint, has accidentally connected them with the aesthetics of the most experimental forms of rock and electronic music, as much through their sounds as through their sheer volume (they play in front of a wall of speakers) and their merciless grooves.

Congotronics, the first studio album by Konono N°1 was recorded and produced by Vincent Kenis - definitely the right person for the job. A great connoisseur of Congolese music, he has produced albums by Zap Mama, Taraf de Haïdouks & Koçani Orkestar. Released on the ubiquitous Crammed label in early 2005, *Congotronics* has garnered phenomenal reviews from such diverse and influential media as the *New York Times*, *Mojo*, the BBC and *The Wire*. The US release will be out June 27 from Rykodisc.

Konono N°1 will spend the spring and summer of 2005 on an extensive European tour, including 10 dates with inimitable avant-rockers Tortoise. Concerted Efforts will present Konono N°1's debut North American tour in Autumn 2005.

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