



## Cheikh Ibra Fam

### Adouna

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Senegalese singer, songwriter, and multi-instrumentalist Cheikh Ibra Fam returns on April 10 with *Adouna (Life)*, a rich and deeply personal album that reflects on knowledge, faith, unity, migration, love, and the courage to transform one's circumstances. Recorded between Reunion Island, Senegal, France, and Canada, the album blends Afro-pop, soul, and the traditional musical languages of West Africa with a modern sensibility shaped by Cheikh's extensive travels and spiritual perspective.

Cheikh describes *Adouna* as "a mirror of life's beauty and struggle," and each song offers a different facet of that reflection. The track, "Xam Xam," honors the influence of his uncle Coly Cissé, the beloved guitarist who first awakened Cheikh's artistic curiosity. Built on a shimmering foundation of kora, zouk, and Angolan kizomba rhythms, the song celebrates knowledge as the key to empowerment—an idea that has guided Cheikh since childhood. From there, the album moves into tender territory with "Sali," a celebration of African femininity and grace that features warm mbalax rhythms infused with funky interwoven guitar lines. The song's accompanying video, filmed in the historic streets of Saint-Louis, radiates humility and intimacy, capturing the everyday beauty that inspires Cheikh's songwriting.

As *Adouna* unfolds, Cheikh expands his storytelling into larger social themes. "Gnou Mbollo," meaning "Let's Unite," is a resounding call for connection across the African diaspora, weaving together rhythms and imagery that travel "from Congo to Panama, from Gorée Island to Brazil." Musically, it draws inspiration from James Brown's classic funk and mixes it seamlessly with West African guitar lines and grooving drums.

The upcoming single "Amoul Solo," supported by a striking new video filmed in Senegal, speaks to the strength that emerges when individuals and communities refuse to face adversity alone. Musically, the song reflects Cape Verdean inspirations with its lilting swing buoyed by Wilfrid Zinsou's captivating trombone lines. Elsewhere on the album, Cheikh reflects on faith and perseverance in "Weurseuk," urges the power of communication in "Wakhtane," and honors the strength, dignity, and essential role of African women in "Mama Africa." Together, these songs form a cohesive mosaic—one that captures both the complexity and the hope of modern African life.

Cheikh's ability to write songs that feel simultaneously intimate and universal is rooted in his own life story. Born in the coastal town of Mbour, he spent his childhood moving across Senegal as his father served as a customs director. Music entered his life early through the spiritual Kourel's choirs, where he began singing at age seven. At home, creativity flourished: his father wrote poetry, his mother painted, and his uncle Coly brought guitar-driven magic into the

house, playing Bob Marley songs during power outages while a young Cheikh listened in awe. These early experiences—along with the soul of Otis Redding, the Afro-Cuban rhythms of Orchestra Aragón, and the spiritual teachings of the Baye Fall tradition—shaped the artist he would become.

After releasing several albums under the stage name Freestyle, Cheikh joined the legendary Orchestra Baobab, a turning point that awakened a deeper connection to his African heritage. Touring the world with Baobab inspired him to embrace singing in Wolof and Bambara and to align his music more closely with his cultural roots. “Baobab awakened the Africa that was sleeping in me,” he recalls, reflecting on the mentorship of figures like Balla Sidibé and Issa Sissokho. Today, based on Reunion Island, Cheikh continues to blend traditions with innovation, carrying forward the message-driven artistry that has become his hallmark.

The making of Adouna reflects both Cheikh’s nomadic life and his collaborative spirit. He began shaping the songs in his home studio on Reunion Island, sketching out melodic ideas, rhythmic frameworks, and vocal arrangements before inviting musicians from Senegal, The Gambia, France, Rwanda, Canada, and Reunion Island to contribute their parts. A crucial creative partner throughout this process was producer and arranger Hakim Abdulsamad, an American producer living in Rwanda whose deep musical intuition and attention to detail helped refine the album’s sound and bring Cheikh’s vision into focus. Together, they crafted a collection that feels grounded in West African heritage yet expansively connected to the broader African world. Final mixing and additional production was handled in Vermont and Montreal by Cumbancha head Jacob Edgar and respected Quebec producer Simon Walls. Cheikh’s goal throughout was to create music that moves listeners emotionally while encouraging them to reflect, reconnect, and rediscover what truly matters.

“It’s not about me,” he says. “It’s about the messages—love, tolerance, understanding, justice, and the courage to change your situation.” His lyrics are a direct result of his Baye Fall beliefs, which emphasize tolerance, hard work, humility, and service. With Adouna, Cheikh Ibra Fam offers those messages with clarity and heart, presenting an album that is uplifting, reflective, and full of humanity.

## **ADOUNA – ABOUT THE SONGS**

### **Gnou Mbollo (Let’s Unite)**

“Gnou Mbollo” is an uplifting anthem of African unity and collective pride. With an irresistible groove inspired by the spirit of James Brown’s funk and enriched by West African traditions, the

song calls listeners to move forward together while honoring their roots. Pulsating rhythms and Mandeng guitar lines intertwine with soaring melodies to create a sound that bridges continents, from Congo to Panama and from Gorée Island to Brazil. It is both a celebration of shared history and a declaration of resilience, reminding us that strength is found in unity.

### **Amoul Solo (Life Is Simple)**

Blending introspection with quiet intensity, “Amoul Solo” reflects on the fleeting nature of fame, wealth, and desire. The song’s soulful brass melodies and grounded percussion create an atmosphere that feels both intimate and expansive. Its message is clear. What we chase often slips away, but self-knowledge and dignity endure. By turning inward and protecting one’s integrity, we discover that life’s true value lies not in possessions, but in character.

### **Xam Xam (Knowledge)**

Carried by the delicate, hypnotic tones of the kora and infused with the sway of zouk and kizomba influences, “Xam Xam” is a tribute to education and wisdom. The song affirms that knowledge is the foundation of life. “If you have it, you have everything.” Both joyful and instructive, it celebrates learning as empowerment and honors the transformative power of education to shape individuals and communities alike.

### **Gondi**

At first listen, “Gondi” radiates pure dance floor energy, driven by vibrant guitars and dynamic rhythms inspired by Yoruba musical traditions. Beneath its electrifying groove lies a deeper message. The song challenges superficial charm and empty promises, urging honesty and authenticity in love. It reminds us that true connection cannot be built on performance or pretense. It requires sincerity and openness.

### **Shabida**

“Shabida” is a poignant reflection on migration and sacrifice. Through powerful storytelling, the song captures the emotional weight of leaving home in search of dignity and opportunity. Its musical landscape blends Senegalese narrative tradition with layered guitars and the hypnotic pulse of Maloya rhythms from Réunion Island. Both intimate and expansive, the song honors the courage of those who journey across oceans while carrying their memories and hopes within them.

### **Weurseuk (Destiny)**

“Weurseuk” meditates on fate, gratitude, and humility. It acknowledges life’s inequalities and how two people born into the same family may walk very different paths, while affirming faith in divine wisdom. The music merges West African rhythmic roots with contemporary textures,

creating a sound that feels grounded yet modern. At its heart, the song invites acceptance, reminding us that contentment and trust are gifts in themselves.

### **Oubil Sa Khol (Open Your Heart)**

“Open Your Heart” is both invitation and affirmation. Beginning softly before building into a celebratory rhythm, the song calls for honesty in relationships and openness between friends and lovers. Its message is simple yet powerful. Truth is better than illusion. Dialogue is stronger than silence. As the percussion intensifies and the refrain lifts into dance, the act of opening one’s heart becomes both emotional and physical, a shared celebration.

### **Sali**

“Sali” unfolds as a warm and heartfelt love song carried by relaxed mbalax rhythms and soulful vocals. Named after a common West African woman’s name, the song becomes a tender expression of devotion and admiration. Its melodies convey both longing and joy, portraying love as peaceful, uncomplicated, and rooted in mutual respect. It is intimate yet universal.

### **Adouna (Life)**

Vibrant and motivational, “Adouna” is a call to perseverance and self-belief. The lyrics encourage listeners to move forward with courage, patience, and dignity, even in the face of fear or uncertainty. Musically, the song pulses with driving rhythms and expansive guitar lines that evoke strength and celebration. It is a reminder that wealth, knowledge, and power begin within, and that forward movement is an act of faith.

### **Mama**

“Mama” honors the dignity, strength, and irreplaceable presence of women, especially mothers. The song affirms a woman’s worth and speaks directly against harm and disrespect. At the same time, it becomes a personal tribute to maternal love, gratitude, and devotion. Blending Afro House energy with global dance textures, the music radiates joy and reverence, transforming respect into celebration.

### **Wakhtane (Dialogue)**

“Wakhtane” is a gentle but powerful plea for communication and unity. Centered on the belief that conversation builds harmony, the song rejects division and reminds us that “you are not my enemy.” Its reflective melody and steady rhythm create space for introspection. By encouraging empathy, shared understanding, and mutual respect, the track affirms that true strength lies in dialogue rather than conflict.

### **Producer**

Abdulsamad, Hakim

### **Mixer**

Edgar, Jacob  
Walls, Simon

### **aufnahmestudio**

Cumbancha Studios  
(Vermont)  
MDCProd Recording Studio  
(Reunion)  
Simon Walls Studio (Montreal)

## Mastering

Lane Gibson Recording &  
Mastering

## Phonotrphy

Cyril Lin

### Tracklist

1.	<b>Gnou Mbollo</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	04:09
2.	<b>Amoul Solo</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:28
3.	<b>Xam Xam</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:04
4.	<b>Gondi</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:27
5.	<b>Shabida</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:31
6.	<b>Weurseuk</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:05
7.	<b>Oubil Sa Khol</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:05
8.	<b>Sali</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:18
9.	<b>Adouna</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:17
10.	<b>Mama</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	04:19
11.	<b>Wahktane</b> M: Cheikh Fame   T: Cheikh Fame	03:17