**Coco Mbassi, Jóa, new album – released 28th September 2014**

In her previous albums, Coco Mbassi took listeners on a musical journey where her African identity absorbs classical music (Sepia) and jazz (Sisea). Her intuitive cross-fertilization of genres has made her the darling of world music aficionados, and the accolades she has received acknowledge both her universality and uniqueness. It has been more than a decade since with last heard new material from Coco Mbassi, and the years gone by led to maturity, or **Jóa**, in the **Duala** language – also the title of her new album. In its twelve tracks, **Jóa** reveals the musical and existential journey of the singer. After embracing what the world has to offer, she returns home and excavates her cultural heritage. The aesthetic of **Jóa** displays, honours and praises the diversity of a musical background that encompasses West Africa and Central Africa. Coco Mbassi's trademark themes – keeping the faith in the face of adversity, love, hope, memories and promises – are infused with a mixture of traditional African instruments, such as the djembe and the kora, sustained by haunting African acoustic guitar styles. **Jóa** is not a comeback but, rather, a homecoming celebration where listeners relish in the soulful singing of life's beauty and complexity. Listeners well-versed in African music will recognize a variety of rhythms from **Cameroon, Mali and Senegal**, to name only a few. Faithful to her acoustic and minimalist tone, Coco Mbassi weaves her way effortlessly from melancholic ballads to upbeat joyful songs. **Jóa** showcases the absolute beauty of African rhythms without excess. One of its major highlights is its amazing tribute to Bazor, also known as **Dina Bell** (one of the greatest makossa composers); its subtle acoustic take on Bell's body of work is one of a kind, a trip down memory lane which actually emphasizes the innate quality of a musical genre that lends itself to unexpected delightful appropriations.

Free from ostentation, Coco Mbassi's rendition is soothing, filled with emotions, and true to her soul. **Jóa** will definitely take the listener on a delightful inward journey that will open her/him up to never ending musical possibilities embedded in Africa.

**Nathalie Etoke, PhD, Author, Associate Professor of French and Africana Studies**

**Release date**: 28th September 2014

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