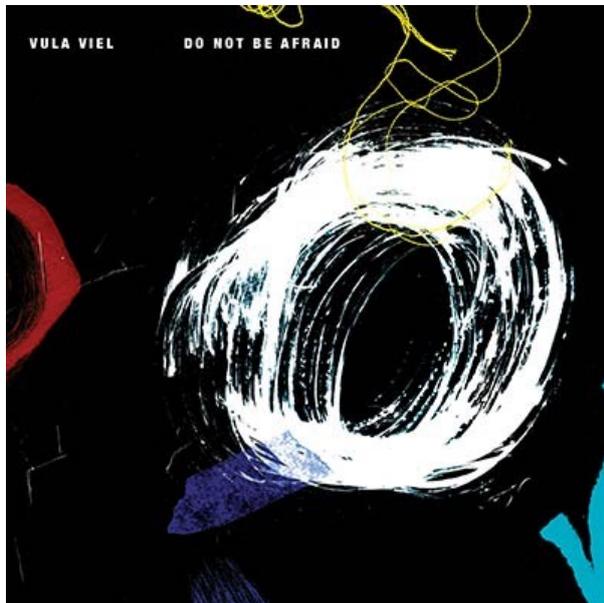




# Vula Viel

## Do not be afraid



Vula Viel Records - CD/ LP/ Digital  
Release Day: 25th January 2019  
Tags: African / Jazz / Minimalist

**Embargo: Strictly no sharing of audio streams  
except for arranged premieres**

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### Links

Private listen

Vula Viel

Vula Viel on Facebook

Vula Viel on Twitter

"Dance to it, make love to it, consume it, listen to it, stare at the clouds to it!"

**Iggy Pop**

"One of my discoveries for the London Jazz Festival... Good is Good"

**Gilles Peterson**

"They were the unexpected stars of a glitzy show"

**John Fordham, The Guardian (UK)**

Forward-thinking UK trio **Vula Viel** release their sophomore album, '**Do Not Be Afraid**' on **25th January 2019**, continuing their unique musical journey centred around the Gylil (Ghanaian xylophone).

The band's new set confidently weaves sparse polyrhythms and intricate rhythm structures around bandleader **Bex Burch**'s Gylil lines and take the instrument's sound into new territory, with bassist **Ruth Goller** (Acoustic Ladyland, Melt Yourself Down, Rokia Traore) and drummer **Jim Hart** (Cloudmakers, Ralph Alessi, Electric Biddle) introducing a rough, post-punk edge to the band's sound.

In Bex's own words: "I have loved making this music. Writing tunes, crafting grooves and both going deeper into the information enclosed in the Dagaare forms and choosing my own meanings. Many of the tracks on the album were composed using a 'rhythm wheel' - rather than the hierarchical structure of western notation with a single starting point and meter, I physically made wheels with had slots cut out to donate rhythmic and harmonic on/off. This music has a really different flow, asymmetrical and spacious - it feels unusual but still grooves. As musicians, Ruth, Jim are mainly from jazz and experimental backgrounds we've really enjoy approaching this style of playing with a fresh perspective."

**P.T.O to read more and full tracklist**



Vula Viel was formed in 2013 by Bex Burch. After studying at Guildhall and training as a classical percussionist, she embarked on a life-changing three-year period living, farming and studying with xylophone master **Thomas Segura** in Upper West Ghana; the band's name means 'Good is Good' in the Dagaare language. After being mentored in the deep traditions around the Gylil, a large African xylophone made of sacred lliga wood, Burch began the journey to bring the instrument into her own music. The acclaimed debut Vula Viel album in 2015, 'Good is Good', was the first realisation of her vision and 'Do Not Be Afraid' is the first set of Burch originals.

Described as "Ghanaian minimalism", with the unassuming ability to blur the lines between atmospheres – Vula Viel's sound may nod to Steve Reichian jazz, but influences don't stop there: one can hear echoes of Bill Laswell and the irresistible energy of Arthur Russell.

On 'Do Not Be Afraid', the band bring a new confidence. The opening track, **'Well Come'** is a strident, marching opener; the title track comforts the listener, urging them not to fear what they believe, hope and love. The track builds from delicate polyrhythms and gylil lines into a euphoric piece; **'I Learn'** which sings out the line Dagaare line 'Fo tu me na' meaning 'You insult me' pounding out the way in which we learn from struggle. **'Inside Mirror'** ('Inside mirror, unworthily reflects you, 'mere fraction of the real you') hard hitting groove and awesome guest vocals from **Rozie Gyems** finishes the A side convincingly.

**'Fire'** start off side B delving deeper into this trio's capabilities. Fire's meaning is about the frustration and struggle and fire we all hold when life is hard and the amazing release and power of that when we keep going! **'I Love You'**, seemingly the album's ballad, is a wild cyclic world of turning two simple lines upside down in groove and feel. **'Breathe the Air'** has a spaciousness that makes you do just that, but don't be fooled that this is light-weight. The album ends with unique **'We Are'** a journey ending track, building cross-rhythms and melodies over an underlying pulse which everything breaks down to for the final line, 'And I said to them, "Stay with me when I'm gone", and they said "We Are"'

#### Tracklisting LP:

- 1 Well Come
- 2 Do Not Be Afraid
- 3 I Learn
- 4 Inside Mirror
- 5 Fire
- 6 I Love You
- 7 Breathe the Air
- 8 We Are



