MUSIC DEPARTMENT RESIDENCY

Mamadou Diabate & Percussion Mania

Duration: 90 minutes with no intermission

Program

Titles to be announced from the stage

Mamadou Diabate, balafon
Yacouba Konate, balafon
Hamidou Koita, callabash
Ibro Fall, djembe
Klaus Anbrochs, guitar
Petar Pera Krstajic, electric bass

About the Artist

Mamadou Diabate was born in 1973 in Burkina Faso to a Jeli family with a long tradition of storytelling and music-making. The very first Diabate (originally Dian-baga-te, meaning “the irresistible”) was mentioned in the Sundiata epic in the 13th century. At the age of 5 he began his professional training with his father, Penegue Diabate, then considered the best balafon player, even far beyond the borders of the Sambla culture. At age 8 Mamadou began with his apprenticeship years with renowned balafonists of neighboring peoples. However, by that time the Jelis has already lost their pre-colonial reputation as guardians of the tradition and speakers for the rulers and tutors of their children. He was frequently sent home from school because his parents could not afford the school fees—an experience that later spurred him to create a tuition-free school.

At the age of 11, frustrated by his future prospects, he ran away from home intending to extend his skills and widen his musical horizons in Bobo-Dioulasso, the second-largest city and musical capital of Burkina Faso. With the help of neo-traditional groups such as Farafina, Sababougnoma and Frères Coulibaly, who later became world-famous, Diabate learned other instruments such as ngoni (hunter’s harp), dundun (bass drum), lunga (talking drum) and the most important one in the “Bobo-Dioulasso style,” the djembe.

In 1988, Diabate reconciled with his family when his father was looking for a suitable second balafon player for the National Cultural Festival (SNC) of Burkina Faso and discovered his son was now an excellent musician. During the following years they repeatedly won the festival’s first prize.

In 1991, together with Ousmane Dembele (“Zoumana”) Moussa Coulibaly and Abdoulaye Dembele, he formed his first band, Landaya. Diabate was the composer and the balafon soloist of the group. In 1998 they won the first prize for the National Culture Festival of Burkina Faso.
About the Artist continued

During a Pan African Film and Television Festival (FESPACO) in Ouagadougou he got to know an Austrian traveler who was fascinated by the music of the Sambla and recognized Diabate’s outstanding musical talent. A deep friendship arose from this encounter and in 1998 the Austrian persuaded Diabate to present the Sambla culture and balafon in Europe. Diabate moved to Austria in 2000 and was soon collaborating and performing widely.

In August 2001 Diabate had an international breakthrough with his CD Sababu man dogo ("A chance is not just anything"), with own compositions in the popular Bobo-Dioulasso style, on which he played all instrumental parts himself. His second CD Keneya ("well-being") in 2002 was the world’s first recording of the Sambla music and language. He had to play all instrumental parts himself, because he was the only Sambla in Austria at this time. Between 2002 and 2005 he toured with his Afro-jazz band Bekadiya, enriched with classical and jazz musicians. In 2003 they released the CD Sira Fila (Two Ways).

One of his earliest collaborators in Austria was the saxophonist Sigi Finkel; their duo CD Folikelaw was released in 2005, their Yala in 2010. Together with the Malian kora virtuoso also named Mamadou Diabate, Diabate composed and recorded music for the audio book African Love Poems in 2007.

With Percussion Mania, founded in 2006, Diabate focuses again on his West African heritage. Musical dialogues and spectacular balafon duels between the Diabate and his brother Seydou Diabate are central to this music. Their three CDs are Kamalenya (2006), Kanuya (2011) and Masaba Kan (2014), with Toumani Diabate and Cheick Tidiane Seck as special guests.

With his “Lege-Lege-Foli” project in 2009, Diabate gave Europeans their first chance to hear live performance by authentic Sambla and Tusia musicians. That year Diabate released two CDs of that music. In 2010, at the urging of Austrian friends, he released a stunningly virtuosic CD of solo balafon music, Fenba. In 2012, with Wolfgang Puschnig (alto sax and flute) with Jon Sass (tuba), he released Mutua.


Diabate’s lifelong desire to help poor children in Burkina Faso to get an education became a reality in 2010, when after six years of hard work and the help of benevolent people and organizations in Europe, he opened an elementary school in Bobo-Dioulasso where today 450 children attend tuition-free.

Connecting Artists to the Community

While at Dartmouth Mamadou Diabate and Percussion Mania taught courses in the Dartmouth Department of Music, took part in a pre-concert talk with Laura McPherson, Assistant Professor in the Linguistics, visited classes in Dartmouth’s music department, shared meals with Dartmouth student groups and house communities, and led a workshop at the Upper Valley Music Center. For more information about Hop Outreach and Arts Education programs, call 603.646.2010 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu/online/outreach.
Upcoming Events

Kodo: Evolution
Mon • March 4 • 7 pm
Internationally renowned taiko masters infuse the ancient tradition with fresh rhythms that move both body and soul.

Jazzmeia Horn
Wed • April 3 • 7 pm
Grammy-nominated jazz singer poised for greatness, with titanic vocal skills and creative drive.

For tickets or more info, call the Box Office at 603.646.2422 or visit hop.dartmouth.edu. Share your experiences! #HopkinsCenter

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