

Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth

presents

Angélique Kidjo

Angélique Kidjo, vocals

Etienne Stadwijk, keys

Michael Olatuja, bass

Magatte Sow, percussion

Yayo Serka, drums

Patrick Murray, sound engineer

Friday, April 29, 7:30 pm

Spaulding Auditorium • Dartmouth College • 2022

Generously supported by the Wetzel Family Fund for the Arts and the Patricia S. and Robert A. Levinson 1946 Fund

Program

Approximate duration: 90 minutes, no intermission

About the Artist

Five-time Grammy Award winner **Angélique Kidjo** is one of the greatest artists in international music today, a creative force with 16 albums to her name. *Time Magazine* has called her “Africa’s premier diva,” and named her one of the 100 most influential people in the world for 2021. The BBC has included her in its list of the continent’s 50 most iconic figures, and in 2011 *The Guardian* listed her as one of their Top 100 Most Inspiring Women in the World. Forbes Magazine has ranked Angélique as the first woman in their list of the Most Powerful Celebrities in Africa. She is the recent recipient of the prestigious 2015 Crystal Award given by the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, the 2016 Amnesty International Ambassador of Conscience Award, and the 2018 German Sustainability Award.

As a performer, her striking voice, stage presence and fluency in multiple cultures and languages have won respect from her peers and expanded her following across national borders. Kidjo has cross-pollinated the West African traditions of her childhood in Benin with elements of American R&B, funk and jazz, as well as influences from Europe and Latin America.

After exploring the roads of Africa’s diaspora, offering a refreshing and electrifying take on the Talking Heads album *Remain In Light*, and reflecting on an icon of the Americas—celebrated salsa singer Celia Cruz, on Kidjo’s latest album, *Mother Nature*, the award-winning luminary joins forces with many of her musical progeny, including some of the most captivating young

creators of West African music, Afrobeat, Afro-pop, dancehall, hip-hop and alt-R&B. The result is a truly visionary body of work, rooted in a deep understanding of musical tradition yet endlessly forward-thinking and inventive. *Mother Nature* fulfills a promise Kidjo first made upon accepting the award for Best Global Music Album at the 2016 Grammys, then reiterated after winning the Best World Music Album prize in 2020 and proudly proclaiming: “The new generation of artists coming from Africa are going to take you by storm, and the time has come.” In sharing this album with the world, Kidjo hopes that her songs might inspire the kind of togetherness that ultimately leads to transcendent change. “This album is a love letter to Mother Earth and all the values we hold dear: truth, trust, love, connection,” says Kidjo. “For our own survival, we need to recognize the humanity that we all share and learn how to live together. There’s just no other way.”

The Grammy-Award winning *Celia* was recorded in New York and Paris, produced by David Donatien and mixed by Russell Elevado (D’Angelo, Kamasi Washington). Over the course of 10 beloved songs from Cruz’s extensive catalog but with special focus on her work from the 1950s, Angélique’s voice soars in lockstep with a grand presentation of rhythmic touchstones that delve deep into the history of music from Africa and its influence on the music of Cuba. Her interpretation of The Talking Heads’ classic 1980 album, *Remain in Light*, was recorded with superstar producer Jeff Bhasker (Kanye West, Rolling Stones,

Beyoncé), taking classic songs such as “Crosseyed and Painless,” “Once in a Lifetime,” and “Born Under Punches (The Heat Goes On)” and reinterpreting them with electrifying rhythms, African guitars and layered backing vocals.

Kidjo’s star-studded album *DJIN DJIN* won a Grammy Award for Best Contemporary World Album in 2008, and her album *OYO* was nominated for the same award in 2011. In January 2014 Angélique’s first book, a memoir titled *Spirit Rising: My Life, My Music* (Harper Collins) and her 12th album, *EVE* (Savoy/429 Records), were released to critical acclaim. *EVE* later went on to win the Grammy Award for Best World Music Album in 2015, and her historic, orchestral album *Sings with the Orchestre Philharmonique Du Luxembourg* (Savoy/429 Records) won a Grammy for Best World Music Album in 2016.

Angélique has gone on to perform this genre-bending work with several international orchestras and symphonies including the Bruckner Orchestra, The Royal Scottish National Orchestra, and the

Philharmonie de Paris. Her collaboration with Philip Glass, *IFÉ: Three Yorùbá Songs*, made its US debut to a sold out concert with the San Francisco Symphony in June 2015. In 2019, Angélique helped Philip Glass premiere his latest work, *Symphony No.12 Lodger*, a symphonic re-imaging of the David Bowie album of the same name, at a sold out performance at the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In addition to performing this new orchestral concert, Angélique continues to tour globally performing the high-energy concert she’s become famous for with her four-piece band.

Angélique also travels the world advocating on behalf of children in her capacity as a UNICEF and OXFAM goodwill Ambassador. At the G7 Summit in 2019, President Macron of France named Kidjo as the spokesperson for the AFAWA initiative (Affirmative Finance Action for Women in Africa) to help close the financing gap for women entrepreneurs in Africa. She has also created her own charitable foundation, Batonga, dedicated to support the education of young girls in Africa.

Connecting Artists to the Community



During her time on campus, Angélique Kidjo meets with Tuck School of Business students and Dartmouth community members to talk about her career and non-profit initiatives for girls’ empowerment in Africa.

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