



HOPKINS CENTER FOR THE ARTS 

presents

# FATOUMATA DIAWARA

## Post-Performance Discussion

You are invited to remain in the theater immediately following the performance for an informal discussion with Fatoumata Diawara.

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Sponsored by  **The Point**  
is Progressive Radio.

**Saturday, September 29, 2012 | 8 pm**  
Spaulding Auditorium | Dartmouth College

# BAND

Fatoumata Diawara *lead vocal, guitar*

Corine Thuy Thy *backing vocals*

Ekoue Jean-Baptiste Gbadoe *drum*

Jean Alain Hohy *bass*

Martin Grenier *guitar*

*Tonight's performance has no intermission.*

## ABOUT THE ARTIST

**Fatoumata Diawara** (aka Fatou) was born of Malian parents in the Ivory Coast in 1982. As a child she became a member of her father's dance troupe and was a popular performer of the wildly flailing *didadi* dance from Wassoulou, her ancestral home in western Mali. She was an energetic and headstrong girl and at the age of twelve her refusal to go to school finally prompted her parents to send her to live and be disciplined by an aunt in Bamako. She was not to see her parents again for over a decade.

Her aunt was an actress, and a few years after arriving, Fatou found herself on a film set looking after her aunt's infant child. The film's director was captivated by Fatou's adolescent beauty and she was given a one line part in the final scene of the film *Taafé Fangan* (The Power of Women). This led to her being given a lead role by the celebrated director Cheick Omar Sissoko in his 1999 film *La Genèse* (Genesis).

At the age of 18 Fatou travelled to Paris to perform the classical Greek role of Antigone on stage. After touring with the production she returned to Mali where she was given the lead in Dani Kouyaté's popular 2001 film *Sia, The Dream of the Python*. The film tells the story of a West African legend called Sia, a young girl who defies

tradition. To many in Mali, Guinea, Senegal and Burkina Faso, Fatou is Sia thanks to the film's enormous success throughout the region.

In 2002 Jean-Louis Courcoult, the director of the renowned French theater company, Royale de Luxe, travelled to Bamako to offer Fatou a part in his new production. An unmarried woman is considered a minor in Malian society so her family's permission was required. They refused. After much soul searching Fatou took the daring decision to run away and at Bamako airport she managed to board a plane for Paris, narrowly escaping the pursuit of the police who had been alerted to the girl's 'kidnapping.'

With Royal de Luxe, Fatou performed a variety of roles around the world including tours in Vietnam, Mexico and throughout Europe. During rehearsals and quiet moments she took to singing backstage for her own amusement. She was overheard by the director and was soon singing solo during the company's performances. Encouraged by the reception from audiences she began to sing in Parisian clubs and cafes during breaks from touring. Here she met Cheikh Tidiane Seck, the celebrated Malian musician and producer who invited her to travel with him back to Mali to work on two projects as chorus vocalist:

## ABOUT THE ARTIST CONTINUED

*Seya*, the Grammy nominated album by Mali's star Oumou Sangaré, and *Red Earth*, the Grammy winning Malian project by American jazz singer Dee Dee Bridgewater. When the albums were released Fatou toured worldwide as singer and dancer with both artists.

On her return to France, Fatou took the role of Karaba in the popular touring musical *Kirikou and Karaba*. She was encouraged to take the role by her friend Rokia Traore who also inspired her to take up the guitar: "To me it was a wonderful and daring thing: a Malian girl with an acoustic guitar. Why should the guitar be only for men?" Fatou bought herself a guitar and started to teach herself, and at the same time began to write down her own compositions.

She made the decision to dedicate herself to her passion, music. She worked to complete an album's worth of songs and started recording demos for which she composed and arranged all the titles, as well as playing guitar, percussion, bass and singing lead and harmony vocals. An introduction from Oumou Sangaré resulted in a record deal with World Circuit and the recording of her debut album.

Between recording sessions she found time to collaborate on Damon Albarn's *Africa Express* and contribute vocals to albums by Cheikh Lô, AfroCubism, Herbie Hancock's Grammy winning *Imagine Project* and *Orchestra Poly-Rythmo de Cotonou*.

Diawara's EP *Kanou* was released by World Circuit Records in the U.K. and Europe last spring and by Nonesuch Records in North America that fall. World Circuit released her debut album, *Fatou*, in Europe and the U.K. in the fall of 2011 to critical acclaim; Nonesuch released the album in North America on August 28, 2012.

Following the release Diawara performed as part of Damon Albarn's album and live project *Rocket Juice and the Moon*, which featured himself, Tony Allen, and Flea. She also is featured on Roberto Fonseca's most recent release *YO* and on Bobby Womack's album *The Bravest Man in the Universe*, which was co-produced by Albarn and Richard Russell. Diawara has also toured extensively, selling out venues across Europe, Canada, and Australia.

This is Fatoumata Diawara's first engagement at the Hopkins Center.

## CONNECTING ARTISTS TO THE COMMUNITY

While at Dartmouth, Fatoumata Diawara visited classes in the Women's & Gender Studies department and shared dinner with Dartmouth students. For more information on Hop Outreach & Arts Education, call 603.646.2010 or visit [hop.dartmouth.edu/outreach](http://hop.dartmouth.edu/outreach).

# ENSEMBLE BASIANI OF GEORGIA

WED | OCT 17 | 7 PM | SPAULDING AUDITORIUM

With powerful, velvety harmonies and quicksilver rhythmic shifts, Georgian choral music evokes the remote, pristine beauty of its homeland. Made up of singers from the choir of Tbilisi's main cathedral, this all-male group was the hit of a 2010 Lincoln Center festival of polyphony, mixing together haunting sacred chant and wild, primeval folk songs for a heady representation of one of the world's great singing cultures.



## CANZONIERE GRECANICO SALENTINO

WED  
FEB 6  
7 PM  
SPAULDING

Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino is at the heart of a new generation of artists reinterpreting the ancient, pagan *pizzica tarantata* music and dance of southern Italy's wild and remote Adriatic coast. A triumph at New York's 2012 globalFEST, they can enchant listeners with a tender love song and then electrify them with driving dance numbers on guitar, drums, accordion, bagpipes and a touch of 21st-century groove. Don't miss this New England debut!

## MUSIC DEPARTMENT RESIDENCY NEW SOUNDS FROM THE ARAB LANDS

TUE  
FEB 26  
7 PM  
SPAULDING

This adventurous program brings together eminent performer-composer-improvisers from Syria and Tunisia creating new music inspired by the rich cultural heritage of their Arab lands. Often performing on instruments not native to the Middle East, these artists exemplify the talent, achievement and breadth of a rising generation of cosmopolitan Arab musicians, combining Western classical music, jazz and classical Arabic music's microtonal subtleties and more than 50 scales.

For tickets or more info call the Box Office at 603.646.2422 or visit [hop.dartmouth.edu](http://hop.dartmouth.edu). Sign up for weekly HopMail bulletins online or become a fan of "Hopkins Center, Dartmouth" on Facebook

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Assistive Listening Devices available in the lobby.



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RECYCLES

If you do not wish to keep your playbill, please discard it in the recycling bin provided in the lobby. Thank you.