

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
AT PRINCETON

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
Humanities
Council

o dp
olivier tarpaga
dance project

AFRICAN
MUSIC at
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

McCarter

TIMBUKTU GROOVES FESTIVAL

Princeton University African Music Festival

Djandjoba: The Big Gathering

Sunday, October 1, 2023, 4:00 PM
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

PROGRAM

Opening: Djeliya/Griots' blessings (Burkina Faso, Mali)
Mandingo ancient singing technique

Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa (Zimbabwe)
Opening solo

Wassa Kouyaté & Flatie Dembele (Mali, Burkina Faso)
Ancient mandingo string music

Sō Percussion (USA)
Fēfē

15 MINUTE INTERMISSION

Dafra Kura Band (Burkina Faso)
Terre Rouge

The Princeton University Afrobeats Ensemble (*New Jersey*)
Funky camel

About the Department of Music:

The Department of Music at Princeton University provides its undergraduates—whether they major or minor in Music—the opportunity to learn from a world-renowned faculty of scholars and composers. Performance opportunities include student-led and departmental ensembles like symphony orchestras, multi-genre choruses, jazz, contemporary music, African music, steel band, laptop orchestra, and much more, and students have access to private instrumental and voice lessons from eminent performing artists. The graduate program offers two distinct and prestigious Ph.D. programs in composition or musicology; graduate students receive fully-funded, immersive experiences conducting research, advancing their craft, and collaborating with faculty within Princeton University's inspiring, interdisciplinary campus.

For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, and to sign-up for our mailing list, please visit music.princeton.edu.

PERFORMERS

Flatié Dembele

Flatié Dembelé is an accomplished grand master Balafon player, a master Kora player, a talented acoustic and electric guitarist and a drummer born in a Griot family in Burkina Faso. Dembelé started singing and playing numerous traditional instruments with his family at an early age and performed at traditional ceremonies. He has performed and toured internationally with the National Orchestra of Burkina Faso as lead drummer and with La Troupe de L'Avenue of Bobo-Dioulasso for several years. He is also the founder and artistic director of the internationally acclaimed ensemble Wassenemi (Dreaming for Freedom of Expression). In 2011, Flatié Dembelé was invited by the Department of Dance of the Ohio State University in Columbus, OH, to compose and perform live music for L'Ombre du Silence, a choreography by internationally acclaimed choreographer Olivier Tarpaga. From 1990-1991, Dembelé had the opportunity to work and exchange with Adama Boloba, Massa Dembélé, Tidiane Coulibaly, Baba Sako and many more. He has composed music for several established choreographers in Africa and Europe and has released several albums. Recently he has been invited to perform in Norway and open for world-renowned recording artist Youssou N'dour in Paris, France. M. Dembélé is the principal musician for Baker & Tarpaga Dance Project. Between 2010-2023, he has toured with Olivier Tarpaga and his Dafra Kura Band in Spain, India, Malaysia, United States, and Indonesia.

Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa

Ask Tanyaradzwa Tawengwa ('14) to name a role she'd like to serve and the response comes easily: "I want to be president of the University." Tanyaradzwa is like so many Princetonians – ambitious, fiercely intelligent, a true multi-hyphenate. Yet it is her way of walking in abundance that is perhaps her most striking and admirable quality. If you can't tell from her title – scholar, healer, composer, singer, and Zimbabwean gwenyambira (mbira player) – Tanyaradzwa is not one to sit idly by. In the last year and a half alone, she has completed a year-long tenure as a Hodder Fellow and embarked on the three-year START Entrepreneurs program. Both have brought her back not only to Old Nassau, but to the Music Department, where she maintains an office alongside former professors she now calls colleagues and friends, and passes the days refining her practice as a Cultural Protector of Zimbabwean ChiVanhú culture. In a way, she is picking up right where she left off – she was a boon to the Music Department during her undergraduate tenure nearly a decade ago, and today she continues to enrich our community through her myriad talents, her passion for teaching, and her remarkable generosity. Growing up in Harare, Zimbabwe as the granddaughter of entrepreneur George Chirume Tawengwa – founder of the Mushandirapamwe Hotel, the first Black-owned hotel in Highfield, Harare (formerly Salisbury) – Tanyaradzwa was inspired by a spirit of entrepreneurship and collaboration from a young age. She was also surrounded by music; her maternal great-grandfather had been a choral conductor, and both sides of her family enjoyed music-making.

PERFORMERS

Wassa Kouyaté

The highlight of the musical team will be Wassa Kouyaté. She is an emerging music celebrity griotte and the only professional female kora player in Mali. She will empower the music with her twenty one strings kora and inspire the dancers with ancient griots songs. Born in 1998 in Sikasso, Wassa is from Badougou Djoliba. Of Malinke tradition and from a family of griots, she is an author, composer, singer, and kora and piano player. She trained at the Mali School of Arts (INA) and at the Mali Conservatory with renowned teachers, including maestro Madou Diabaté. Wassa Kouyaté made the kora his favorite instrument. This instrument offers incredible melodies and musicality. Today, the kora is the pride and promotion of Mandinka culture throughout the world. Wassa Kouyaté multiplies musical and artistic experiences by mixing musical styles, combining tradition and modernity to perfection. She has several artistic collaborations, including the Africa EXPRESS Project in England. She is currently on tour with Nainy Diabaté's Kaladjula Band. She is also involved in several projects for the production of advertising spots.

Sō Percussion

For twenty years and counting, Sō Percussion has redefined chamber music for the 21st century through an “exhilarating blend of precision and anarchy, rigor and bedlam” (*The New Yorker*). They are celebrated by audiences and presenters for a dazzling range of work: for live performances in which “telepathic powers of communication” (*The New York Times*) bring to life the vibrant percussion repertoire; for an extravagant array of collaborations in classical music, pop, indie rock, contemporary dance, and theater; and for their work in education and community, creating opportunities and platforms for music and artists that explore the immense possibility of art in our time.

Dafra Kura Band

Hailing from Burkina Faso, Dafra Kura Band fuses the high energy of the griot ancestral tradition and the contemporary sounds of modern African cities sourced from Mandingo tradition, nomad desert blues, and Afrobeat. Dafra aims to bring people together to investigate tolerance and diversity and to draws in audiences from diverse communities to celebrate the rich diversity of West African music and dance.

The Princeton University Afrobeats Ensemble

The Afrobeats Ensemble explores sounds and rhythms originating from cities across Africa. Including Bamako and Johannesburg, Kinshasa and Abidjan, Lagos and Nairobi, Ouagadougou, and more. From Fela Kuti in Nigeria to Soukous and the Democratic Republic of Congo. From Coupé Décalé in Côte d'Ivoire, to Desert Rock and blues from Mali.

The use of photographic, video, or audio equipment is strictly prohibited. Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.
