

APOLLO

**Apollo Theater's *Africa Now!* &
African Film Festival 30th Anniversary Celebration
Present the Legendary
Oumou Sangaré
Saturday, April 4**

***Africa Now!* Performance Marks Grammy Award Winner
Sangaré's Apollo Theater Debut**

Harlem, NY – (February 18, 2020) – The Apollo Theater will host Malian musician and Grammy Award winner **Oumou Sangaré** for a one-night-only performance on **Saturday, April 4 at 8 p.m.**, produced by the Apollo Theater as part of *Africa Now!* and the African Film Festival (AFF) 30th Anniversary Celebration. One of West Africa's most celebrated vocalists, Sangaré infuses her music with traditional African percussion, distinctive vocals, and progressive social criticism, creating a unique sound that has propelled her onto the international stage. The evening will be hosted by Femi Oke, an award-winning journalist who has been recognized for her commitment to broadcasting complex African affairs to international audiences.

Sangaré's performance headlines the Apollo's eighth *Africa Now!* concert, an annual celebration of the best of contemporary music from Africa and its impact on the African diaspora. *Africa Now!* continues the Apollo's mission to serve as a partner in the articulation and projection of the African American narrative and its role in the development of American and global culture, advancing its impact worldwide. Sangaré's performance is also part of AFF's milestone 30th anniversary celebration highlighting its commitment to presenting enriching community and education programs.

"We are thrilled to partner with the African Film Festival to welcome international vocal treasure Oumou Sangaré to our stage," said Apollo Executive Producer **Kamilah Forbes**. "Sangaré's artistry and fearlessness in addressing issues of local and global importance through her music are exactly what we need in these times, and her impact on contemporary music, ranging from Beyoncé to Béla Fleck, resonates around the world."

"As we were approaching AFF's 30th anniversary, I was shocked at how time has flown," says **Mahen Bonetti**, AFF Founder and Executive Director. "In celebration of this milestone, we wanted an event which aligned with our vision; something very democratic, for the people, by the people, and with the people. Oumou and her sound embody the matriarchal society that Africa was, is, and will continue to be. I can think of no better artist than Sangaré or partner than the world-famous Apollo to help us celebrate 30 years."

For her Apollo debut, Sangaré, who is referred to as "The Songbird of Wassoulou," will perform music that spans traditional Wassoulou music to contemporary sounds coming out of Africa, complementing the Theater's mission in displaying how Africa's influence has not only expanded, but revolutionized culture and contemporary trends around the world. Later this year she is set to release *Mogoya Unplugged*, a new interpretation of her critically acclaimed 2017 album, *Mogoya*. Sangaré has performed for tens of thousands

of audience members across the globe; recorded one of Mali's all-time, best-selling records with her first album, *Moussolou*; and she was featured in the 2008 documentary film *Throw Down Your Heart*, which won a Grammy Award for "Best Pop Instrumental Performance," "Best Contemporary World Music Album," for Vol. 3, and was nominated for "Best Classical Crossover Album." She has collaborated with artists as diverse as Herbie Hancock, Seal, P!nk, and Jeff Beck, and most recently with her contribution on "Mood 4 Eva" by Beyoncé, which sampled Sangaré's "Diaraby Nene."

Africa Now! events also include an *Apollo Music Café* concert on April 3 at 9 p.m., curated by the World Music Institute, with a performance by Natu Camara—one of the brightest stars coming out of the West African nation of Guinea—and a setlist of Afrotech and Afrobeat hits spun by DJ Sabine Blaizin. Following Oumou Sangaré's performance on April 4, the *Apollo Music Café* will host the *Africa Now! After Party*. Past *Africa Now!* programs have included Yvonne Orji and Luvvie Ajayi of the podcast *Jesus and Joloff*, South African artist Black Coffee, and Malian singer Fatoumata Diawara, among others.

TICKET INFO

Tickets for Oumou Sangaré's *Africa Now!* performance, starting at \$30, and the *Apollo Music Café* are available now at the Apollo Theater Box Office: (212) 531-5305, 253 West 125th Street, and Ticketmaster at 1-800-745-3000 or www.ticketmaster.com.

SUPPORT

The Apollo's 2019-2020 season is made possible by leadership support from Coca-Cola, Citi, Ford Foundation, Howard Gilman Foundation, the Jerome L. Greene Arts Access Fund in the New York Community Trust, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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ABOUT OUMOU SANGARÉ

Stylish, elegant, and charismatic with a soulful, soaring voice, Sangaré has become an emblem for African womanhood and a role model for women everywhere through her advocacy for various women's issues. She won the 2011 Grammy Award for "Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals," and in 2017 won the Artist Award at WOMEX in recognition of both her music and advocacy. In 2017, she also paired with cutting-edge producer Ludovic Bruni to record *Mogoya*, her fifth studio album since her recording debut in 1990. *Mogoya* is deeply rooted in the continuity of Malian tradition but also integrates contemporary sounds coming from the African continent and across the globe.

ABOUT THE APOLLO THEATER

The legendary Apollo Theater—the soul of American culture—plays a vital role in cultivating emerging artists and launching legends. Since its founding, the Apollo has served as a center of innovation and a creative catalyst for Harlem, the city of New York, and the world.

With music at its core, the Apollo's programming extends to dance, theater, spoken word, and more. This includes the world premiere of the theatrical adaptation of Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me* and the New York premiere of the opera *We Shall Not Be Moved*; special programs such as the blockbuster concert *Bruno Mars Live at the Apollo; 100: The Apollo Celebrates Ella*; and the annual *Africa Now! Festival*. The non-profit Apollo Theater is a performing arts presenter, commissioner, and collaborator that also produces festivals, large-scale dance and musical works organized around a set of core initiatives that

celebrate and extend the Apollo's legacy through a contemporary lens, including the *Women of the World (WOW) Festival* as well as other multidisciplinary collaborations with partner organizations.

Since introducing the first *Amateur Night* contests in 1934, the Apollo Theater has served as a testing ground for new artists working across a variety of art forms and has ushered in the emergence of many new musical genres—including jazz, swing, bebop, R&B, gospel, blues, soul, and hip-hop. Among the countless legendary performers who launched their careers at the Apollo are Ella Fitzgerald, Sarah Vaughan, Billie Holiday, James Brown, Stevie Wonder, Gladys Knight, Luther Vandross, H.E.R., D'Angelo, Lauryn Hill, Machine Gun Kelly and Miri Ben Ari; and the Apollo's forward-looking artistic vision continues to build on this legacy.

In fall 2020, the Apollo Theater will mark its first ever physical expansion with the theaters at the Victoria, part of the vision for a future Apollo Performing Arts Center. The theaters at the Victoria will support the growth of the Apollo's artistic programming as it continues to provide a home to artists of color, create an expanded 21st century American performing arts canon, and provide additional educational and community programming in Harlem and beyond. For more information about the Apollo, visit www.ApolloTheater.org.

ABOUT THE AFRICAN FILM FESTIVAL, INC.

African Film Festival, Inc. (AFF) was launched in 1990 as a vehicle to provide exposure to arts, literature, and culture through the screening of cinematic works made by and about the people of Africa and the African diaspora. Since 1993, AFF's flagship program, the New York African Film Festival (NYAFF) has brought the best in African and diaspora film and culture to New York City. Co-presented with Film Society of Lincoln Center and Brooklyn Academy of Music, the festival is a major initiative of AFF's mission to advance an enhanced understanding of African and diaspora culture through the moving image. AFF is a non-profit 501(c)(3) arts organization.

AFF offers diverse platforms for the wide distribution of African media through year-round programming and events, community, and education programs. Through its publications, AFF documents the evolution of African and diaspora cinema and culture, making this discourse accessible to a larger public. Bypassing economic, class, and racial barriers, AFF is committed to increasing visibility and recognition for African media artists by introducing African film and culture to a broad range of audiences in the United States and abroad.

For 30 years, AFF has screened over 3,000 films and brought African film and culture to a diverse audience of over 600,000. We have built a platform for African diaspora filmmakers and artists to share their work and win international recognition and have contributed to the greater integration of African films into festivals and cultural institutions around the world. For more information about AFF, visit www.africanfilmny.org

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