

Le Ballet National du Senegal

Wednesday, October 9, 8 pm, 2002

Zellerbach Hall

Kuuyamba

The Spirit of West Africa in Music, Song, and Dance

Prof. Ousmane Diakhate, general director

Bouly Sonko, ballet director

Dancers

Demba Djiby Ndalar Sene

Auguste Nanky

Daro Diop

Mariama Basse

Mama Djitte

Mame Diarra Ndong

Awa Badji

Tougourou Camara

Samba Bella Sall

Moussa Sonko

Seyni Niasse

Mahamadou Balde

Dionsoba Konte

Khalifa Ba

Tacko Demba Sissoko

Aissatou Goudiaby

Drummers

Macire Drame

Birame Mboup

Mamadou Fall

Waly Toure

Ibrahima Fall Diagne

Alpha Diene

Mamadou Diao

Demba Balde

Mor Coumba Mbengue

Fotigui Toure

Bacary Goudiaby

Balafon Players

Mamadou Camara

Abdoulaye Mane

Singer

Almamy Cissokho

Columbia Artists Management Inc., New York

Tim Fox, personal direction

Produced in association with

2Luck Concepts

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with the support of the Friends of Cal Performances.

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In Mandingue, the Kuuyamba is the second sojourn in the sacred forest.
It is the initiation where the transition from adolescence to adulthood is achieved—
through rhythm, dance, and song—to bring back to life the beauty and the freedom of the body.

ACT I

The Kuuyamba is composed of three parts:
the Sama, the Djigui, and the Silimbo.

Sama

Through dance and sacred songs,
the initiated ask the spirits for their
permission to organize a Silimbo.

Djigui

The Alcali, chief of the village, appears
after a mystic meeting with the spirits.
He announces to the village the good news:
the spirits have given their approval.

Silimbo

The news spreads and the Silimbo ceremony
is performed, featuring rhythm, percussion, colorful pageantry, and the beauty of the body.

Le Yella

This delicate scene features the incomparable melody of Toucouleur songs and the imperial grace
of young girls and boys dancing to the muffled sound of the gourds.

Interlude with kora

The kora is a kind of harp with 21 strings
registering soft sonorities.

Bara Mbaye

Bara Mbaye is the opportunity for all the Ndananes—men and women, masters of their art—to join
together, feasting and talking to the sound of traditional musical instruments. Here, the young
Ndananes, virtuosos of rhythm and dance, meet as rivals of ardor and expertise, under the magic
wand of the lama,
a small drum that is the joy of Senegalese women; with its pulsations, it gives free rein
to their legendary sensuality.

ACT II

Peulh Acrobats

The Peulh shepherds are always seeking new areas of pasture for their animals. Once settled, the
men enjoy a spirited, moonlit competition with each incredible feat topping the last.

Amiran Miran

This dance shows off the
beauty of the African woman, which is
two-fold—the ebony blackness of her skin
and the exciting sensuality of her body.

Interlude with balafon malinke and dan

The balafon malinke is a xylophone-like
instrument that is traditionally used to greet the king and queen as they arrive at the palace.
Originally from the Tambacounda region, only initiated men played the dan, a traditional string
instrument, which is used to celebrate important events such as weddings,
circumcisions, and harvests.

Diali-Foli

Sounou, Téréné, Kégné—all familiar names to the population of Western Senegal. Médoune
Khoule, tam-tam virtuoso, leads the playing. The echo of djimbé, which he makes resonate in his

hands, has passed on his message.
From the fortresses of Fonta, Kédougou, Tambacounda, the villagers run towards him. Joyful
dances and ritual dances
follow each other.

Ballet National du Senegal is the premier dance company performing the traditional dances of West Africa—the ensemble that the finest young African dancers and musicians aspire to join. The group was founded by poet and national leader Leopold Senghor in 1960 (the year of Senegal's independence), and has since been acclaimed worldwide. The ensemble has made 22 sold-out tours of North America (most recently in 1998).

“Exuberance” is the word most often used in the scores of glowing reviews received by the Ballet National du Senegal. The artists' performances are characterized by high-energy choreography that explodes from the stage, performed by dancers with unmatched physical gifts and discipline. In addition, there is an infectious feeling of joy that fills the stage for every performance. These are exceptional dancers who not only perform impeccably, but also share their culture and traditions with the audience. The result is moving, involving, impressive, and very sensual.

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