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 Contact: Kristen Wicker  
 wicker@udayton.edu

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**NEWS RELEASE**

**UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON & CITYFOLK PRESENT MAMADOU DIABATE ON OCT. 1;  
 MUSICIAN TO PRESENT SOUNDS AND INSTRUMENTS OF MALI, WEST AFRICA**

DAYTON, Ohio — Mamadou Diabate is an artist known for his mastery of traditional African music and blending that music with more contemporary, American-born styles. He will perform at 8 p.m. **Wednesday, Oct. 1**, at the Kennedy Union Boll Theatre on the University of Dayton campus.

The concert is the first in the three-concert World Rhythms Series, a new arts event this year. The series is a collaboration between the University and CITYFOLK, a Dayton-based organization that presents traditional and ethnic arts.

Since he was 4 years old, Diabate has played the *kora*, a West African harp-lute with 21 strings stretched across a tall bridge that produces a soft, delicate sound. He is a descendant of a long line of musician-storytellers, known as the *jeli* or *griot*, who preserve tradition through song.

Yet Diabate, a resident of Ithaca, N.Y., since 1996, also infuses time-honored melodies with elements of jazz and blues. He has recorded with the likes of blues musicians Taj Mahal and Guy Davis and jazz musicians Randy Weston and Donald Byrd.

His debut album, "*Tunga*," released in 2000, melded traditional Malian music with other African styles of playing and American jazz. Critics praised it for bridging the past and the future and for making his ancient instrument sound as though it was invented yesterday.

Joining Mamadou Diabate during his UD performance will be lead singer and dancer Adjaratou Tapani Demba, *ngoni* player Cheikh Hamala Diabate, and *balafon* player Balla Kouyate. All are masters of traditional Malian music and descendants of *griot* families now live in the United States.

Adjaratou Tapani Demba frequently is asked to perform at cultural ceremonies, such as baby-naming ceremonies and weddings. She has performed in France, Poland, Belgium and throughout the United States.

OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS  
 300 College Park Dayton, Ohio 45469-1679  
 (937) 229-3241 (937) 229-3063 Fax  
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Cheikh Hamala Diabate plays the small, four- or five-stringed lute *ngoni*, ancestor of the banjo. He has performed throughout West Africa, Europe, Asia and Canada, and in recent years, his work has combined traditional African music with American bluegrass.

Balla Kouyate began to play the *balafon*, a xylophone-like instrument, at the age of 6. Also born into a *griot* family, he has played with African artists on nearly two dozen albums, and he has performed with The National Percussion of Mali and with various artists throughout Europe and the United States.

Two other concerts compose the World Rhythms Series: Gao Hong — master of the *pipa*, a guitar-like, four-string lute — and Chen Tao, using an assortment of bamboo flutes, will play Chinese folk music during a Nov. 14 concert at Sears Recital Hall in the Jesse Philips Humanities Center on UD's campus. The octet Les Yeux Noirs will perform its unique combination of Gypsy and Jewish music, playing traditional and original songs, on Feb. 7 in the Kennedy Union Boll Theatre.

A grant from the Montgomery County Arts and Cultural District helped make the World Rhythms Series possible.

Season tickets for all three World Rhythms Series performances are still available and cost \$40 each. Tickets to the Mamadou Diabate show are \$15 each. Contact the UD Box Office at (937) 229-2545.

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For media interviews, contact UD Manager of Arts and Cultural Events **Barbra Lupp** at (937) 229-2787 or via e-mail at [barbra.lupp@notes.udayton.edu](mailto:barbra.lupp@notes.udayton.edu) or **Dave Barber**, CITYFOLK's director of programs, at (937) 223-3655 or via e-mail at [dbarber@cityfolk.org](mailto:dbarber@cityfolk.org). For more on Mamadou Diabate, see [www.onqueueartists.com/mamadou.html](http://www.onqueueartists.com/mamadou.html). For more on the World Rhythms Series, see <http://artsseries.udayton.edu>.