



KALABANTÉ

AFRIQUE EN CIRQUE

PHILADELPHIA DEBUT | PHILADELPHIA PREMIERE

ARTISTIC DIRECTOR AND COMPANY FOUNDER Yamoussa Bangoura

COSTUME DESIGN Jacinthe Perrault

LIGHTING DESIGN Stéphane Ménigot

TECHNICAL AND SOUND DIRECTION Marc Laliberté

SUNDAY, **MAY 1** @ 3 PM

Annenberg Center, Zellerbach Theatre

There will be no intermission.

PROGRAM NOTES

The *Afrique En Cirque* show symbolizes the strength, agility and joy of life found in African youth. A handful of daring acrobats, accompanied by their musicians, perform to the pulsating rhythm of the djembes of Guinea with their authentic and original choreography and acrobatics. With the melodious sound of the Kora, Yamoussa Bangoura transports us to a place where the diversity of traditional African arts is illuminated and combined with the virtuosity of a modern North American circus performance.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Kalabanté Productions was created by Yamoussa Bangoura, a multidisciplinary artist of Guinean origin. Bangoura's long-term dream was to create a school of circus arts and direct his own multidisciplinary company specializing in the African arts. As the company director, he develops his own shows which, over the past several years, have received increased attention and recognition in the Québec circus arts community and worldwide. *Kô Ryass*, and other shows such as *Kumbaya*, *Uno*, *Kira Nene* and *Afrique en Cirque* have been performed worldwide. Several new projects are in development for the coming years, which will continue to disseminate and promote the values of the company.

Bangoura first became interested in the circus arts as a young man growing up in Conakry, Guinea in the 1990's. He studied the circus performers he saw on European TV and practiced on the beach and dirt around his home. He also studied the Nyamakala tradition of circus, practiced by the Fula people of West Africa. He eventually joined Guinea's original circus company, Circus Baobab, with which he toured Africa and Europe. With this company, he was able to spend time in Spain and France where he honed many of the European style circus skills.

In the early 2000's, he was recruited to come to Canada with Cirque Éloize, a Montréal-based Canadian cirque company. While in Canada, he also performed with Cirque du Soleil and Cavalia (cirque with horses). In 2007, Bangoura realized his dream and opened his own company, Kalabanté Productions, in Montréal. He recruited many of his extended family members to join the company, including his twin sisters, brothers and cousins.

The company began doing shows in Québec, and over the years, expanded to all of Canada, performing throughout the year. Working at many of the prestigious children's festivals throughout the company, Kalabanté has made a name for itself as a top children's performing group as well as an adult circus performing company.

In 2010, Kalabanté was part of a special project, the making of the documentary film, *Circus Without Borders*. The film was a collaboration between Kalabanté and Artcirq, a circus company in the Arctic. Artcirq visited Guinea and Kalabanté went to the Arctic Circle. Both companies shared humble origins and worked closely on improving conditions in their community for youth and vulnerable community members.

In 2018 and 2019, the company performed internationally at the Sziget Festival in Budapest, Hungary and the International Festival of Santa Lucia in Monterrey, Mexico before crowds of up to 21,000 people. Also, in 2018, Kalabanté opened its own studio and school in Montréal, where there are continuous classes offered in African dance, cirque and drumming.

Yamoussa Bangoura, artistic director of the company, works to pass on and share his values and passions in the circus arts. He teaches various artistic disciplines, such as African dance and traditional music of West Africa.

Kalabanté Productions is proud to be able to share its original work and achievements and also assist with the humanitarian mission to help the Guinean community from which Bangoura and many of the company members come.