




November 5

Wednesday

7:30PM

Malian Maestro

Toumani Diabaté, solo

 Pre-Concert Talk featuring Toumani Diabaté, 6:30PM. Free to ticket holders.

Herbst Theatre

"Diabaté's two-handed flurries flow like a clear, life-giving stream." —Boston Globe

Toumani Diabaté is the living voice of one of the most beautiful sounds in the world: the kora, a 21-string West African harp that has been played by griots in the Diabaté line for 71 generations. Toumani's father, the revered Sidiki Diabaté, made the first recording on the instrument, and Toumani absorbed knowledge of the kora by watching him play. But growing up in Mali's capital Bamako in the '70s and '80s, Toumani also had his ears open to the sounds on the streets. American soul music was all the rage, and he listened closely to everyone from Jimi Hendrix and Led Zeppelin to Jimmy Smith and Sly Stone.

A close friend and frequent musical partner with Mali's late guitar legend Ali Farka Touré, Diabaté won a Best Traditional World Music Album Grammy in 2006 for their collaboration *In the Heat of the Moon*. While dedicated to preserving the traditional musical forms of the Mandé people, he is also the kora's leading ambassador. A brilliant improviser, he has collaborated with a stellar array of artists, appearing on Bjork's album *Volta*, jazz trombonist Roswell Rudd's *MAL!cool*, and Taj Mahal's *Kulanjan*. As a bandleader, Diabaté promotes a transnational vision reflecting the ancient Manding empire, which encompassed a huge swath of territory from the 13th through the 17th century. His latest album, *Mandé Variations*, is a solo tour de force featuring his inventions inspired by traditional melodies of the Mandé people.

TOUMANI DIABATÉ
Toumani Diabaté kora

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Mr. and Mrs. Joe Sherman



November 6

Thursday

7:30PM

Natacha Atlas Rahim Alhaj

Herbst Theatre

An icon of Middle Eastern music, Natacha Atlas is a riveting singer, belly dancer, and cultural assimilator. Known for her work with Jah Wobble and the globetrotting Transglobal Underground, Atlas turns to the acoustic roots of Arabic music on her recent album *Al Hina* (World Village). A one-woman multicultural wave, Atlas expresses her complex identity with an embracing musical vision. Born in Brussels to a father of Moroccan, Egyptian, Sephardic Jewish and Palestinian ancestry and a British mother who converted to Islam, Atlas grew up speaking Arabic, French, English, and Spanish (all of which she has used in her music). Strongly identified with Egyptian culture, she often includes verses from the Quran in her lyrics. Politically, she's an outspoken proponent of co-existence who has often called for peace and understanding between Muslims and Jews.

Since fleeing his native Iraq in 1991 with Saddam Hussein's henchmen hot on his trail, oud master Rahim Alhaj has sought to give voice to the plight of the Iraqi people. Now based in Albuquerque, the conservatory-trained composer is a skilled improviser who has collaborated with jazz musicians such as guitarist Bill Frisell. He's also toured widely with a string quartet, and has developed a body of music that he plays with symphony orchestras. His original compositions are pointillist soundscapes designed to capture specific situations, moods and locales in his homeland. Alhaj performs tonight with Grammy-nominated percussionist Souhail Kaspar, his guest on the recent album *Home Again*.

NATACHA ATLAS

Natacha Atlas vocals, dancing
Harvey Brough piano
Ali Abdel-Alim darabuka
Clara Sanabras guitar
Andrew Hamill acoustic bass
Ian Burdge cello
Louai Alhenawi ney
Julian Ferraretto viola
Samy Bishai violin

RAHIM ALHAJ

Rahim Alhaj oud
Souhail Kaspar percussion