

World Premiere

Yimbégré

Souleymane Badolo

Commissioned by BAM

DATES: DEC 2—5 at 7:30pm
LOCATION: BAM Fisher (Fishman Space)
RUN TIME: Approx 1hr (no intermission)

#YIMBÉGRÉ
#BAMNextWave

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Support for Muslim Stories: Global to Local provided by the Building Bridges Program of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art.

Support for new dance presentations in the BAM Fisher provided by the Mertz Gilmore Foundation.

Souleymane Badolo is the recipient of the 2015 Harkness Dance Residency at the BAM Fisher.

This production is made possible with support from the Joseph V. Melillo Fund for Artistic Innovation.

Yimbégré

CONCEIVED AND CHOREOGRAPHED BY
Souleymane Badolo

PERFORMED BY
Sylvestre Koffitse Akakpo-Adzaku
Souleymane Badolo
Mamoudou Konate

ORIGINAL MUSIC
Mamoudou Konate

ADDITIONAL MUSIC
Dar-es-Salaam by Diamond Platnumz

LIGHTING DESIGNER/
PRODUCTION STAGE MANAGER
Carol Mullins

ASSISTANT LIGHTING DESIGNER
Serena Wong

COSTUME DESIGN
Amanda Shafran

BADOLO'S COSTUME BY
Ali Savadogo

PRODUCTION COORDINATOR
Leah Moriarty

GENERAL MANAGER
Amy Cassello

ABOUT *Yimbégré*

One day recently, a group of French friends, artists and relatives, came to visit me and to discover my beautiful Burkina Faso, called the country of men of integrity, or dignified men. I invited them to attend with me the funeral of an old woman, one of my grandmothers, and there in the funeral rite they saw the masked figure, his gestures and actions understood by those initiated in the language of his movement. My French friends thought the masked figure was dancing—they saw the movement, the bowing down, the standing up, the swaying back and forth, moving near and away.

But I said to them it is not the dancing they know. This masked figure who shakes, moves forward and back, and bows down, is a spirit transformed, sharing a language of deeper meaning, a codified language of movement that must be known to appreciate the messages within. Listen to me very carefully: in the ceremony of mask, movement, and drums, the spirit makes known to us that here in this land, in this field of corn, the corn is lying with the old bones; this is where the old have been buried. And with this I mean that we have immense riches to discover—riches revealed in the language of this movement and in the sounds of the drums, the bendéré, louanga, and wíggá.

—Souleymane Badolo

Who's Who

Benin, Crossroads, Gasango Dance Company, Seattle); and Harold George (*History*, Dunia Dance Theater, Belgium). He has taught and presented internationally for a decade at venues including Dance New Amsterdam, the University of Lomé (Togo), and Cleo Parker Robinson Dance.

SYLVESTRE KOFFITSE
AKAKPO-ADZAKU
Performance

Sylvestre Koffitse Akakpo-Adzaku is originally from Togo, West Africa and is currently based in New York City. He is the founder of Kor & D'Kor Dance Company and presented his most recent work, *I Am That and More*, at the Judson Church (Movement Research) this past December. He also presented his works *Reality* and *Frontier(s)* at the French Cultural Center in Togo and the Bates Dance Festival. In Burkina Faso, Akakpo-Adzaku danced *Wando the Mask* with choreographer Souleymane Badolo's company Kongo Ba Téria. He also assisted choreographer Nora Chipaumire in the studio and performed her work at the 92nd Street Y and Baryshnikov Arts Center. He performed in *Le Sacre du Printemps* at the Joyce Theater and Jacob's Pillow during La Compagnie Heddy Maalem's world tour (2008—09). Akakpo-Adzaku has collaborated and performed with many other dancers and choreographers including Rainy Demerson (*Unearth, Sacred Space*, Kumble Theater, NY); Onye Ozuzu (*And They Lynched Him, The Survivor*, University of Colorado, Boulder); Etienne Cakpo (*Horizon, Mikwabo*

SOULEYMANE BADOLO
Concept & Performance

Souleymane "Solo" Badolo is a Brooklyn-based choreographer and dancer born in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. He started his professional career as a dancer for the DAMA, a traditional African dance company. In 1993, he founded his own Burkina Faso-based troupe, Kongo Ba Téria, which fuses traditional African dances with Western contemporary dance and continues to tour internationally. Badolo has danced with the world-renowned contemporary African dance company Salia ni Seydou, worked with French choreographers Elsa Wolliaaston and Mathilde Monnier, and performed with the National Ballet of Burkina. He and Kongo Ba Téria are featured in the widely-screened documentary *Movement (R)évolution Africa* which documents the continent's emergent experimental dance scene. Since moving to New York City in 2009, Badolo has created a number of solo projects commissioned and presented by Danspace Project, New York Live Arts, Dance New Amsterdam, Harlem Stage, 92nd Street Y, Museum of Art & Design, and the River to River Festival (R2R). He has collaborated with Nora Chipaumire, Ralph Lemon, Reggie Wilson, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar



Photo: Souleymane Badolo by Nina Mouritzen

of Urban Bush Women. His ongoing research in Africa has been supported by the Suitcase Fund of New York Live Arts. Badolo was nominated for a 2011 Bessie Award as outstanding emerging choreographer and in 2012, received the juried Bessie Award (panel included Lar Lubovitch, Yvonne Rainer, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar). In summer 2013, he was named artist-in-residence at the institute for curatorial practice and performance at Wesleyan University and Mount Tremper Arts. Badolo was commissioned to create a dance for Philadanco as part of *James Brown: Get on the Good Foot*, produced by the Apollo Theater in October 2013, followed by national and international touring dates. Badolo is a participant in the Extended Life program of the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council (LMCC) and the recipient of Wesleyan University's 2014 Mariam McGlone emerging choreographer award. He graduated from Bennington College with an MFA in June 2013, and since that time has been a guest instructor at The New School and Bennington. Badolo was selected as Harkness Foundation artist-in-residence at the BAM Fisher for summer 2015.

MAMOUDOU KONATE
Music & Performance

Master drummer, Mamoudou Konate hails from Burkina Faso, West Africa. In African drumming, the title of master drummer is given to a drummer well-known by other masters for his considerable skill and knowledge, ability to play any part of any rhythm for his own as well as neighboring

ethnic groups in any ceremonial situation, and who knows the songs and dances that go with each rhythm. As a descendant of gifted ancestors of Griots in the Sundiata Keita family, Konate has an inborn ability to feel and communicate, through his drums and music, the old stories and histories of the ancestors of West Africa. A professional percussionist with more than 27 years of experience, Konate has performed throughout Africa, Europe, and America, and his skills, knowledge, and talents keep traditional West African drumming alive. With the constant evolving styles of music, Konate has picked up new rhythms along his travels and has incorporated them into his own individual style. In addition to being able to play any genre of music, old and new, Konate is also an accomplished composer, singer, arranger, director, and band leader.

ALI SAVADOGO
Costume Design

Ali Savadogo was born in Ouahigouya in the north region of Burkina Faso. From his home country, he designs clothing and textiles for display and purchase across Africa and Europe, specializing in embroidered finishes. This past summer, he participated in the Afro-Caribbean Fair in Paris, the Parade Gala Dinner organized by the Ouagadougou Chamber of Commerce, and Fashion Danfani.

AMANDA SHAFRAN
Costume Design

Amanda Shafran is an international theatrical designer, yogi, and mixed media artist based in New York City. She was previously in the 2015 Next Wave with Seán Curran Company for *Dream'd in a Dream*. Selected theater credits include *Cloned!* (Signature Theater), *I Am the Wind* (59E59), *Carcass* (HERE Arts Center), *The Balcony* (Horizon Theater Rep), *The Wild Duck* (NYU), and *Boom* (NYU). Her film work includes *#GymShorts* and *Coconut Grove*. She has also worked in opera including *Encounter* (Beijing National Center for the Arts), *Actéon* (Kennedy Center), and *The Telephone* (Alchemical Theater). Additionally, Shafran is continuously working on a collection of evolving paintings and drawings entitled FibroFigures. She earned an MFA at NYU's Tisch School of the Arts. amandashafran.com.

LEAH MORIARTY
Production Coordinator

Leah Moriarty is a Brooklyn-based dance artist. She is currently performing with Moving Spirits and Movement of the People Dance Company. Her choreography is currently being performed as part of a University of Massachusetts dance concert, and she works as an on-site coordinator for ThisWorldMusic, a drum and dance intensive program in Ghana. She is elated to be part of this work with Souleymane Badolo at BAM.

CAROL MULLINS
Lighting Design/
Production Stage Manager

Carol Mullins designed the lighting for Souleymane Badolo's *Benon* at Danspace Project in 2014 as well as his previous dances there in 2010. In addition to lighting many of his earlier works, Mullins designed lighting for Douglas Dunn's *Aidos* at BAM Fisher in 2015. Recently she designed lighting for Vicky Shick, Steve Paxton, and Lisa Nelson, among others. She has been a resident lighting designer at the Danspace Project since 1982 and has received three Bessie Awards and one OBIE for her lighting.

Thanks!

For making this dream season possible, I want to thank Joe Melillo and everyone here at BAM, Lucy Sexton and the Bessie committee, Joan Finkelstein and the Harkness Foundation for Dance, and Christopher Pennington and the Jerome Robbins Foundation. Since coming to the United States six years ago, I have been fortunate to find a place in the dance community and comfort in my spiritual community. I am especially grateful to my dear Nora Chipaumire; the beautiful people at Bennington College who have stood by me for many years (Terry Creach, Susan Sgorbati, Dana Reitz, and Michael Wimberly); and Sam Miller and staff for Extended Life and the R2R Festival, places where I have been able to try out many ideas in the safety of the studios and in the warm sun.

Thank you to Kate Peila, Bill Schaffner, Ivan Sygoda, Tony Turner, Charmaine Warren, Tim Whinsey, Reggie Wilson, and Jawole Willa Jo Zollar for your help and friendship along the way. I am eternally grateful to all of the great New York City institutions who have hosted my work heretofore: Dance Theater Workshop/New York Live Arts, Harlem Stage, the Apollo Theater, Dance New Amsterdam, 92Y, Mount Tremper Arts, TOPAZ Arts, and Danspace Project.

I could not have made this piece without the generous spirits and collective talent of Sylvestre, Mamoudou, Carol, and Leah. Merci beaucoup to them and to you, our audience.

Muslim Stories

Under the programming umbrella of Global BAM, BAM has had a long and dynamic history of presenting transnational events that connect artists and audiences from around the world. From the annual DanceAfrica Festival to the countless international artists who headline the Next Wave Festival and Winter/Spring Season every year, BAM is committed to serving as a forum not only for excellent art across disciplines, but also for innovative work that furthers cross-cultural dialogue and understanding.

Presenting the work of artists from the Muslim world has been a particularly important part of this legacy. World music icons Youssou N'Dour (Senegal) and Rokia Traoré (Mali) headlined the Nonesuch celebration during the 2014 Next Wave Festival. *Mic Check: Hip-Hop from North Africa and the Middle East* (2013) showcased the growing hip-hop scene in those regions with energetic performances by artists such as Amkoullé (Mali), Deeb (Egypt), El Général (Tunisia), and Shadia Mansour (Palestine/UK). *Muslim Voices: Arts & Ideas*, BAM's 2009 partnership with Asia Society and NYU Center for Dialogues, engaged with audiences through an academic and policy conference as well as mainstage, film, and visual arts components. And, in 1996, Anglo-Punjabi alt-rock band Cornershop paired with Pakistani Muslim devotional ensemble the Sabri Brothers in a groundbreaking double bill.

This fall, with support from the Building Bridges Program of the Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art, BAM

is proud to build on this history by launching *Muslim Stories: Global to Local*, a two-year initiative that will feature the vibrant range of performing and cinematic arts being produced by artists from contemporary Muslim cultures and communities.

Muslim Stories will include rich programming for audiences of all ages and interests and from across the world—from Senegal to Indonesia, as well as in communities from the United Kingdom to Sri Lanka. “We believe that performance is an ideal entry point for cross-cultural exploration and that providing context for artists, art forms, and perspectives is key to enhancing understanding,” says BAM Executive Producer Joseph V. Melillo. “*Muslim Stories* will bring to life the cultural diversity and complexity of the Muslim world through its rich contemporary art forms, too long ignored in our country.”

The first *Muslim Stories* presentation was *Dream'd in a Dream*, from New York-based Seán Curran Company and Kyrgyz folk music ensemble Ustatshakirt Plus, who met during a DanceMotion USASM (a program of the US Department of State and BAM) residency in the Kyrgyz Republic. *Dream'd in a Dream* offered a particularly auspicious series kick off—it allowed audiences to engage in a musical tradition uncommon to New York City, and it demonstrated the intriguingly beautiful results of two disparate cultural traditions coming together. From Dec 2—5, Burkina Faso choreographer and Brooklyn transplant Souleymane Badolo performs *Yimbégré* (“beginning”) at the BAM Fisher, exploring the tension between roots and aspirations. Thanks for joining us.



Photos: Souleymane Badolo by Nina Mouritzen



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