

#YoussouNDOUR

BAM

Youssou NDOUR

and

Le Super Étoile de Dakar

May 20 & 21, 2016 at 8pm | BAM Howard Gilman Opera House

YOUSOU NDOUR

Born in Dakar in 1959, Youssou NDOUR is a passionate singer, composer, bandleader, and producer whose strikingly expressive voice transformed both the *mbalax* music of his native Senegal and Western pop. NDOUR returned to the US in September 2014 with his band, Le Super Étoile de , which has recorded and toured the world with NDOUR for 30 years. With his traditional griot oral history, Wolof lyrics, and praise-singing with Afro-Cuban arrangements, NDOUR was named “African Artist of the Century” by the English publication *iRoots* and to the TIME 100—*Time* magazine’s annual list of “the hundred men and women whose power, talent, or moral example is transforming the world.” NDOUR was the subject of the documentary *I Bring What I Love*, about Senegal’s divided reaction to his Grammy Award-winning album *Egypt*, a deeply spiritual album dedicated to a more

tolerant view of Islam (both the album and the documentary soundtrack were released by Nonesuch). In 2013 NDOUR was awarded Sweden’s prestigious Polar Music Prize. He has traced the roots of his griot (traditional oral historian) heritage, and explored his Muslim faith and its sonic impact by collaborating with Egyptian musicians, winning a Grammy for his efforts.

For NDOUR, this freedom and directness translates into a stronger medium for the messages that he, too, has dedicated his career to spreading. His voice has launched Senegalese social movements (“Set” became a rallying cry for urban youth activists in 1994). His songs have whipped up international support in the fight against malaria (2009’s “Fight Malaria”) and for women’s rights (1989’s “Shaking the Tree” with Peter Gabriel), to name just a few of the issues NDOUR has addressed. His work as a UNICEF ambassador—and as a global pop

star dubbed “the world’s most famous singer” by *Rolling Stone*—has taken him across the planet.

On his travels, the importance of those who had gone before him hit home, musicians like Bob Marley who hailed from long-denigrated places and yet managed to parlay powerful music into global stardom and a new social consciousness. “When I started traveling, I started seeing how Bob Marley had affected the world. I saw how someone from an under-developed country can become a star, someone who’s really loved,” NDOUR explains. “He was my example. I knew looking at Bob Marley that I could do my music from Senegal and touch the world.”

In reggae, NDOUR also heard the powerful transits that music from Africa made, as slavery ripped people and sounds from their homelands: “When people were taken from Africa, the music left, too.” Reggae’s African heart had long intrigued NDOUR, whether listening to Marley songs in the market or at home on his uncle’s records. He fantasized about taking his catchy yet moving songs and letting them unfold in a new reggae context. Recent albums include *Dakar—Kingston* (2010), *Mbalakh Dafay Wakh* (2011), and *Fatteliku* (2014).

NDOUR has performed at BAM in recent seasons in *Muslim Voices* (2009) and *Nonesuch* at BAM (2014). He toured North America in 2015, performing in major cities including Los Angeles, Seattle, and Montreal.

Members of Les Ballets de la Renaissance Africaine “WAATO SiiTA” appear in a special tribute to Doudou Ndiaye Rose



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