

Connecting countries musically

Nightlight celebrates Senegalese music

BY ANNA NORRIS
STAFF WRITER

West African musician Diali Cissokho recalls a time when, during a stint abroad, he and a friend went to play a show at a restaurant. After a while, Cissokho noticed a man in the audience listening to his songs and crying.

During a break, Cissokho approached the man and asked why he was crying. The man replied that he had a girlfriend who he loved very much, even though she was always stringing him along. He told Cissokho he heard him singing about love, and it made him cry. Yet Cissokho, who is Senegalese, was singing in his native Manding.

"This man couldn't understand any of the words of my song, but from the sound of the music, the tone and the melody — from my body language and facial expressions, my language didn't matter. He could hear my message in this song despite the language," says Cissokho. "This is what I love about West African music."

Audience members will get to experience a similar dissolution of cultural and language barriers Friday night during The Senegal Connection, an event celebrating

the musical and cultural traditions of Senegal at the Nightlight.

The show will also feature Chapel Hill's The Lizzy Ross Band and The Brand New Life, a band from Greensboro that creates world-music fusion.

With the recent addition of Mamadou Mbengue, a West African musician known for his skill on the talking drum, The Brand New Life has added Mbengue's West African influences to the sound. Bassist Seth Barden of The Brand New Life is the principal coordinator for the event.

The event is also a showcase for the kora, the 21-stringed instrument that is sometimes described as a cross between a harp and a lute.

Cissokho has been playing the kora since he was six years old, and he says that while the kora has always had an important place in traditional celebrations, it has only recently found a place in Senegalese popular music.

In Senegal, Cissokho was born into a family of Manding griots, the musician caste. Mande society holds the griot to be a historian, advisor, praise-singer and storyteller. Cissokho says that these inherited traditions have been passed

ATTEND THE EVENT
Time: 9:30 p.m. Friday
Location: Nightlight
405 1/2 W. Rosemary St.
Info: www.nightlightclub.com

down from generation to generation and are said to have deep connections to spiritual, social and political powers.

He also says that the kora has started becoming incorporated into genres like hip-hop, jazz, reggae and blues. As for himself, Cissokho is the first in his very traditional family to electrify the kora and mix it with Western instruments.

"I find that I don't like to stay strictly to the traditional style. It's difficult to find the correct mixture of styles and instruments, but I think it helps me really experience my music," he said. "Any instrument you want to try, I like to try to mix with the kora — any instruments can go together some way."

This kind of creativity will be more than welcome on Friday.

"At Nightlight, our mission is always to support creativity and experimentation, and I think it's really awesome to take this traditional instrument and show how it's continued today," says venue owner Alexis Mastromichalis.

And even if you have never heard West African music before,

"I want to teach people important lessons ... and share good messages of love and peace."

DIALI CISSOKHO, MUSICIAN

Cissokho promises a good time.

"West African music can be very expressive, and I try to express my message or story clearly regardless of language," says Cissokho. "I was always taught that musicians carry a lot of influence, a lot of power, and that it's not right to abuse this power. I don't believe in singing about things that are bad or not important."

Much like his experience with the crying man, the Senegalese musician hopes to transcend barriers this weekend.

"I want to teach people important lessons from my life experiences and share good messages of love and peace. Used in the right way, music can have incredible power and influence, and this is what I like about sharing this style of music with audiences new and old."

Contact the Diversions Editor at diversions@dailytarheel.com.

DIVERECOMMENDS.....

Album from the Vaults:

Django Reinhardt, *Paris 1945*: There's no better way to woo your significant other than with a swing album from one of the best guitarists to ever live. "Really, honey? Legends from Jimmy Page to Trey Anastasio list Django as an influence? That's so sexy."

Movie from the Vaults:

"Trapped in the Closet": R. Kelly's hip-hopera begins with a one-night stand gone awry and follows Sylvester (Kelly) over 22 episodes. The R&B singer manages to drag the same song on for an hour and a half and ends in a dramatically unsatisfying "TO BE CONTINUED." It might leave your Valentine wondering if it's you who's trapped in the closet.

Events:

THURSDAY

Tapes 'n Tapes

Cat's Cradle | With influences like Pavement and the Beach Boys, it's no wonder that Tapes 'n Tapes' brand of indie rock is Pitchfork approved. Oberhofer opens. 8 p.m., \$16

The Big Picture

Tir na nog | If you can make the Thursday night trek out to Durham and you're old enough to consume, this edition of Local Band Local Beer will be worth way more than the gas money. The Big Picture has yet to play one of their songs the

same way twice and with members of The Never and Lost in the Trees, you know their indie pop is top notch. Gray Young and Fan Modine open. 10 p.m., free

FRIDAY

Pipe

Local 506 | If you've seen a local band with an awesome poster, chances are it's by Ron Liberti, artist and vocalist for Pipe. After a tour with Arches of Loaf and Polvo, injuries led to the end of Pipe, but Friday night, they're back. The Breaks and Bastages open. 10 p.m., \$5

SATURDAY

WXYC Valentine's Dance Party

Nightlight | Bring your date and get your pregame grind on for Valentine's Day. DJ sets by Andy Sullivan, Nicole Campbell, Heart Pressure and Bruce Dickenson. 9:30 p.m., \$5

SUNDAY

Veelee

King's Barcade | Celebrating the second anniversary of their first live show and Valentine's Eve, Veelee will take to the stage with pop and dangerously catchy tunes. Juan Huevos will help open up the night with his bizarre visuals — terrorists on beaches? — and even more outlandish indie rap. Think M.C. Chris in a grown man's body. Motor Skills opens. 9:30 p.m., \$5



February

9–13 *Black Watch* – National Theatre of Scotland

16 *Blues at the Crossroads: The Robert Johnson Centennial Concerts*

18 Eddie Palmieri Latin Jazz

22–24 Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

26 Yasmin Levy

28 Nicola Benedetti, violin

March

1–2 *iD* – Cirque Éloize

3 Leon Fleisher, piano

17–18 *The Andersen Project* – Ex Machina

22 Phil Kline's *John the Revelator* – ETHEL and Lionheart

29–30 Nederlands Dans Theater

Showing at UNC's Memorial Hall. Visit website for full season offerings.



Blues at the Crossroads: The Robert Johnson Centennial Concerts



Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Black Watch
National Theatre of Scotland
Feb 9–13

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FEBRUARY

10 TH TAPES 'N TAPES w/ Oberhofer** (\$14/\$16)

11 FR DSI / LATE SHOW Talent Showcase, w/ EDDIE BRILL, Sara Benincasa, more (\$14)

12 SA IRATION / BALLYHOO/ Fiction 20 Down/ Doco** (\$12/\$14)

14 MO YANN TIERSEN w/ Shannon Wright** (\$18/\$20)

17 TH PLAIN WHITE Ts w/ Parachute and Miggs** (\$18/\$20)

18 FR DSI Presents: EMO PHILLIPS and The Beatbox** (\$14)

19 SA ROONEY w/ EISLEY and DELTA RAE** (\$15/\$17)

20 SU THE BUDOS BAND w/ D-Town Brass and DJ Ras J** (\$12/\$15)

21 MO SHINOBU NINJA, Free Sol, Click Clack, Wax Lips** (\$8/\$10)

24 TH THE PIETASTERS w/ Archbishops Of Blount Street** (\$12/\$14)

25 FR LOS AMIGOS INVISIBLES w/ Rubblebucket** (\$15/\$17)

26 SA "IF NOT FOR YOU": A 40th Anniversary Tribute to George Harrison's ALL THINGS MUST PASS** (\$10/\$12)

27 SU THE GET UP KIDS w/ Miniature Tigers and Brian Bonz** (\$18/\$22)

MARCH

4 FR SUPERCHUNK w/ Veelee** (\$14)

5 SA GREG BROWN w/ Bo Ramsey** (\$28/\$30)

6 SU YELAWOLF w/ CyHi Da Prynce and King Mez** (\$13/\$15)

11 FR JOHN MARK MCMILLAN** (\$10; on sale 2/4)

12 SA ROCKY VOTOLATO/ MATT POND PA** (\$10/\$12)

MARCH (cont)

15 TU Cole Park, SNMNMNM, and Katherine Whalen and her Fascinators (7:30pm show)

18 FR CARBON LEAP** (\$15/\$17)

19 SA HOLY GHOST TENT REVIVAL** (\$8/\$10)

25 FR ABBEY ROAD LIVE!

27 SU SEBADOH** (\$15)

APRIL

2 SA THE PAINS OF BEING PURE AT HEART w/ Twin Shadow** (\$13/\$15)

3 SU EASY STAR ALL-STARS w/ THE GREEN and Cas Haley** (\$15/\$17)

6 WE BLACK LIPS w/ Vivian Girls and Gringo Star** (\$12/\$14)

7 TH DESTROYER w/ The War On Drugs** (\$13/\$15)

8 FR THE MOUNTAIN GOATS w/ Megafaun** (\$18/\$20)

10 SU J MASCIS w/ Kurt Vile And The Violators** (\$16/\$18)

13 WE THE OLD 97s w/ Teddy Thompson** (\$18/\$20)

14 TH An Intimate Solo/Acoustic Performance by CITIZEN COPE** (\$25/\$28)

15 FR MOUNT MORIAH Album Release Party w/ guests The Moaners and Filthybird, A Free Show!

16 SA RAVEONETTES w/ Tamarayn** (\$15/\$17)

18 MO BRITISH SEA POWER w/ A Classic Education** (\$12/\$14)

23 SA YACHT** (\$12/\$15)

26 TU YELLE w/ French Horn Rebellion** (\$18/\$20)

29 FR PETER, BJORN & JOHN** (\$15/\$18)

MAY

2 MO PINBACK** (\$14/\$16)

JUNE

12 SU JOE PURDY** (\$15/\$17 on sale Feb. 12; seated show)

WE ARE ALSO PRESENTING...

SHOWS @ Local 506 (Chapel Hill)
Feb 25: JONATHAN RICHMAN** (\$13/\$15)
March 4: PARLOTONES** (\$10)
March 7: TENNIS w/ La Sera and Holiday Shores** (\$10)
March 18: The Mr. Funny Pants Tour with MICHAEL SHOWALTER** (\$12/\$14)
March 25: TIM BARRY w/ JENNY OWEN YOUNGS** (\$10)
April 5: CIVIL TWILIGHT w/ Atomic Tom and Mother / Father (\$10)

SHOWS @ Kings (Raleigh)
March 9: ASTRONAUTALUS w/ Sims and Mr. Invisible (\$10)
March 29: DAMONWELLS w/ Harper Blynn, Howard Jennings** (\$10)

SHOW @ Lincoln Theatre (Raleigh)
SHARON JONES & THE DAP-KINGS** (\$25/\$28)

SHOW @ Disco Rodeo (Raleigh)
May 4: INTERPOL** (\$25/\$28)

SHOW @ The ArtsCenter (Carrboro)
March 17: TODD SNIDER, The Storyteller** (\$20)
April 22: KINA GRANNIS** (\$13/\$15)

SHOW @ Casbah (Durham)
Feb. 12: BEN SOLLEE** (\$13/\$15)

SHOW @ Historic Playmakers Theatre (UNC)
Feb. 15: ENCORE Performance of BIG STAR'S THIRD featuring members of Lost In The Trees, Old Ceremony, Birds And Arrows, the dB's (\$15 GP, \$8 Students)

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FRIDAY, FEB. 11
GYMNASTICS v. #21 Penn State; 7pm

SATURDAY, FEB. 12
#5 WOMEN'S TENNIS v. #2 Florida; 11am

#3 WOMEN'S LAX v. #22 Florida; 12pm

WRESTLING v. #14 Nebraska; 1pm
Senior Day
One lucky fan will win a pair of Pit Passes and Grandstand Tickets to the NASCAR Sprint Cup All-Star Race on Saturday, May 21st
FREE post-meet BBQ for first 50 students.

#3 MEN'S LACROSSE v. Robert Morris; 2:30pm

SUNDAY, FEB. 6
#12 WOMEN'S BASKETBALL v. #21 Miami; 1pm
TURN IT PINK! Free Pink Pom Pons
Annual shag dance demonstration at halftime

Whether you're celebrating Valentine's Day with your sweetie or with your besties, come to Rams Head for dinner on Monday, February 14th. Visit dining.unc.edu for more info.

