



**CHEICK HAMALA DIABATE**  
GRIOT, STORYTELLER, MUSICIAN

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## SKILLS & ABILITIES

- Teaching Artist
- Choreographer
- Storyteller
- Praise Singer
- Poet
- Performer
- Musician
- Songwriter
- Producer

## INSTRUMENTS

- Balafon (wooden xylophone)
- Banjo
- Guitar
- Kora (gourd harp)
- N'goni (West African lute)

## EXPERIENCE

### **OYÉ PALAVER HUT, INC., WASHINGTON, DC**

2019 - PRESENT

Provide cultural entertainment at a virtuosic level for special events with storytelling of historical integrity composed of Malian praise singing, poetry, and the traditional trio of West African griot instruments: the n'goni ("ancestor of the banjo"), kora, and balafon, inviting audiences to experience an influential art form with a rich tradition stretching back hundreds of years to the formation of the great West African Mali Empire.

### **INDEPENDENT ARTIST, WASHINGTON, DC**

1995 - PRESENT

Steward of his family's 800 year-old griot tradition, Diabate is a world-recognized master of the n'goni, and 2007 Grammy nominee with Bob Carlin for the album *From Mali to America* in the World Music category. He offers master classes in the n'goni, griot history and culture. He tours frequently, solo or with his Manding ensemble throughout Africa, Asia, Europe, Canada and the U.S. as a performer, lecturer, storyteller, and choreographer. Diabate has performed at the White House, Smithsonian, Aulnay All Blues Festival, John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Festival International Lafayette, New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Fest, National Folk Festival, and the Toronto Afro Festival, among other prestigious venues. He has collaborated with world-renowned artists Salif Keita, Bela Fleck, Corey Harris, Toumani Diabaté, Djelimady Tounkara, Ami Koita, Kandia Kouyate, Yaya Kanoute, and Fadiala Diawara. His 2013 CD, *Ake Ben Mali Denou*, includes elements of jazz, blues, reggae, and contemporary Rhythm & Blues, all of which have roots in traditional African music. Diabate also explores music and dances of the Caribbean and Latin American African Diasporas such as soca, calypso and zouk music, and the flamenco, samba, rumba, and salsa dance forms - all created to varying degrees by the enduring artistry of enslaved Africans.

## EDUCATION

### **NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ARTS, BAMAKO, MALI**

1978