



C R E A T E

YOUR SEATTLE CENTER EXPERIENCE

City of Seattle
Mayor GREGORY J. NICKELS

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Media Information

Discover the Roots of Hip Hop, Jazz and Rock at Safeco Insurance Festál: Spirit of West Africa

The traditions of West African countries come to life through live music, dance performances and workshops, exhibits, film and storytelling at Safeco Insurance Festál: Spirit of West Africa, May 9, 12:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. at Center House.

Live performances by top local and touring artists from West African countries such as Ghana, Senegal, Benin, Mali, Guinea, and Liberia highlight this day-long event. Festival-goers may take part in ritual and celebratory African dance workshops, learn how a drum talks, witness the healing drums of West African drum masters trained since birth to serve their communities, experience the arts and culture through film, and shop in the African Marketplace.

Special guests this year include: Obo Addy, master drummer, teacher, musician and NEA National Heritage Fellow from Ghana; Mady Kouyate, captivating kora master from Mali; Mariem Faye, former dancer with the National Ballet of Senegal; Alseny Yansane, former dancer with Les Ballet Africains of Guinea; and Won Ldy Paye – multi-talented author, artist and performer from Liberia.

Local artists include: Thione Diop and Yeke Yeke from Senegal, Etienne Cakpo and Gansango Dance and Drum from Benin, Lora Chiorah-Dye and Sukutai from Zimbabwe, Naby Camara and Lagni Sussu from Guinea, Mapathe Diop from Senegal, and Atlantic Melody from Guinea.

Did you know? Baaba Maal, born in 1953 in northeast Senegal on the edge of the Sahara desert to a non-griot family of fishermen of the Pulaar minority, followed his own path to become a musician and performer, transforming the traditional West African music into a rootsy danceable brew with international flavor that has won him acclaim around the world. A talented singer, he is equally at home with an acoustic guitar playing traditional folk or the hottest international dance music. From a non-musical family, Maal has spent much of his life learning his heritage.

Join us at Safeco Insurance Festál 2009 and become a culture carrier (someone who

contributes to cultural understanding through the sharing of stories, songs, music, food and family traditions). This festival is produced by Seattle Center in partnership with Thione Diop Productions. For more information on Safeco Insurance Festál and other Seattle Center programming, click on www.seattlecenter.com.

About Safeco Insurance Festál

Safeco Insurance Festál, presented by Seattle Center in partnership with community organizations, is a year-long series of FREE events that honors the cultural richness and diversity of the Pacific Northwest. Safeco Insurance Festál plays a vital part in Seattle Center efforts to connect our dynamic and varied communities.

This collection of 22 events is presented with the generous support of Safeco Insurance, Wells Fargo, Verizon Wireless and KUOW 94.9 Public Radio. Additional support is provided by The Paul G. Allen Family Foundation, The Boeing Company, Seattle Center Fund and the City of Seattle.

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