



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
January 26, 2022

African Circus Arts and Music Set to Astound Chan Centre Audiences in Thrilling Live Performance

Guinean-Canadian Yamoussa Bangoura leads a jaw-dropping display of astonishing physical feats and superb musicality

Vancouver, BC — The Chan Centre for the Performing Arts at the University of British Columbia presents **Kalabanté: *Afrique en Cirque*** to open the new year on February 24, 2022, supported by Presenting Sponsor RBC. Montreal-based Kalabanté, led by artistic director Yamoussa Bangoura, celebrates the disciplines of circus arts and African dance and music with a spectacular 11-person performance bursting with energy—a high-flying, audaciously athletic feast for the senses.

“Kalabanté’s *Afrique en Cirque* is an electrifying and entertaining circus act that I know our audiences will love,” says Pat Carrabré, Director of the Chan Centre. “But even beyond the impressive physicality of these artists is the wonderfully rich music – a mix of African percussion and sonorous melodies performed by highly skilled instrumentalists. Watching how this remarkable ensemble transforms the Chan Centre concert hall stage will be a thrill, and it feels like the perfect way to open 2022 for the Chan Presents series.”

Kalabanté fuses long-established African arts and European circus traditions to showcase exceptional dancers, contortionists, gymnasts, and acrobats, as well as a group of brilliant musicians. The music for *Afrique en Cirque*, composed by Bangoura and based on the intricate polyrhythms of West Africa, includes vigorous and masterful performances on the kora—an African harp made from a split calabash—as well as the saxophone, bass, and varied drums and other percussion instruments. The performance celebrates human strength and agility in both body and spirit, with vibrant costumes, dynamic lighting design, and an impressionistic, affecting narrative that highlights the value of community and the importance of redemption.

“We’re trying to create a bridge with the public, so they really feel a part of what’s going on,” says Bangoura. “It’s very high-energy. There’s a narrative element too, with a character who steals people’s dreams.” The allegorical tale sends a direct and meaningful message about compassion, transformation and atonement through the arts.

Yamoussa Bangoura began his circus training in his native Guinea, studying the Nyamakala tradition of circus which is practiced by the Fula people of West Africa. He eventually joined the original Guinean circus troupe, Circus Baobab, and was later recruited by Quebec-based Cirque Éloize to be one of the creators and acrobats of the show *Nomade*. In 2010, he joined the equestrian company Cavalia for the creation of *Odyseo* and toured with them until 2012. Says the *Georgia Straight*, “If you love contemporary circus, chances are you’ve seen Yamoussa Bangoura perform— and picked your jaw up off the floor afterward.”

Since forming in 2007, Kalabanté has made a name for itself as a beloved circus company for both adults and children, performing at many prestigious performing arts centres as well as children’s

/more...

festivals across Canada. The group has developed a circus school in Bangoura's native Guinea, named École Kalabanté, and has forged a strong connection with the Canadian arts community through a partnership with Nunavut-based company Artcirq, led by Guillaume Saladin. In 2018 and 2019, the company performed internationally at the Sziget Festival in Budapest, Hungary, and the International Festival of Santa Lucia in Monterrey, Mexico, before crowds of up to 20,000 people. With the support of the Quebec and Montreal governments, Kalabanté recently opened their own studio and school in Montreal, where there are continuous classes offered in African dance, circus, and drumming.

Chan Centre Connects Events

Programmed in conjunction with Chan Centre performances, exploring the role of arts and artists in society.

- **Film Screening: *Circus Without Borders* — Thursday February 17, 7pm at The Cinematheque (1131 Howe St).** A documentary about Guillaume Saladin and Yamoussa Bangoura, best friends and world-class acrobats from remote corners of the globe who share the same dream: To bring hope and change to their struggling communities through circus. Tickets at thecinematheque.ca.

About the Chan Centre for Performing Arts at UBC

Since 1997, the Chan Centre for the Performing Arts has earned an international reputation for its striking design, stellar acoustics, and exceptional programming. Artists, critics, and patrons alike are unanimous in their praise of the facility, winning it a place among North America's top-rated performing arts spaces. Featuring three unique venues—the Chan Shun Concert Hall, the Telus Studio Theatre, and the Royal Bank Cinema—the Chan Centre is a vital part of UBC campus and community life where artistic and academic disciplines merge to inspire new perspectives on the world around us. Past performers and speakers include Wynton Marsalis, His Holiness the Dalai Lama, Renée Fleming, Dan Savage, Yo-Yo Ma, Jane Goodall, Herbie Hancock, Lila Downs, and Anoushka Shankar.

LISTING INFORMATION

Date:

Ticket Prices:

Address:

Box Office:

Website:

Link to Artist Photos:

Chan Centre Presents: Kalabanté: *Afrique en Cirque*

Thursday February 24, 2022 at 8pm

From \$15

Chan Centre for the Performing Arts

University of British Columbia

6265 Crescent Road

Vancouver, BC V6T 1Z1

604-822-2697 / chancentre.com

Open Tue–Fri, 12pm–4pm

chancentre.com

chancentre.com/press-downloads

-30-

For further media information:
LAINA TANAHARA | 604-700-5967
laina.tanahara@ubc.ca
Chan Centre for the Performing Arts