

# Musician and Activist Sona Jobareth Embarks on North American Tour February-April 2024

*Groundbreaking Kora Virtuoso Shares the bill with Blues Legend Taj Mahal for 13 Shows*

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- Internationally renowned as the world's first female professional Kora virtuoso, [Sona Jobarteh](https://sonajobarteh.com) returns to North America this winter and spring for a tour that will take her from coast-to-coast. Blues legend Taj Mahal shares the bill with her for several stops in February and March. For tickets and information about the tour, visit [sonajobarteh.com](https://sonajobarteh.com).

Born into a Griot family from the Gambia, a tradition that dates back seven centuries, Sona is a living archive of the Gambian people. Her music is uniquely poised between the preservation of her rich cultural heritage and an accessible, modern style that relates to the current era and to audiences from all over the world. While fronting her electric Afropop band, she sings about cultural identity, gender, love, and respect.□



Sona Jobarteh, kora virtuoso

Sona generally sings and records in Mandinka, a traditional language spoken by one of Gambia's many ethnic groups, rather than in English, which would be expected to garner more commercial success. Yet her debut album in 2011 was a surprise hit both internationally and in Gambia. In a New York Times profile, she said "It makes Africans feel something, to see that someone is being respected to sing in their own language, dress in their own clothes, play their own music," she said. "That is a message not just for Gambians — it's for the whole African continent."

Sona's most recent release *Badinyaa Kumoo* is a musical manifesto expressing her vision of empowering women, children, artists, and African societies to effect positive change. Showcasing her skills as an innovative composer and multi-instrumentalist, the album also includes guest appearances by renowned World Music artists such as the Senegalese singer Youssou N'Dour, Malian kora master Ballaké Sissoko, and American saxophonist Kirk Whalum. The album has well over 6 million streams on Spotify and over 23 million views on YouTube, and led to a feature

about Sona on CBS' 60 Minutes.

At the heart of Sona's success as an artist is her dedication to humanitarian activism in the areas of social development and educational reform on the continent of Africa. Badinyaa Kummo, named one of the "10 Best Album of the Year" by Songlines Magazine, was released more than a decade after her debut solo recording. During that time she was bringing her broader mission, that aligns with her role of a griot, to reality.



Sona Jobarteh

In 2015, she founded The Gambia Academy, the first institution in the country to educate young Africans in their culture, traditions, and history seamlessly alongside their everyday academic education. Sona says "Education is a vital foundation block in changing mind-sets, which in turn determines the degree of success of a nation in its journey towards self-determination, self-dependence, self-governance, and economic self-sustainability."

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Sona Jobarteh is Africa's first female griot kora virtuoso, and also a fine singer and composer, blending traditional music, blues and Afropop to impressive effect"

*Robin Denselow, The Guardian*

Since founding The Gambia Academy, Sona has become a highly sought after speaker on education reform and advocate for "replacing the existing Euro-centric education framework, which historically has marginalized and disempowered young Africans, with curriculum and teaching methods that develop engagement, agency, critical thinking, self-determination, tenacity and excellence within students."

She has lectured and held university residencies in Africa and across the United States and Europe. In 2023, Sona received an honorary doctorate from the Berklee School of Music, joining an elite list of other notable honorees, including Aretha Franklin, Justin Timberlake, Sting, and Herbie Hancock.

2024 Winter/Spring North American Tour

February 22 Santa Barbara, CA with Taj Mahal  
UC Santa Barbara Campbell Hall

February 23 Los Angeles, CA with Taj Mahal

Cal State, Los Angeles Luckman Fine Arts Center

February 24 San Luis Obispo, CA with Taj Mahal  
Performing Arts Center

February 25 Palm Springs, CA with Taj Mahal  
Palm Springs International Jazz Festival

February 26 Mesa, AZ with Taj Mahal  
Ikeda Theatre, Mesa Arts Center

February 27 Tucson, AZ with Taj Mahal  
Fox Tucson Theatre

February 28 Albuquerque, NM  
The Dirty Bourbon Dance Hall and Saloon

March 1 Santa Fe, NM with Taj Mahal  
Lentic Theatre

March 2 Colorado Springs, CO with Taj Mahal  
Pikes Peak Center

March 3 Denver, CO with Taj Mahal  
Paramount Theatre

March 5 Ridgefield, CT with Taj Mahal  
Ridgefield Playhouse

March 6 Portsmouth, NH with Taj Mahal  
The Music Hall

March 7 Albany, NY with Taj Mahal  
The Hart Theatre at The Egg

March 8 Montreal, QC  
Le National

March 9 Toronto, ON with Taj Mahal  
Koerner Hall at The Royal Conservatory of Music

March 10 Ottawa, ON with Taj Mahal  
National Arts Centre

March 30 Somerville, MA  
Somerville Theatre

April 3 New York, NY  
Sony Hall

April 4 New Haven, CT  
International Festival of Arts & Ideas

April 5 Wilmington, DE  
Arden Gild Hall

April 7 Bethesda, MD  
The Music Center at Strathmore

April 9 Northampton, MA  
BOMBYX Center for Arts and Equity

April 11 Kennett Square, PA  
Longwood Gardens Ballroom

April 13 Norlina, NC  
Seven Springs Farm and Vineyard

April 17 Kalispell, MT  
Wachholz College Center

April 20 Hamilton, MT  
Bitterroot Performing Arts

Additional dates to be announced

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