

West African Kora Virtuoso Sona Jobarteh Continues 2024 North American Tour with Dates on East Coast and Rocky Mountains

Musician and educational pioneer Sona Jobarteh's critically acclaimed 2024 North American tour continues with 11 concerts from New York City to Montana

BOSTON, MA, US, March 26, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Legendary kora virtuoso and educational

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"Sona Jobarteh pairs her virtuosity on the kora and the guitar with ethereal vocals. She is a beacon of light from West Africa, shining farther west than her ancestors could have ever imagined."

NYS Music

pioneer Sona Jobarteh continues her critically acclaimed 2024 North American tour this spring with 11 concerts that go from New York City to the Rocky Mountains. For tickets and information about the tour, visit sonajobarteh.com.

"Serious and soft-spoken, Jobarteh makes incredibly beautiful music on the ancient instrument (kora) which, in her hands, sounded like a jazz-informed fusion of harp and lute," said The Ottawa Citizen. "Her band was amazing, full of Afro-Latin polyrhythms and cascading guitar lines and featuring the dexterous work of Jobarteh's adult son on balafon."

Born into a Griot family from the Gambia, a tradition that dates back seven centuries, Sona is a living archive of Gambian history. 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 sings 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 *Fasiya* in 2011 was surprisingly well received, 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 superstar 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 Kumoo, named "Best African 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.

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 believes "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."

Since founding The Gambia Academy, Sona has become a 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."

In 2023, Sona received an honorary doctorate from the Berklee School of Music, joining an elite list of other famous honorees, including Aretha Franklin, Justin Timberlake, Sting, and Herbie Hancock.

The tour launched in February with Sona sharing the stage in a co-bill with blues legend Taj Mahal.

2024 Spring North American Tour

March 30 Boston MA - Somerville Theatre



Sona Jobarteh, kora virtuoso

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 18 Butte, MT -Covellite Theatre

April 20 Hamilton, MT -Bitterroot Performing Arts

*Presented as part of International Festival of Arts & Ideas' Visionary Leadership Event –
An Evening of Conversation and Music with Sona Jobarteh

For more information, visit Sona Jobarteh at <https://sonajobarteh.com/>

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