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Thursday, September 17, 2015

Town Hall: An Evening with Traditional African Dance Artists in NYC: Conversation, Demonstration and Celebration

By Dance/NYC

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When: Thursday, September 17, 2015, 6:00-7:30 p.m.

Where: New York Public Library for the Performing Arts, Dorothy and Lewis B. Cullman Center, Bruno Walter Auditorium, 40 Lincoln Center Plaza (between Columbus and Amsterdam), New York, NY 10023 ([Directions](#))



Accessibility: The venue is wheelchair accessible.

[#townhall](#)

[#AfricanDance](#)

[Dance/NYC](#) and the [New York Public Library's Jerome Robbins Dance Division](#) present an evening of conversation and dance demonstration with Master African Dance Artists who have greatly transformed the dance landscape in New York City. Interviewed during the African Dance Interview Project of 2014, these esteemed artists include Maguette Camara, Marie Basse-Wiles, Mouminatou Camara, Youssouf Koumbassa, and N'Deye Gueye. This initiative, conceived by Jan Schmidt with Carolyn Webb serving as Project Director, was developed to increase community knowledge, awareness, and appreciation of traditional African Dance in NYC. Renowned scholar and lecturer of the African Diaspora, C. Daniel Dawson, will moderate the evening. Both this program and the African Dance Interview Project are generously sponsored by The Mertz Gilmore Foundation.

Moderator:

C. Daniel Dawson, curatorial experience includes Museum for African Art, Museum of Natural History, Studio Museum in Harlem, Caribbean Cultural Center; arts administrator, educator, photographer, filmmaker with research focus on the African diaspora and its Culture, with expertise in the Congo and Brazil.

Panelists:

[Maguette Camara](#) learned his cultural dances growing up in his native Senegal, West Africa and performed with Ballet Bougarabou Dance Company as a young adult. He is a widely recognized choreographer, teacher and performer whose specialties include Kutiro, Djembe, and Sabar. Maguette currently teaches at New York City locations including The Alvin Ailey Dance School and Barnard University. Maguette is founder and director of Mane Kadang West African Dance Company in New York City.

[Marie Basse Wiles](#) is a native of Senegal with family ties in Mali. Her grandmother taught her the traditional culture, dances and songs of the Bambara people. Marie's international touring experience includes performing with The Ballet National of Senegal where she learned the dances of many other ethnic groups of Senegal and began her teaching career. She has lived in New York City for over 30 years and is one of the African Dance communities most beloved icons. She is devoted to preserving and sharing the dances of her homeland. She has maintained her dance company, Maimouna Keita, in New York City for over 30 years.

[Mouminatou Camara](#) is from Guinea, West Africa. Moumi states that she started dancing in her Mother's womb. Since that time she has become internationally recognized as a brilliant performer and principal dancer with Les Ballet African and Les Ballet Djoliba. She brought her dynamic dance style to New York City in the 1990s. Moumi has worked consistently and generously as a teacher to share her skills, passion, and cultural knowledge pertaining to the dances. She founded Seewe African Dance Company in 2005.

[Youssouf Koumbassa](#), from Guinea, West Africa began dancing before age 6 by emulating both community and professional dancers. He later toured the world with The National Ballet of Guinea and Ballet Djoliba and earned his reputation as a phenomenal dancer and musician. Youssouf relocated to New York City in the 1990s and established a dance company, Les Ballets Bagata. He is a much beloved teacher and ambassador of cultural dance here. Youssouf brings energy and excitement as well as cultural information. He continues to be in high demand internationally as master dance teacher and choreographer.

[Ndeye Gueye](#) was born in Senegal, West Africa. She is a charismatic, dynamic and highly sought after performer and teacher. Ndeye's expertise is Senegalese Sabar dance, and she brings incredible spice and grace to each movement. She has performed for former president Abdou Diouf of Senegal and at the United Nations Peace Conference. Her choreographic merits include the First Place Award at San Francisco's Ethnic Dance Festival. Ndeye, who founded her company Chosaanu African Dance, is committed to sharing her culture and raising the self-esteem of women and children through the arts. Although she travels nationally and internationally, she currently lives in New York City where she is a beloved teacher in the African Dance community.



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[< back](#)

[previous listing](#) • [next listing](#)