

Wednesday, October 26, 2011, 8pm  
Thursday, October 27, 2011, 8pm  
Friday, October 28, 2011, 8pm  
Saturday, October 29, 2011, 8pm  
Zellerbach Playhouse

## *Desdemona*



**Written by Toni Morrison**

**Music by Rokia Traoré**

**Directed by Peter Sellars**

*United States Premiere*

*Desdemona was commissioned and is co-produced by Cal Performances; Wiener Festwochen, Vienna; Théâtre Nanterre-Amandiers; Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, New York; Kulturveranstaltungen des Bundes in Berlin GmbH—spielzeit'europa/Berliner Festspiele; and Barbican, London (with the support of Arts Council London and London 2012 Festival).*

*These performances are made possible, in part, by Patron Sponsors Deborah and Bob Van Nest and Rockridge Market Hall.*

*Cal Performances' 2011–2012 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.*



Pascale Victor

## Desdemona

### CAST

Toni Morrison	<i>author</i>
Peter Sellars	<i>director</i>
Rokia Traoré	<i>composer, Barbary</i>
Tina Benko	<i>Desdemona</i>
Mamah Diabaté	<i>n'goni</i>
Fatim Kouyaté	<i>singer</i>
Bintou Soumbounou	<i>singer</i>
Kadiatou Sangaré	<i>singer</i>
Mamadyba Camara	<i>kora</i>
James F. Ingalls	<i>lighting designer</i>
Alexis Giraud	<i>sound designer</i>
Diane J. Malecki	<i>producer</i>
Anne Dechêne	<i>production stage manager</i>
Janet Takami	<i>assistant stage manager</i>

**T**HIS EVENING is a literary and musical collaboration between Toni Morrison and Rokia Traoré, moving across continents, shared histories, imagined “other worlds” and the permanently open-ended poetry of William Shakespeare’s *Othello*.

In Act I, Shakespeare has Othello tell the Venetian Senate that he and Desdemona fell in love as he told her stories—stories of his youth as a child soldier, stories of suffering, reversal, privation, salvation, transformation and human generosity. Stories of “other worlds.” Toni Morrison wanted to write those stories.

Late in Act IV, Shakespeare has Desdemona sing her famous “Willow Song.” She learned this song, she tells Emilia, from her nurse, Barbary, who died singing it, of a broken heart. In these few lines, Shakespeare offers a powerful image: in Shakespeare’s England, “Barbary” meant “Africa.” Courageous, loving, independent-minded Desdemona was raised by an African woman, growing up with African stories and learning African songs.

Shakespeare did not know any Africans. Today, at the outset of the 21st century, Africa is very present in the world, and our shared worlds have greater proximity and interpenetration than even Shakespeare could have imagined in his “Globe.” “Barbary” is one of Shakespeare’s powerful and enigmatic “missing women”—he did not write for her, possibly because he could not write for her. Tonight, we meet her, and Desdemona meets her again.

Four hundred years later, Toni Morrison and Rokia Traoré can respond to Shakespeare’s *Othello*, offering some missing pieces and wider perspectives. The women now have the scope to speak their minds and their hearts, and Africa is real, not just imagined. The women speak to us from the other side of the grave, older now, no longer teenagers. In African traditions, the dead are quite undead and very present, and for them, as Toni Morrison says, the past and the future are the same. In a time outside of time that illuminates and infuses the present, Des-demon-a confronts her “demons,” reconciling the past and now, no longer alone, preparing a future.

*This program is approximately two hours long and will be performed without intermission.*

*Peter Sellars*



Pascal Victor

### Reviving Desdemona and Barbary

My mother had a maid call'd Barbary:  
 She was in love, and he she loved proved mad  
 And did forsake her: she had a song of "Willow,"  
 An old thing 'twas, but it express'd her fortune,  
 And she died singing it. That song tonight  
 Will not go from my mind; I have much to do,  
 But to go hang my head all at one side,  
 And sing it like poor Barbary.  
*Othello*, 4.3.26–33

**A**LWAYS READY to break new artistic ground, Nobel Laureate Toni Morrison has partnered with two like-minded innovators—American theater/opera director Peter Sellars and African singer-songwriter Rokia Traoré—to create *Desdemona*, a provocative reimagining of *Othello*'s tragic representation of the legacies of gender, race and class domination. The *Desdemona* project grew out of Mr. Sellars's dialogue with Ms. Morrison about *Othello*—to which he initially responded by mounting a new production in Vienna for the Vienna Festival in 2009, and she by developing her script in

conversation with Ms. Traoré. Having written about Ms. Morrison's relationship to music, I was intrigued by this new work combining music with dramatic dialogue. Previously, I interviewed Ms. Morrison concerning her opera libretto for *Margaret Garner* (2005), which revisits the historic case of a fugitive slave whose untold story she first imagined in her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *Beloved* (1987). I recently had the opportunity to talk with two members of the team that helped bring her Shakespearean project to fruition: Peter Sellars and Matías Tarnopolsky, who directs Cal Performances. I present a glimpse of those conversations in what follows.

Many crises of modern life find a voice in *Desdemona*, whether the physical and spiritual battering of women, the exploitation of child soldiers, dislocations caused by slavery, hunger and poverty, or racism's legacy for interpersonal distrust and cultural alienation. The relevance of such themes together with the promise of artistic excellence originally led the Director of Cal Performances to commit his support to the project two years ago during a meeting with

Mr. Sellars. "*Desdemona* is one example of us being partners in commissioning a major new contribution to the repertoire," Mr. Tarnopolsky told me. Relevance has been one of five core values championed by him since he took the helm of Berkeley's leading arts organization in 2009. "The performing arts," he emphasized, "really can shine a light on the world around us."

This project aims to rescue from obscurity "Barbary," the character whose "Willow Song" (adapted by Shakespeare from a popular English tune) rises to Desdemona's memory as a premonition of her imminent death. Up to now, attentive readers have only known Barbary as Desdemona's mother's "maid." Invented by Shakespeare, she is missing from his Italian source, Giraldi Cinthio's novella *Un capitano moro* ("A Moorish Captain") (1565), which may harken back to an historical incident of murder in Venice in 1508. But scholars have long recognized that Barbary's name recalls Iago's description of Othello as a "Barbary horse"—one of several equivocal references to Africa in the text. Mr. Sellars explained to me why this term mattered to Shakespeare: "Two high diplomats from the Barbary Coast came to London in 1600 to meet with Queen Elizabeth. And it was the first time Londoners saw Africans of high degree, and that was widely commented on in the British press at the time. So for Shakespeare to use the term 'Barbary' in 1603 was extremely vivid." In those same years, the Queen sought to banish low-placed "Blackamoors" from her realm, and there was public outcry about the enslavement of British sailors by "Barbary" pirates. These anxieties complicated the English fascination with various dark-skinned peoples known from a popular travel literature, which informed Shakespeare's play, as Mr. Sellars and I also discussed.

Mr. Sellars's colleague, Avery Willis, suggested to Ms. Morrison that, by calling the maid "Barbary," Shakespeare allows us to imagine Barbary as herself African, and her songs to Desdemona as a medium transmitting another history. The idea that Barbary was not just her mother's maid, but also Desdemona's own nurse, was the creative seed for the *Desdemona* project.

It is Desdemona's prior familiarity with this African heritage, so *Desdemona* suggests, that allows her to *recognize* Othello's own history

Of moving accidents by flood and field,  
 Of hair-breadth scapes i' th' imminent  
 deadly breach,  
 Of being taken by the insolent foe  
 And sold to slavery, of my redemption  
 thence.... *Othello*, 1.3.135–38

Mr. Sellars proposed the collaboration with Rokia Traoré, he told me, because the project "required a voice of an African woman to speak as an African woman and to sing as an African woman. Rokia was the logical choice because Rokia is a completely extraordinary figure." It was important to him as well as to Ms. Morrison that Africa no longer be "ventriloquized" by Shakespeare, nor even by Ms. Morrison, for that matter. In *Desdemona*, finally, the voice of "Barbary"—Africa—is...African.

Ms. Morrison gives her Barbary a real African name (Sa'ran, or "joy") to challenge the concept—implicit in the name of "Desdemona" ("misery")—that culturally assigned identities fix our doom. Barbary is performed by world music sensation Rokia Traoré and Desdemona by American actress Tina Benko. Originally from Mali, Ms. Traoré sings (in her native Bambara and some French) her own songs together with music she revises from the ancient griot tradition in which she is schooled. The only exception is a one set of lyrics that Ms. Morrison penned for her in response to the "Willow Song." Ms. Traoré accompanies herself on acoustic guitar with her small band of traditional string players (the *n'goni* and *kora*) and three backup singers.

Built on the backbone of Ms. Morrison's incisive script, the piece took shape through the fluid rapport between the writer and composer, who share compatible artistic values. The art of both women is ambitious yet also personal and intensely lyrical, as they seek to engage us in the complex issues that engage them. Mr. Sellars called the result a "specifically charged feminine space.... They create a space in their image that is quiet at their center and infinite at the edges."

Mr. Tarnopolsky concurred by describing moments of “great tenderness and visceral force” that transport us on a “real emotional journey” with the aid of “gorgeous music,” as witnessed by the “incredible reception” by the first audience in Vienna last May. Crediting Mr. Sellars’s active involvement, he explained how the director traveled back and forth between Mali and the United States to work closely with each artist during the genesis of the piece.

It is fitting that as a singer, Barbary should come to life via Ms. Traoré’s translucent music. Ms. Traoré has distinguished herself within the vibrant musical culture of Mali by developing an unusually intimate style that promotes thoughtful consideration of her intricate lyrics. The root sound of traditional instruments to which she adds her guitars and vocal harmonies (also unusual for a female vocalist) pulsate quietly in layered rhythms as she sings with compassion about issues confronting her fellow Africans. She has built a bridge with a Western sensibility as well by partnering with noted ensembles and covering old favorites like Gershwin’s “The Man I Love” on her last album, *Tchamantché*, which garnered France’s equivalent of the Grammy Award for Best World Album in 2009. Several popular genres, including jazz and R&B, inform her cosmopolitan approach. She first worked with Mr. Sellars in 2006, when she created the multimedia *Wati* with Klangforum Wien for his New Crowned Hope Festival (celebrating the 250th anniversary of Mozart’s birth) in Vienna. Reimagining Mozart as a 13th-century griot, Ms. Traore wove her music into an historical narrative about the Mande Empire, as recounted by a West African woman in a lively conversation with an Austrian cabbie during a ride around Vienna.

Ms. Traoré grew up traveling the world as the daughter of a diplomat and part of Mali’s elite; her becoming a professional musician violated conventional expectations. Yet although her popular albums blend folk with contemporary idioms, she puts down her electric guitar in *Desdemona* in favor of a purely acoustic sound that evokes her Bamana tradition, which she then reconceives. Songs praising young brides

and epic warriors are important in this tradition, and she presents both classic and sometimes startling new versions here. While facing what’s happening in Africa right now, Mr. Sellars remarked, she “retains this depth of sadness...that feeds your yearning and your sense that the future has to be sought out and achieved.” It is this same orientation toward the future, Mr. Sellars suggested, that motivates Ms. Morrison’s script: “Toni reimagines and repositions what is frequently told in Western historical sources as a story of failure, and let’s you see, actually, the human achievement inside what the world has decided is a failure. ... And that was also, needless to say, a Shakespearean project.”

The persistence of the past in the present through song, memory and practice is a consistent theme of Ms. Morrison’s work. The two temporalities refer to and enrich one another, as when a jazz player or singer of spirituals reanimates the old standard even while reworking it. Here, in Ms. Morrison’s reimagining, *Desdemona* and Barbary (who is not listed in Shakespeare’s *dramatis personae*) meet in the afterlife. Their dialogue—also a dialogue between Ms. Morrison’s text and Ms. Traoré’s music—allows the trauma of race, gender and class violence, those wounded identities at the heart of the tragedy of *Othello*, to reverberate in our own global present. “Toni has reconfigured Shakespeare’s early present-at-the-creation pictures of colonialism,” Mr. Sellars pointed out. “She updates and reframes the colonialist project and its residue, as does Rokia from an African perspective.” Ms. Morrison’s work on early America for her last novel *A Mercy* (2008), specifically how slavery became associated with race, provided fertile ground for this project.

As America’s only living Nobel Laureate in literature, Toni Morrison has come to occupy a unique place in the world of letters today. Translated into 26 languages, her novels chronicling the lives of African Americans are read by millions, taught at universities all over the world, and celebrated by critics and governments alike. Upon receiving France’s *Legion d’honneur* last year, Ms. Morrison was dubbed “the greatest American woman novelist of her

time” by Culture Minister Frederic Mitterrand, who saw in her “the best part of America, that which founds its love of liberty on the most intense dreams.” Her work with Ms. Traoré is one of several musical partnerships that have carried her voice into major concert halls and opera houses since the early 1990s. She has collaborated not only with musicians, but also with dancers, visual artists and dramatists (including Mr. Sellars) in the Princeton Atelier Program, which she founded while serving as the Robert F. Goheen Professor in the Council of the Humanities at Princeton University for nearly 20 years. In the process, she transformed her lifetime appreciation of music, which permeates her novels, by writing musical lyrics premiered by the likes of Jessye Norman, Kathleen Battle and Sylvia McNair (together with André Previn, Yo-Yo Ma, Max Roach and others), and more recently by Denyce Graves, who shaped the title role of *Margaret Garner*. This work, which represented the first foray into opera for both Ms. Morrison and composer Richard Danielpour, has enjoyed notable success (sold-out performances in six American cities over four years and a national broadcast still available on NPR’s “World of Opera” website).

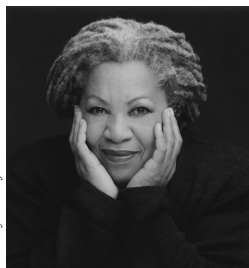
*Desdemona* promises to reach an even wider audience, bringing a message of hope despite—or perhaps because of—the gravity of the issues it raises. The act of listening between *Desdemona* and Barbary models “a new set of relations,” Mr. Sellars clarified, “and a different form of mutual recognition...[based on] radical equality.” Unhindered by conventions

of staging, their contemplative dialogue allows them to connect in a way that “spans continents and centuries,” in his view. The meeting between these women, then, symbolizes a much larger meeting among world cultures, showing how they are enriched when they encounter each other on equal terms. “Shakespeare went out of his way,” Mr. Sellars added, “to write stories that were all about how intricately wired and cross-woven the world is.” He reminded me that there is no better symbol for this exchange than the Bard’s theater, the Globe. By finding a kindred spirit from Mali, Ms. Morrison brings this lesson back home to the United States, where so much well-loved music has its roots in Africa—indeed, in Mali itself (think of the Mississippi blues, for one, or the American banjo, whose likely precursor was the ancient African lute we still hear in Ms. Traoré’s band).

To better disseminate this message, there is talk of adapting *Desdemona* into an African movie in Mali after it completes its long run in two American cities and several more in Europe, including at the Cultural Olympiad during the 2012 Olympics in London.

Lenore Kitts

Currently a Visiting Scholar at UC Berkeley’s School of Law, Lenore Kitts studies how nations cope with traumatic political histories through law and the arts. She is writing a book about Toni Morrison’s use of music in her reckoning with slavery.



**Toni Morrison** (author) is the Robert F. Goheen Professor Emerita in the Humanities at Princeton University.

Her nine major novels, *The Bluest Eye*, *Sula*, *Song of Solomon*, *Tar Baby*,

*Beloved*, *Jazz*, *Paradise*, *Love* and *A Mercy*, have received extensive critical acclaim. She received the National Book Critics Circle Award in 1977 for *Song of Solomon* and the 1988 Pulitzer Prize for *Beloved*. In 2006, *Beloved* was chosen by *The New York Times Book Review* as the best work of American fiction published in the last quarter-century.

Ms. Morrison's lyrics *Honey and Rue*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Kathleen Battle with music by André Previn, premiered January 1992; *Four Songs*, with music by Mr. Previn, premiered by Sylvia McNair at Carnegie Hall in November 1994; *Sweet Talk*, written for Jessye Norman with music by Richard Danielpour, premiered in April 1997; and *Woman.Life.Song*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Jessye Norman with music by Judith Weir, premiered in April 2000; the opera *Margaret Garner* with music by Richard Danielpour, premiered in May 2005.

In fall 2005 Ms. Morrison was the guest curator at the Musée du Louvre in its "Grand Invité" program, where she curated a month-long series of events across the arts on the theme of "The Foreigner's Home."

She has received the *Ordre national de la Légion d'honneur*, the *Commandeur Ordre des Arts et des Lettres* and the National Humanities Medal, among other honors. In 1993, Ms. Morrison was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature.



Opera, theater and festival director **Peter Sellars** (director) is one of the most innovative and powerful forces in the performing arts in America and abroad. A visionary artist, Mr. Sellars is known for groundbreaking interpretations of classic works. Whether it is Mozart, Handel, Shakespeare, Sophocles or the 16th-century Chinese playwright Tang Xianzu, Peter Sellars strikes a universal chord with audiences, engaging and illuminating contemporary social and political issues.

Mr. Sellars has staged operas at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Glyndebourne Festival, the Netherlands Opera, the Opéra National de Paris, the Salzburg Festival and San Francisco Opera, among others, establishing a reputation for bringing 20th-century and contemporary operas to the stage, including works by Olivier Messiaen, Paul Hindemith and György Ligeti. Inspired by the compositions of Kaija Saariaho, Osvaldo Golijov and Tan Dun, he has guided the creation of productions of their work that have expanded the repertoire of modern opera. Mr. Sellars has been a driving force in the creation of many new works with longtime collaborator John Adams, including *Nixon in China*, *The Death of Klinghoffer*, *El Niño*, *Doctor Atomic* and *A Flowering Tree*.

Recent Sellars projects have included a staging of Stravinsky's *Oedipus Rex/Symphony of Psalms* for the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the Sydney Festival; a production of Shakespeare's *Othello* seen in Vienna, Bochum (Germany) and New York; a critically acclaimed concert staging of J. S. Bach's *Saint Matthew Passion* with the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra performed in Salzburg and Berlin; and, this year, stagings of *Nixon in China* for the Metropolitan Opera and George Crumb's *The Winds of Destiny* for the Ojai Music Festival and Cal Performances, and new productions of Handel's *Hercules* in Chicago and Vivaldi's *Griselda* in Santa Fe.

Mr. Sellars has led several major arts festivals, including the 1990 and 1993 Los Angeles Festivals; the 2002 Adelaide Arts Festival in Australia; and the 2003 Venice Biennale International Festival of Theater in Italy. In 2006, he was Artistic Director of New Crowned Hope, a month-long festival in Vienna for which he invited international artists from diverse cultural backgrounds to create new work in the fields of music, theater, dance, film, the visual arts and architecture for the city of Vienna's Mozart Year celebrating the 250th anniversary of Mozart's birth.

Mr. Sellars is a professor in the Department of World Arts and Cultures at UCLA and Resident Curator of the Telluride Film Festival. He is the recipient of a MacArthur Fellowship, the Erasmus Prize, the Sundance Institute Risk-Takers Award and the Gish Prize, and is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.



At once delicate and intense, the voice of **Rokia Traoré** (*Barbary*) takes us on a dreamlike journey into the world of an artist who has forged her own style. Inspiration, freshness and spontaneity, combined with timeless singing and delicate yet energetic instrumental sounds characterize the originality of her repertoire.

Ms. Traoré hails from Bamako, Mali. Seeing her on stage, one cannot deny that her talent is considerable and imbued with strength and serenity. When she was just 25 years old, it was already clear that she was destined to become one of the great voices of Africa.

Full of inventiveness and daring, and spurred on by a natural authority and great integrity in her artistic choices, Ms. Traoré is one of the most influential musicians of Africa.

Winner of the Radio France International Discoveries of Africa contest, and a revelation at the Angoulême Music Metisses Festival in 1998, Ms. Traoré has invented a deliciously original

and appealing music. Her innovations have established a singular style in contemporary African music, and she does it all as an artist responsible and aware of the proper way to fulfill her calling.

In 2006, pursuing a career characterized by such brilliant works as her albums *Mounissa*, *Wanita* and *Bowboï*, Ms. Traoré was invited to collaborate with the American director of the New Crowned Hope festival, Peter Sellars.

This first collaboration with Mr. Sellars responded perfectly to Ms. Traoré's desire to pursue a career broader in definition than the narrow universe of so-called world music, which, for her, limits her artistic desires.

In 2010, after the success of her fourth album, *Tchamantché*, Ms. Traoré began her second collaboration with Mr. Sellars: *Desdemona*, for which she has composed the music. In order to realize her musical compositions, Ms. Traoré engaged the talented *n'goni* (West African lute) player, Mamah Diabate, who had accompanied her since the beginning of her career; Kadiatou Sangaré, Bintou Soumbounou and Fatim Kouyaté, who are among the young singers supported by Ms. Traoré's foundation in Mali, La Fondation Passerelle; and Mamady Camara, a *kora* (West African harp) player, who she selected by audition.



**Tina Benko** (*Desdemona*) recently appeared in Ivo Van Hove's production of *The Little Foxes* at New York Theatre Workshop and Wallace Shawn's *Marie and Bruce* at The New Group. Other New York Theatre includes *Irena's Vow*, *A Day in the Death of Joe Egg*, *Ten-High*, *Rough Sketch*, *Restoration*, *Age of Iron*, *Post-Mortem* and *Wintertime*. Her television credits include *Royal Pains*, *Ugly Betty*, *Law & Order*, *Chappelle's Show* and three seasons on Showtime's *Brotherhood*. Her film credits include *The Avengers*, *Photo-Op*, *Puccinni for Beginners*, *Lucky Days*, *The Nanny Diaries* and *The Hungry Ghosts*. Ms. Benko has co-written the plays *Crush the Infamous Thing* and *Gazebo* and is currently directing the solo

play *Lou* based on the writings of Lou Andreas-Salomé.

**Mamah Diabaté** (*n'goni*) comes from a griot family in the region of Ségou, Mali. Like most griot musicians, Mr. Diabaté was taught at a young age to play his instrument, the *n'goni*, by his father. After auditions in 1998, Rokia Traoré hired Mr. Diabaté when he was just 20 years old. With the exception of *Mouneïssa*, he has performed on all of Ms. Traoré's albums and tours. Mr. Diabaté also accompanies the great griots in Bamako, Mali, when not on tour.

**Kadiatou Sangaré** (*singer*) is identified as a noble Malinké Fulani in the socio-ethnic classification of Malians. As with Rokia Traoré, traditional Malian social mores do not allow her to speak in public during meetings or celebrations, expressing an opinion or desire...be it her own or someone one else's. According to the cultures of most ethnic groups in Mali, a noble or well-bred woman does not speak in public.

However, because of contact with the West, this social practice has been relaxed, which has led to members of the nobility practicing journalism, history, storytelling and music...and to griots to become doctors, biologists and bankers.

**Bintou Soumbounou** (*singer*) is the daughter of a notable Garanké named Hamé Soumbounou, highly respected in the world of griots in Mali. **Fatim Kouyaté** (*singer*) comes from an important griot family. The Garankés are distantly related to the family of griots, of which they are not traditionally a part.

To understand this difference, it helps to know that in the past empires and kingdoms of West Africa, griots (Djéli) addressed themselves to everything concerning music and history. They put stories of different events to music.

Finas, or Founès, specialized in speech, making them the messengers and spokespersons in a society where writing did not exist and the rules of the nobility demanded that the farmers, fishermen and others did not speak in public. The Noumous mastered iron, earth and fire. They were healers, practicing circumcision and making weapons and utensils. Garankés controlled skin and leather. They made the

sheaths of weapons, harnesses and leather goods. Today, for the sake of simplicity, all of the different families who are pillars of this complex social organization are called griots.

These young women are different from the Niamakalas and Horon (nobles) of a few decades ago. They have been educated in schools, just like any young people of the 21st century. They have even participated in competitions and events organized around the music in West Africa, Ms. Soumbounou having been a finalist in the musical contest Africa Stars. Moreover, these young women are as much attracted by traditional Malian music as they are by the music of Rokia Traoré, Beyoncé or Céline Dion.

In 2009, Ms. Sangaré, Ms. Soumbounou and Ms. Kouyaté participated in auditions organized by Rokia Traoré's foundation to select 16 young singers for training in vocal technique and were subsequently enrolled in education programs supported by La Fondation Passerelle.

**Mamadyba Camara** (*kora*) was born in 1968 in Kita, Mali, and spent part of his childhood in Gambia. He is a Fina; like any son of Niamakala, he will learn his parents' occupation alongside them. By the turns of fate, some Niamakalas have undergone social reorganization to bring their roles in alignment with social realities.

Such is the case of Mr. Camara, who is the son of a Fina but also plays an instrument, the *kora*. He arrived in Bamako with his parents when he was still a teenager. Like the great *kora* players Toumani Diabaté and Balakè Sissoko, he grew up in the environment of the Niamakalas of Bamako, who maintain a connection to Gambia.

Mr. Camara has accompanied such great Malian singers as Amy Koïta and Oumou Dede Demba, and he began working with Rokia Traoré in 2009.

**James F. Ingalls** (*lighting designer*) designs include *Romeo and Juliet*, *On Motifs of Shakespeare*; *Mozart Dances*; *L'Allegro, il Penseroso ed il Moderato*; *Dido and Aeneas*; and *The Hard Nut* (Mark Morris Dance Group); *Orfeo ed Euridice* (Metropolitan Opera); *King Arthur* (English National Opera); *Joyride*, *Sylvia*, *Sandpaper*

*Ballet*, *Maelstrom* and *Pacific* (San Francisco Ballet); *Platée* (Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, and New York City Opera); *Ein Herz* (Paris Opera Ballet); and the initial White Oak Project tour. His other work in dance includes *Split Sides* and *Fluid Canvas* for the Merce Cunningham Dance Company, *Brief Encounters* for the Paul Taylor Dance Company and *Bitter Suite* for Jorma Elo at Hubbard Street Dance Company. He often collaborates with Melanie Rios Glaser and the Wooden Floor dancers in Santa Ana, California.

A native of the Paris region, **Alexis Giraud** (*sound designer*) began his career as a sound technician in 1995 in Le Bataclan, a Parisian nightclub. After working with many internationally acclaimed artists and musicians, Mr. Giraud began touring as a sound designer for artists in the French and world music genres. When he is not touring, Mr. Giraud makes recordings and works to bring emerging young artists' music projects to fruition.

**Diane J. Malecki** (*producer*) has produced the work of Peter Sellars for more than 25 years. She served for several years as Artistic Administrator of the Tyrone Guthrie Theater in Minneapolis, Minnesota, where she first worked with Mr. Sellars. She was subsequently invited by him to become Executive Director of the American National Theater at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington DC, where Mr. Sellars had been appointed Artistic Director. In 1987, Ms. Malecki was appointed Producing Director of the newly formed BAM Opera at the Brooklyn Academy of Music. Since 1990, she has worked as an independent producer, collaborating primarily with Mr. Sellars on the development, production, and touring of his theater, opera, film, video and festival work. Ms. Malecki has been engaged by numerous organizations, including the Salzburg Festival, the Barbican Centre, the Vienna Festival, Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts, the Holland Festival, San Francisco Opera and the Los Angeles Philharmonic, to produce Mr. Sellars's productions, and has worked with many and diverse creative and interpretative artists.