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**SALIF KEITA, THE GOLDEN VOICE OF AFRICA, RETURNS WITH HIS BAND**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, AT 8 P.M. AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**BERKELEY, March 14, 2007**—Acclaimed West African troubadour **Salif Keita**, one of the founders of modern Afro-Pop music whose electrifying voice has earned him the honorific “Golden Voice of Africa,” performs with his band one night only at Cal Performances **Wednesday, April 25, at 8 p.m. at Zellerbach Hall**. For four decades Keita has thrilled audiences on the world music stage with his soaring voice, passionate songs, rich musicality and the spiritual warmth of his concerts. His current American tour follows directly on the heels of his well-received concert at the legendary Womadelaide Festival in Adelaide (March 2007). “It is Salif Keita who remains pre-eminent...his musical expertise and eerily beautiful vocals are still without peer. Keita's band, featuring guitars and percussion, played a full tilt set” (*The Australian*).

Keita blends the traditional griot sounds of his Malian childhood with other West African styles from Guinea, the Ivory Coast, and Senegal, fusing effortlessly with influences from Cuba, Spain, and Portugal. His band includes traditional African instruments such as the *kora* (stringed instrument sounding like a harp), *balafonn* (wooden xylophone), *djembe* (hand carved West African drum) and the oddly-shaped *camele n'goni* (Malian long-necked lute), these instruments often synthesized and sampled, along with electrified Western guitar, organ and sax. Over the years Keita has recorded numerous top-selling albums, including *M'Bemba*, the much-praised Grammy-nominated *Moffou* and the just released *Wassalou*.

Iain Shedden, writing in *The Australian* in advance of the Adelaide concert, took note of Keita's influence in ushering other Malian acts onto the world stage to become international stars, including Tinarawen, Amadou and Mariam. “So elementary is music in Mali,” he wrote, “that there is no end to the country's potential to produce world-dominating acts.” Quoting Keita, “It's been a long time that Malian music has been well received all over the world. I think it's fantastic. It's good for the music, it's good for the culture and it's good for the country as well. I

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hope I have been influential in that.”

Keita clearly has been influential in many ways. His personal story has served to deepen his mystique and burnish the iconic position he holds on the world stage: Keita descends from true African royalty, and he was born an albino in a land that traditionally rejects and shuns Africans born with white skin. As a direct descendant of the Mandinka warrior Sundiata Keita, founder of the Mali Empire in the 13th century, the young Keita was told he could not be a musician since that is the role of griots, or folk storytellers in Mali. Being of royal lineage, however, did not shield him from the rejection and prejudice of his countryman. He was a social outcast in Mali, where albinos are considered bad luck. Shunned by his father at birth and later prevented from earning a college degree in education, although he had completed all the course work, Keita persisted. Working with now revered acts such as the Super Rail Band de Bamako and Les Ambassadeurs Internationales he eventually found himself dubbed “the golden voice of Africa.”

Keita eventually reconciled with his father, and over the years has helped family members who share his genetic anomaly, including his own daughter. Today he spends his free time working for the Salif Keita Foundation, which raises funds for the care and education of albino children in Mali. Money raised by the foundation buys sunscreen and clothing appropriate for children who must shield their vulnerable skin from the sun. Said Keita in a published report, “We hope at some stage to get some funding from international organizations, but that is not the case at the moment. What we hope for is that albinos will be recognized as ordinary people. It’s very hard, but you have to start somewhere.”

### **TICKET INFORMATION**

Tickets for **Salif Keita April 25** in Zellerbach Hall at **8 p.m.** are priced at **\$22.00, \$30.00** and **\$42.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a

\$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperformances.net](http://www.calperformances.net).

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**CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Wednesday, April 25 at 8 p.m.**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus**  
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

*World Stage*  
**Salif Keita**

**Program:** World Music superstar Salif Keita from Mali, West Africa, and his band arrive for a dynamic, up-on-your feet concert of Afro Pop fusion.

**Tickets:** \$22.00, \$30.00 and \$42.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperfs.berkeley.edu](http://www.calperfs.berkeley.edu); and at the door.

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