

FOR IMMEDIATE
RELEASE

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SENEGALESE SUPERSTAR
BAABA MAAL
RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES FRIDAY, APRIL 2 AT 8:00 P.M.

GRAMMY-NOMINATED VOCALIST AND GUITARIST EXPERTLY BLENDS AFRICAN MUSICAL TRADITIONS WITH REGGAE, R&B, FUNK AND JAZZ

BERKELEY, March 1, 2004 – **Baaba Maal**, one of Senegal’s most passionate and well-known artists comes to Zellerbach Hall **Friday, April 2 at 8:00 p.m.** with his signature high-energy performance of driving rhythms fused with timeless Fulani musical traditions. Featuring dancing, traditional Senegalese costumes and his seven-member band **Daande Lenol** (“voice of the people” in Toucouleur), Maal is known for combining his soaring vocals with traditional African instruments such as the *hoddu* (a four-stringed lute), *kora* (a 21-stringed harp anchored by a gourd and plucked by thumbs), and various hand drums and acoustic guitars. “The music they made was magnificent,” wrote *New York Times* critic Jon Pareles. “Hypnotic and galvanizing, uplifting and visceral.” Joining Maal on stage is his long-time musical mentor, **Mansour Seck** (guitar and vocals), as well as **Barous Sall** (*hoddu*), **Mama Gaye** (guitar), **Djiby Sall** (guitar, vocals, movement), **Assane Kaba** (percussion), **Ousseynou Kaba** (percussion), and **Abdoul Khadre Diack** (movement).

BAABA MAAL

The West African country of Senegal, a bridge between the continent’s Arab and Sub-Saharan regions, seems to incorporate the base of all Western music—especially country blues and rap—in its ancient rhythms. “When you hear Wolof music in Dakar,” points out **Baaba Maal**, “you can see one man who talks during the rhythm, as they do in rap music. And when Senegalese youths listen to rap they dance to it like they would do to Wolof.” Similar to his music, Maal is a mix of the past and the present. He almost missed his life’s calling by not being born into the social caste of the *griot*—musicians and storytellers whom the community holds responsible for keeping Senegalese history alive. Fortunately for Maal, the ancestral tradition

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was not embraced by his elementary school headmaster, who encouraged his young student's musicianship. As a youth, Maal traveled from village to village along the Senegal River, learning from older musicians. Later, after being recognized as a musical prodigy, he attended the conservatory in Dakar for four years, followed by postgraduate work in Paris at the Ecole des Beaux Arts. Complementing this traditional and classical music training, Maal was influenced in the 1960s by African American singers such as James Brown, Otis Redding and Wilson Pickett and later by Jamaican reggae stars Bob Marley and Jimmy Cliff when they toured Senegal in the '70s.

Having logged tens of thousands of miles touring over the last two decades, Baaba Maal has performed on nearly every continent. He considers himself a world musician who is also a world citizen, using music as a medium to express his concerns about African unity, women's roles in society, world peace, and the environment. Off stage, Maal serves as spokesman for the United Nations Development Program on the issue of AIDS in Africa. "I want to say a lot of things about how we [Africans] see the world and how we see Africa in this new millennium," Maal explains.

Baaba Maal has recorded nine albums, including the Grammy-nominated *Firin' in Fouta* (Mango Records, 1994). His latest CD on the Palm Pictures label, *Missing You...Mi Yeewnii*, was recorded in the open air in Maal's hometown village of Nbunk, and features his band on acoustic instruments. Baaba Maal and his group contributed four songs to the *Black Hawk Down* (Decca/Universal) movie soundtrack.

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Baaba Maal** on **Friday, April 2 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$22.00, \$28.00, and \$36.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; 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.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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San Francisco Chronicle, *San Francisco* magazine, and KDFC Classical 102.1 FM are media sponsors of Cal Performances' 2003/04 performing arts season.

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Cal Performances' presentation of Baaba Maal is sponsored by Hear Music.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

Friday, April 2 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph, Berkeley

World Stage

Baaba Maal, guitar and vocals
with his band, **Daande Lenol**

Program:

One of Africa's greatest musical treasures, Senegalese singer and guitarist Baaba Maal returns to Cal Performances following his previously sold-out performance.

Tickets: \$22.00, \$28.00 and \$38.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door

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