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**WORLD MUSIC/CRASHarts Presents
HABIB KOITÉ**

Friday, March 7, 8pm, Somerville Theatre

BOSTON, MA -- World Music/CRASHarts presents Habib Koité on Friday, March 7, 8pm at the Somerville Theatre, 55 Davis Square, Somerville. Tickets are \$35, reserved seating. For tickets and information call World Music/CRASHarts at (617) 876-4275 or buy online at www.WorldMusic.org.

Blessed with a sweet, intimate voice, Malian guitar virtuoso Habib Koité has become one of the leading figures in Afro-pop. Backed by his band, he creates a sparkling modern sound that draws on several styles of traditional Malian music along with touches of blues, jazz, and rock. Habib Koité is touring with a new band in support of his latest release, *Soô*, out February 25, 2014 (Contre Jour).

Malian guitarist Habib Koité is one of Africa's most popular and recognized musicians. Born in 1958, Koité comes from a noble line of Khassonké griots, traditional troubadours who provide wit, wisdom, and musical entertainment at social gatherings and special events. He grew up surrounded by 17 brothers and sisters and developed his unique guitar style accompanying his griot mother and paternal grandfather who played the *kamele n'goni*, a traditional four-stringed instrument associated with hunters from the Wassolou region of Mali.

Habib Koité has a unique approach to playing the guitar. He tunes his instrument to the pentatonic scale and plays on open strings as one would on a *kamala n'goni*. At times, his music sounds closer to the blues or flamenco. Unlike the griots, his singing style is restrained and intimate with varying cadenced rhythms and melodies. His music brings together different styles, creating a new pan-Malian approach that reflects his open-minded interest in all types of music. He has performed at most of Europe's major venues and festivals including the Montreuz Jazz Festival, WOMAD, and the World Roots Festival. He has appeared in the top 20 of the College Music Journal New World music

chart, #1 on the World Charts Europe, and he broke new ground at AAA rock radio, spending several months in regular rotation on commercial stations across the country. He has garnered fans across the world, including bluesman Eric Bibb, Oumou Sangare, Jackson Browne and Bonnie Raitt, making an appearance on Bonnie Raitt's 2002 album *Silver Lining*.

Touring in support of his new album *Soô* (which translates to "home" in English), Habib Koité again spotlights Mali's diversity. With all the turmoil that has hit Mali since his last recording, Koité recorded the entire album in his own home. The album looks at his native land, a country torn apart by violence over the last two years, a time when a real feeling of home couldn't be more vital. On it, Koité addresses issues such as people helping each other and living together peacefully, circumcision, and forced marriages. It also touches on happier times, celebrating soccer, a vital part of life in Mali.

The album features mostly new musicians after 22 years with the same band, Bamada; the only remaining member is bassist Abdul Berthe. Even the engineers were new, one of them being Koité's 21 year old son. The legendary Toumani Diabaté joins a song on the kora and Bassekou Kouyate lends his *n'goni* on the same song. Beyond new personnel, the album also features a percussionist on calabash and djembe instead of a drum kit and features Koité on banjo along with a brand new guitar that uses metal strings. Singing in Malinke, Bambara, and Dogon, and incorporating styles and rhythms from all over the country, Koité brings together the diversity of ethnicities of Mali on *Soô* and continues to establish him as one of world music's most exciting figures.

His 2014 tour features Koité on lead vocals and guitar; Abdul Berthe on bass and *kamala n'goni*; Mama Kone on calabash, djembe and vocals; Issa Kone on acoustic guitar, banjo, and vocals; and Coulibaly on keyboard and backing vocals.

For more information: <http://www.habibkoite.com/>

About World Music/CRASHarts

World Music, a non-profit organization established in 1990, is New England's premier presenter of global culture, featuring music and dance from the far and near corners of the globe. In 2001, World Music launched CRASHarts as a division of World Music dedicated to presenting a contemporary performing arts series in greater Boston. World Music/CRASHarts strives to offer audiences an opportunity to share in many different cultural and artistic expressions and seeks to foster an atmosphere of discovery and exploration. The organization presents approximately 70 concerts and 15 educational programs per year. For more information, call (617) 876-4275 or visit www.WorldMusic.org.

World Music/CRASHarts is funded in part by the Massachusetts Cultural Council, a state agency which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts.

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