

# ANGELIQUE KIDJO; VUSI MAHLASELA

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VUSI Mahlasela may have arrived as the support act for Angelique Kidjo but he left with the audience standing and cheering as though they'd come to see him. The South African singer-songwriter is - like Kidjo - an activist and artist, and his performance resonated with a calm authority as he shared his concerns for the future of his country.

Mahlasela's rich and full-bodied voice is flecked with an unexpected sweetness that softens the directness of his lyrics. His four-piece band provided a supple backbeat for many of his songs, though the most affecting numbers were those accompanied only by acoustic guitar and minimal percussion, keeping Mahlasela's vocals front and centre.

Angelique Kidjo mesmerised the audience with the sheer beauty of her voice when she opened her set with an a cappella version of *Atcha Houn*, a traditional Beninese song. Later she offered a poignant tribute to her father with *Petite Fleur* (sung as an intimate, jazz-tinged duet with bassist Itaiguara Brandao) and an exquisitely unadorned *Malaika*.

But most of the evening was dedicated to dynamic, dance-friendly numbers that saw Kidjo pacing the stage as she sang, coaxing the band to energetic peaks and chiding the audience for remaining in our seats. As Latin, Afro-pop and even disco rhythms fuelled the music's fervour, Kidjo headed into the auditorium to dance with us (by now we were all on our feet), her potent voice never faltering as she encouraged a mass stage invasion for her ecstatic finale.

Source: <https://www.theage.com.au/entertainment/music/angelique-kidjo-vusi-mahlasela-20120406-1wgyt.html#ixzz1rYIHahCb>