

barbican



Wed 6 Jul, Hackney Empire

Band of Gypsies:

Taraf de Haïdouks & Kočani Orkestar

Two of the most famous, emblematic and brilliant Balkan Gypsy bands join forces for a raucous evening of wild new music and old favourites.



Fri 8 Jul, Hackney Empire

Calle 13 + Wara + DJ Quantic

Ten-time Latin Grammy award winners invite you to the biggest party of the summer, with Latin DJs Quantic and Cal Jader & Arias (Movimientos) 'til late!



Sun 10 & Mon 11 Jul, Hackney Empire

Hugh Masekela

and his band with guest South African stars **Vusi Mahlasela, Thandiswa** and **Lira**.



Tue 12 Jul

Congotronics vs Rockers

Feat. **Deerhoof, Konono no.1, Kasai Allstars, Juana Molina, Wildbirds & Peacedrums** and **Skeletons**



Thu 14 Jul, Hackney Empire

Ebo Taylor / Fool's Gold

The best Afrobeat, Highlife and Funk grooves from Ghanaian music legend Ebo Taylor



Mon 18 Jul, Rich Mix

Baloji / Fatoumata Diawara

Showcasing two of Africa's hippest musical exports



Fri 22 Jul

A Night in Tahrir Square

Feat. **El Tanbura, Azza Balba, Mustafa Said** and **Ramy Essam**
Voices from Egypt's uprising



Sat 23 Jul

Aurelio / Danyel Waro / Carlou D

Fresh and emerging global voices from Honduras, Réunion and Senegal

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Blaze
19 JUN - 28 JUL

**OUMOU
SANGARE**
**+ ANIBAL VELASQUEZ
Y LOS LOCOS
DEL SWING**
THU 30 JUN 7.30PM

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Oumou Sangare

+ Anibal Velasquez y Los Locos del Swing

Oumou Sangare

Oumou Sangare lead vocals
Sekou Bah bass guitar
Brehima Diakite kamele n'goni
Mamadou Diakite guitar
Aliou Dante drum
Cheick Oumar Diabate djembe
Amadou Traore flute
Dandio Sidibe backing vocals
Awa Berthe backing vocals

Anibal Velasquez

Anibal Velasquez accordion
Jose Velasquez vocals
Rafael Polo bombo / trumpet
Abelardo Carbone guitar
Luis Lopez piano
Rosemberg Peinado congas
Miguel Gomez timbale
Cesar de la Hoz caja
Freddy Gomez guacharaca
Willam Consuegra bass

FreeStage 6.15 – 7.15pm

Simon Nwambenen

Oumou Sangare is Mali's most famous woman. Gorgeous, principled and possessed of a voice that could change the flow of the Niger River, she is known by everyone in this vast West African country as, simply, Oumou. In the cosmopolitan capital of Bamako, where she lives, Oumou is ubiquitous: her funky electro/acoustic music blares from buses, taxis and market stalls. Her face, with those almond-

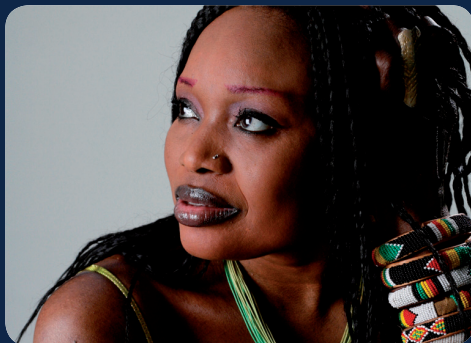
shaped eyes and that megawatt smile, adorns T-shirts and billboards. Her legacy is there in the city's women: the ones who walk proud, taking no nonsense from men.

"Africa and the world must understand," says Oumou, 43, "that there cannot be human rights if there are no women's rights. I spread this message in my music, and in the way I live my life. I have seen a big change in attitudes over the years." She shakes her head, her earrings jangling. "But there is still much work to be done."

Back in 1989 Sangare placed Western instruments alongside the djembe drum and kamalengoni – an instrument particular to her mother's birthplace in the Wassoulou region of southern Mali, and one usually associated with male power. Her debut cassette *Moussoulou (Women)* caused a sensation. Gorgeous, vertiginous and just 21-years-of-age, she spoke to men in ways they had never been spoken to before. Her Bambara lyrics – on arranged marriages, errant husbands, the price of a bride, the thrill of sexuality – confused Mali's men folk, who danced to her tunes anyway.

Since then her star has ascended ever higher; her most recent album *Seya (World Circuit)*, her first album in five years, was celebrated and Grammy-nominated. In between recording and performing, Oumou walks her talk: the impresaria behind a business empire that includes a hotel, a farm and her own range of Oum Sang cars imported from China; the patron of a charity for single mothers and an ambassador for the UN, she is the embodiment of the modern African woman.

"I will never forget my roots," asserts the mother-of-one, who used to zip to gigs on a Yamaha scooter when her career took off in the early Nineties. "What I sing," she says, "I sing from experience."



Oumou Sangare



Anibal Velasquez y Los Locos del Swing

The third of four children, Oumou was just two-years-old when her father, an imam, took a second wife and moved to the Ivory Coast. Oumou's mother, a singer at traditional ceremonies, struggled to keep the family afloat; by 13, Oumou was the main breadwinner. At 16 she was on tour in Europe with a song/percussion ensemble: "I met [the late Mama Africa] Miriam Makeba, who told me I had a very great future, which gave me the confidence to go back and start my own band."

Oumou has been honing and developing her exuberant, upbeat sound ever since. And as her acclaimed performance (as part of African Soul Rebels) at the Barbican last year proved, her voice – a bluesy call to arms - is sounding richer, more nuanced, more powerful. "Even if I don't understand what she's saying," says fan and former collaborator Alicia Keys, "I understand what she's saying."

Rhythm is a language too, says Oumou, whose messages are also exhortations to get up and dance. Surrounded by musicians on, variously, drums, flute, violin and electric guitars – and of course, the harp-like kamalengoni – Oumou and her backing singers toss and spin calabash bowls in a spectacle that's part soul review, part traditional Motherland.

Welcome, then, the new Mama Africa. And prepare to be overcome: wherever in the world Oumou Sangare performs, mass dancing – including mass dancing onstage – is commonplace.

But first: crazy costeño magic from Anibal 'El Mago' Velasquez, the elder statesman of Colombia's Musica Tropical movement and a man famed for whipping crowds into frenzies. Born in 1936 in the bustling port city of Barranquilla, a gateway for sounds from Cuba, Mexico and the United States, Anibal was playing instruments before he could walk. His weapon of choice, however, is the accordion –

which he wields like a hombre possessed.

"People were confused at first," he's said of the accordion, which was previously dismissed as a second-class instrument. "Then they'd just flow with the music."

It helped, of course, that Anibal wrapped his squeezebox around Cuban grooves – rumba, mambo, guaracha – as well as Colombian styles such as cumbia and mapalé. Anibal's household-name fame filled stadiums, created copycats, prompted a boom in recording studios up and down the coast. "Amazing times," Anibal has recalled. "We were pioneering a new identity for Colombia."

But by the 1970s, with the accordion-led vallenato style thoroughly appropriated by country's infamous drug cartels, Anibal hightailed it to Caracas, Venezuela, where he remained for 18 years – and released 150 LPs. Tonight this living legend cherry-picks tracks from a career that continues to swing. If you're wearing a hat, hold onto it.

Programme notes © Jane Cornwell

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