

# Afriky Lolo West African Dance Company Hosts Its 7th Annual African Dance Celebration With Featured Performance of SUNDIATA - The King Of Mali

*Ivorian dancer, actor, singer and star of "The Lion King" in Europe –  
**Anicet Germaine** – will make special appearance as guest performer*

**St. Louis, MO** – The region's premier, professional West African dance company – **Afriky Lolo** – will host its **7<sup>th</sup> Annual African Dance Celebration** on Friday, **February 26** and Saturday, **February 27** at 8:00 p.m. at Edison Theatre on the campus of Washington University. This year's event is co-presented by the African Student Association at Washington University. Tickets for the performance are \$25.

After staging sold-out performances over the past years, celebrated West African choreographer and artistic and executive director of Afriky Lolo **Diadie Bathily** (pronounced Jah-jee Bah-chilly) returns, leading the dance company in another exciting performance.

Joining Afriky Lolo as a special guest performer is **Anicet Germaine** – Ivorian dancer, actor, singer and star of "The Lion King" ("Le Roi Lion") in Europe . Two other Ivorian artists will join the production as well: **Louis-Pierre Yonsian**, a dancer from George Momboye's Company in France and musician **Diarra Zumana** from New York City . **K. LaMonte' Jones**, a professional actor based in New York City, will also join the production, playing the starring role of "Sundiata."

- WHO:** Afriky Lolo's 7th Annual African Dance Celebration.
- WHAT:** **Sundiata – The King of Mali**
- WHEN:** Friday, **February 26** and Saturday, **February 27** at 8:00p.m.
- WHERE:** **Edison Theatre**  
Washington University  
St. Louis, MO 63130
- TICKETS:** **\$25.00 (General Admission)**

Tickets are available by calling the Edison Theater Box Office at 314-935-5000 or through Metrotix at 314-534-1111. For further information, call Dominique Beeks of Afriky Lolo at 314-276-1913 or e-mail her at [afrikylolo@yahoo.com](mailto:afrikylolo@yahoo.com)

The tale of **Sundiata** has been told for centuries all over Africa. In fact, it is the basis for **Disney's "The Lion King."** "Sundiata – The King of Mali" follows the universal story of an undiscovered hero, who must overcome extreme adversity to attain eminence. As a child, Sundiata is crippled and lowly, but when he becomes an adult he overthrows the cruel sorcerer king, Sumanguru Kanté and is crowned with the title "Massa," which means "king of kings." As the first ruler of the Mali Empire, his model for government guides the empire to its zenith until its dissolution in 1645.

In addition to the vibrant choreography and heart-pounding West African drumming and music arranged by **Caph Guei** and **Weedie Braimah**, one of the most delightful aspects of the Annual African Dance

Celebration is the costume design. Diadie Bathily imports colorful costumes from Mali and Ivory Coast. His wardrobe team also hand stitches many of the costumes. An exciting feature of this year's production is the dramatic headpieces made from carved gourd by Illinois artist **Nora Harvey**.

"Sundiata – The King of Mali" promises to be a captivating journey into West African history, culture and dance and entertaining for all ages. This show is a rare gem that you don't want to miss.

#### **BACKGROUND:**

*Founded and led by Diadié Bathily, Afriky Lolo is a non-profit organization that is committed to bringing West African dance and culture to the communities of St. Louis , Metro East and the greater Eastern Missouri region through teaching and performing. Bathily is a master dancer and choreographer from the Cote d'Ivoire , West Africa . He immigrated to the United States in 1998. He has a strong personal and professional desire to share the beauty, culture and passion of West African dance with Americans, especially African Americans.*

*Diadie Bathily has danced professionally for over 30 years and has performed professionally for Marie-Rose Guiraud's Les Guirivoires, Adama Drame, Wara Danse (his company in the Cote d'Ivoire), and Diadié Bathily Dance (in the United States). Bathily is an experienced teacher who specializes in traditional dances from Mali , the Cote d'Ivoire , Senegal , and Ghana . He teaches and performs in schools and at local universities, colleges, and dance studios throughout the Midwest . Throughout the school year, Bathily teaches and gives workshops at local elementary and secondary public schools, at Washington University and at the University of Missouri in St. Louis . Bathily also choreographs original pieces for university dance companies.*

*Diadie Bathily formed Afriky Lolo in 2003, and became a tax-exempt, non-profit corporation in 2007. The company has 75 dancers – ranging in age from 6 to over 60 – and eight drummers. Afriky Lolo, meaning African Star, performs traditional West African dance at community events throughout the year. The company's annual African Dance Celebration is its largest event.*

*Afriky Lolo performances are choreographed, staged, costumed, and directed by Diadié Bathily. These performances reflect the rich culture of West Africa , and each dance performed by Afriky Lolo is enhanced by traditional West African costumes. Afriky Lolo continues to grow its public recognition, its teaching opportunities and its performance opportunities. The company offers its educational program to schools in 2010 – 2011, and is increasing the number of performances and workshops it can offer to the community.*

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