



PRESS RELEASE

17 January 2022

Performance: 10–12 February, 7–8:15 pm, Hall 2, Humboldt Forum

Installation: 9 February: 3–6 pm, 10–12 February, 10 am–5 pm, Hall 2, Humboldt Forum

AT FIRST

Traditional music from Mali meets contemporary European music: *AT FIRST* is a Malian-German project in which choreographer and dancer Kettly Noël and composer and musician Marc Sinan explore creation myths from West Africa and Europe alongside scientific accounts of the creation of the world. The storytelling will unfold using dance and song, as well as performance and video art. *AT FIRST* brings together the Djiguiya Orchestra from Bamako, the Neue Vocalsolisten Stuttgart, and the international Marc Sinan Company. In the Humboldt Forum, *AT FIRST* can be experienced in two different ways: During the day, Hall 2 will be open, with a video installation (free entry). In the evening, musicians and dancers from Mali and Germany will perform live in the installation.

In 150 fragments, the the choreographer and dancer present Kettly Noël and the composer and musician Marc Sinan present creation myths from West Africa and Europe alongside scientific accounts of the creation of the world.

AT FIRST describes our world by reflecting its pluralistic, contradictory nature. Although we may realize that different perspectives can co-exist, we remain in our own indifferent existences, in our own worlds, each shaped by our own perspectives. Stories about the beginning are fundamentally at odds: Some believe that God created the world. Others believe in the scientific theory of the Big Bang. The Dogon people in Western Mali pass on the myth of a fraternal twin impatiently fleeing the womb, with a piece of the placenta falling off and leading to the creation of the Earth. The Dogon have also held astronomical knowledge about the invisible companion of the star Sirius and its course since time immemorial. Astrophysicists were only able to confirm the twin star's existence at the end of the 20th century.

In hall2 in the Humboldt Forum a hexagon twelve meters in diameter provides a mythical space in which the audience is surrounded by creation stories of the Dogon and the nomadic Malian Peulh people, sung simultaneously, contrasted by scientific perspectives on the origins of the universe.

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Biographies:

Marc Sinan – artistic direction, composition, guitar

Marc Sinan's work explores new collaboration methods between artists in a transcultural and transmedial context. He regularly works both as composer and artistic director, guitarist and producer with his own ensemble, the Marc Sinan Company, as well as an ever-changing line-up of international guests and institutional partners. Recordings of his works are released by ECM Records. He lives and works in Berlin. In 2019, he founded the *Spreehalle*, a location for transmedial & transcultural music, art & performing arts in the Elektropolis Schöneeweide (spreehalle.berlin). His polytopic oratorio Manifest(o), recently performed simultaneously at seven key sites of the so-called NSU, received critical acclaim.

marcsinan.com

Kettly Noël - choreography, dance

Born in Haiti, Kettly has lived in Bamako, Mali since 1999. She is a dancer, choreographer, and actress, and tours internationally with her work. Her first creation, *Dans Lacour*, from 1996 – a seminal piece steeped in Haitian voodoo culture – delves into the animistic universe of the island, while simultaneously exploring the roots of modern African dance. Kettly Noël currently directs the international contemporary dance festival *Dense Bamako Danse*, which she founded in 2003, as well as the *Donko Seko Cultural Centre*, a space for training, choreographic creativity and development of contemporary dance as a tool for socialisation. She was invited to perform at *documenta 14* in 2017, where she created the installation and performance *Zombification*.

Djiguiya Orchestra

Founded in 2019, this orchestra from Bamako combines traditional instruments from Mali with European music to create a unique transcultural interplay. Singer and kamale n'goni player Lassine Koné, together with Habib Sangaré on bolon and calabash, and balafon virtuoso Joel Diarra, form an extraordinary ensemble.

Marc Sinan Company

Founded in 2008, the Marc Sinan Company (MS\C) has established a strong profile and a global network. Led by composer and guitarist Marc Sinan, this independent ensemble creates its award-winning transmedial, transcultural projects thanks to an interdisciplinary team and international guests. Permanent ensemble members include clarinetist and electronic musician Oguz Büyükberber, drummer Daniel Eichholz, author Maike Wetzel, producer Eric Nikodym, dramaturge Holger Kuhla and sound designer Karsten Lipp. Their acclaimed guests include Iva Bittová, Kettly Noël (Mali),

Ulzhan Baibussynova (Kazakhstan), Ensemble ConTempo Beijing (China), the Djiguiya Orchestra (Mali), Damian and Delaine Le Bas (UK) and the schnellebuntebilder media collective. The company regularly appears with a varying line-up at top-class festivals and venues – most recently in India, Turkey and the USA. Collaboration partners have included the Badische Staatstheater Karlsruhe, the Bühnen Halle, the Dresdner Sinfoniker and the Humboldt Forum Berlin. Projects created by the MS\C have received numerous awards, including from UNESCO.

Neue Vokalsolisten Stuttgart

The Neue Vocalsolisten see themselves first and foremost as explorers and discoverers. In order to pave the way for the new, they regularly work together with both established and young composers. Over the past 20 years, this has resulted in a repertoire of vocal chamber music that is unique the world over. The Neue Vocalsolisten work particularly within the area of contemporary music theatre with its characteristic electronic media, video and conceptual art. Against this interdisciplinary background, they have formed the genre of vocal chamber music theatre, including works by Georges Aperghis, Carola Bauckholt, Luciano Berio, Luca Francesconi, Lucia Ronchetti, Oscar Strasnoy and Claude Vivier. The ensemble consistently partners with top-class specialist ensembles and orchestras, international opera houses, the independent theatre scene, electronic studios and numerous organisers of festivals and concert series of new music across the globe.

neuevocalsolisten.de

16 / 8 Euro, Tickets: humboldtforum.org

Press images: humboldtforum.org/presse

More informations and trailer: marcsinan.com/projekte/am-anfang/

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One building, four partners: The diverse range of voices is founded on the collaboration of our partner institutions. The Humboldt Forum is a collaboration between the Stiftung Humboldt Forum im Berliner Schloss; the Stiftung Preussischer Kulturbesitz for collections from the Ethnologisches Museum and the Museum für Asiatische Kunst of the Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin for the Humboldt Lab; and Kulturprojekte Berlin with the Stadtmuseum Berlin for the BERLIN GLOBAL exhibition.

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