**CHEICK HAMALA DIABATE WORKSHOPS**

Cheick Hamala Diabate offers a number of workshops including:

1. Master Classes in guitar, ngoni and banjo

2. Griot History

3. Characteristics of African Music

4. The Ngoni, ancestor of the Banjo

5. African Dance

All workshops are offered in sessions from one hour, up to a full day session with a closing concert. Artist in Residency programs can also be arranged.

For any of the workshops listed, the scope and depth of material covered will be a direct result of the amount of time given for each session.

Please Note: For an appropriate presentation of a workshop/clinic/class we will need the following items: Students with their instruments, stereo system with CD/Tape player as well as a guitar amp Depending on the size of the room, we may also need a good quality sound system with, preferably, a mic on a boom stand near the piano. A chalk board with chalk and eraser are also needed.

1. MASTER CLASSES IN GUITAR, NGONI or BANJO

These classes are offered on the elementary, intermediate, and advanced levels.

2. GRIOT HISTORY

The griot, or jeli (djeli or djéli in French spelling) is a West African historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet and musician. The griot is a repository of oral tradition. As such, they are sometimes also called bards. According to Paul Oliver in his book Savannah Syncopators, "Though [the griot] has to know many traditional songs without error, he must also have the ability to extemporize on current events, chance incidents and the passing scene. His wit can be devastating and his knowledge of local history formidable." Although they are popularly known as "praise singers", griots may also use their vocal expertise for gossip, satire, or political comment.

Cheick will talk about the history of the griot, and will demonstrate various storytelling techniques using prose, poetry and music.

3. CHARACTERISTICS OF AFRICAN MUSIC

Africa is a vast continent and its regions and nations have distinct musical traditions. The music of North Africa for the most part has a distinct history from sub-Saharan African music traditions.The music and dance forms of the African diaspora include African-American music and many Caribbean genres, such as soca, calypso and zouk. Latin American music genres such as the flamenco, samba, rumba, salsa, and other clave (rhythm)-based genres, were founded to varying degrees on the music of enslaved Africans, and have in turn influenced African popular music.

4. THE NGONI – ANCESTOR OF THE BANJO

Cheick plays the ngoni or "n'goni", considered the ancestor of the banjo. It is a string instrument originating in West Africa, and played by all griot. Its body is made of wood or calabash with dried animal (often goat) skin stretched over it like a drum. In the hands of a skilled ngoni instrumentalist, the ngoni can produce fast rapid melodies. It appears to be closely related to the akonting and the xalam and this instrument family is believed to be the ancestor of the American banjo.[citation needed] This ngoni is called a jeli ngoni, played by griots to perform at celebrations and other special occasions to play the traditional songs.

5. AFRICAN DANCE

**African dance** refers mainly to the dance of Sub-Saharan Africa, and more appropriately African dances because of the many cultural differences in musical and movement styles. These dances must be viewed in close connection with Sub-Saharan African music traditions and Bantu cultivation of rhythm. African dance utilizes the concept of polyrhythm as well as total body articulation yet many African languages have no word to define music.

Dances teach social patterns and values and help people work, mature, praise or criticize members of the community while celebrating festivals and funerals, competing, reciting history, proverbs and poetry; and to encounter gods. African dances are largely participatory, with spectators being part of the performance. With the exception of some spiritual, religious or initiation dances, there are traditionally no barriers between dancers and onlookers. Even ritual dances often have a time when spectators participate.

Cheick is an accomplished choreographer, who was worked with many African dance troupes. His band performances always incorporate a dancer.