

Famoro Dioubaté's

# Kakande

*A West African Griot in New York*



The balafon (xylophone) has electrified popular music in West Africa since the court of Emperor Sundiata Keita back in 1235. With his band Kakande, Famoro Dioubate updates this tradition with an explosive new groove. Lush vocals, sinewy guitars, flutes, and cellos meet the virtuosic balafon of this master griot from Guinea.

Kakande is managed through Jumbie Records Artist Management. To hear more about Kakande and other Jumbie ensembles, please visit [www.JumbieRecords.com](http://www.JumbieRecords.com).

For additional information, availability and fees, contact **Raul Rothblatt**, band manager. Phones: 646-498-6093 / 718-857-3150 Email: [Raul@JumbieRecords.com](mailto:Raul@JumbieRecords.com)



# Famoro Dioubaté's Kakande

**When an Eight Hundred Year Tradition Moves to America:  
Griot-led band at the heart of NYC's exploding African music scene**

Not many musicians can claim an 800-year musical legacy as balafon master **Famoro Dioubate** can. From one of the most prestigious families of griots (musician/storytellers) in Guinea, Dioubate is a guardian of traditions dating back to the 13<sup>th</sup> century in the ancient Mandé Empire. Named for his ancestral village, Dioubate's ensemble Kakande is an extension of the lineage that he knew back home, bridging this near millennial tradition to modern audiences.

As legend holds, the **balafon (xylophone)** appeared magically in the forest almost a thousand years ago where it was discovered and guarded jealously by mighty sorcerer-king Sumanguru Kante. Eventually it was re-conquered by the founder of the Mandé Empire, Sundiata Keita, who bequeathed it to his griot to play and protect.

Grammy winning singer **Mory Kante** joined Kakande on their 2008 concerts to promote the CD release of *Dununya*. Kante first met Dioubate years ago when he was halted by the sounds of his balafon on the streets of Guinea. He asked his driver to stop, and approached the youngster. He was so impressed that he gave him \$100 on the spot, prophesying his greatness. They have remained close friends ever since.

Today, **Dioubate is a unique artist in the Mandé musical world**; keenly aware of the tradition he was born into, yet eager to reshape it. He carefully crafted this ensemble to serve his aesthetic curiosity. His inclusion of non-traditional elements is a nod to the dynamic and fluid nature of tradition. In a blindfold test, even the most educated listener of traditional music would have trouble discerning that many in the band are not African, and may be surprised to learn that the least traditional elements, the inclusion of the cello for example, were part of Dioubate's own artistic design.

The lyrics on *Dununya* reflect the age and wisdom of this ancient form. On the surface, "Mali Sadjo" tells a story about a hippo in love with a girl. But in the allegorical nature of oral griot songs it is more complicated than the simple tale of a forlorn animal. And "So Si Sa" is more than just a whimsical tale of a man fruitlessly knocking on his girlfriend's door, only to go home knowing that she is inside ignoring him. There is depth and richness in this music waiting to be discovered.

At its heart, that is what Kakande is all about. Eight hundred years of tradition is a heavy, daunting legacy. But for **Famoro Dioubate and Kakande, tradition is picked up, dusted off, and fashioned anew.** "We are musicians," says Dioubate. "We have something together, and good musicians know no boundaries."



Kakande



Missia Saran Dioubate



Famoro Dioubate & Mory Kante



*Enthralling rhythmic circularity and a deep, expansive groove*



*A thrilling mix of adventurousness and expertise, Dununya brims with the splendor of Africa's Mande Empire*



*A uniquely stunning, textured sound*



*Traditional feel... very much at ease with a 21st-century musicality*



*Kakande takes a unique approach to Mande music— acoustic, kinetic, textured and grooving. Dioubate's virtuosic balafon riffing is rightly front and center, backed harmonically by a sweet blend... creating textures that work as well in a dark, roiling jam.*

*What comes through most is the freshness and esprit de corps of this band. The cross-cultural collaboration sets a new bar... and speaks well for the ever rising sophistication and quality of U.S. based Afropop projects.*

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