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## NEWS RELEASE

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PHOTOS AVAILABLE at  
[cityfolk.org/media.htm](http://cityfolk.org/media.htm)

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CITYFOLK PRESENTS  
MALI'S *NGONI* MASTERS  
**BASSEKOU KOUYATE & NGONI BA**  
NOVEMBER 16 AT BOLL THEATRE AT UNIVERSITY OF DAYTON

One of Mali's most important and influential musicians, *ngoni* virtuoso **Bassekou Kouyate** and his band **Ngoni Ba**, praised by *The Guardian* (UK) for a sound that's "ancient and utterly contemporary...like some African answer to [Jimi] Hendrix," come to Dayton for a concert on **Wednesday, November 16, 2011**, at **Boll Theatre** on the **University of Dayton** campus. The performance, which begins at **8:00 p.m.**, is presented in collaboration with the University of Dayton Arts Series. Reserved seat tickets for the concert are \$20 and are available from the Cityfolk Box Office at (937) 496-3863. More information is available online at [www.cityfolk.org](http://www.cityfolk.org).

One of the new faces of African music, **Bassekou Kouyate** has performed at the Royal Albert Hall in London, the WOMAD Festival, Carnegie Hall and Lincoln Center in New York City and throughout the world. He toured extensively as the *ngoni* player in Ali Farka Touré's band and was one of the main musicians on Touré's posthumous album *Savane*. In addition to collaborations with Taj Mahal, Vieux Farka Touré and Carlos Santana, Kouyate has appeared on the hit album *AfroCubism*, Youssou N'Dour's album *Rokku mi Rokka* and Dee Dee Bridgewater's *Red Earth*, and was featured on Bela Fleck's Grammy-winning album *Throw Down Your Heart* and subsequent Africa Project tours.

No one has been more innovative with the *ngoni*—a traditional kind of lute played throughout West Africa—than Kouyate, who has forever changed the perception of his chosen instrument. Kouyate, for example, was the first *ngoni* player to stand while playing, with the *ngoni* strapped on like a guitar. His most startling innovation was to assemble an ensemble with the *ngoni* as the lead voice. Having taken that step, he must have thought, "why not four?" Kouyate formed his band, Ngoni Ba ("big *ngoni*"), in 2005. Ngoni Ba, the first major ensemble to be built around the *ngoni*, has an instrumental frontline of four *ngonis*. *The Independent* in London calls Ngoni Ba "the best rock and roll band in the world."

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Bassekou Kouyate and Ngoni Ba have recorded two albums. The debut, *Segu Blue*, released in 2007, won the BBC Radio 3 World Music Award for Album of the Year and appeared on world music charts all over Europe. The second album, *I Speak Fula*, was released in 2010. Featuring guests artists Toumani Diabate and Vieux Farka Touré and the soaring vocals of Amy Sacko, *I Speak Fula* was one of *Mojo's* Albums of the Year and in the words of *Spin*, “effortlessly mixes the rapid-fire pluck of bluegrass, the doleful churn of the blues, the joyous pulse of Afropop, and the caffeinated whirl of high-velocity rock.”

The body of the *ngoni* is a hollowed-out, canoe-shaped piece of wood with a dried goat skin stretched over it like a drum. The neck is a fretless length of dowel that inserts into the body; the *ngoni* usually has either four or seven strings. Because of the instrument's sound, method of playing and drum-like construction, the *ngoni* is considered to be an African ancestor of the American banjo.

The Cityfolk 2011-2012 Season of Events is supported by CompuNet Clinical Laboratories and WYSO 91.3 FM. Cityfolk also receives operating support from Culture Works, the Ohio Arts Council, and Montgomery County.

All Cityfolk events are accessible to the elderly and people with disabilities. Available services include audio amplification headsets, large-print or Braille programs, sign interpretation, audio description and wheelchair accessibility. For information about services available for a particular Cityfolk event, please call (937) 223-3655 or e-mail [cityfolk@cityfolk.org](mailto:cityfolk@cityfolk.org).

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#### CITYFOLK IS A MEMBER OF CULTURE WORKS

The recipient of the 2009 Governor's Award for the Arts in Community Development and Participation, Cityfolk is Dayton's premier traditional and ethnic arts organization. Cityfolk, which is celebrating its 30th season of arts presentation in 2011-2012, won the first CMAcclaim Award in 2005, presented by Chamber Music America for outstanding achievements in the ensemble music field. Through its year-round program of concerts, in-school educational activities, annual Cityfolk Festival and other programs, Cityfolk brings to the Dayton area the finest folk, ethnic and traditional music and dance performances from around the world. For more information on Cityfolk's history, commitment to education and programming updates, call (937) 223-3655 or visit Cityfolk on the web at [www.cityfolk.org](http://www.cityfolk.org).