



**Faso Danse Théâtre**  
Serge Aimé Coulibaly  
Vieux Farka Touré

# BACK TO KIDAL

*Spectacle for seven dancers,  
a singer/guitarist, an actress  
and two musicians*

*Duration: ca. 75 minutes*  
*Creation: november 2025 - august 2026*



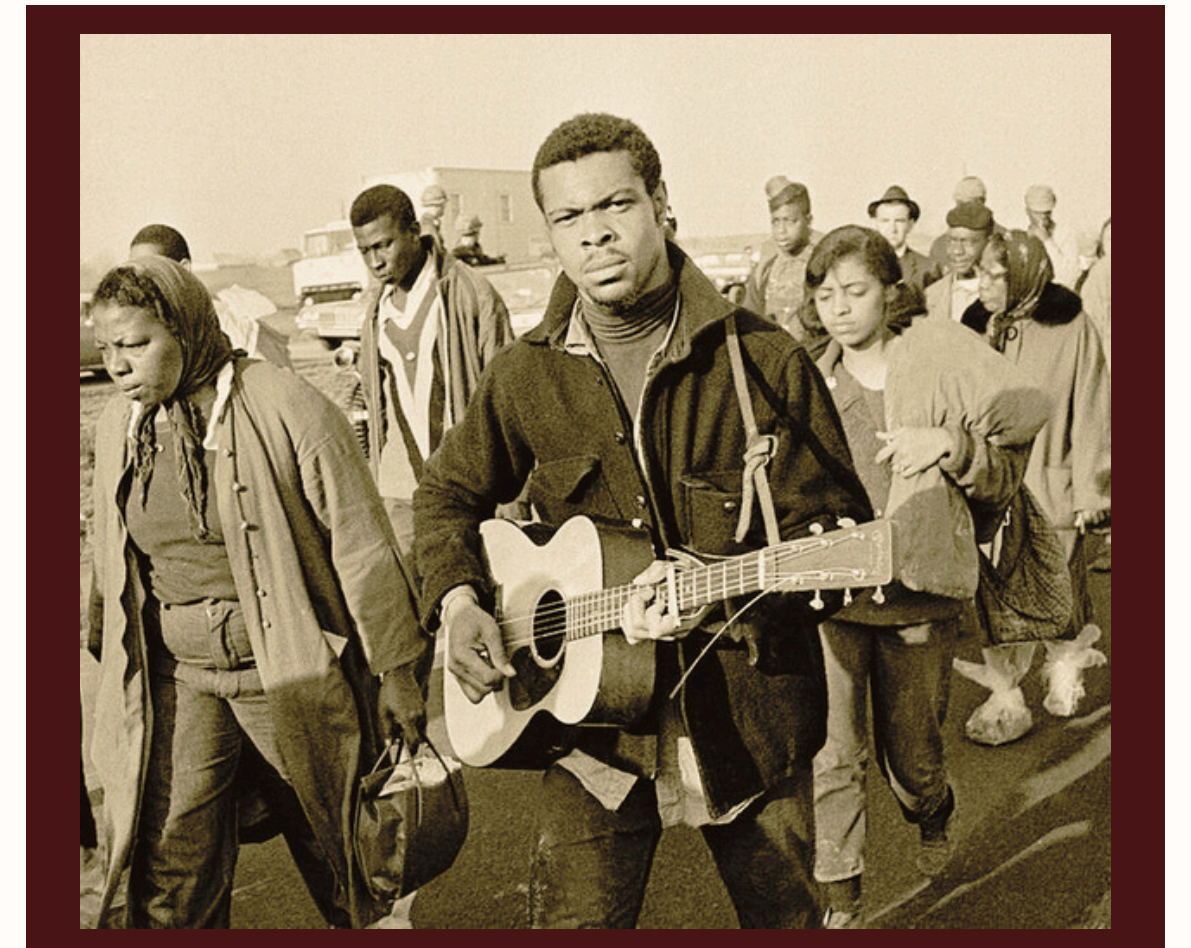
## ***Back to Kidal***

*We have come a long, long way in the struggle for justice, but we have a long way to go. Martin Luther King*

**Back to Kidal** is a modern day epos telling the story of a people's great march to freedom and self-determination.

The odyssey is recounted through Coulibaly's powerful choreography performed by Faso Danse Théâtre's flagship dancers, as well as spoken word recited by actress **Odile Sankara**. **Vieux Farka Touré's** Afro Blues-style guitar sound constitutes a thread that binds all elements of the spectacle and creates a link with the music that has been essential in the history of Africa and its people.

All adversities in spite, it is a history of a triumph of hope and joy that are generously shared with the audience.



## ***Back to Kidal* - CONCEPT**

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In his new creation, Serge Aimé Coulibaly recounts the African and Afro-Descendent people's march towards freedom, emancipation and self-determination through dance, music composed and performed by Vieux Farka Touré and the text written and spoken by Burkinabè actress Odile Sankara.

Back to Kidal is an artistic take on a centuries long African odyssey. The piece reflects on the 'great march' to freedom and self-determination: from the times of the powerful empires, through the centuries of the trans-Atlantic slave trade and colonization, the struggle for independence, to decolonization and neo-colonialism, and on to the present-day revival of African emancipatory thought. A common theme running through this epic is the blues – the music that has always accompanied the struggle and remained the umbilical cord linking its birthplace in West-Africa to the cotton fields of southern United States. Despite the suffering inherent in the 'great march', Back to Kidal tells a story permeated by joy, hope and force that have made the perseverance possible and can be shared with the rest of the world.

In this odyssey, Kidal is a mythical place. Located in what used to be the eastern outskirts of the Mali Empire, the town and the surrounding territory have a centuries long musical culture. Enslaved people brought their heritage to Americas, where it gave birth to blues – a genre that provided a sound-track to the anti-slavery and anti-racism movement. But Kidal is also a symbolic cradle of Afro Blues, the genre popularized in the 20th century by the region's native Ali Farka Touré. Moreover, as an insurgent territory rich in minerals, it is emblematic for a scramble for Africa's natural resources in the post-colonial period.

## ***Back to Kidal - Choreography***

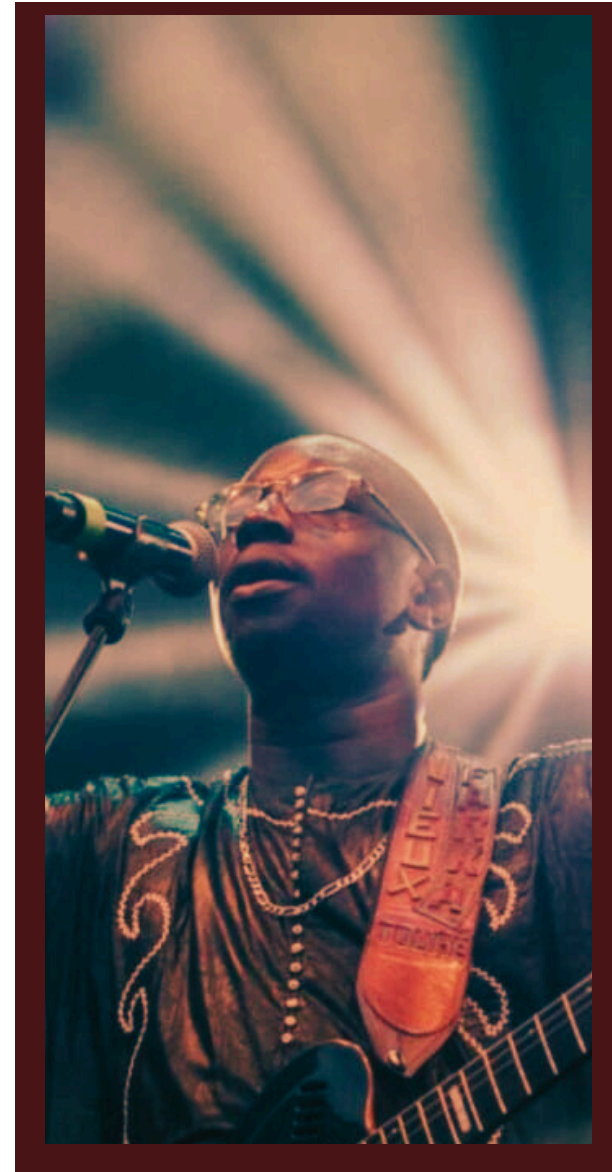
While firmly set in the music, the narrative is carried by choreography for a **seven-person ensemble**. Coulibaly's vision on dance remains deeply humanistic. His principal question is: How can I reach and touch the core of humanity in every person through simple yet original body presence? Finding the answer requires continuous research on what our essence is and how to evoke - through dance - an energy that will connect the performers with the deepest part in each spectator. Driven by this ambition, the artist engages in a constant evolution of his choreographic vocabulary rooted in urgency and necessity, as well as in the emergence of movement and countermovement. In *Back to Kidal*, Coulibaly ventures to create a complex, detailed choreography executed with great precision.



## ***Back to Kidal - music***

A turning point in the conception of the piece came when Serge Aimé Coulibaly met -via a mutual friend- **Vieux Farka Touré**, a Malian guitar virtuoso and son of the legendary Ali Farka Touré (1939-2006).

This inspiring accidental encounter made all elements of the puzzle come together. *Back to Kidal* was enriched with a unique musical texture of Vieux's compositions, which constitute the red thread of the piece.



As the blues carries the piece, it is complemented by texts written and recited by Burkinabè actress **Odile Sankara**. She is a cadet sister and the guardian of the memory and legacy of the illustrious leader of Burkina Faso Thomas Sankara (assassinated in 1987). Throughout her career, Odile herself became a flagbearer of the struggle for emancipation and self-determination of African people, women in particular.



Her presence in *Back to Kidal* stands for the prominent role of women in the great march to freedom. They have been the backbone of both the anti-slavery movement in the United States and of the struggle for self-determination in Africa. Their involvement and their singing has brought the hope, force and resilience to the epic journey towards freedom.

## Back to Kidal - place in Serge Aimé Coulibaly's oeuvre



A meditation on the complexity of the cultural, historical and political relations between Africa and the West has already been vital to Serge Aimé Coulibaly's other creations, most recently ***Kirina*** (2018) and ***Kalakuta Republik*** (2016).

Musicians performing on stage with dancers have been an integral part of several of recent spectacles. For ***Kirina*** (2018), Coulibaly collaborated with **Rokia Traoré** as a composer and musical director, which resulted in a stunning spectacle with 9 dancers, 1 actor, 4 musicians, 2 singers and featuring 40 amateurs on stage. In ***WAKATT*** (2020), 10 dancers performed to live music played by **Magic Malik Orchestra**. The unique energy of his latest creation ***C LA VIE*** (2023) is due to a subtle blend of a powerful dance performance with **Dobet Gnahoré's** expressive vocals and **Yvan Talbot's** accompaniment on percussion and drums. The choice to work with a guitarist in the next spectacle is, therefore, a continuation of an artistic vision according to which dance and live music form a continuous dialogue.



## Serge Aimé Coulibaly



**Serge Aimé Coulibaly** was born in 1972 in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. He has worked in Europe and far beyond since 2002. While the root of his inspiration lies in African culture, the artist commits to inventing powerful contemporary choreographies anchored in emotions, but always bearing a reflection and hope. Coulibaly's style is marked by an intense expression, which makes his creations universal and resonate with audiences worldwide.

His productions, which include **C LA VIE** (2023), **WAKATT** (2020), **Kirina** (2018), **Kalakuta Republik** (2016), **Nuit Blanche à Ouagadougou** (2014) have been presented in theatres and festivals worldwide. His open view of the world and of differences, which he always questions, as well as his constructive attitude and will to persevere, has led to collaboration with numerous other artists since the beginning of his career. He regularly works on international productions, both as a performer and choreographer. His artistic collaborators include **Marrukegu Company** in Australia (Le dedernier appel, 2018, produced in New Caledonia, Cut the Sky, 2014, and Burning Daylight, 2009), **Alain Platel** (C(H)OEURS, 2012, and Wolf, 2003), and **Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui** (Tempus Fugit, 2004).

His most recent international collaborations include two projects at the **Münchener Kammerspiele**, Germany: Les statues rêvent aussi (2022) with Jan Christoph Gockel, and Balau (2024), anisi creations with **Ace Dance Company in Birmingham**, UK (The night before tomorrow, 2022) and Daland@ (Maisha dance), a choreography for Africa Day 2024, commissioned by the European Union from the African Union in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

Motivated by the will to create a place for experimentation, creation and reflection art and artistic commitment, Serge Aimé Coulibaly founded **ANKATA**, the International Laboratory for Performing Arts in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso, in 2012. It prides itself in being a space open for exchanges between different continents, disciplines and communities, that share a common aim of inventing a bright future through art, education and ethical attitudes towards humanity and nature.

## Faso Danse Théâtre

Serge Aimé Coulibaly founded Faso Danse Théâtre in 2002. Under his artistic direction, the company explores complex themes with the aim of bringing about a positive dynamic, while considering dance as a social commitment. Their creations question daily reality as well as broader social evolution and share Coulibaly's observations with his audience through his dynamic yet deeply engaged art. Coulibaly examines the interaction between personality and involvement, the tension between what the individual experiences or wants to say on the one hand, and what the commitment to a better world imposes on that individual on the other hand. On the basis of his engagement, he developed a creative process that starts from the duality principle. Every movement executed by the body triggers an opposite movement. Every form of energy is responded to by a complementary form. This brings body and mind into a state in which intuition and urgency take control. The creation process of Faso Danse Théâtre's spectacles always takes place partially in Europe and partially in Africa, notably ANKATA in Bobo- Dioulasso.





### Text, declamation



Burkinabé actress **Odile Sankara** was born in 1963. She is the younger sister of the legendary former president of Burkina Faso, Thomas Sankara, and belongs to the most prolific figures of the contemporary Burkinabe culture. A graduate of literary studies at the University of Ouagadougou, she joined the theatre company FEEREN in 1991 where she worked with the actor, director, and pedagogue Amadou Bourou, while taking theatre classes at the Théâtre de l'Union des Ensembles Dramatiques de Ouagadougou (l'UNEDO). Parallel to the projects with FEEREN throughout the 1990s, Odile participated in spectacles abroad, notably Millenium (1992-1993) with Théâtre Volland on the island of Réunion, Les Coépouses (1997) with Norade- National Theatre of Norway. Meeting a French theatre director Jean Lambert-Wild in the early 2000s during a residency in the Scène Nationale de Belfort (France), opened a new chapter in her career. From the 2002 on, she played in numerous plays directed by Lambert-Wild. Mue, Première mélopée (2006), to name but one of them, was a co-production of the Festival of Avignon and made a successful tourné in France. Odile Sankara's international career continued as she worked in Théâtre Nanterre Amandiers and with directors Jean-Louis Martinelli, Moïse Touré, Fargass Assande and with choreographer Salia Sanou, to name a few.

Odile is known as an exceptionally versatile artist, who has excelled in roles in plays strongly rooted in African cultures, for example *La vie est un songe*, 2008, directed by Moïse Touré, as well as in classics of European theatre and literature, such as an adaptation of Franz Kafka's *Joséphine la Cantatrice* directed by Jean Wild-Lambert in 2009. Beyond acting, Sankara is involved in the artistic education of the youth, girls in particular, through the activities of her NGO Talents de Femme in her native Burkina. Moreover, she serves as the artistic director of the Récréatras in Ouagadougou, one of the most prestigious theatre festivals in Africa.

### Guitar, composition, vocals



**Boureima 'Vieux' Farka Touré** was born in Mali in 1981 as a son of guitarist and singer Ali Farka Touré – one of the greatest stars of African music in the 20th century. Graduate of the Institut National des Arts, he recorded his first album *Vieux Farka Touré* in 2006. Ever since, he released eleven more records and toured extensively all over the world.

While remaining faithful to his afro-blues pedigree, Vieux compositions defy genre limits and resonate with diverse audiences. He belongs to the most prolific and innovative guitarists of his generation. *Back to Kidal* is his first ever dance theatre project.

### Additional music



For more than 20 years, Yvan has been driven by a passion for traditional West African music. He is particularly drawn to playing rare and unusual instruments. Thanks to this keen interest, **Yvan Talbot** (1973) has been able to bring the worlds of dance and music together by collaborating with various musicians and choreographers. He met the Compagnie Julie Dossavi and became its musical director in 2002. In 2010, he collaborated with Bouba and composed the original music for the dance duo Murmures.

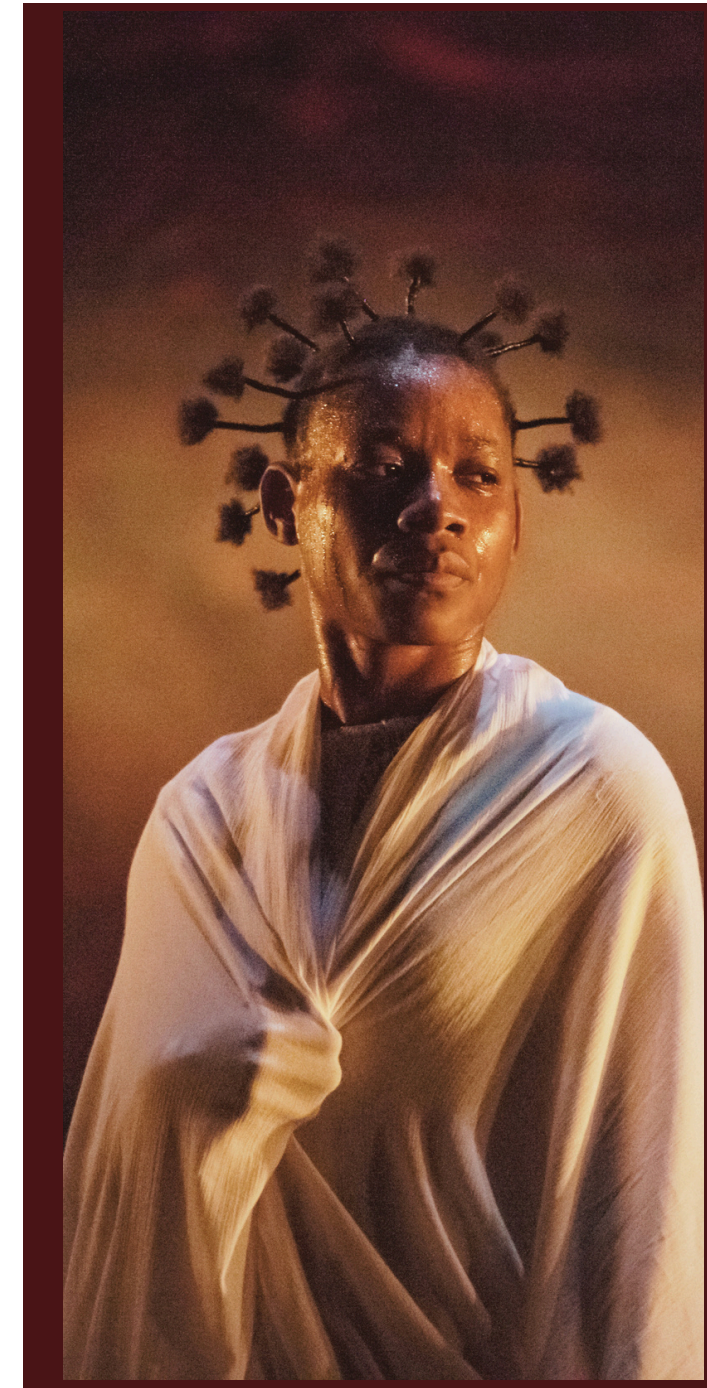
In addition to these creative activities, he regularly contributes to various training programmes.

## Additional music



A musician chosen by Vieux Farka Touré, to be confirmed.

## Danse



**Ida Faho** was born in 1990 and began training in the performing arts in 2003. She studied theatre and entered the EDITA dance school in 2009. She regularly dances with the company of Irène Tassembédo while developing her own projects and training with other choreographers, in Africa, at the Ecole des Sables, but also in Europe, in the Pavillon noir of Angelin Preljocaj. Her dance has been nourished by all these encounters. Ida succeeds in harmoniously marrying a powerful gesture, an electrical presence with gentleness, grace and sensuality.

### Dance



**Arsène Etaba** (Doula, Cameroon, 1999) specialises in both traditional African dances and in a number of contemporary Afro-styles. Arsène is a member of numerous cultural movements in Cameroon, whose aim is to promote the cultural and artistic values and to strengthen the dance industry. He is a sought-after animator of workshops and a tireless dance teacher. His contagious energy is fuelled by his mission to denounce the ills of the world and to deconstruct arbitrary rules imposed on an individual by society.

He holds a PhD in pharmacy from the University of Douala.

### Dance



Born in 1986 in Burkina Faso, **Jean-Robert Koudogbo Kiki**, was strongly influenced by the dancer choreographer Lebeau Boumpoutou, who first passed the passion for contemporary dance to him. Taught by Éloi Bamafrom the company Teguerer and by Michel Neya, the founder of the group Génération 2000, he danced in Nassongo, a musical which toured France and Luxembourg (2008) and in *Entre chiens et loups* (Montpellier Danse 2010). In 2010, he joined the company *Je Danse Donc Je Suis* (I Dance Therefore I Am). He worked on the opening and closing of FESPACO in 2009, 2011 and 2013 with the choreographers Irène Tassembedo, Salia Sanou and Seydou Boro. In 2014, he acted in the play *Tichèlbè aires de jeux* with Kettly Noel in the Festival du Niger.

## Back to Kidal - cast and crew (provisory)

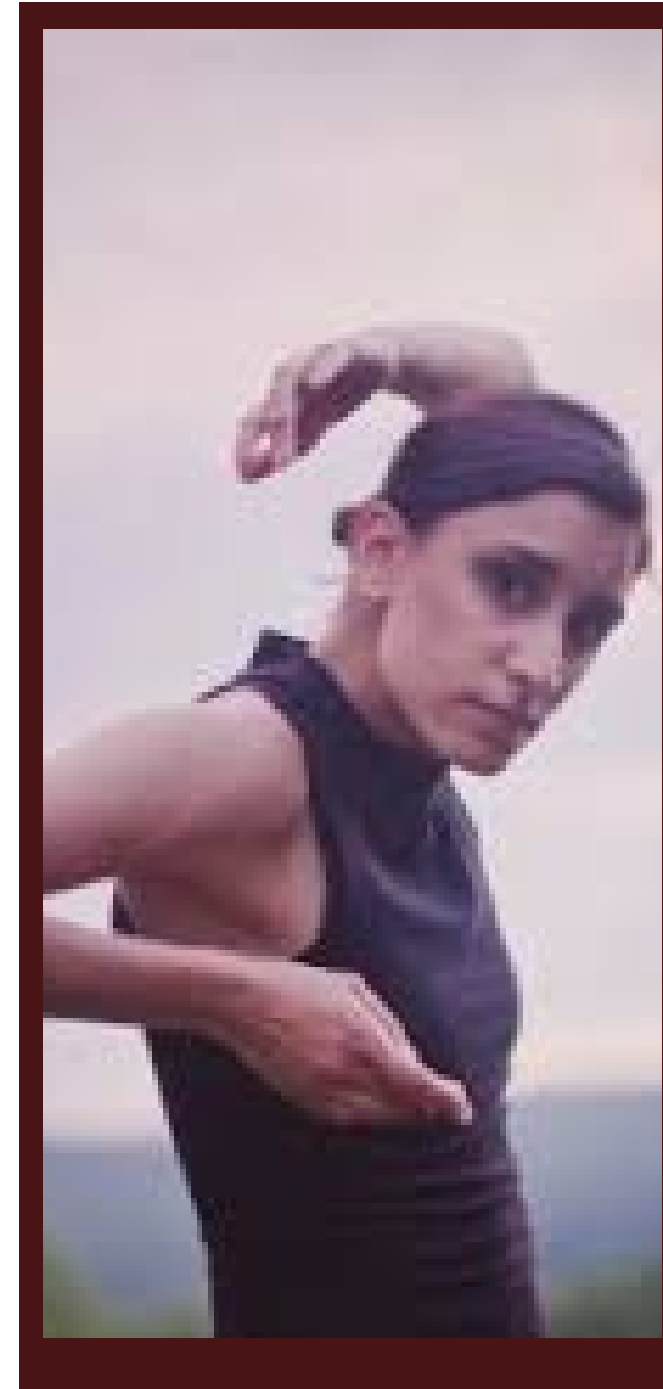
### Dance



**Djibril Ouattara** is a dancer, choreographer, and pedagogue born in 1988 in Bobo-Dioulasso, Burkina Faso. He currently works as an artistic director of Ardji Danse Company and as the educational director of the three-year multidisciplinary training programme Ankata Next Generation. He trained as a dancer at Centre de Développement Chorégraphique (CDC) la Termitière in Burkina Faso and the Ecole des Sables in Senegal.

Ouattara has worked with, amongst others, Salia Sanou, Olivier Tarapaga and Moïse Touré. Djibril Ouattara has also been invited to work on a number of projects and creations as a choreographer or choreographic designer, including a performance created with internally displaced people from Burkina Faso.

### Dance



**Deborah Lotti** (1993) started dancing in Luxembourg before heading to Paris to continue her dance education at the *Institut de Formation Professionnelle Rick Odums*. While completing her Dance Teacher Diploma and Bachelor of Arts at the "Université Paris 8", she starts to perform with several dance companies, such as the "Ballets Jazz Rick Odums" and the "Armstrong Jazz Ballet".

Lately, she integrated different projects allowing her to work with international choreographers such as Damien Jalet for "Chiroptera", Alexander Ekman for the Paralympic Opening Ceremony in Paris, Serge Aimé Coulibaly for „MAISHA“ in Ethiopia and Jill Crovisier for „Mahalaga Landscapes“ in Luxembourg. Since 2018, she is a cast member of the RB Dance Company and its touring show "Stories" mixing tap dance and urban jazz.

### Choreographic assistance



After a childhood spent in Abidjan, **Sayouba Sigué** (1981) came back to Burkina for high school. He studied traditional and contemporary dance. Discovered in 2001 by a young Burkinabe choreographer Souleymane Porgo, he joined his company Téguéer. He also benefited from training by several other choreographers of different styles and origins. In this manner, dance went from being an extra-curricular activity to becoming a career. Sigué has performed in many productions with the greats of African and European dance, such as Irène Tassembédo, Serge Aimé Coulibaly and Kathrin Wehlisch. He is a co-director of the DIALAW FESTIVAL in Senegal and lecturer in contemporary dance in Cologne (Germany).

### Dramaturgy



**Sara Vanderieck** (1978) obtained her degree in theatre directing at RICTS in Brussels. In 2006, she joined Les Ballets C de la B, where she first worked as production manager and later as artistic assistant to Alain Platel and of Lisi Estaras . In 2012, she left Les Ballets C de la B to join the artistic direction of De Grote Post in Ostend. Sara also works as a freelance dramaturg/outside eye for various (danse)theatre personalities such as Claron McFadden/Muziektheater Transparant, Bára Sigfúsdóttir, Ayelen Parolin and Naïf Productions. *Back to Kidal* is her eighth project with Serge Aimé Coulibaly after *Fadjiri* (2013), *Nuit Blanche à Ouagadougou* (2014), *GLOED* (2015), *Kalakuta Republik* (2016), *Kirina* (2018) and *C LA VIE* (2023).

## **Back to Kidal - CREDITS (provisory)**

**Production:** Faso Danse Théâtre

**Concept & choreography:** Serge Aimé Coulibaly

**Created and performed by:** Jean Robert Koudogbo-Kiki, Ida Faho, Djibril Ouattara, Arsène Etaba, Odile Sankara, Vieux Farka Touré, a musician and two other dancers to be confirmed.

**Music and vocals:** Vieux Farka Touré

**Additional music:** Yvan Talbot

**Assistant choreographer:** Sigué Sayouba

**Dramaturgy:** Sara Vanderieck

**Text:** Odile Sankara

**Light technician:** Herman Coulibaly

**Technical director :**Thomas Verachtert

**Stage manager :** Dag Jennes

**Tour- and production manager :** Arnout André de la Porte

**Coordination and communication Faso Danse Théâtre:**

Marta Bigus

**Distribution:** Frans Brood Productions



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