

Faso Danse Théâtre & Brussels Jazz Orchestra

Serge Aimé Coulibaly



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Back to Kidal

**Performance with 7 dancers,
a guitarist, an actress and a jazz band.**

Duration: ca. 75 minutes

Creation period: November 2025 – May 2026

World première: May 2026



Back to Kidal

Back to Kidal is a powerful artistic project by Serge Aimé Coulibaly, in collaboration with the Brussels Jazz Orchestra (BJO). This dance and music performance delves into the origins of blues and jazz, drawing inspiration from the city of Kidal in northern Mali, home of Afro-Blues. The piece explores the complex intersections of African, European, and American histories, particularly through the lens of the civil rights movement, colonialism, and cultural exchange.

The work connects African, European, and Afro-descendant cultures, focusing on the collective imagination formed over the last 100 years. It revisits the historical roots of jazz in African and Afro-American culture, emphasizing the struggles for emancipation and civil rights in Africa, Europe, and the U.S.

Music

The project features a unique collaboration between the famous Malian guitarist and Singer, **Vieux Farka Touré** the son and Inheritor of the grammy award winning Ali Farka Touré, a Burkinabe actress who is herself a symbol of the struggles and self-determination in Africa **Odile Sankara**, and the **Brussel jazz orchestra**. This fusion represents the historical and cultural depth of jazz, a genre that, despite its sophistication, owes much to African rhythms and melodies passed down through generations

Choreography

In his newest creation, Coulibaly's thinking about dance remains deeply humanistic. The point of departure is the question of how to reach and touch the core of humanity in every person through simple yet original body presence. This requires continuous research on what is the essence of humanity and how to evoke, through dance, an energy that will connect the performers with the deepest human part of each member of the audience. Driven by this ambition, the artist engages in a constant evolution of his choreographic vocabulary rooted in urgency, necessity as well as in the emergence of movement and countermovement. In *Back to Kidal*, Coulibaly sets the bar high and ventures to create a choreography that is complex, detailed and executed with great precision



Brussels Jazz Orchestra

With their career spanning over three decades, Brussels Jazz Orchestra belongs to the icons of Belgian jazz. The band was founded by Frank Vaganée, Serge Plume, Marc Godfroid and Bo van der Werf in 1993. Since their beginnings in the legendary Brussels jazz club The Sound, the orchestra gained critical acclaim, which was proven by a Grammy Award nomination for their album *Wild Beauty* (2013) with Joe Lovano. Moreover, the Brussels jazzmen can count themselves among Oscar laureates, as they are featured on an Academy Award-winning score for the film *The Artist* (2012). The critical praise is paired with great appreciation by the audience: the band's numerous concerts are regularly sold out.

The quality of BJO's projects and collaborations proves that they belong to the highest echelons of European jazz. Throughout the years, the band toured, played and recorded with such greats as the Belgian legend Toots Thielemans, Kenny Werner (USA), Maria Schneider (USA) and Tutu Puoane (South Africa). BJO was welcomed numerous times in the most iconic jazz venues: Lincoln Center in NYC and New Morning in Paris, to mention but two.

Distinctive for BJO's artistry is their quest to push the boundaries of jazz. The record *Tango!* (2002) celebrating the eponymous dance- and music style was a result of their work with an Argentinian composer Carlos Franzetti. In *Creating Chances* (2009), they united the Brussels Philharmonic with a Belgian soprano soloist Iris Luypaers and South African singer Tutu Puoane. Throughout the years they continued to work with several other symphonic orchestras. The band's creative union with Tutu Puoane resulted in, amongst other projects, jazz arrangements of a selection of traditional African songs on the album *Mama Africa* (2010). *Luz des sur: Jazz inspired by Flamenco* (2013) was yet another original attempt at joining two musical universes. This time, as indicated in the title, it was jazz and flamenco. With *BREL* (2016) BJO gave a jazz taste to chansons of the legendary Brussels native Jacques Brel, and with *Kanneelvingers* (2017) to texts of Belgian poet Stefan Hertmans.

Beyond those musical ventures, the orchestra is known for its involvement in the education of youth. Not only does the band organize regular masterclasses for jazz students, but it also engages in musical initiation projects with elementary school children. Moreover, the BJO dedicated an entire album *The Future Is Now* (2016) to showcasing young talents and launched Youth Jazz Collective consisting of conservatory students in 2018.



Faso Danse Théâtre/Serge Aimé Coulibaly

Faso Danse Théâtre was founded in 2002 by Serge Aimé Coulibaly, who lives and works in Brussels and Bobo-Dioulasso. In all his creations with Faso Danse Théâtre, 13 to date, the Belgian-Burkinabe choreographer explores complex themes with the aim of bringing about a positive dynamic.

While the root of his inspiration lies in African culture, the artist is committed to creating powerful contemporary choreographies anchored in emotion but always bearing a reflection and hope. The intense expression inherent in his style makes Coulibaly's creations universal and resonate with audiences all over the world. The creation process of Faso Danse Théâtre's spectacles always takes place partially in Europe and partially in Africa, notably in Ankata – International Laboratory for Research, Creation and Dissemination of Performing Arts in Bobo-Dioulasso funded by Serge Aimé Coulibaly in 2011. The cast, crew and coordination-administration team of the company are international, multilingual and multiethnic. This is essential to the philosophy and practice of Serge Aimé Coulibaly and constitutes the unique quality of Faso Danse Théâtre.

Serge Aimé Coulibaly considers dance as a social commitment. He questions daily reality as well as broader social evolutions and shares his observations with his audience through his dynamic yet deeply engaged art. Coulibaly examines the intersection 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. 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.

Musicians performing on stage with dancers were 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 the latest creation *C LA VIE* (2023) is due to a subtle blend of a powerful dance performance with Dobet Gnahoré's emotive vocals and Yvan Talbot's accompaniment on percussion and drums. The choice to work with a 16-piece jazz band and a guitarist in the next spectacle is, therefore, a continuation of an artistic vision according to which dance and live music are in a continuous dialogue, blend and complementation.



Cast and crew

For this creation, Coulibaly opts once again for an artistic team that is close to him and his oeuvre. Sigué Sayouba is in charge of the choreographic assistance. Sara Vanderieck, Faso Danse Théâtre's long-time associate, is in charge of dramaturgy. At this stage, the rest of the artistic team is still in the selection phase. Although the final decisions considering the cast are yet to be made, it is clear that the core of the ensemble will feature the dancers that have been essential for the spectacles of Faso Danse Théâtre in the past years, namely Ida Faho, Jean-Robert (Robbi) Koudogbo-Kikki. These signature performers will be accompanied by artists who proved to be excellent interpreters of Coulibaly's choreographic language in *C LA VIE*: the Burkinabe Djibril Ouattara and Cameroonian Arsène Etaba. A quest for the remaining three dancers who will fit within the concept of *Back to Kidal* is currently in course.