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**Celebrated African singer and guitarist
Habib Koité and his band Bamada perform a mix of rock, folk
and traditional African music
at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**

**Special pre-show event features a discussion with Habib Koité and a special taste of Mali
prepared by Bintou Restaurant of Germantown**

(Philadelphia, March 1, 2010) — Internationally renowned singer, songwriter and guitarist **Habib Koité** and his band **Bamada** perform hits from their most recent album *Afriki* on **Sunday, March 14, 2010 at 7:00 PM at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts**. Dubbed “Mali’s biggest pop star” by *Rolling Stone Magazine*, Koité is known for the way he effortlessly blends the musical traditions of his homeland with the rock and folk sounds of the Western world. This is the second performance of the 09/10 Penn Presents African Roots Series, which featured a sold out performance by the Soweto Gospel Choir in January 2010 and concludes with the Grammy® nominated, percussion driven, vocal ensemble **Linda Tillery & The Cultural Heritage Choir** on **April 30, 2010 at 8:00 PM**.

One of Africa’s most popular and celebrated musicians, Habib Koité hails from the West African nation of Mali. Famous for his unique approach to playing the guitar, Koité performs with his own group, Bamada (translation: “in the mouth of the crocodile”), comprised of Malian musicians who he has been friends with since childhood. As a group, they have performed nearly 1000 shows since exploding onto the world music scene in 1994 and have sold 250,000 albums to critical acclaim. Habib Koité and Bamada released their fifth album *Afriki*, about the strengths and challenges of the African continent, in 2007.

Koité has been featured in hundreds of newspapers and magazines including *People Magazine*, *Rolling Stone*, *Le Monde* and *Vanity Fair Magazine*. He has also been featured in the United States on National Public Radio’s All Things Considered and WXPN’s World Café. In 2001, Habib Koité and Bamada became one of the few African artists to appear on The Late Night with David Letterman. His artistry has earned the admiration of such fans as Jackson Browne and Bonnie Raitt (Koité and Bamada made a guest appearance on Raitt’s 2002 album *Silver Lining*).

Habib Koité last appeared at the Annenberg Center in 2004.

Pre-Show Enhancement Events

Enjoy the tastes of Mali prepared by Bintou Restaurant of Germantown, PA beginning at **5:30 PM** in the Annenberg Center Lobby followed by a special pre-show chat with Habib Koité. This event is free to ticket holders and is sponsored by the African Studies Center at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

The University of Pennsylvania's Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts has been the region's leading multi-disciplinary performance venue for Theatre, Dance, Jazz, World Music, New Music and children's programming since its inception in 1971. The Annenberg Center's curatorial vision emphasizes four primary values: artistic integrity, cultural diversity, curatorial balance and a willingness to take risks. By presenting world renowned and cutting edge artists and companies who express adventuresome perspectives on contemporary issues, timeless ideas and diverse cultures, the Annenberg Center promotes critical thinking and dialogue among its audiences, creating a uniquely rewarding arts experience.

The Annenberg Center has achieved national recognition for its outstanding Dance Celebration series (presented in partnership with Philadelphia's Dance Affiliates), touring theatre series, and for its superior offerings for children, including both its Student Discovery Series and the acclaimed 25-year-old Philadelphia International Children's Festival, the oldest festival of its kind in the United States. Through a generous grant from the Wallace Foundation, the Annenberg Center also showcases its commitment to local artists each year through its By Local series.

Throughout its history, the Annenberg Center has presented innovative and critically-acclaimed theatre productions with some of the biggest stars of stage and screen including Liv Ullmann and Sam Waterston in *A Doll's House*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* with Glenn Close, Jessica Tandy in Beckett's *Not I*, and Tennessee Williams' *Sweet Bird of Youth* with Irene Worth and Christopher Walken. Noteworthy Broadway producer and director Harold Prince (a University of Pennsylvania alum) and Joseph Papp staged many of their plays at the Annenberg Center before taking them to Broadway. As part of the Dance Celebration series, a broad range of world-class and emerging dancers and companies have appeared at the Annenberg Center each season including the Pilobolus Dance Theatre, Hubbard Street Dance Chicago, MOMIX, Parsons Dance Company, Martha Graham, Merce Cunningham, Paul Taylor and Alvin Ailey.

HABIB KOITÉ and BAMADA

Sunday, March 14 at 7:00 PM

Zellerbach Theatre at the Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts

From the West African nation of Mali, singer and guitarist Habib Koité is one of Africa's most beloved and popular musicians. Famous for his unique approach to playing the guitar and his ability to blend all styles of music with the ancient traditions of Mali, Habib Koité has been hailed as Mali's "biggest pop star" by *Rolling Stone*. Performing selections from his newest album, *Afriki*, with his band Bamada, the charisma and magnetism of Habib Koité will speak to your soul and translate across all cultures.

Media support provided by WDAS FM and the *Philadelphia Tribune*.

Tickets: \$20-\$40. For more information please call 215.898.3900 or visit www.AnnenbergCenter.org

For further press information or to set up interviews, please contact:

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