



## **Griot, A Must See Film!**

13 September 2012 by Ariadne Sawyer, MA.

A fascinating interview with Director and Producer, Volker Goetze.

### ***What message/messages do you want to give to the audience?***

The film is a window into the world of a Senegalese Mandinka Jeli (Griot) and musician Ablaye Cissoko. Through the film, Ablaye acts as a storyteller and mediator. His stories are very different from the ones we normally hear in the western world. They address lost and often forgotten values of family, friendship, respect and compassion. Ablaye is descended from generations of Cissokos and they are famous for inventing the African harp otherwise known as the kora.

### ***Why should people go see the film?***

Go see the film to get a glimpse of the oral tradition and living history of West Africa, get uplifted by Ablaye's music, understand what the youth in Senegal are going through; and gain a better understanding of the connection of oral memory to Black Culture.

### ***You have high profile and experienced film partners. Why did they join your team?***

Working with Ablaye Cissoko, I discovered and learned more about the Griot culture and oral history of West Africa. I wanted to share this discovery and the idea of a documentary was born. In 2007, I read a book called "Documentary Storytelling" by Sheila Curran Banard, which introduced me to Sam Pollard, known for his many collaborations with Spike Lee. It mentioned that Spike Lee often just left the footage to Mr. Pollard and let him work out the story creatively, by looking at the footage itself. It was right then and there that I realized that Sam Pollard would be an excellent collaborator for this film. I thought he might be interested because of the nature of the topic. But it was not until two years later that a colleague Bob Mover, who worked with Charles Mingus and Chet Baker, mentioned to me that he actually knew someone who could connect me with Sam Pollard. After the first meeting with Sam and his former mentor Victor Kanefsky, I found out that Sam is a huge fan of jazz-

legend and pianist Randy Weston, who we interviewed for the film. Randy Weston has lived in Africa for fifteen years and Ablaye Cissoko and Randy Weston actually met in 2007 at the Saint-Louis-Jazz-Festival in Senegal. Sam Pollard mentioned that if I set up a meeting with Randy Weston that he would be on board. So I set up a meeting and Sam Pollard joined the team together with Victor Kanefsky. Sam and Victor proved to be invaluable additions to the team. I also have to mention Sanne Kurz– a fantastic cinematographer from Munich. She was hard working and provided the fantastic images. I have so many people to thank including writer Leslie Mulkey, historian Prof. Mamadou Diouf, and editor Marie Planqouis. Documentary films are made by the labor of love and it was a dream come true to work with Sam Pollard and Victor Kanefsky.

***What is the most important theme of the film?***

Humanity

***The visuals and the music are stunning. How did the producers achieve this?***

Again it was the craft of cinematographer Sanne Kurz. She is a school colleague of a close friend of mine who has won prizes for best cinematography in Europe. She loves films and she prefers to work on films with artistic merit turning down commercial offers. We worked as a two person team: she did the filming and I did the sound as I had experience in mobile recording. When Ablaye and I listened to our first recordings in 2007, which can be heard on the CD “Sira” (Motéma Music), we could not believe it – it felt that someone else is playing, we were actually shocked. So I was never worried about the music, I just hoped that the film would be strong enough to carry the music.

***What do you want to say about the film?***

As with my music I don't feel comfortable talking about my work. Go see it once, twice... I hope that we achieved a complex and rich film, which will speak to the audience differently each time they watch it. I hope it will evoke deep emotions, heal and if it touches a fraction of the experience of a living piece similar to the oral memory of West Africa all goals would be achieved.

***What would Ablaye Cissoko want to tell the readers of the TAN the Afro News?***

I just reached him and this is what he said:

“All I as a griot do is sing and play. Whenever I get a chance to perform- I feel honored and the transmission of the Griot culture is done. That is my role.”  
I would like to thank Volker Goetze , Ablaye Cissoko, The Vancouver International Film Festival, Helen Yaki and above all our esteemed publisher and editor Honore Gbedze. Thank you for doing so much in such a short time period. It was -a real team effort.



## VIFF 2012: Griot brings a culture to the forefront

By [Alexander Varty](#), September 27, 2012

### Special coverage

[Vancouver International Film Festival 2012](#)

There are two things that **Volker Goetze** wants out of music: emotion and magic. “If you listen to, say, Louis Armstrong, within three seconds there’s magic in the recording, and that’s what I look for,” he says, calling from a New York City hotel.

For some, exploring the jazz past would be enough, but not for this German trumpeter and filmmaker. In search of living magic, he went to West Africa a decade ago, and it was in Senegal that he discovered the performer who is both his musical partner and the subject of his latest film, *Griot*. A virtuoso on the harplike kora, **Ablaye Cissoko** is a griot—a member of a hereditary caste that used music and storytelling to mediate between kings and commoners, and between this world and the supernatural.

“In some ways the griots were probably controlling or directing society,” says Goetze, noting that they were both respected for their knowledge and feared for their power. But conditions are changing for the griots: between Senegal’s dire economy and global access to technology, the old systems are breaking down and new ones rising. The filmmaker fears that griot culture might be a casualty—unless, like Cissoko, the maintainers of oral tradition can adapt.

“He’s a transitional figure because his music becomes more and more personal,” Goetze says of Cissoko, who’ll perform with him when the [Vancouver International Film Festival](#) hosts the world premiere of *Griot* at the Empire Granville 7 Cinemas tonight (September 27) and Vancity Theatre on Sunday afternoon (September 30). That’s not entirely out of keeping with griot tradition. Once again, Cissoko and his peers are connecting very different realms, only this time it’s the Third World and the industrial, the old and the new.



The griot is a fixture of Senegalese life. Part family historian, part community diplomat, they record the past and present it in a mix of songs and words. This world-premiere documentary, from German trumpeter-cum-filmmaker Volker Goetze, explores the life of legendary Senegalese musician and community leader Ablaye Cissoko, a modern-day griot whose haunting voice is often accompanied by the jazz trumpet of Mr. Goetze. Mr. Cissoko talks, and sings, about his upbringing in a musical family – one of 21 children – as well as his life's passion: finding a way to keep the young people of Senegal from fleeing the country and the central role of music in that endeavour (he wants to build a music school and culture centre in the port city of Saint-Louis). Visually and aurally stunningly beautiful.



## URBAN COWGIRL

### VIFF 2012 PREVIEW

September 11, 2012 · by Urban Cowgirl · in Film. ·

**Griot** Senegalese kora and western trumpet make fabulous music together. Volker Goetze's enthralling documentary melds dazzling visuals and haunting songs to serve up a feast for the senses. Griot introduces us to Goetze's own soulful trumpet stylings and the extraordinary voice and calabash harp artistry of Ablaye Cissoko. Rumour has it, they're set to play a special live performance in Vancouver during the festival!

## VIFF GOES INTO AFRICA >>>

> BY MARK HARRIS



◆ Films about Africa are usually films about problems. These problems can be of external (the chaotic aftermath of colonialism), internal (structural weaknesses in traditional societies), or natural (disaster and disease) origin. Of the three, the middle group of problems is probably the hardest to make movies about. Ironically, it is precisely this set of difficulties that has attracted the most attention at this edition of the Vancouver International Film Festival.

Thus, the havoc wreaked by civil war figures in both Daan Valhuizen's *Stories of Lakka Beach* and Kim Nguyen's *Rebelle* (the latter feature also tackling the heartbreaking, seemingly all but irreparable tragedy of the child soldier). Homophobia of a virulence encountered locally only among the most extreme members of the fundamentalist right is the subject of Malika Zouhali-Worrall and Katherine Fairfax Wright's *Call Me Kuchu*, while the even more widespread hysteria in regard to witch-

craft (which, tragically, seems to fasten most often upon homeless waifs) adds a bitter tang to Marc-Henri Wajnberg's *Kinshasa Kids* and (even more horrifically) Christine François's *The Secret of the Ant Children*. As for the documentary form's most unusual and personally engaged agent provocateur, this time out of the gate Danish director Mads Brügger buys a bogus diplomatic identity in *The Ambassador* and practices corruption for real in the Central African Republic.

*Griot* is not a film about problems. If anything, it is a film about solutions. It is also a film about music, the African resource that is most internationally admired (a force that manages to lighten even the gloom in *Kinshasa Kids*).

Of course, in West Africa, the *griot* is far more than just a musician. As first-time filmmaker Volker Goetze explained to the *Georgia Straight* about his uplifting nonfictional look at this tradition, "The *griot* was always very powerful, because there were no written news-

papers, no written books. They had the power to kill someone, to kill them with words, since they knew all the family histories. If, for instance, the king didn't fulfill his promises, then he would be *badly* praised, which created a certain degree of conflict. The kings needed

the griots' support even though, socially speaking, they ranked just above the caste of slaves." Being simultaneously poets, musicians, oral historians, praise singers, satirists and wits, the *griots* would seem to have much in common with the *flidh*, the Irish college of bards that flourished during pagan days, but this is a comparison that cannot be pushed too far. "There are similarities," the director admitted, "but European society functioned differently."

For one thing, the griots are both endogamous and close to 100 percent Muslim. Specific skills are passed down from one generation to the next. Musical masters without descendants must now count on their students to continue their various skills, although this is not a problem facing the star of *Griot*, since, as the director explained, "he has 20 brothers and sisters, so someone will continue his kora tradition."

*Griot*, essentially a collaboration between the German-born, New York-based trumpeter-director and



Musician Ablaye Cissoko comes to VIFF to present the film *Griot*.

Ablaye Cissoko, one of Senegal's most talented younger musicians as well as Goetze's usual concert partner (they'll be playing the *Vogue* together on Friday [September 28]—see page 55), has been a long time a-comin', as they say in the music world. "The idea of the film was first developed in October, 2007," the filmmaker recalled, "and the shooting started in February, 2008. I had some experience with short films and music videos, but this was my first feature." Getting the right technical team together took several years, and grants were often hard to come by. Still perseverance ultimately paid off.

As for the future, that's still terra incognita. "Vancouver's actually *Griot*'s premiere," Goetze explained, "and we're hoping that a good and established distributor will pick it up. Frankly, I'd rather have a lot of people see it than make a lot of money out of it."

Now, there's a non-Hollywood tradition that might be worth pursuing. ◆

## MUSIC NOTES >>>

### ZUMPARNO COMPOSITIONS FEATURED AT VIFF

If the name Jason Zumpano sounds familiar, it might be because this drummer and keyboardist led a band of that same (last) name in the 1990s, when it recorded two albums for Sub Pop. Singer Carl Newman went on to form the New Pornographers, and Zumpano subsequently launched two outfits, Sparrow and Attics and Cellars, before turning his attention to other projects, including composing music for movies.

Some nifty shorts and animations can be sampled at his website ([jasonzumpano.com/](http://jasonzumpano.com/)), but his highest-profile outing yet is a feature found at this year's Vancouver International Film Festival. Screening Friday (September 29) and October 4 and 5, *Cartoon*

*College* offers a delightfully skewed visit with students and instructors at North America's only institution, in small-town Vermont, devoted to the making of comic people and graphic novelists.

"The kind of music they wanted was a bit retro," says Zumpano, on the line from his Vancouver home, of electronic tunes with a video-game ring to them. "But I didn't do it that consciously."

The composer's connection with New York filmmakers Josh Melrod and Tara Wray came when the latter used some of his existing songs for her previous feature, *Manhattan, Kansas*. A few guitar-based tracks not on his website did make it onto a new, second album with his current band, *Cyrillic Typewriter*, released on his own JAZ Records label.

"I'm not really jazzy, but close enough," admits the musician, who can also be recognized, if a tad blurrily, for his years slinging beers at the WISE Club. "I do all my recording at home, and it's pretty bare bones. My stuff's not super-slick. I tried that before, and it didn't go well, so I figured I better stick to doing what I do."

Zumpano will be on hand for the movie's October screenings.  
> KEN EISNER

### GRIOT BRIDGES REALMS

**AT VIFF** There are two things that Volker Goetze wants out of music: emotion and magic. "If you listen to say, Louis Armstrong, within three seconds there's magic in the recording, and that's what I look for," he says, calling from a New York City hotel.

systems are breaking down and new ones rising. The filmmaker fears that griot culture might be a casualty—unless, like Cissoko, the maintainers of oral tradition can adapt.

"He's a transitional figure because his music becomes more and more personal," Goetze says of Cissoko, who'll perform with him at the *Vogue Theatre* on Friday (September 28). That's not entirely out of keeping with griot tradition. Once again, Cissoko and his peers are connecting very different realms, only this time it's the Third World and the industrial, the old and the new. The Vancouver International Film Festival hosts the world premiere of the film, *Griot*, at the Empire Granville 7 Cinemas tonight (September 27) and Vancity Theatre on Sunday afternoon (September 30).

> ALEXANDER VARTY

For some, exploring the jazz past would be enough, but not for this German trumpeter and filmmaker. In search of living magic, he went to West Africa a decade ago, and it was in Senegal that he discovered the performer who is both his musical partner and the subject of his latest film, *Griot*. A virtuoso on the harplike *kora*, Ablaye Cissoko is a griot—a member of a hereditary caste that used music and storytelling to mediate between kings and commoners, and between this world and the supernatural.

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# NEW MOVIES

## 12 Years a Slave, a masterpiece, leads a long list of new movies now playing

Volkmar Richter | Posted: Nov 1st, 2013

(Page 3 of 3)

They're still together but like many old people they express their love one minute and bicker the next. "I'm not his assistant," she insists. Yes she is, he says, because "the average one has to support the genius." The film is full of scenes capturing both their affection and the competition. While he creates paintings with boxing gloves and struggles to pay the rent with the earnings, she's re-lit her artistic drive by telling her own story in cartoon drawings starring Cutie. The film shows parts of it in animation and in a wall installation when she gets a joint gallery show with him. It's a unique view of a woman's personal growth and a union that's endured. (VanCity) 3 out of 5

**GRIOT:** This one played at the film festival in 2012. It's back with a special extra. The two musicians featured in the film and now big on the world music scene will follow the film with live concerts on two of its four days. The film starts Saturday, plays again Thursday and will have the live addition next Saturday and Sunday. (At a special price).

It's a documentary about a traditional figure in Senegal called the griot. He's a musician, storyteller, village leader and herald of news, including war. Ablaye Cissoko, who plays the kora, a stringed instrument and sings soulfully, comes from a long line of griots. German-born Volker Goetze, now a New York resident, made the film to document his story, his ancient calling and a bit of Senegal's economic problems. He also joins in now and then with his jazz trumpet. It's a surprisingly successful mix and with or without trumpet the music in the film is wonderful. (VanCity) 3 1/2 out of 5

**NEW AFRICAN CINEMA:** There's more from the formerly dark continent in this series at The Cinematheque organized by UBC's African studies program. The goal, they say, is to display a shift that's gone largely unnoticed. Young filmmakers are less into "didactic" films about their countries and more into personal philosophy, "interiority and poetics". So looking over the list (which you can find at [www.thecinematheque.ca](http://www.thecinematheque.ca)) you'll notice a film about Barack Obama's half-sister in Kenya and another about the Rawandan genocide. Not unexpected. But you'll also see **Restless City**.

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FILM FEATURES

## Senegalese storytelling

Griot explores the link between music and Africa's oral culture  
Published November 7, 2013 by [Steve Gow](#) in [Film Features](#)

The name Ablaye Cissoko may not mean much to those who aren't tuned into the obscure world of African kora music, but if German trumpeter Volker Goetze has anything to do with it, that's about to change.



Cissoko is a soulful singer and impassioned master of the kora (a 21-stringed lute-like instrument), but he is better known as a griot — a West African bard who passes on age-old stories through his haunting hymns. Goetze not only began recording with Cissoko, he he also became obsessed with telling the Senegalese songsmith's story.

While sitting beside French-speaking Cissoko during a recent interview to promote his documentary, *Griot*, Goetze says the two bonded nearly instantly. In a faded German accent (he's now based in New York), the jazz artist-turned-director explains the film's humble beginnings. "My idea was to take a camera with me [during the recording of their hit sophomore album *Amanké Dioni*] and see what I could [capture]. Then I walked through a bookstore and found a [book about Ablaye] and I discovered... all this history of what he's born into, and I was just fascinated by how a living oral culture and history works. For me it just opened another universe."

That new universe opened thanks to a chance meeting in 2001, but by the time the documentary was in production, the encounter had eventually opened Goetze's eyes to Cissoko's extended family. It also gave him the inspiration to explore the griot's role from a western culture's perspective.

After all, the griot isn't just a simple storyteller in Senegalese culture; he is something of a spiritual figure and community leader — his multi-generational tales embedded with forgotten values concerning family, compassion and respect.

"I think it's a very important role — how oral cultures or traditions are passed on," says Goetze, who further explains that griots are invariably tied to music. "If you're born into a certain family, all your children learn to play music, but not the way we were trained through music schools or sessions with a very strict teacher. They all just play music. They say it's in their blood, but at the same time they're all just playing and dancing and doing it from (childhood)."

It is that free-spirited inflection that Goetze really captures in *Griot*. Accented with Goetze and Cissoko's own beautiful ballads and often highlighted by swirling, hallucinatory animation (which is borrowed from the pair's live shows), finding the tone and pace of *Griot* proved to be the most difficult challenge for Goetze's transition from trumpet player to filmmaker.

"As a director you have a vision of the film and you have an idea, but the edit kind of [shapes] it," Goetze says, crediting producer Victor Kanefsky and Sam Pollard for their help during the lengthy six-month post-production phase. "I just had to stop my thinking as a director and let the editor do his work pulling it apart and then put it back together in a way which was much better than before. It was just one of those abstract films which takes much longer to edit."

As satisfied as Goetze is with the film's colorful esthetics and casual pace, he appears even more content having revealed Cissoko's music and distinct culture to the rest of the world.

"I would like [audiences] to get a viewpoint of how important the oral culture is and the heritage because it is so meaningful [in Senegal]," says Goetze. "It's also very meaningful for us in the [western] world to protect that tradition."

But perhaps it's the quiet Cissoko — finally speaking up in French — that most succinctly suggests the importance of looking at the traditional oral culture of griots.

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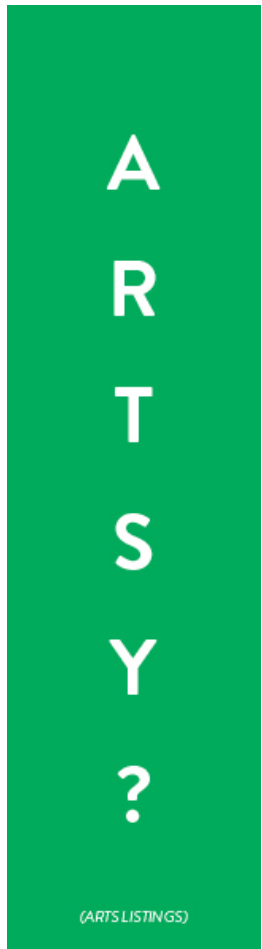
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“Sometimes [younger people] don’t realize the chance they have,” translates Goetze for Cissoko. “It’s now up to the younger generation to discover what their role will be.”

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**FILM CORNER**  
With GREG KLYMKIWI  
*Greg Klymkwi*  
*un homme grincheux qui aime  
l'art du cinéma*  
A Web Publication of Greg Klymkwi's CFC

**ABOUT GREG KLYMKIWI - un homme grincheux qui aime l'art du cinéma:** Greg Klymkwi's 35 years in the movie business includes journalism, screenwriting, script editing, producing and 13 years of service to Norman Jewison's Canadian Film Centre as the senior creative consultant and producer-in-residence. In addition to producing iconoclastic work by Guy Maddin, Cynthia Roberts, Bruno Lazaro Pacheco and Alan Zweig, his legendary guerilla campaigns as the Winnipeg Film Group's director of distribution and marketing placed prairie post-modernist cinema on national and international stages. In addition to Klymkwi Film Corner, he writes for POV, Phantom of the Movies' VIDEOSCOPE and among others, Electric Sheep - a deviant view of cinema. He's writing a book about screenwriting entitled "Movies Are Action" (featuring interviews with the world's best filmmakers). He is the subject of a documentary by Ryan McKenna entitled: "Survival Lessons: The Greg Klymkwi Story". At last count he had seen over 30,000 feature films.

**GUIDE TO STAR RATINGS:** \*\*\*\*\* Masterpiece \*\*\*\*\* Excellent \*\*\*1/2 Very Good \*\*\* Good \*\*1/2 Not Bad \*\* Whatever \*1/2 Poor \* Raw Sewage . . . If a film is not quite up to earning a 1/2 star or 1 star, it will earn at least 1 Pubic Hair.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2013

## GRIOT - Review By Greg Klymkwi



**Griot** (2013) \*\*\*\*\*

Dir. Volker Goetze

Starring:

Ablaye Cissoko,

Volker Goetze

**Review By Greg Klymkwi**

The Griot is, at least from my own interpretation of Volker Goetze's film, the very essence of African history and culture. These hallowed individuals are singers, storytellers, community leaders, praise-bearers and keepers of oral histories and traditions. To learn of their history and to be introduced to one of the truly legendary Griots, Ablaye Cissoko was a truly and deeply personal revelation to me.

I'm not African by any stretch of the imagination, but like all of us on this planet, I share the blood of humanity with the African people as they do with me. We are, ultimately the product of stardust and as such, we are the progeny of the Heavens. Call it God, call it a higher power, call it a supreme being, call it dark matter, call it quantum physics, call it the Drake Equation - call it whatever you like. We are all one and it is with both awe and respect that I feel blessed to have been introduced to the dazzling power of this great musician.

*Griot* is a stirring, colourful and moving documentary and as such, a lyrical and poetic exploration of the West African tradition of the aforementioned Griot, an important personage in African culture with a clear relationship to the indigenous populace, but more importantly, how it seems to have influenced the entire African diaspora - especially in

America.

The structure of the film is simple - all the better as this exposes so many factual, historical and finally spiritual properties of the Griot. You will experience heart achingly gorgeous music, you will see it performed, you will experience the joy of dance and musical expression and most of all, you will learn of the great lament of the Griot in the contemporary world. Culture and tradition is a blood right, but history has toyed with it, colonialism and slavery has tried to suppress it, contemporary African leaders seem to have no interest in its preservation and finally, even the Griot is in a world where the very role needs to both grow and yet return to its very roots.

I truly believe the concerns of the Griot are ALL of our concerns and the message Cissoko imparts via Goetze's cinematic eye-piece is truly universal and something that touches us all.

It might even touch you personally as it did me.

Allow me to share a deeply personal and cultural connection to this great story. My heritage is Ukrainian - a culture and language that has been battered, slaughtered and oppressed for over a thousand years - primarily by Russia. Perhaps the most horrific piece of recent history that has always haunted me is the systematic destruction and brutalization of the Ukrainian culture and its people by the Butcher Joseph Stalin. He not only orchestrated the genocide of ten million Ukrainians during the man-made famine known alternately as the Harvest of Despair and the Holodomor, but for me, the most horrendous genocide was a cultural decimation. Stalin not only implemented forced Russification amongst the Ukrainians, he destroyed one thousand years of history.

Here is why I was so personally moved by this film - my people were agrarian in nature and their entire history and culture was maintained in a very strict oral tradition by men who were not unlike the West African Griots. In Ukraine, they were called Kobzars. Like the Griot, their talent and place in the world was not through formal training, but through blood. They were the keepers of the country's history. Joseph Stalin invited all the Ukrainian Kobzars to Russia for a national conference to celebrate and discuss how the Kobzars would remove the yoke of Czarist oppression and adopt a new direction in praise of the revolution, of communism, of Stalin. Once all the Kobzars were assembled under one roof, Stalin had them all shot. One thousand years of history gone in one fell swoop.

To see the brilliant, caring, committed Ablaye Cissoko as he laments the horrid lack of a proper cultural centre, the indifference of a government to tradition and a millennia of history and culture was so profoundly touching. All the more so because the Griot still exists and his place in African culture - bound by blood - will only be eradicated if it is done so by force. Thankfully, we have filmmaker and musician Volker Goetze to put this important tradition in front of a camera and preserve its sound, image and yes, even soul so that the tradition can travel well beyond the borders of West Africa, beyond the borders of its intended audience - to travel into the hearts and minds of humanity all over the world.

My people lost their Kobzars, but as long as the Griot exists and thrives, I am confident that through the power of stardust, the river of blood that binds all of us and most of all, through the soul cleansing grace and beauty of the Griot's music, the history and tradition of man will be reflected in the words and teachings of the great people of West Africa. This is a film that gives me so much hope that culture is what binds all of us.

As Cissoko states, "Without culture one becomes a person without an identity."

He has nothing to fear, however. His blood flows as does the blood of others like him. It flows into the music of the soul and it cascades out via the tributaries of the Earth and thank whatever power is responsible, but the Griot thrives. Cissoko is here to soothe us, to offer praise to the heavens and to the ancestors - who ultimately are the ancestors of all of us.

For we are one.

*"Griot" is launching a cross-Canada tour via Ryan Bruce Levey's Vagrant Films Releasing and Publicity. The film begins at the gorgeous Royal Theatre in Toronto - a perfect launch pad as it's still the one standalone cinema in the city with the most exquisite sound and picture quality. The film, miraculously, will be launched by a concert that features blaye Cissoko and Volker Goetze. For tickets and further information about the concerts and screenings across the country, please visit the official Griot website [HERE](#).*

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## Griot Directed by Volker Goetze

REVIEWS > FILM > OCT 24 2013



By Scott A. Gray

German jazz trumpeter Volker Goetze hasn't just made a documentary celebrating the remarkable talents of Senegalese Kora master Ablaye Cissoko. Even if that were the extent of the project's scope, it would be well worth seeing; Cissoko is a rare virtuosic talent whose ability is exceeded only by the depth of his passion. His every note embodies exactly what people mean when they speak of transcendence in music.

Goetze's first stab at directing a feature documentary illuminates the vital, revered role of the master musician in West African culture. This position of respect and influence is that of the griot. Traditionally, the griot serves as historian and political and spiritual advisor to the people, as well as entertainer. In times of conflict, these venerated minstrels would play to inspire the warriors in battle. Much like nobility (even interbreeding in the past), this multifaceted discipline is passed down through bloodlines.

Cissoko's late father, Bouba, to whom the film is dedicated, had four wives and more than 20 children. All of them are musicians and most of them make appearances during the many public performances filmed in Cissoko's home village. These group sessions are joyous and moving in a way that defies description. Words simply cannot convey the camaraderie and unadulterated happiness of this musical family in the throws of collaboration. The music must be heard; the profound love adorning their faces during the act of expression must be seen.

Having an intimate understanding of his subject's unique power (they've been playing together for years now), Goetze maintains a keen focus on Cissoko's shiver-inducing voice and hypnotic Kora patterns (the instrument bears some resemblance to the harp). Between scenes of the warm, intelligent musician performing either solo, in his ensemble or with Goetze, the director interviews community members and professionals (including a very insightful history professor) about the current cultural climate in Senegal and

### FILM HIGHLIGHTS



Another Day, Another Time: Celebrating the Music of Inside Llewyn Davis Directed by Christopher Wilcha



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• FILM: **Another Day, Another Time: Celebrating the Music of Inside Llewyn Davis** Directed by Christopher Wilcha

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how the role of the griot can evolve to preserve and enrich the heritage of the region in this modern age.

Much more than an excellent piece of promotion for Goetze and Cissoko's global touring as ambassadors of cultural preservation, *Griot* is a moving, beautiful and unflinching depiction of a people and their lifestyle. Without comment, Goetze trains his camera on the simple occurrences of daily life in this community: a man getting bitten by goat while preparing it for slaughter; a woman nursing; children dancing in the streets to the complex rhythms of an impromptu drum circle; and young men angrily protesting local economic conditions.

Full of Zen-like wisdom, immeasurable beauty and positively inspiring unselfconscious experimentation with musical forms, *Griot* is an absolute must-see for anyone enthralled by the meditative, reflective and emotionally evocative qualities of composition. This powerful documentary should help ensure that Cissoko's sacred duty takes on new significance as part of the global story of humanity's great artistic achievements. (Vagrant)

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**Monday, January 6th 2014**

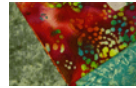
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### Speaking in Tongues

Hosted by Daryl L.  
Saturdays from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm  
Next Show: **January 11, 2014 @ 12:00 pm**

Speaking in Tongues is currently CJSW's only generalist world music show. For one and a half hours every week Speaking in Tongues features the widest possible range of traditional and popular sounds from around the planet, from obscure reissues emanating from discreet local scenes to the newest of new releases being highlighted on the global stage. [...]

beats | cultural | jazz | metal | mixed | news/spoken | roots

## some thoughts on ablaye cissoko & volker goetze live in concert and on the movie "griot"

« Back to Speaking in Tongues

At 78 years of age the venerable Plaza Theatre in Kensington is Calgary's last remaining independent, neighbourhood art house theatre. I used to frequent it on a regular basis from the time I was in my late teen years and into my late twenties but had not been there in some time prior to this past week.

On Wednesday, November 6 it hosted Senegalese griot and kora player Ablaye Cissoko and German trumpet and flugelhorn player Volker Goetz in a sometimes spell-binding but sadly under-attended live performance. The concert preceded a limited engagement screening of Volker Goetz's excellent related documentary film "Griot" that ran from November 8-10.

I experienced a sense of relief when I stepped through the front door and into the foyer and it immediately became apparent that not much had changed in the place since I was there last, from its soda fountains and popcorn machine to the red upholstered seats to the old movie posters on the theatre walls depicting Charlie Chaplin, Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, Buster Keaton, Lauren Bacall, Marlon Brando and James Dean. I recalled one balmy summer evening when patrons in the front rows suddenly became aware that a spreading pool of water was creeping from underneath the exit doors at the front of the theatre and around their feet, a brief but very fierce thunderstorm having traversed the neighborhood outside.

There was a very simple set-up for the concert as one might have predicted with two microphone stands, a chair, a piano stool and a couple of speakers. A projector at the front of the stage threw bright kaleidoscopic images resembling multi-coloured land line telephone cables on to the red curtain at the back of the stage and from thence in all directions. The run-up to the show was not the least bit boisterous with perhaps thirty people in attendance, the only evident sounds coming from somewhere towards the theatre foyer as Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetz warmed up.

A dignified looking Ablaye Cissoko wore a regal looking cream coloured vestment over identical pants finished with a grey-green scarf and a red fez. The bespectacled Volker Goetz wore a dark shirt, pants and jacket with his slicked back hair tied in a pony tail.

On the Motema Music label website one reads: "...while the spirit of improvisation is key to the almost meditative essence of their sound, Goetze also emphasizes that (they are) equally about focus. 'When we play, we are simply playing in a state of mind much like meditating. Any great performer knows how to get into his zone, and it amazes me that we can stay in that zone for over an hour every time we perform live.'"

I have often made note of how specific odors, sights and sounds can trigger exceedingly vivid memories and the instant Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetz began playing both on stage and on screen I was transported back in time to the late 1980s when I was in my mid-twenties and I had a couple of opportunities to travel in West Africa, mainly in Ghana but also in Mali, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. The vibe was so remarkably serene



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**January 6, 2014**

1. Cowpuncher\*\* - Ghost Notes (Self-Released)
2. SAVK\*\* - Love Letters And Hate Mail (VK)
3. Thao & The Get Down Stay Down - The Feeling Kind (Ribbon)
4. Raleigh\*\* - Sun Grenades & Grenadine Skies (Self-Released)
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 **Ben Cannon** 8h  
@sexcannon  
Tune into the SU Weekly at 11:30am on @CJSW! We will be discussing possible changes to the fitness centre and space exploration! @SUUofC  
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 **Case of the Mondays** 5 Jan  
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TUNE IN TO @CJSW TOMORROW (Monday), 12-2pm MST for a run-down of the best albums and songs of 2013! Not to be missed!  
[cjsw.com/program/case-o...](http://cjsw.com/program/case-o...)  
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and calming it was as though I was strolling with friends from the University of Ghana at Legon on a moonlit night in that country's capitol city of Accra in search of a drink with crickets chirping and with palm oil lanterns dotting the busier streets, their food vendor owners working late into the evening.

West Africa abounds with glittering musical talents of all descriptions but Ablaye Cissoko must surely rank as one of its most outstanding kora players. He constructed his own instrument as did his griot ancestors and he deftly navigates its twenty-one strings with the thumb and forefinger of both hands, plucking out often gorgeous melodies. He is also a compelling vocalist capable of evincing subtlety, beauty and strength.

Ever since I first heard their first two recordings "Sira" and "Amanke Dionte" Volker Goetze's Miles Davis-like muted trumpet and flugelhorn have always struck me as a surprisingly effective accompaniment to Ablaye Cissoko's kora and in live performance their complementarity is even more evident.

As Ablaye Cissoko's English language abilities are limited Volker Goetze also provides much affable and useful translation related to the content and meaning of each song. On this evening he also provided something of a comedic element with several quizzical but good-natured observations that there was something "weird" about the piano bench he was using for a seat, as some unknown substance was causing his pants to adhere to it.

For the most part I listened quietly with my attention riveted to the stage, marvelling at what was a rare opportunity to see two musicians of this background and quality play live in our city. At the end of the evening I could only lament the evening had not been shared with considerably more eyes and ears in attendance.

From Wikipedia: "A *griot* is a historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet and/or musician. The griot is a repository of oral tradition, and is also often seen as something of a societal leader due to his traditional position as an adviser to royal personages. As a result of the former of these two functions, he is sometimes also called a bard. According to Paul Oliver in his book *Savannah Syncopators*, "Though [the griot] has to know many traditional songs without error, he must also have the ability to extemporize on current events, chance incidents and the passing scene. His wit can be devastating and his knowledge of local history formidable". Although they are popularly known as 'praise singers', griots may also use their vocal expertise for gossip, satire, or political comment."

While at least one reviewer has criticized The Volker Goetze documentary "Griot" for being rather too short on narrative it was for me a riveting visual and aural feast depicting a slice of West Africa that I have not actually visited but which so closely resembled those places I have visited the depictions of everyday life almost felt like *deja vu*.

From the Vancouver International Film Festival: "Ostensibly, Goetze's documentary sets out to explore the history and role of the 'griots' whose spiritual and musical talents are passed through the blood from generation to generation. Their role is many-faceted: historian, storyteller, praise-singer, poet and musician. Ablaye Cissoko, thinker, leader and gifted musician, is an exemplar.

*The film has at least three elements that compel our attention and capture our minds and hearts: the outstanding music; the cinematography, which brings to life the vibrant colours of West Africa and the splendours of its natural life; and the almost hallucinatory animation which adds another texture to the music.*

*In common with other exceptional documentaries, Griot amounts to more than the sum of its parts. It is a paean to the senses: at moments our eyes are dazzled by what we see, at others we can close them and just let the haunting music flow through us."*

I suppose I am biased, but I cannot recommend "Griot" highly enough especially if you already have a well-developed affinity for things West African.

I am hopeful that Calgary will soon see the return of Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetz at one venue or another, perhaps Afrikadey or the Calgary Folk Music Festival or the BD&P World Music Series, and when they do return I hope commensurately more Calgarians take advantage of the opportunity to see them play live.

Until then, you will have to make do with....

[www.griotmovie.com](http://www.griotmovie.com)

[www.volkergoetze.com](http://www.volkergoetze.com)

[www.ablaye-cissoko.com](http://www.ablaye-cissoko.com), and

[www.motema.com](http://www.motema.com)

This entry was posted on Monday, November 11th, 2013 at 11:00 pm. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. Both comments and pings are currently closed.



## The Kora and the Trumpet – Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetze

BY UWERA OCTOBER 28, 2013 ABLAYE CISSOKO AFRICAN HARP CALGARY GRIOT KORA TORONTO VOLKER VOLKER GOETZE

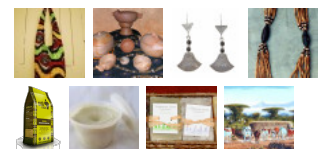


Sometimes life presents you with a rare gift. A moment of peace and tranquility that unites our collective consciousness, while providing refuge from our crazy, hectic world. This is the gift of Senegalese Kora artist, composer, **Ablaye Cissoko** and trumpeter, composer, **Volker Goetze**. A commencement concert like no other began in Toronto, Canada, last week. Part of a 7 City, 8 show, North American tour which celebrates the simultaneous release of Goetze's documentary **Griot**, featuring Ablaye Cissoko.

This may sound like an unusual pairing. The trumpet, a European brass instrument created in 1814, with a range that provides familiar sounds from military to jazz. The Kora, known as the African harp, is a 21 stringed instrument, carved from a calabash. It is with great pride that Cissoko can say that the instrument was invented by one of his direct ancestors, four centuries ago.

The concert, held in the intimate setting of small, art deco theme theatre, with wonderful acoustics was exquisite. It is very apparent that both musicians have brought together a scintillating pairing. The audience was mesmerized by the hypnotic strains of the Kora and subtlety of Volker's accompanying trumpet and Flugel Horn.

### PHOTOS





Cissoko, a hereditary Griot, exuded a quiet wisdom as he introduced the songs. Songs from their albums included, **Sira**, which means mermaid, and is the name of his youngest daughter. The song **Haiti**, is a tribute to the survivors of the last earthquake. He sang in Mandinka, the language of the Mande people, but spoke to the audience in French. Volker's challenging translations were assisted by the audience, who were only too happy to help. The social commentary of the Griot, was particularly apparent in the song, one of their biggest hits in Europe, **Amanka Dionti**, which means, She is not your Slave.



Cissoko and Goetze are musical masters whose talent and mutual respect reach out from their instruments. When Volker's trumpet enters the world of the Kora it is almost imperceptible until its high note peaks, and there is union as each instrument caresses the other until they both exhale.

Even if we don't understand the words, Cissoko's singing is a call to embrace the finite and make it the infinite. It is beyond the flow of the Nile, the Jinn's of the Sahara, and the heights of Kilimanjaro. If the drum is the heartbeat of Africa, the Kora is the lifeblood. The harmonies that will carry the people, wherever they may be, through the passages of life.

[\\*Look out for the Exclusive Interview with this Duo coming soon.](#)

The pair will be hopefully coming to a city near you. Check out these dates for concerts and movie screenings:



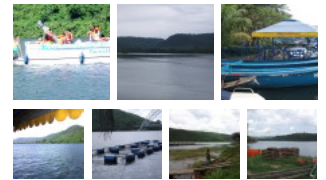
## PETERBOROUGH

Tuesday, October 29th, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$35.00 General seating)

Gordon Best Theatre, 216 Hunter St. W

Peterborough ON

(705) 876-8884



## **MONTREAL**

Friday, November 1st, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$52.50-\$62.50)

Theatre Outremont

1248 Rue Bernard O.

Montreal QC

514 495 9944

<http://www.theatreoutremont.caadmission.com>

*Film Screenings: Starts November 1<sup>st</sup> Cinema Du Parc, Montreal QC*

## **SASKATOON**

Monday, November 4th, 7:30 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

Broadway Theatre

715 Broadway Ave.

Saskatoon SK

(306) 652-6556

<http://www.broadwaytheatre.ca> tickets available at [broadwaytheatre.ca](http://broadwaytheatre.ca)

*Film screenings: November 1st – Broadway Theatre, Saskatoon SK*

## **CALGARY**

Wednesday, November 6th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

The Plaza Theatre

1133 Kensington Rd NW

Calgary, AB

(403) 283-3636

*Film Screenings: Starts November 8th The Plaza Theatre, Calgary, AB*

## VANCOUVER

Saturday, November 9th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

Sunday, November 10th, 2:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General Seating, \$25.00 for under 25 Matinee special)

Vancity Theatre

1181 Seymour St.

Vancouver BC

(604) 685-0260

<http://www.viff.org/theatre/2013/calendar> Tickets available at [viff.org](http://viff.org)

*Film Screenings: Starts November 8<sup>th</sup> – Vancity Theatre, Vancouver BC*

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BY WILLIAM BROWNRIDGE / OCTOBER 24, 2013

## REVIEW: GRIOT



To better understand *Griot*, it's important to know who a griot actually is. In West Africa, the griot served many functions, from royal adviser, to community leader. They carried the tradition of their people through song or spoken word, essentially becoming historian, musician, poet, and leader, all in one. This documentary explores the life and work of Ablaye Cissoko, a Senegalese griot who has shared his incredible music, and stories, with the world.

Director Volker Goetze, who also happens to be an incredibly talented trumpet player, forming a duo with Ablaye, offers up a journey that mirrors the work of a griot. He tells his story in much the same way, combining spoken word and song, to create an entirely new experience. Audiences learn about Ablaye Cissoko as much through his music, as they do through typical documentary storytelling.

*Griot* becomes a bit of an oddity. Since it's not a standard documentary film, and it's not a straightforward concert film, audience members may find themselves wanting more of one aspect. Both sides are incredibly well done, and the music is certainly beautiful, but you can't help but feel that there's so much more to be explored, leaving the storytelling aspect falling short.

The highlight is definitely the music of Ablaye Cissoko. He plays a kora, which is a 21 stringed instrument, looking like a cross between a harp and a guitar. The music created exists somewhere between the sound of a harp, and what you may hear in blues, as well as flamenco music. It's fascinating to watch, and incredibly beautiful to listen to. Cissoko's talent is immense, and it seems almost impossible to create the sounds that he does.

This also leads into a brief discussion on the influence that African music has had on styles we're more familiar with, like blues, or rock and roll. You can hear the history of those styles as Ablaye plays, and it's no secret that much of the world of percussion has its roots in African music as well. It's history lesson and musical performance wrapped up together, and it's something you've never heard before.

### IS GRIOT OPENING WEEKEND WORTHY?

For music fans, this is a must see. You'll witness the history of music actually being performed, as opposed to sitting and listening about it. To further enhance the film, Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetze will be performing a live concert on Thursday, October 24, 2013, ahead of the films opening on Friday, October 25, 2013. Both the concert, and the film, will be playing at The Royal. Check their [website](#) for more information.

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## Tag Archives: Volker Goetze

### Griot Review

By [Andrew Parker](#) October 23, 2013



The role of the local musician in Senegal still holds a great deal of power and purpose, bringing people together, sharing news, and always a part of major life celebrations. Ablaye Cissoko, subject of German trumpeter, frequent collaborator, and filmmaker Volker Goetze's documentary *Griot*, crafts stirring, meaningful, and meditative reflections on day to day life for average people who still use music as a reverential bridge to the things they hold important in their daily lives. He's a town crier, historian, composer, and troubadour in a country where music not only matters, but is still an intricate part of everyday life.

Cissoko holds the film's titular position, a soulful singer musician tasked with keeping oral tradition alive through a blend of traditional storytelling and original material. He goes to baptisms, weddings, engagements, funerals, and any other major life event where his presence is requested to give reverence to those involved and to spread a kind of positivity around. In Ablaye's own words, he's there to make people see reason. He's one of the most respected members of his community, and part of a heritage that suggests music has always been in his blood and it was never a question this would be his ultimate profession. Playing a sort of harp, guitar, and percussion-like hybrid known as a kora, Cissoko has not only established himself as a vital voice for his people, but has also collaborated with Goetze on two jazz albums and several world tours.



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Linda Minkevich on **CONTEST: See an Advance Screening of LONE**

A labour of love for Goetze filmed over the past eight years and across his travels around the world and spending a great deal of time with Cissoko in his own village back home, the film does a great job underlining the importance of music in everyday life, something a lot of people in many societies take for granted. While the collaboration and friendship between Ablaye and Volker gets discussed and looked at, it largely and wisely takes a backseat to talk about the role of musicians in societal roles that still matter.

Besides, what truly matters is the actual music being made and the duo's collaboration on the album *Amanke Dionti* is what's truly beautiful and ultimately what brings them to Canada for a cross country tour kicking off this week in Toronto at The Royal. Together they craft a type of jazz that injects a more than healthy dose of storytelling that the genre genuinely misses. In many ways, it might be actually preferable to hear or see the pair perform before going into the film. One will easily be disarmed and taken aback by the beauty of the music, even fans of the genre and those familiar with the type of storytelling in play.

Griot opens at Toronto's Royal Cinema on Friday October 25th for a theatrical engagement, following a performance there on Thursday the 24th from Goetze and Cissoko. From there, they embark on a tour of the following cities throughout October and November in support of the film:

### **KITCHENER-WATERLOO**

Sunday, October 27th, 7:30 p.m. (Tickets \$35.00 General seating)  
The Chrysalids Theatre, 137 Ontario St. N  
Kitchener-Waterloo ON  
[www.thechrysalids.ca](http://www.thechrysalids.ca) Ticketweb  
*Film screenings- Oct. 26-27th*

### **PETERBOROUGH**

Tuesday, October 29th, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$35.00 General seating)  
Gordon Best Theatre, 216 Hunter St. W  
Peterborough ON  
(705) 876-8884  
[www.peterboroughpromotions.com](http://www.peterboroughpromotions.com)

### **MONTREAL**

Friday, November 1st, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$52.50-\$62.50)  
Theatre Outremont  
1248 Rue Bernard O.  
Montreal QC  
514 495 9944  
<http://www.theatreoutremont.ca/admission.com>  
*Film Screenings: Starts November 1st Cinema Du Parc, Montreal QC*

### **SASKATOON**

Monday, November 4th, 7:30 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)  
Broadway Theatre  
715 Broadway Ave.  
Saskatoon SK  
(306) 652-6556  
<http://www.broadwaytheatre.ca> tickets available at [broadwaytheatre.ca](http://broadwaytheatre.ca)  
*Film screenings: November 1st – Broadway Theatre, Saskatoon SK*

### **CALGARY**

Wednesday, November 6th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)  
The Plaza Theatre  
1133 Kensington Rd NW  
Calgary, AB  
(403) 283-3636  
[www.theplaza.ca](http://www.theplaza.ca)  
*Film Screenings: Starts November 8th The Plaza Theatre, Calgary, AB*

### **VANCOUVER**

Saturday, November 9th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

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[Brynn Aidan Sweetapple on Meet the Cast of The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones](#)

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Vancity Theatre  
1181 Seymour St.  
Vancouver BC  
(604) 685-0260

<http://www.viff.org/theatre/2013/calendar> Tickets available at [viff.org](http://viff.org)

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## Contest: See Ablaye Cissoko & Volker Goetze in Concert in Toronto!

1

By [Andrew Parker](#) October 22, 2013

We don't often get the chance to share some great music with our readers, but today marks a very special occasion! Enter for a chance to win a prize pack with two tickets and two CDs to see world music artists Volker Goetze and Ablaye Cissoko at The Royal in Toronto on Thursday, October 24th at 7:30pm, in honour of the documentary about the duo, *GRIOT*, opening at the theatre on Friday, October 25th! [Continue reading](#)

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FILM FEATURES

## Senegalese storytelling

Griot explores the link between music and Africa's oral culture  
Published November 7, 2013 by [Steve Gow](#) in [Film Features](#)

The name Ablaye Cissoko may not mean much to those who aren't tuned into the obscure world of African kora music, but if German trumpeter Volker Goetze has anything to do with it, that's about to change.



Cissoko is a soulful singer and impassioned master of the kora (a 21-stringed lute-like instrument), but he is better known as a griot — a West African bard who passes on age-old stories through his haunting hymns. Goetze not only began recording with Cissoko, he he also became obsessed with telling the Senegalese songsmith's story.

While sitting beside French-speaking Cissoko during a recent interview to promote his documentary, *Griot*, Goetze says the two bonded nearly instantly. In a faded German accent (he's now based in New York), the jazz artist-turned-director explains the film's humble beginnings. "My idea was to take a camera with me [during the recording of their hit sophomore album *Amanké Dioni*] and see what I could [capture]. Then I walked through a bookstore and found a [book about Ablaye] and I discovered... all this history of what he's born into, and I was just fascinated by how a living oral culture and history works. For me it just opened another universe."

That new universe opened thanks to a chance meeting in 2001, but by the time the documentary was in production, the encounter had eventually opened Goetze's eyes to Cissoko's extended family. It also gave him the inspiration to explore the griot's role from a western culture's perspective.

After all, the griot isn't just a simple storyteller in Senegalese culture; he is something of a spiritual figure and community leader — his multi-generational tales embedded with forgotten values concerning family, compassion and respect.

"I think it's a very important role — how oral cultures or traditions are passed on," says Goetze, who further explains that griots are invariably tied to music. "If you're born into a certain family, all your children learn to play music, but not the way we were trained through music schools or sessions with a very strict teacher. They all just play music. They say it's in their blood, but at the same time they're all just playing and dancing and doing it from (childhood)."

It is that free-spirited inflection that Goetze really captures in *Griot*. Accented with Goetze and Cissoko's own beautiful ballads and often highlighted by swirling, hallucinatory animation (which is borrowed from the pair's live shows), finding the tone and pace of *Griot* proved to be the most difficult challenge for Goetze's transition from trumpet player to filmmaker.

"As a director you have a vision of the film and you have an idea, but the edit kind of [shapes] it," Goetze says, crediting producer Victor Kanefsky and Sam Pollard for their help during the lengthy six-month post-production phase. "I just had to stop my thinking as a director and let the editor do his work pulling it apart and then put it back together in a way which was much better than before. It was just one of those abstract films which takes much longer to edit."

As satisfied as Goetze is with the film's colorful esthetics and casual pace, he appears even more content having revealed Cissoko's music and distinct culture to the rest of the world.

"I would like [audiences] to get a viewpoint of how important the oral culture is and the heritage because it is so meaningful [in Senegal]," says Goetze. "It's also very meaningful for us in the [western] world to protect that tradition."

But perhaps it's the quiet Cissoko — finally speaking up in French — that most succinctly suggests the importance of looking at the traditional oral culture of griots.

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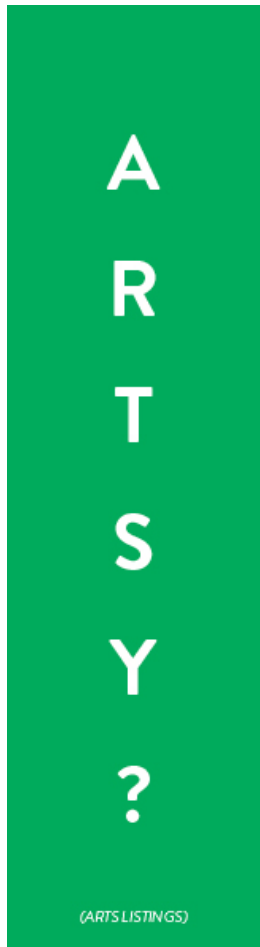
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“Sometimes [younger people] don’t realize the chance they have,” translates Goetze for Cissoko. “It’s now up to the younger generation to discover what their role will be.”

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The **CURMUDGEON** of  
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**GREG KLYMKIWI**

**FILM CORNER**  
With **GREG KLYMKIWI**  
*Greg Klymkwiw*  
*un homme grincheux qui aime*  
*l'art du cinéma*  
A Web Publication of Greg Klymkwiw's CFC

**ABOUT GREG KLYMKIWI - un homme grincheux qui aime l'art du cinéma:** Greg Klymkwiw's 35 years in the movie business includes journalism, screenwriting, script editing, producing and 13 years of service to Norman Jewison's Canadian Film Centre as the senior creative consultant and producer-in-residence. In addition to producing iconoclastic work by Guy Maddin, Cynthia Roberts, Bruno Lazaro Pacheco and Alan Zweig, his legendary guerilla campaigns as the Winnipeg Film Group's director of distribution and marketing placed prairie post-modernist cinema on national and international stages. In addition to Klymkwiw Film Corner, he writes for POV, Phantom of the Movies' VIDEOSCOPE and among others, Electric Sheep - a deviant view of cinema. He's writing a book about screenwriting entitled "Movies Are Action" (featuring interviews with the world's best filmmakers). He is the subject of a documentary by Ryan McKenna entitled: "Survival Lessons: The Greg Klymkwiw Story". At last count he had seen over 30,000 feature films.

**GUIDE TO STAR RATINGS:** \*\*\*\*\* Masterpiece \*\*\*\*\* Excellent \*\*\*1/2 Very Good \*\*\* Good \*\*1/2 Not Bad \*\* Whatever \*1/2 Poor \* Raw Sewage . . . If a film is not quite up to earning a 1/2 star or 1 star, it will earn at least 1 Pubic Hair.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2013

## GRIOT - Review By Greg Klymkwiw



**Griot** (2013) \*\*\*\*\*

Dir. Volker Goetze

Starring:

Ablaye Cissoko,

Volker Goetze

**Review By Greg Klymkwiw**

The Griot is, at least from my own interpretation of Volker Goetze's film, the very essence of African history and culture. These hallowed individuals are singers, storytellers, community leaders, praise-bearers and keepers of oral histories and traditions. To learn of their history and to be introduced to one of the truly legendary Griots, Ablaye Cissoko was a truly and deeply personal revelation to me.

I'm not African by any stretch of the imagination, but like all of us on this planet, I share the blood of humanity with the African people as they do with me. We are, ultimately the product of stardust and as such, we are the progeny of the Heavens. Call it God, call it a higher power, call it a supreme being, call it dark matter, call it quantum physics, call it the Drake Equation - call it whatever you like. We are all one and it is with both awe and respect that I feel blessed to have been introduced to the dazzling power of this great musician.

*Griot* is a stirring, colourful and moving documentary and as such, a lyrical and poetic exploration of the West African tradition of the aforementioned Griot, an important personage in African culture with a clear relationship to the indigenous populace, but more importantly, how it seems to have influenced the entire African diaspora - especially in

America.

The structure of the film is simple - all the better as this exposes so many factual, historical and finally spiritual properties of the Griot. You will experience heart achingly gorgeous music, you will see it performed, you will experience the joy of dance and musical expression and most of all, you will learn of the great lament of the Griot in the contemporary world. Culture and tradition is a blood right, but history has toyed with it, colonialism and slavery has tried to suppress it, contemporary African leaders seem to have no interest in its preservation and finally, even the Griot is in a world where the very role needs to both grow and yet return to its very roots.

I truly believe the concerns of the Griot are ALL of our concerns and the message Cissoko imparts via Goetze's cinematic eye-piece is truly universal and something that touches us all.

It might even touch you personally as it did me.

Allow me to share a deeply personal and cultural connection to this great story. My heritage is Ukrainian - a culture and language that has been battered, slaughtered and oppressed for over a thousand years - primarily by Russia. Perhaps the most horrific piece of recent history that has always haunted me is the systematic destruction and brutalization of the Ukrainian culture and its people by the Butcher Joseph Stalin. He not only orchestrated the genocide of ten million Ukrainians during the man-made famine known alternately as the Harvest of Despair and the Holodomor, but for me, the most horrendous genocide was a cultural decimation. Stalin not only implemented forced Russification amongst the Ukrainians, he destroyed one thousand years of history.

Here is why I was so personally moved by this film - my people were agrarian in nature and their entire history and culture was maintained in a very strict oral tradition by men who were not unlike the West African Griots. In Ukraine, they were called Kobzars. Like the Griot, their talent and place in the world was not through formal training, but through blood. They were the keepers of the country's history. Joseph Stalin invited all the Ukrainian Kobzars to Russia for a national conference to celebrate and discuss how the Kobzars would remove the yoke of Czarist oppression and adopt a new direction in praise of the revolution, of communism, of Stalin. Once all the Kobzars were assembled under one roof, Stalin had them all shot. One thousand years of history gone in one fell swoop.

To see the brilliant, caring, committed Ablaye Cissoko as he laments the horrid lack of a proper cultural centre, the indifference of a government to tradition and a millennia of history and culture was so profoundly touching. All the more so because the Griot still exists and his place in African culture - bound by blood - will only be eradicated if it is done so by force. Thankfully, we have filmmaker and musician Volker Goetze to put this important tradition in front of a camera and preserve its sound, image and yes, even soul so that the tradition can travel well beyond the borders of West Africa, beyond the borders of its intended audience - to travel into the hearts and minds of humanity all over the world.

My people lost their Kobzars, but as long as the Griot exists and thrives, I am confident that through the power of stardust, the river of blood that binds all of us and most of all, through the soul cleansing grace and beauty of the Griot's music, the history and tradition of man will be reflected in the words and teachings of the great people of West Africa. This is a film that gives me so much hope that culture is what binds all of us.

As Cissoko states, "Without culture one becomes a person without an identity."

He has nothing to fear, however. His blood flows as does the blood of others like him. It flows into the music of the soul and it cascades out via the tributaries of the Earth and thank whatever power is responsible, but the Griot thrives. Cissoko is here to soothe us, to offer praise to the heavens and to the ancestors - who ultimately are the ancestors of all of us.

For we are one.

*"Griot" is launching a cross-Canada tour via Ryan Bruce Levey's Vagrant Films Releasing and Publicity. The film begins at the gorgeous Royal Theatre in Toronto - a perfect launch pad as it's still the one standalone cinema in the city with the most exquisite sound and picture quality. The film, miraculously, will be launched by a concert that features blaye Cissoko and Volker Goetze. For tickets and further information about the concerts and screenings across the country, please visit the official Griot website [HERE](#).*

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## Griot Directed by Volker Goetze

REVIEWS > FILM > OCT 24 2013



By Scott A. Gray

German jazz trumpeter Volker Goetze hasn't just made a documentary celebrating the remarkable talents of Senegalese Kora master Ablaye Cissoko. Even if that were the extent of the project's scope, it would be well worth seeing; Cissoko is a rare virtuosic talent whose ability is exceeded only by the depth of his passion. His every note embodies exactly what people mean when they speak of transcendence in music.

Goetze's first stab at directing a feature documentary illuminates the vital, revered role of the master musician in West African culture. This position of respect and influence is that of the griot. Traditionally, the griot serves as historian and political and spiritual advisor to the people, as well as entertainer. In times of conflict, these venerated minstrels would play to inspire the warriors in battle. Much like nobility (even interbreeding in the past), this multifaceted discipline is passed down through bloodlines.

Cissoko's late father, Bouba, to whom the film is dedicated, had four wives and more than 20 children. All of them are musicians and most of them make appearances during the many public performances filmed in Cissoko's home village. These group sessions are joyous and moving in a way that defies description. Words simply cannot convey the camaraderie and unadulterated happiness of this musical family in the throws of collaboration. The music must be heard; the profound love adorning their faces during the act of expression must be seen.

Having an intimate understanding of his subject's unique power (they've been playing together for years now), Goetze maintains a keen focus on Cissoko's shiver-inducing voice and hypnotic Kora patterns (the instrument bears some resemblance to the harp). Between scenes of the warm, intelligent musician performing either solo, in his ensemble or with Goetze, the director interviews community members and professionals (including a very insightful history professor) about the current cultural climate in Senegal and

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Another Day, Another Time: Celebrating the Music of Inside Llewyn Davis Directed by Christopher Wilcha



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how the role of the griot can evolve to preserve and enrich the heritage of the region in this modern age.

Much more than an excellent piece of promotion for Goetze and Cissoko's global touring as ambassadors of cultural preservation, *Griot* is a moving, beautiful and unflinching depiction of a people and their lifestyle. Without comment, Goetze trains his camera on the simple occurrences of daily life in this community: a man getting bitten by goat while preparing it for slaughter; a woman nursing; children dancing in the streets to the complex rhythms of an impromptu drum circle; and young men angrily protesting local economic conditions.

Full of Zen-like wisdom, immeasurable beauty and positively inspiring unselfconscious experimentation with musical forms, *Griot* is an absolute must-see for anyone enthralled by the meditative, reflective and emotionally evocative qualities of composition. This powerful documentary should help ensure that Cissoko's sacred duty takes on new significance as part of the global story of humanity's great artistic achievements. (Vagrant)

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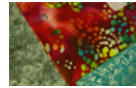
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## speaking in tongues

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beats | cultural | jazz | metal | mixed | news/spoken | roots



### Speaking in Tongues

Hosted by Daryl L.  
Saturdays from 12:00 pm to 1:30 pm  
Next Show: **January 11, 2014 @ 12:00 pm**

Speaking in Tongues is currently CJSW's only generalist world music show. For one and a half hours every week Speaking in Tongues features the widest possible range of traditional and popular sounds from around the planet, from obscure reissues emanating from discreet local scenes to the newest of new releases being highlighted on the global stage. [...]

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## some thoughts on ablaye cissoko & volker goetze live in concert and on the movie "griot"

« Back to Speaking in Tongues

At 78 years of age the venerable Plaza Theatre in Kensington is Calgary's last remaining independent, neighbourhood art house theatre. I used to frequent it on a regular basis from the time I was in my late teen years and into my late twenties but had not been there in some time prior to this past week.

On Wednesday, November 6 it hosted Senegalese griot and kora player Ablaye Cissoko and German trumpet and flugelhorn player Volker Goetz in a sometimes spell-binding but sadly under-attended live performance. The concert preceded a limited engagement screening of Volker Goetz's excellent related documentary film "Griot" that ran from November 8-10.

I experienced a sense of relief when I stepped through the front door and into the foyer and it immediately became apparent that not much had changed in the place since I was there last, from its soda fountains and popcorn machine to the red upholstered seats to the old movie posters on the theatre walls depicting Charlie Chaplin, Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, Buster Keaton, Lauren Bacall, Marlon Brando and James Dean. I recalled one balmy summer evening when patrons in the front rows suddenly became aware that a spreading pool of water was creeping from underneath the exit doors at the front of the theatre and around their feet, a brief but very fierce thunderstorm having traversed the neighborhood outside.

There was a very simple set-up for the concert as one might have predicted with two microphone stands, a chair, a piano stool and a couple of speakers. A projector at the front of the stage threw bright kaleidoscopic images resembling multi-coloured land line telephone cables on to the red curtain at the back of the stage and from thence in all directions. The run-up to the show was not the least bit boisterous with perhaps thirty people in attendance, the only evident sounds coming from somewhere towards the theatre foyer as Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetz warmed up.

A dignified looking Ablaye Cissoko wore a regal looking cream coloured vestment over identical pants finished with a grey-green scarf and a red fez. The bespectacled Volker Goetz wore a dark shirt, pants and jacket with his slicked back hair tied in a pony tail.

On the Motema Music label website one reads: "...while the spirit of improvisation is key to the almost meditative essence of their sound, Goetze also emphasizes that (they are) equally about focus. 'When we play, we are simply playing in a state of mind much like meditating. Any great performer knows how to get into his zone, and it amazes me that we can stay in that zone for over an hour every time we perform live.'"

I have often made note of how specific odors, sights and sounds can trigger exceedingly vivid memories and the instant Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetz began playing both on stage and on screen I was transported back in time to the late 1980s when I was in my mid-twenties and I had a couple of opportunities to travel in West Africa, mainly in Ghana but also in Mali, Burkina Faso and Cote d'Ivoire. The vibe was so remarkably serene



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## charts

**January 6, 2014**

1. Cowpuncher\*\* - Ghost Notes (Self-Released)
2. SAVK\*\* - Love Letters And Hate Mail (VK)
3. Thao & The Get Down Stay Down - The Feeling Kind (Ribbon)
4. Raleigh\*\* - Sun Grenades & Grenadine Skies (Self-Released)
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@sexcannon  
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and calming it was as though I was strolling with friends from the University of Ghana at Legon on a moonlit night in that country's capitol city of Accra in search of a drink with crickets chirping and with palm oil lanterns dotting the busier streets, their food vendor owners working late into the evening.

West Africa abounds with glittering musical talents of all descriptions but Ablaye Cissoko must surely rank as one of its most outstanding kora players. He constructed his own instrument as did his griot ancestors and he deftly navigates its twenty-one strings with the thumb and forefinger of both hands, plucking out often gorgeous melodies. He is also a compelling vocalist capable of evincing subtlety, beauty and strength.

Ever since I first heard their first two recordings "Sira" and "Amanke Dionte" Volker Goetze's Miles Davis-like muted trumpet and flugelhorn have always struck me as a surprisingly effective accompaniment to Ablaye Cissoko's kora and in live performance their complementarity is even more evident.

As Ablaye Cissoko's English language abilities are limited Volker Goetze also provides much affable and useful translation related to the content and meaning of each song. On this evening he also provided something of a comedic element with several quizzical but good-natured observations that there was something "weird" about the piano bench he was using for a seat, as some unknown substance was causing his pants to adhere to it.

For the most part I listened quietly with my attention riveted to the stage, marvelling at what was a rare opportunity to see two musicians of this background and quality play live in our city. At the end of the evening I could only lament the evening had not been shared with considerably more eyes and ears in attendance.

From Wikipedia: "A *griot* is a historian, storyteller, praise singer, poet and/or musician. The griot is a repository of oral tradition, and is also often seen as something of a societal leader due to his traditional position as an adviser to royal personages. As a result of the former of these two functions, he is sometimes also called a bard. According to Paul Oliver in his book *Savannah Syncopators*, "Though [the griot] has to know many traditional songs without error, he must also have the ability to extemporize on current events, chance incidents and the passing scene. His wit can be devastating and his knowledge of local history formidable". Although they are popularly known as 'praise singers', griots may also use their vocal expertise for gossip, satire, or political comment."

While at least one reviewer has criticized The Volker Goetze documentary "Griot" for being rather too short on narrative it was for me a riveting visual and aural feast depicting a slice of West Africa that I have not actually visited but which so closely resembled those places I have visited the depictions of everyday life almost felt like *deja vu*.

From the Vancouver International Film Festival: "Ostensibly, Goetze's documentary sets out to explore the history and role of the 'griots' whose spiritual and musical talents are passed through the blood from generation to generation. Their role is many-faceted: historian, storyteller, praise-singer, poet and musician. Ablaye Cissoko, thinker, leader and gifted musician, is an exemplar.

*The film has at least three elements that compel our attention and capture our minds and hearts: the outstanding music; the cinematography, which brings to life the vibrant colours of West Africa and the splendours of its natural life; and the almost hallucinatory animation which adds another texture to the music.*

*In common with other exceptional documentaries, Griot amounts to more than the sum of its parts. It is a paean to the senses: at moments our eyes are dazzled by what we see, at others we can close them and just let the haunting music flow through us."*

I suppose I am biased, but I cannot recommend "Griot" highly enough especially if you already have a well-developed affinity for things West African.

I am hopeful that Calgary will soon see the return of Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetz at one venue or another, perhaps Afrikadey or the Calgary Folk Music Festival or the BD&P World Music Series, and when they do return I hope commensurately more Calgarians take advantage of the opportunity to see them play live.

Until then, you will have to make do with....

[www.griotmovie.com](http://www.griotmovie.com)

[www.volkergoetze.com](http://www.volkergoetze.com)

[www.ablaye-cissoko.com](http://www.ablaye-cissoko.com), and

[www.motema.com](http://www.motema.com)

This entry was posted on Monday, November 11th, 2013 at 11:00 pm. You can follow any responses to this entry through the RSS 2.0 feed. Both comments and pings are currently closed.



## The Kora and the Trumpet – Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetze

BY UWERA OCTOBER 28, 2013 ABLAYE CISSOKO AFRICAN HARP CALGARY GRIOT KORA TORONTO VOLKER VOLKER GOETZE

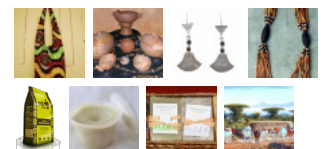


Sometimes life presents you with a rare gift. A moment of peace and tranquility that unites our collective consciousness, while providing refuge from our crazy, hectic world. This is the gift of Senegalese Kora artist, composer, **Ablaye Cissoko** and trumpeter, composer, **Volker Goetze**. A commencement concert like no other began in Toronto, Canada, last week. Part of a 7 City, 8 show, North American tour which celebrates the simultaneous release of Goetze's documentary **Griot**, featuring Ablaye Cissoko.

This may sound like an unusual pairing. The trumpet, a European brass instrument created in 1814, with a range that provides familiar sounds from military to jazz. The Kora, known as the African harp, is a 21 stringed instrument, carved from a calabash. It is with great pride that Cissoko can say that the instrument was invented by one of his direct ancestors, four centuries ago.

The concert, held in the intimate setting of small, art deco theme theatre, with wonderful acoustics was exquisite. It is very apparent that both musicians have brought together a scintillating pairing. The audience was mesmerized by the hypnotic strains of the Kora and subtlety of Volker's accompanying trumpet and Flugel Horn.

### PHOTOS





Cissoko, a hereditary Griot, exuded a quiet wisdom as he introduced the songs. Songs from their albums included, **Sira**, which means mermaid, and is the name of his youngest daughter. The song **Haiti**, is a tribute to the survivors of the last earthquake. He sang in Mandinka, the language of the Mande people, but spoke to the audience in French. Volker's challenging translations were assisted by the audience, who were only too happy to help. The social commentary of the Griot, was particularly apparent in the song, one of their biggest hits in Europe, **Amanka Dionti**, which means, She is not your Slave.



Cissoko and Goetze are musical masters whose talent and mutual respect reach out from their instruments. When Volker's trumpet enters the world of the Kora it is almost imperceptible until its high note peaks, and there is union as each instrument caresses the other until they both exhale.

Even if we don't understand the words, Cissoko's singing is a call to embrace the finite and make it the infinite. It is beyond the flow of the Nile, the Jinn's of the Sahara, and the heights of Kilimanjaro. If the drum is the heartbeat of Africa, the Kora is the lifeblood. The harmonies that will carry the people, wherever they may be, through the passages of life.

[\\*Look out for the Exclusive Interview with this Duo coming soon.](#)

The pair will be hopefully coming to a city near you. Check out these dates for concerts and movie screenings:



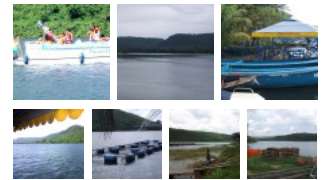
## PETERBOROUGH

Tuesday, October 29th, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$35.00 General seating)

Gordon Best Theatre, 216 Hunter St. W

Peterborough ON

(705) 876-8884



## **MONTREAL**

Friday, November 1st, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$52.50-\$62.50)

Theatre Outremont

1248 Rue Bernard O.

Montreal QC

514 495 9944

<http://www.theatreoutremont.caadmission.com>

*Film Screenings: Starts November 1<sup>st</sup> Cinema Du Parc, Montreal QC*

## **SASKATOON**

Monday, November 4th, 7:30 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

Broadway Theatre

715 Broadway Ave.

Saskatoon SK

(306) 652-6556

<http://www.broadwaytheatre.ca> tickets available at [broadwaytheatre.ca](http://broadwaytheatre.ca)

*Film screenings: November 1st – Broadway Theatre, Saskatoon SK*

## **CALGARY**

Wednesday, November 6th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

The Plaza Theatre

1133 Kensington Rd NW

Calgary, AB

(403) 283-3636

*Film Screenings: Starts November 8th The Plaza Theatre, Calgary, AB*

## VANCOUVER

Saturday, November 9th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

Sunday, November 10th, 2:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General Seating, \$25.00 for under 25 Matinee special)

Vancity Theatre

1181 Seymour St.

Vancouver BC

(604) 685-0260

<http://www.viff.org/theatre/2013/calendar> Tickets available at [viff.org](http://viff.org)

*Film Screenings: Starts November 8<sup>th</sup> – Vancity Theatre, Vancouver BC*

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Griot: beautiful, lyrical but languid doc



I speak with musicians Volker Goetze and Ablaye Cissoko about Volker's new



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BY WILLIAM BROWNRIDGE / OCTOBER 24, 2013

## REVIEW: GRIOT



To better understand *Griot*, it's important to know who a griot actually is. In West Africa, the griot served many functions, from royal adviser, to community leader. They carried the tradition of their people through song or spoken word, essentially becoming historian, musician, poet, and leader, all in one. This documentary explores the life and work of Ablaye Cissoko, a Senegalese griot who has shared his incredible music, and stories, with the world.

Director Volker Goetze, who also happens to be an incredibly talented trumpet player, forming a duo with Ablaye, offers up a journey that mirrors the work of a griot. He tells his story in much the same way, combining spoken word and song, to create an entirely new experience. Audiences learn about Ablaye Cissoko as much through his music, as they do through typical documentary storytelling.

*Griot* becomes a bit of an oddity. Since it's not a standard documentary film, and it's not a straightforward concert film, audience members may find themselves wanting more of one aspect. Both sides are incredibly well done, and the music is certainly beautiful, but you can't help but feel that there's so much more to be explored, leaving the storytelling aspect falling short.

The highlight is definitely the music of Ablaye Cissoko. He plays a kora, which is a 21 stringed instrument, looking like a cross between a harp and a guitar. The music created exists somewhere between the sound of a harp, and what you may hear in blues, as well as flamenco music. It's fascinating to watch, and incredibly beautiful to listen to. Cissoko's talent is immense, and it seems almost impossible to create the sounds that he does.

This also leads into a brief discussion on the influence that African music has had on styles we're more familiar with, like blues, or rock and roll. You can hear the history of those styles as Ablaye plays, and it's no secret that much of the world of percussion has its roots in African music as well. It's history lesson and musical performance wrapped up together, and it's something you've never heard before.

### IS GRIOT OPENING WEEKEND WORTHY?

For music fans, this is a must see. You'll witness the history of music actually being performed, as opposed to sitting and listening about it. To further enhance the film, Ablaye Cissoko and Volker Goetze will be performing a live concert on Thursday, October 24, 2013, ahead of the films opening on Friday, October 25, 2013. Both the concert, and the film, will be playing at The Royal. Check their [website](#) for more information.

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### Griot Review

By [Andrew Parker](#) October 23, 2013



The role of the local musician in Senegal still holds a great deal of power and purpose, bringing people together, sharing news, and always a part of major life celebrations. Ablaye Cissoko, subject of German trumpeter, frequent collaborator, and filmmaker Volker Goetze's documentary *Griot*, crafts stirring, meaningful, and meditative reflections on day to day life for average people who still use music as a reverential bridge to the things they hold important in their daily lives. He's a town crier, historian, composer, and troubadour in a country where music not only matters, but is still an intricate part of everyday life.

Cissoko holds the film's titular position, a soulful singer musician tasked with keeping oral tradition alive through a blend of traditional storytelling and original material. He goes to baptisms, weddings, engagements, funerals, and any other major life event where his presence is requested to give reverence to those involved and to spread a kind of positivity around. In Ablaye's own words, he's there to make people see reason. He's one of the most respected members of his community, and part of a heritage that suggests music has always been in his blood and it was never a question this would be his ultimate profession. Playing a sort of harp, guitar, and percussion-like hybrid known as a kora, Cissoko has not only established himself as a vital voice for his people, but has also collaborated with Goetze on two jazz albums and several world tours.



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Linda Minkevich on [CONTEST: See an Advance Screening of LONE](#)

A labour of love for Goetze filmed over the past eight years and across his travels around the world and spending a great deal of time with Cissoko in his own village back home, the film does a great job underlining the importance of music in everyday life, something a lot of people in many societies take for granted. While the collaboration and friendship between Ablaye and Volker gets discussed and looked at, it largely and wisely takes a backseat to talk about the role of musicians in societal roles that still matter.

Besides, what truly matters is the actual music being made and the duo's collaboration on the album *Amanke Dionti* is what's truly beautiful and ultimately what brings them to Canada for a cross country tour kicking off this week in Toronto at The Royal. Together they craft a type of jazz that injects a more than healthy dose of storytelling that the genre genuinely misses. In many ways, it might be actually preferable to hear or see the pair perform before going into the film. One will easily be disarmed and taken aback by the beauty of the music, even fans of the genre and those familiar with the type of storytelling in play.

Griot opens at Toronto's Royal Cinema on Friday October 25th for a theatrical engagement, following a performance there on Thursday the 24th from Goetze and Cissoko. From there, they embark on a tour of the following cities throughout October and November in support of the film:

### **KITCHENER-WATERLOO**

Sunday, October 27th, 7:30 p.m. (Tickets \$35.00 General seating)  
The Chrysalids Theatre, 137 Ontario St. N  
Kitchener-Waterloo ON  
[www.thechrysalids.ca](http://www.thechrysalids.ca) Ticketweb  
*Film screenings- Oct. 26-27th*

### **PETERBOROUGH**

Tuesday, October 29th, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$35.00 General seating)  
Gordon Best Theatre, 216 Hunter St. W  
Peterborough ON  
(705) 876-8884  
[www.peterboroughpromotions.com](http://www.peterboroughpromotions.com)

### **MONTREAL**

Friday, November 1st, 8:00 p.m. (Tickets \$52.50-\$62.50)  
Theatre Outremont  
1248 Rue Bernard O.  
Montreal QC  
514 495 9944  
<http://www.theatreoutremont.ca/admission.com>  
*Film Screenings: Starts November 1st Cinema Du Parc, Montreal QC*

### **SASKATOON**

Monday, November 4th, 7:30 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)  
Broadway Theatre  
715 Broadway Ave.  
Saskatoon SK  
(306) 652-6556  
<http://www.broadwaytheatre.ca> tickets available at [broadwaytheatre.ca](http://broadwaytheatre.ca)  
*Film screenings: November 1st – Broadway Theatre, Saskatoon SK*

### **CALGARY**

Wednesday, November 6th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)  
The Plaza Theatre  
1133 Kensington Rd NW  
Calgary, AB  
(403) 283-3636  
[www.theplaza.ca](http://www.theplaza.ca)  
*Film Screenings: Starts November 8th The Plaza Theatre, Calgary, AB*

### **VANCOUVER**

Saturday, November 9th, 9:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General seating)

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Sunday, November 10th, 2:00 p.m. (\$35.00 General Seating, \$25.00 for under 25 Matinee special)

Vancity Theatre  
1181 Seymour St.  
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(604) 685-0260

<http://www.viff.org/theatre/2013/calendar> Tickets available at [viff.org](http://viff.org)

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## Contest: See Ablaye Cissoko & Volker Goetze in Concert in Toronto!

1

By [Andrew Parker](#) October 22, 2013

We don't often get the chance to share some great music with our readers, but today marks a very special occasion! Enter for a chance to win a prize pack with two tickets and two CDs to see world music artists Volker Goetze and Ablaye Cissoko at The Royal in Toronto on Thursday, October 24th at 7:30pm, in honour of the documentary about the duo, *GRIOT*, opening at the theatre on Friday, October 25th! [Continue reading](#)

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