The Perry and Marty Granoff Music Center
Tufts University • 20 Talbot Avenue • Medford, MA • 02155

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Tufts University Presents Africa Fest 2009 – A Celebration in Honor of Alhaji Abubakari Lunna

Medford/Somerville, MA – On Saturday, March 7, Tufts University presents Africa Fest 2009, a daylong festival of African music, dance, and culture in the Granoff Music Center and Jackson Dance Lab on the Tufts Medford and Somerville campus. The festival, featuring workshops and performances by several collegiate and professional world music ensembles, is being held in celebration of the late Alhaji Abubakari Lunna, noted Ghanaian master drummer and frequent artist-in-residence at Tufts University. A full schedule of events is below.

The highlight of the festival will be a grand evening performance celebrating Alhaji Abubakari Lunna’s far-reaching legacy in the greater music world. Groups scheduled to perform during the event include the acclaimed world-jazz ensemble Natraj, the New York based African fusion group Imaginary Homeland, the West African folkloric groups: Boston’s Agbekor Society and Canada’s Akpokli, the Berklee College of Music West African and Dance Ensemble directed by Joe Galeota, and Kiniwe, the Tufts African Music and Dance Ensemble, directed by Professor David Locke. The performance will begin at 8 pm and take place in the Granoff Music Center’s Distler Performance Hall, Tufts University, 20 Talbot Avenue, Medford, Massachusetts. General admission tickets are required for the performance ($2-$7), and can be purchased by calling 617.627.3679.

In addition to the performance, Africa Fest 2009 will feature several other components. From 1:30 pm to 3:30 pm, interactive and participatory workshops lead by the ensembles and artists performing on the evening event will be offered. The workshops are open to the public and are free. Tickets and reservations are not required to attend. Participation is optional (guests may just come to watch). The workshops will feature demonstrations in African drumming and African dance. In addition, there will also be a session in which the composers from the professional ensembles discuss how they create their music and the African influence that is reflected in it. The workshops will take place in the Jackson Dance Lab, Tufts University, 50 Talbot Avenue, Medford, Massachusetts (just next door to the Granoff Music Center).

During the afternoon and early evening, there will be an African Bazaar in the Granoff Music Center’s main lobby. The bazaar will include African craft vendors, poster sessions on African causes, a small African dinner (available for a small fee), and other interactive media presentations related to Africa. Entrance to the bazaar is free and open to the public.

Africa Fest 2009 is being held in conjunction with the annual Tufts Emerging Black Leaders Symposium. The symposium will take place in the Distler Performance Hall of the Granoff Music Center.
Center during the morning and early afternoon. Noted and critically acclaimed rap artist, MC Talib Kweli will offer a keynote speech during the symposium. For information on the symposium schedule, Talib Kweli address, and ticket information, please visit the Tufts EBL website at http://www.tuftsebls.org/site/symposium/. The event is open to the general public.

About Alhaji Abubakari Lunna
The late Alhaji Abubakari Lunna was a celebrated teacher, drum-maker, virtuoso performer, and Ghanaian cultural expert. He is considered by many to be one of the most important and influential Ghanaian artists of his generation. He has served as teacher, consultant, and mentor to countless artists across the world, including Tufts University Professor of Music David Locke, director and found of Kiniwe and the Agbekor Society, since 1975.

Trained in the art of drumming by his biological and teaching fathers, Alhaji Abubakari Lunna worked for nearly thirty years as a professional artist with the Arts Council of Ghana’s Folkloric Company. As one of the few drummers of Dagbon with broad cosmopolitan experience, many Dagbana would seek his advice, direction, and counsel on problems that confront contemporary Africans. However, his work often extended far from Ghana. He was frequent guest artist and artist-in-residence in many collegiate and professional music and dance programs across North America. He had an especially close relationship with the Berklee College of Music and Tufts University. Over the last two decades, Alhaji Abubakari came to Tufts as guest artist or special artist-in-residence nearly every year. At the time of his passing, he was head of a very large family living in northern Ghana. Alhaji Abubakari Lunna was known until two years ago as Dolsi-naa Abubakari Lunna, his name changing upon completing the Hajj to Mecca.

More Information/Online Press Information
For more information on Africa Fest 2009, including the most recent schedule of events, information and biographies on performing ensembles scheduled to appear, and high resolution photographs, please visit http://tufts.edu/musiccenter/events/africafest.html online.

Africa Fest 2009 is being presented at Tufts University with support from the Tufts Departments of Music, Drama/Dance, the Tufts Africana Center, the Tufts African Students Organizations, the Tufts Pan-African Alliance, the Tufts Emerging Black Leaders, and the Tufts Dean of Arts and Sciences Diversity Fund.

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Tufts University, located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville, and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized among the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate and professional programs across the university's eight schools is widely encouraged.

The Tufts Department of Music offers a flexible and eclectic academic program for both undergraduate and graduate students. Students concentrate in composition, ethnomusicology, musicology, or theory, while having the opportunity to explore all these discipline, as well as the areas of music cognition, linguistics, sociology, and anthropology of music. The Tufts Department of Music is housed in the new Perry and Marty Granoff Music Center, home to the Distler Performance Hall and Fisher Performance Room. The Granoff Music Center hosts over 200 events and concerts annually, the majority of which are produced and presented by the Department of Music.

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