

# Feraba

African Rhythm Tap Company



Artistic Director  
Irene Koloseus

Musical Director  
Andy Algire



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*"I am so impressed, I have never seen anything like this!"*

*Gregory Hines*

## History:

Féraba was founded in New York City in 1995, through the collective creative vision of Austrian tap dancer Irene Koloseus and world-renowned master balafonist Abou Sylla from Guinea, West Africa.

A multicultural and multiethnic performance group, Féraba fuses the traditional sounds and movements of West Africa with the American artistic forms of tap dance and jazz in a unique and exciting way. Féraba exposes its audience to many different cultures, and seeks to create a bond of understanding among the people of the world, suggesting that this diversity enriches one's life.

Féraba's explosive blend has been well received by audiences worldwide, including performances at Lincoln Center, Aaron Davis Hall, Town Hall, and other prestigious venues throughout the U.S., Europe, and West Africa. Through community outreach, Féraba also brings its extraordinary programs to hospitals, schools, universities, and libraries in the New York metropolitan area.

This award winning company has received numerous grants, including a NYFA fellowship for music composition, general operating support from the Open Society Foundation's Performing Arts Recovery Initiative, a citation from Marty Markowitz, "President of the borough of Brooklyn" - recognizing the artistic impact of Féraba in the community, the Ethnic Dance Award by Giant Steps, and has been featured on several international radio and television programs.

## Mission:

Féraba is dedicated to the appreciation and the preservation of American Tap dance and traditional West African music, dance and culture. Feraba's mission is to inform, educate and entertain through the universal language of rhythm, promoting the ideal of friendship, tolerance and cultural understanding among people of all nations

## BIOS:

### **Irene Koloseus**

**Artistic Director - Choreographer - Dancer**

Irene Koloseus is an accomplished dancer, choreographer, and instructor, who began her career in her native Austria. She is the founder and Artistic Director of the award-winning group Fériba-African Rhythm Tap, formed through collaboration with internationally renowned musician Abou Sylla. The group premiered at the NYC Tap Festival and prompted Gregory Hines to say, *"I've never seen anything like it!"*

Ms. Koloseus has performed throughout the US, West Africa and Europe, appearing with world-renowned tap artists such as Dr. James "Buster" Brown, Savion Glover, Josh Hilberman and Roxanne Butterfly. She has also collaborated with Heather Cornell of Manhattan Tap and Max Pollack of Rumba Tap. Ms. Koloseus has studied African and Brazilian percussion intensively, and was a member of Ivo Araujo's Manhattan Samba Band and Madou Dembele's Benkelema. She is the recipient of the Ethnic Dance Award by Giant Steps funded by the New York State Council on the Arts and the City of New York Department of Cultural Affairs, MCAF/NYC, administered by the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and received a citation from Marty Markowitz, President of the Borough of Brooklyn, for her extraordinary achievements.

Ms. Koloseus performs with Fériba throughout the U.S., bringing the thoroughly authentic and completely unique global flavor and energy of the group into many communities. As a teaching artist, she has designed curricular-based movement and music residencies for students of all ages and abilities and has conducted staff development programs for educators.



## Andy Algire

### Musical Director, Composer, Percussionist

Born in Wisconsin, Andy Algire was a Percussion Performance Major at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire, with an emphasis on drum set and Jazz studies. He toured nationally with the Billy McLaughlin Group, and the Connecticut based ensemble *Rhythm Exchange*, lead by Scott Hanna, performing at the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Since 2000, Andy has been studying the music of West Africa with various master musicians such as Abou Sylla, Famoro Dioubate, and Madou Dembele. He is currently the Musical Director of *Féraba*, and performs, tours and records with many groups such as *The Mandingo Ambassadors*, *Kakande*, *The Afro-yorkers*, *Saida Fikri*, and others. He has also worked with several acclaimed artists from West Africa, including Sekouba Bambino, Mory Djeli Kouyate, and Oumou Dioubate. Andy has traveled to Cuba, Guinea, and Mali to study and perform.

He has received several composition grants from various New York arts foundations, and in 2007 was commissioned by Circuit Productions to create the program "Sound Bridges" with funding provided through the New York State Music Fund. Andy also leads an African percussion ensemble at Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY, and teaches private and group classes in the New York City area and throughout New England.



## Chikako Iwahori

### Dance and Vocals

Chikako Iwahori, born in Japan, was the co-founder of *Féraba* with Ms. Koloseus and Mr. Sylla. She was a member until 2001 and still performs with *Féraba* as a guest artist.

Chikako is currently touring with *Beat the Donkey*, Max Pollack's *Rumba Tap*, Heather Cornell's *Manhattan Tap* and Barbara Duffy's group. She was a singer in the African group *Tamalalou*, assistant director of *Da Fusion* and performed with *Ka Tap*. She has performed in Europe, the US, Japan and Africa with various groups, including a tour with *Féraba* to Guinea, West Africa.





## Yalani Bangoura

**Assistant Artistic Director** African Dance, Hip Hop, Acrobatics

Yalani Bangoura is a master dancer, performer, and choreographer from Guinea, West Africa. He is also well known for his exciting, contemporary hip-hop and acrobatic dance style. As a member of the award-winning West African dance and drum company, *Les Merveilles de Guinee*, Yalani has toured France, Guinea, Mali, Ivory Coast, Senegal, and the US. Since his arrival in New York, he has appeared with many prestigious African Dance companies such as *Magbana*, *Sankofa Kuumba*, and *Bamidele Dancers and Drummers*.

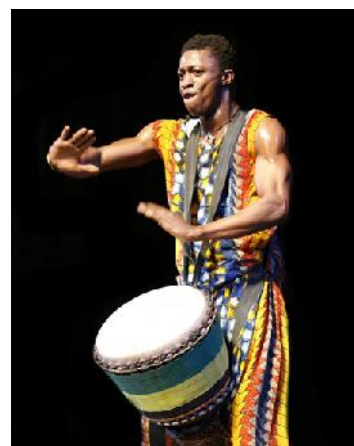
Yalani teaches African dance classes and workshops at many events and locations throughout the U.S. including *Djoniba Dance and Drum Center*, NYC, the *Guinea Fanyi Conference*, Oakland, CA, and *The Dinizulu Center of African Culture and Research*, NYC. He has also lead residencies at *Buxton School*, Williamstown, MA and at the *Ifetayo Cultural Arts Center*, NYC. Yalani has been a member of *Féraba* since 1998.



## Ibrahima Kolipe Camara

**Composer, African Percussion**

Ibrahima "Kolipe" Camara is a Master Drummer from Guinea West Africa. In 1992 Kolipe joined *Les Merveilles De Guinee*, working with the world-renowned director and choreographer, Mohammed Kemoko Sano, from *The National Ballets of Guinea*. After 3 years he joined *Le Solei D'Afrique "The Sun of Africa"*, and toured out of Africa for his first time, playing in Belgium as a lead percussionist. After his international tour, Kolipe took his own artistry to another level & created the group *Zanga Zanga*. This group is well known throughout Guinea playing for local and national ceremonies & festivals. In 2000, Ibrahima Kolipe Camara joined *Les Ballets Africaines*, the internationally recognized representatives of West African Culture, and the highest level of accomplishment for a Guinean percussionist. As a lead drummer Kolipe toured throughout Africa and U.S.



Since 2005, he has been living in New York; teaching, touring, and performing with a number of talented groups, including *Drum Café*, *Sidiki Conde's Tokounou Dance Company* and the *New York Knicks Street Beatz* - commissioned by *Madison Square Garden* and the *New York Knicks*, performing regularly at NY Knicks home games. Kolipe continues pleasing crowds as a dynamic musician with a powerfully positive presence.

## **Sekouba "Pablo" Dembele**

**African percussion, Banjo, Balafon**

Pablo is a celebrated master percussionist and Griot from the Ivory Coast. He has toured the world extensively with numerous prestigious groups, such as Djolem, Koteba and Farafina among others and has recorded and performed with Salif Keita, Habib Koite's Bamada, Ami Koite, Kandia Kouyate, Oumou Sangare, Fanta Diallo, and many more. Currently, he tours the U.S. with Drum Café, Sidiki Conde, Balla Kouyate and Féraba.



## SCHOOL/FAMILY PROGRAMS:

### Holiday Seasons around the World

Pre K to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



Travel around the world with the Féraba Fairy and see how different cultures celebrate the holiday season. Audiences will explore the arrival of St. Nikolaus & Krampus (Austria, Europe) from the Catholic tradition, the harvest celebration (Guinea, West Africa), and Sounahori Salli- a festival of song and dance accompanied by a great feast that celebrates the traditional ending of Ramadan in the Muslim world. The holiday fairy also engages the audience with a quiz show game, asking questions about Kwanzaa and Hanukah.

### Roots of Tap

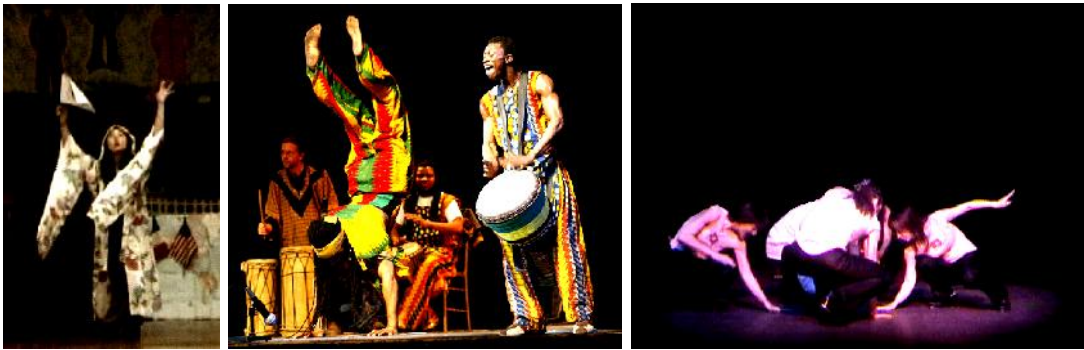
Pre K to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade



This program traces the unique history of tap dancing, which dates back almost 400 years. The story encompasses early African slave dances (Ring Shout c. 17<sup>th</sup> century) as they fused with the rhythms and dances - jig, hornpipe, and clogging - from Irish and English immigrants who settled in America in the 1800's-1900's. Dances featured on the program include the Ring Shout, Bill *Bojangles* Robinson's routines, Eddie Brown's BS chorus, and traditional West African Dances. Also incorporated are contemporary pieces created by Irene Koloseus revealing how rhythm tap can be re-integrated with its roots in African dance to create new and exciting works pushing the boundaries of the art form.

## The Magic Woman

Pre K to 5<sup>th</sup> Grade



This show, geared toward younger audiences, entrances and captivates with an imaginative and interactive story emphasizing the uniqueness of several different cultures. In addition, it explores the universality of rhythm/music/dance as a language shared by all. The Magic Woman, with her special charms, brings together people from different cultures including Austria, Africa (Guinea, Ivory Coast), Japan and the USA and shows how we can create harmony among all.

## Sounds/Dance of the Mandingo Empire

Pre K to 12<sup>th</sup> Grade



The Mandingo Empire was founded by Sundiata in the early 13<sup>th</sup> century. It lasted in various forms until the 17<sup>th</sup> century and played a unique role in regional oral tradition. Geographically, it extended from present-day northern Guinea to southern Mali. This show focuses on "exotic" West African instruments originating from this area, including the Krin, Bolon, Balafon, N'Goni, bells, shakers, Kora, drums, Mbirra and many more. As an incredible musical journey to Africa the show also features West African dances from this time period.





Join the group as they take you on a journey of rhythm. Fériba delivers a soul-inspiring combination of traditional instruments, vocals, and dance guaranteed to captivate, astonish, and move the audience. Performers from four continents fuse tap, hip hop, body percussion and traditional West African songs and dance into an electrifying art form that truly reflects the melting pot that is America.

## **CONCERT PROGRAMS:**

### **SOUNDBRIDGES:**



Féraba's unique program, Sound Bridges, is an energetic show comprised of compositions from the group's Musical Director Andy Algire. Inspired by the exploration of several different styles and genres of music, this repertoire represents an integration of the interlocking percussive and melodic textures inherent in West African and Cuban music combined with instrumentation, arrangement devices, and improvisational techniques more typical of American jazz. The work is rooted in the discoveries of inter-style communication, and encompasses the development and progression of traditional forms and the creation of new musical palettes, aiding in the expression of the ongoing dialogue between West African and jazz music.

### **BIASHI: The Journey**

Féraba, an award winning multicultural and multiethnic performance group, fuses the traditional sounds and movements of West Africa with the American artistic forms of tap dance and jazz in a unique and exciting way. Join the group as they take you on a journey of rhythm and dance. Féraba delivers a soul-inspiring combination of traditional West African instruments, such as the balafon, djembe and doun doun drums, and dance guaranteed to captivate, astonish, and move the audience. Performers from four continents fuse tap, hip-hop, and traditional West African songs and dance into an electrifying art form that truly reflects the melting pot that is America.



## ARTS-AND-EDUCATION:









As part of the company's ongoing commitment to community outreach, Féraba offers master classes, workshops and artistic residencies in schools, colleges, dance studios, community centers, and libraries. Féraba members are all experienced teachers and have taught in Africa, Europe and throughout the USA. Members have served as teaching artists in the New York City area for the last 12 years. They have conducted staff developments for teachers, and are familiar with the Blueprint educational standards. Each program is custom designed to meet the needs of your organization.

Féraba offers age appropriate classes & workshops for students ranging from pre-k to adults and professionals in:

- Traditional West African Dance
- Rhythm Tap Dance
- West African Drum (djembe and doun doun)
- Creative Movement
- Body Percussion
- Balafon (Wooden Xylophone)



## Feraba's traditional West African instruments:

 <p><b>DOUN DOUNS</b></p>	<p><b>DOUN DOUNS</b> are big double-ended bass drums, played with sticks. Doun Douns provide the bass lines in African drumming. They are usually played in pairs with a bell.</p>
<p>The <b>BALAFON</b> is a wooden xylophone, a percussion instrument played with Mallets.</p>	 <p><b>BALAFON</b></p>
 <p><b>DJEMBE</b></p>	<p>The <b>DJEMBE</b> is the drum which best exemplifies the sound of West African drum music &amp; the drum most enthusiasts buy. It encompasses a wide tonal range from very deep bass to cracking high notes. It is used both as a rhythm instrument and for soloing.</p>
<p>These woven basket shakers, filled with seeds, give a soft texture to the music &amp; provide the stability of a steady pulse.</p>	 <p><b>CAXIXI</b></p>
 <p><b>KRIN</b></p>	<p>The <b>KRIN</b> is an idiophone log drum from West Africa, also known as Kolokolo. The solid piece of hardwood is hollowed out on the inside, with two tuned keys and three slit openings, and a handle on each end. The Krin is played with two wood sticks.</p>
<p>The <b>BOLON</b> is a traditional Mande harp consisting of a large open-top gourd covered with skin, fretless neck, bridge, and 3-4 tunable strings. This instrument is pitched lower than the other West African harps like the Ngoni or Kora.</p>	 <p><b>BOLON</b></p>
 <p><b>NGONI</b></p>	<p>The Djeli <b>NGONI</b> is likely the ancestor of the modern-day <b>banjo</b>, and is still very popular today in traditional and modern Mande music. It consists of a hollow body with goatskin covering with a fretless fingerboard and 4-7 fish-line strings, strung over a bridge and tensioned by leather straps.</p>
<p>The <b>WASEMBE</b> rattle creates a very loud, high pitch, striking sound when the gourd slices clack together.</p>	 <p><b>WASEMBE</b></p>



## Quotes:

- *"Irene Koloseus and Yalani Bangoura are extremely accomplished dancers! The music and dancing from their troupe was from the heart, direct, and a great demonstration of human connection through music -both within the group and out into the audience!"*

Parents Association, CT

- *"What an outstanding production! Because of your special talents, Féraba was a tremendous success. The pleasure it brought to both students and staff was most apparent by the applause, laughter and smiles on the faces of all who attended. Please know how much your efforts and hard work are appreciated."*

Marcy Berger, Principal PS4@PS179 Queens

- *"I am writing regarding the HAI performance for our school. If the students weren't dancing, they were sitting in their seats enjoying the music. We had no behavior problems during the show, and from all reports, none that afternoon when they returned to their sites. The next day I visited 2 of our sites, and there was a quiet, peacefulness in both units that is unusual for a Friday."*

Gloria DuBois, AP - District 75

- *"We loved having you and your troupe here and received excellent feedback. Our audience especially liked the interactions and participation. Thanks again for a wonderful experience!"*

Lily Mazurek, Theatre Manager-City of Sunrise

- *"Ms. Koloseus produces a fluency in style not to be imitated by many."*

Jimmy Slyde, Tap

- *"The performance was exhilarating! In a nutshell, encore s'il vous plait!"*

Brooklyn Public Library

- *"Féraba has claimed quite a bit of attention for its singular choreographies and world sounds."*

Killmer - Emerging Arts

- *"Féraba delights the audiences with their impulsive and highly innovative dances."*

Buster Brown, Tap Dancer

- *"Ms. Irene Koloseus has a high work ethic, is very committed and passionate and displays excellent instructional skills."*

Pamela Bogan, Director ECFY Beacon

- *"The troupe was prompt, a joy to meet and work with, and very self-sufficient. I would certainly recommend highly them to any school looking for an unusual, fresh, inspiring and energetic trip into culturally fused music and dance."*

Anne Lloyd, Enrichment and Arts Council, Stamford, CT

- *"It is this company's obvious excitement and joy in performing that makes the audience want to come back and get more."*

E. Lohninger, NY ITA News

- *"Ms. Koloseus is fearless in her explorations, thereby fiercely following her creative instincts which puts her in one league with the truly great artists of this country."*

Savion Glover, Tap Dancer

- *Dear Ms. Koloseus, on behalf of the students of IS 93 Queens, I would like to thank you, and your fellow performers for a wonderful assembly presentation on Wednesday May 27, 2009. My sixth and seventh grade students thoroughly enjoyed the tap dancing, singing and African percussion presentations. Audiences can be tough, especially in a New York City Middle school, yet your performance won your audience over. My students were singing, clapping and swaying to your music. I am sure the volunteer tap dancers will always remember their participation; I hope we can schedule another performance for next term.*

Grace Marie Sears Assistant Principal, I.S. 93