

Koite confirms Hifa performance

city.com reporter

MALI'S great musical talisman, Habib Koite, largely expected by his legion of European fans to embark on a tour of the continent, has temporarily ditched them for the warmth of Africa and Zimbabwe.

Habib finally confirmed attendance of Hifa, which runs from April 28 to May 2 under the theme Enligh10ment (sic).

The esteemed Malian will be on an encore tour to Harare for the same event, and will garnish the premier arts festival south of the Sahara as it celebrates a cool ten years in existence. The dreadlocked West African, who was due to be on call elsewhere, could not resist the warm hearted crowds that usually grace the African starry-skied nights as they enter the musical trance of his Flamenco music at the Main Stage in what promises to be a musical juggernaut of the multi-faceted arts festival.

"We have battled to make sure that Koite comes back to Zimbabwe.

"He was a major favourite of many when he last came and we have been busy trying to satisfy the calls for an encore performance from the audience by hosting him yet again," said Hifa executive director Maria Wilson.

And true to their wishes, the Malian maestro will be on the Hifa whirlwind when it hits the sandy shores of Zimbabwe.

Koite is a world legend courtesy of his moody voice, which is as captivating as it is intoxicating and he is a master of the Flamenco and Blues genres.

The palate of his voice can be both an aphrodisiac and a painkiller, an electric spark of excitement and a massage stone to the soul of the listener.

Koite and his Bamada crew (which translates into 'out of the mouth of a crocodile') are expected to churn out sure hits like Cigarettes Abana (meaning no more cigarettes), I Ka Barra and Din Din Wo all celebrated hits in his resume amidst a host of other songs.

Koite has collaborated with Bonnie Raitt, known in Zimbabwe for sampling Oliver Tuku Mtukudzi's epic song What's Going On and earning platinum status in the process.

Koite has also worked with the Putumayo World Music label, which also immortalised Tuku when he had the live video recording that culminated in the production of his 1998 Live in San Francisco DVD.

Yet despite his masterful antics with wide genres of music of African origin and instrument playing abilities, Koite says modestly that he is a natural at the art o making music.

"Nobody really taught me to sing or play the guitar. I watched my parents and it washed up on me," he explains.

Apart from Koite, the Hifa melting pot of culture and arts is expected to contain the usual intriguing array of theatre, circus and musical presentations.

The festival is expected to make for an enjoyable week of arts and a fitting tribute to ten years of hard work, energy and tireless dedication by Manuel Bagorro, Maria Wilson and the entire Hifa team, which this year is sadly without enigmatic media guru Jill Day who has unfortunately been rested.