

VERMONT ARTS



■ HIGHLAND CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Fatoumata Diawara performs at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 31, at Highland Center for the Arts, Greensboro. Tickets are \$23-\$38 (\$10 for students); call 748-2600 or go online to www.kcprepresents.org or www.catamountarts.org.



PHOTO BY KENNY MATHIESON

Celebrated Malian singer and guitarist Fatoumata Diawara performs an afternoon show March 31 at Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro, in support of her Grammy-nominated 2018 album, "Fenfo" ("Something To Say").

FATOUMATA DIAWARA

brings spellbinding sound to Northeast Kingdom

By TOM HUNTINGTON
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

Born and raised in the musically rich West African country of Mali, Fatoumata Diawara — already an established actor and dancer — ran away to Paris to escape an arranged marriage and pursue a career in acting.

Now a rising star on the world music scene, the 36-year-old singer and guitarist brings her spellbinding music and stage presence to the Highland Center for the Arts in Greensboro on March 31, stopping by the Northeast Kingdom between dates in New York City and Montreal.

"In Africa, you do not often see a woman playing an electric

guitar," Diawara told Vancouver's North Shore News. "I didn't take normal guitar lessons. I play with my heart. It's kind of my blues. I use a modern instrument, instead of the kamele ngonni or the kora, but I'm transposing all those sounds to my Gibson guitar."

Diawara is touring in support of her acclaimed 2018 album, "Fenfo" ("Something To Say"), which received a Grammy nomination for Best World Music Album. And her vocal work sampled on British electronic duo Disclosure's big summer dance single, "Ultimatum," earned her another Grammy nomination for Best Dance Recording.

"Fenfo" is a follow-up to

Diawara's lauded debut album, "Fatou." Released in 2011 in Europe and a year later in the U.S., the album topped the European world music chart for over six months and was dubbed the No. 1 world music album of the year by the Sunday Times. The Telegraph called Diawara "the most beguiling talent to hit the world music scene in some time" in its five-star CD review. And Nat Geo Music called it "one of the most exciting world music releases of 2011."

Since then, the Paris-based artist has recorded with Herbie Hancock and Bobby Womack. She has toured with Cuban pianist Roberto Fonseca and as part of Africa Express, a project

of Blur and Gorillaz frontman Damon Albarn that brought western and African musicians together. She has also made a name for herself in film, and works as a political activist and ambassador focusing on improving conditions in her west African homeland.

Released last May, "Fenfo" was called "a classy affair that demonstrates her impressive musical range" by the Guardian, while RootsWorld called Diawara "a performer that brings African music into contemporary sounds and styles" and "takes the dazzling colors and patterns of tradition and effortlessly makes them seem relevant and modern."

Village Voice music critic Robert Christgau dubbed Diawara the "subtlest of desert divas."

"To hear Diawara's joyful-sounding songs on Fenfo, you'd never guess her painful history or revolutionary subject matter," said the Financial Times.

"I want to show what I have learned," said Diawara in the London daily paper. "But also, I am not healed yet. My husband, my manager, they try to talk to me about the future. But I live day by day, second by second. This is a survivor's life. It is why I can give everything at every show, because I do not believe there will be another."



PROVIDED PHOTO

The Metropolitan Opera will broadcast "Die Walküre" to Middlebury Town Hall Theater March 30 and Rutland's Paramount Theatre March 31.

Wagner's epic 'DIE WALKÜRE' live at the Met

STAFF REPORT

The Metropolitan Opera broadcast of "Die Walküre" (The Valkyrie) is expected to be a Wagnerian event for the ages, as soprano Christine Goerke plays Brünnhilde, Wotan's willful warrior daughter, who loses her immortality in opera's most famous act of filial defiance. Tenor Stuart Skelton and soprano Eva-Maria Westbroek play the incestuous twins Siegmund and Sieglinde. Greer Grimsley sings Wotan. Philippe Jordan conducts.

"Die Walküre" will be broadcast "Live in HD" to Middlebury's Town Hall Theater at noon on Saturday, March 30, and broadcast to Rutland's Paramount Theatre at noon on Sunday, March 31. Estimated running time is 4 hours, 55 minutes.

The second opera in Wagner's monumental "Ring" cycle, "Die Walküre" has long stood on its own as an evening of extraordinarily powerful theater. Part of this appeal lies in its focus on some of the most interesting "Ring" characters at

decisive moments of their lives: Wotan, the leader of the gods; his wife, Fricka; his twin offspring, Siegmund and Sieglinde; and, above all, Wotan's warrior daughter, Brünnhilde. These characters and others follow their destinies to some of Wagner's most remarkable music.

"Die Walküre" is set in mythological times, when gods, giants, dwarves and humans all grappled for power. While the first part of the cycle, "Das Rheingold," moves between realms above and below the earth, "Die Walküre" takes place entirely in human territory, as the balance of power in the cosmic struggle tips ever so slowly toward humanity.

In Middlebury, a free pre-performance talk will be given by Greg Vitercik at 11:15 a.m. in the studio downstairs.

Middlebury tickets are \$24 (plus fees), \$10 for students; call 802-382-9222, or go online to www.townhalltheater.org. Rutland tickets are \$23, \$10 for students; call 802-775-0903, or go online to www.paramountvt.org.

By JANELLE FAIGNANT
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

I have memories, from 5 or 6 years old, of being held hostage in the car while running endless errands with my mother, the radio my only solace. Air Supply was almost always playing. "I'm all out of love, I'm so lost without you," I belted out, long before I understood what they were talking about. Graham Russell was the songwriter behind that hit, and if you told me back then that one day I'd be talking to him on the phone I never would have believed it.

"This is our particular genre, and we kind of invented it," he said Monday afternoon from his ranch in Utah. "That's what people want to see when they come, and something happens — even if they're not a fan before, something's going to happen to them during the show, and that's why we call it the 'Lost in Love Experience.'"

Air Supply's "Lost in Love Experience" tour is stopping at Rutland's Paramount Theatre at 8 p.m. Saturday, March 30, in support of its new live album, also titled "The Lost In Love Experience," which co-founders Russell and Russell Hitchcock recorded with the Prague Symphony.

"But it's not Russell and I on acoustic guitar singing 'ooh, ahh,'" Russell said of the concert. "This is a rock 'n' roll show. It's loud and it's passionate and it's in your face, and people will love it, as they always do."

In 1975, Hitchcock and Russell formed Air Supply in Australia. Often labeled

Success only encourages classic rockers Air Supply



COURTESY PARAMOUNT THEATRE

Air Supply brings its "Lost in Love Experience" tour to Rutland's Paramount Theatre March 30.

■ PARAMOUNT THEATRE
Air Supply presents "Lost in Love Experience" at 8 p.m. Saturday, March 30, at the Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. in Rutland. Tickets are \$69-\$89; call 802-775-0903, or go online to www.paramountvt.org.

soft rock, Russell said, "We came along and everybody kind of laughed us off."

At that time ballads weren't in, AC/DC was one of the big acts of the moment, and everybody told Russell they were crazy, with his heartfelt ballads and Hitchcock's soaring voice. But they made a record and the last record company they went to put it out and a week later it went to No. 1 in Australia. "That was the beginning of our journey," Russell said.

His songwriting talent is a natural one. He wrote the song "Lost in Love" in 15 minutes, and his songs usually come out that way.

"I think about it for a while," Russell said. "I don't sit down and write. I wait for all the information that I need in my head, and then it's kind of like pushing 'enter.' I sit down at the piano or guitar and everything comes out. It happens really quick."

They made the single for "Lost in Love" in one afternoon, and it shot to No. 1. Their second single was "All Out of Love," which went up the charts even more quickly.

Despite being starkly different from the popular bands of that time, Air Supply's success caught on like wildfire, and Russell said, "I think everybody was ready for something different."

"Lost in Love," "All Out of Love," "The One That You Love," and "Making Love Out of Nothing at All" have all achieved multi-million plays on the radio.

"People say, 'why don't you do something different?' All your songs are very romantic, and they are, but we didn't choose that, it chose us," Russell said. "So we kind of figured that out, we don't have to make excuses anymore. After 41 years, we've figured out what we do. And we're in a very fortunate position because every show we do we sell out."

"Russell and I said many years ago we'll keep playing as long as the people keep coming," Russell said. "We'll know when it's over. But I can't see that happening just yet."