

In the footsteps of West African storytellers

Amadou

AMINATA DEMBA

'Amadou' is a poetic and musical tale in which Aminata Demba breathes new life into the centuries-old tradition of West African storytelling. She plays a young girl who has many questions but receives few satisfying answers. This makes her rebellious. After an incident with a pet tortoise and an argument with her mother, she shuts herself up in her room out of frustration. There, in a vision, she is drawn into a parallel reality where animals speak and the ancestors are still alive.

In that magical world she is given the task of travelling to the native village of legendary storyteller Amadou. Along the way she meets a motley assortment of characters: a stressed-out hippopotamus, an elephant with an itch, some quarrelling lizards, hospitable aunts and a crafty crow. At first she refuses to offer help to anyone who needs it, but when she gets into difficulties herself and takes the wrong path, she learns that helpfulness is essential. Yet this is not a moralizing tale that teaches us to always do the right thing, but one that invites us to make mistakes of our own and thereby to write our own story. It is also the coming-of-age of the central character, who becomes wiser because of the adventures she goes through.

'Amadou' delivers storytelling theatre at its finest. A perfectly composed picture, and a piece that distils theatre down to its age-old essence: a good story.

JURY THEATERFESTIVAL

The play is inspired by the work of Malian writer Amadou Hampâté Bâ, who wrote down the mythical, oral stories of the Fula people. 'Amadou' is similarly imbued with ancestral wisdom. The script is playful and musical, and Demba creates a gripping and humorous story full of imagination. 'Amadou' is an ode to storytelling, to stories as a means of sharing emotions, of understanding the world and of passing on life's lessons.

Photo © Karolina Maruszak



AUTHOR



Aminata Demba (b. 1987) is a Belgian-Malian actor, theatre producer and presenter. She acts for various companies including Het Zuidelijk Toneel, KVS, Toneelhuis and De Maan. Since 2003 she has been part of the artistic core of the youth theatre company Laika. Photo © Sigrid Spinnox

ORIGINAL TITLE: Amadou (2025, Laika/De Nieuwe Toneelbibliotheek, 56 pp)

AGE: 8+

CHARACTERS: 1 character (F), première 1 March 2025

PRIZES: Selection TheaterFestival 2025

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