

# ANGELIQUE KIDJO

*"Her spirit is irrepressible, and she brings life to everything she touches." – Peter Gabriel*

With **DJIN DJIN**, her latest release on Razor & Tie/Starbucks Entertainment, Angélique Kidjo comes home. The four-time Grammy-nominated, much-celebrated singer, composer, and performer began in the Beninese port village of Cotonou, where she launched her career at the age of six. The political turmoil in her country led her to relocate to Paris, the capital of world music, and then ultimately to New York City, where she now resides. Her striking voice, stage presence and her fluency in multiple cultures and languages won respect from her peers and expanded her following across national borders. It also earned her access to humanitarians who sensed the passion in the words of her songs, resulting in her long-term dedication to global charity work.

Kidjo has traveled far and mesmerized audiences on countless stages, speaking out on behalf of the children in her capacity as a UNICEF and OXFAM goodwill ambassador. She also just created her own charitable organization, Batonga, dedicated to support the education of young girls in Africa.

With **DJIN DJIN** and the return to her musical roots, Kidjo has truly closed the circle in her life as she brings international artists to the musical world of her native country. As a child, Kidjo was mesmerized by an iconic album cover of Jimi Hendrix, which led her to follow the African roots of music from the United States, Brazil and the Caribbean. The results were the Grammy-nominated trilogy of albums, **OREMI**, **BLACK IVORY SOUL** and **OYAYA**. With **DJIN DJIN** (pronounced "gin gin"), Angélique Kidjo returns to the soul of Benin – and, for the first time, shares it with a cast of all-star guests, in a marriage of cultures that has significance far beyond music alone. The contributions of stellar guest artists illuminate Kidjo's concept. By finding a place for their distinctive talents within the marriage of African and Western influences, **DJIN DJIN** celebrates the beauty of diversity as well as the unity of cultures that Kidjo achieves through her music.

Inspired by the traditions and culture of Kidjo's native Benin in West Africa, the title of the album refers to the sound of the bell that greets the beginning of a new day for Africa. The diversity represented by Alicia Keys, Peter Gabriel, Josh Groban, Carlos Santana, Joss Stone, Branford Marsalis, producer Tony Visconti, and the others who contribute to **DJIN DJIN** speaks to the lesson of this project: For all the differences in the music of our time, the river of Africa flows through it all. Kidjo set some of the new material on **DJIN DJIN** into the languages of Benin, Nigeria, and Togo. She has written and sung extensively in French and English as well, but for this mission the lyrics came to her from further back in her history.

**DJIN DJIN** has yielded Kidjo a heap of critical praise, including coverage in *Vanity Fair*, *The Los Angeles Times*, *Time*, *People*, *USA Today*, *Le Monde*, *Global Rhythm* (cover story), *The London Sunday Times* (feature story) and many other esteemed outlets. In 2007 alone, she performed (with her incredible band of multi-cultural musicians) on "The Tonight Show With Jay Leno", "The Late Show With David Letterman" and "The CBS Saturday Early Show," and **DJIN DJIN** won Best Contemporary World Music Album at the 50th Grammy Awards.

Kidjo returned to the studio to record her latest effort, **OYO**, tentatively set for release in March 2010.

