

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 16, 2010

**VUSI MAHLASELA'S SAY AFRICA,
PRODUCED BY TAJ MAHAL,
SET FOR JANUARY 18th RELEASE BY ATO RECORDS**

U.S. Tour With Amos Lee Launches On January 20, 2011

ATO Records will release *Say Africa*, the latest album from celebrated South African singer-songwriter, poet and activist **Vusi Mahlasela**, on January 18, 2011. **Vusi**, who sat in with Dave Matthews Band on the song "Everyday" at Madison Square Garden last Saturday, will tour the U.S. with Amos Lee early next year. The tour will kick off at Seattle's Moore Theatre on January 20th. See below for itinerary.

"His performances are optimistic and soulful, delivered with an intensity that captures the attention and embraces the heart," said the *Los Angeles Times* while *The New York Times* praised his "tone-shifting improvisations." "If Mahlasela embodies his country's spirit, there is plenty of cause for hope," said the *Times* of London.

"Vusi has a sort of profound beauty about him. He has a light on ...And that's something he would share with Bob Marley, Neil Young, Marvin Gaye or Miles Davis," says Dave Matthews, who signed **Vusi** to ATO Records, which released **Mahlasela's** best-of collection, *The Voice*, in 2003, and *Guiding Star*, his first full-length album in the States, in 2007.

Say Africa, recorded at Dave Matthews Band's studio in Charlottesville, VA, is a collection of songs with a strong message of hope not only for South Africa, but for the entire continent. While hosting a benefit concert in San Francisco for 46664, Nelson Mandela's HIV/AIDS initiative, **Vusi** met legendary bluesman Taj Mahal. (**Vusi** is an ambassador for 46664.) Two years later, Mahal came on as producer after hearing demos of some of **Vusi's** new songs. The album features bassist Bakithi Kumalo (Paul Simon), guitarist Mongezi Ntaka (Lucky Dube) and Ian Herman, **Vusi's** longtime South African band mate, drummer and musical director. Mahal contributes vocals and banjo to the exquisite love song, "**In Anyway**," and GRAMMY®-winning vocalist Angélique Kidjo guests on the rousing "**Nakupenda Africa**."

"I've seen him perform around the world and he never fails to connect with sparkling results and joyous energy," notes Taj Mahal. "Vusi is quite possibly the warmest African artist to be writing, singing and performing on the international music scene today!"

Fusing folk, world, blues and soul music, **Vusi** bridges generations and continents with a universal message of freedom and the strength of the human spirit. *Say Africa*, the follow-up to the acclaimed *Guiding Star*, captures his hope for the future of his homeland.

“Let all those who share in Mandela’s greatest wish—to one day see an Africa that is at peace with herself—SAY AFRICA,” says **Vusi**, who recently performed the title track at the 2010 FIFA World Cup Kick-off Concert, which was broadcast worldwide. You can check out the clip at:

<http://www.youtube.com/vusimahlasela#p/a/f/1/2crrKXs-vfE>

The album closes with “**Ntate Mandela**,” **Vusi**’s tribute to Nelson Mandela. He performed at Mandela’s inauguration in 1994 and took the stage with Josh Groban and the Soweto Gospel Choir at his 90th birthday concert in London’s Hyde Park. **Vusi** also performed at Mandela’s 91st birthday celebration, which took place this past summer at Radio City Music Hall.

Vusi is simply known as “The Voice” in his native South Africa – a nod to his distinct, powerful voice and his poetic, optimistic lyrics. Raised in the Mamelodi Township, where he still resides, **Vusi** became a singer-songwriter at an early age, teaching himself how to play guitar and later joining the Congress of South African Writers. He has released six studio albums in South Africa. His appearance in the documentary film *Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony* and on the accompanying soundtrack brought him to the attention of North American audiences. In 2008, **Vusi** joined Paul Simon for a week of shows in New York entitled “Under African Skies.” He was featured on Béla Fleck’s 2009 GRAMMY-winning album, *Throw Down Your Heart*, and joined Fleck on tour.

The track listing for *Say Africa* is as follows:

1. Say Africa
2. Woza
3. Ro Yo Tshela Kae
4. Conjecture of The Hour
5. Umalume
6. Mokalanyane
7. In Anyway (featuring Taj Mahal)
8. Ode to Lesego
9. Vezubuhle
10. Nakupenda Africa (featuring Angelique Kidjo)
11. Korodi
12. Ba Kae?
13. aka Mokhura
14. Ntate Mandela

VUSI MAHLASELA – 2011 U.S. TOUR WITH AMOS LEE

<u>Date</u>	<u>City/State</u>	<u>Venue</u>
1/20	Seattle, WA	Moore Theater
1/21	Portland, OR	Crystal Ballroom

1/22	Eugene, OR	McDonald Theater
1/24	Chico, CA	El Rey
1/25	San Francisco, CA	Fillmore
1/27	Los Angeles, CA	Music Box
1/28	Anaheim, CA	House of Blues
1/29	San Diego, CA	House of Blues
1/30	Tucson, AZ	Rialto Theatre
2/1	Salt Lake City, UT	The Depot
2/3	Beaver Creek, CO	Vilar Center
2/4	Aspen, CO	Belly Up
2/5	Boulder, CO	Boulder Theatre
2/7	Lawrence, KS	Liberty Hall
2/9	Tulsa, OK	Cains
2/10	Dallas, TX	House of Blues
2/11	Austin, TX	Paramount
2/12	Houston, TX	House of Blues

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