

## Senegalese band to play on Tulane campus

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The Njum Waalo Band featuring Demma Dia of Senegal will play on the Tulane University uptown campus as part of the opening ceremony for the [International Colloquium](#) on Saint-Louis, Senegal - New Orleans: Two Mirror Cities (17th - 21st Centuries).



In town for a conference comparing the cultures of New Orleans and Saint-Louis, Senegal, the Njum Waalo Band also will play at Jazz Fest. (Photo from Emily Clark)

The New Orleans conference on April 22-25 is organized by [Emily Clark](#), the Clement Chambers Benenson Professor of American Colonial History at Tulane, along with colleagues from the Université Cheikh Anta Diop in Dakar, Senegal, and the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales in Paris.

The band also will play at the [New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival](#). The Jazz Fest Congo Square African Marketplace will feature an exhibition on the relations between Senegal and Louisiana, which will include music demonstrations and xalam-making by the band. The xalam is believed to be one of the principal ancestors of the American banjo.

The free concert on the uptown campus will be on Monday (April 22) at 6 p.m. in the Freeman Auditorium of the Woldenberg Art Center.

The Njum Waalo Band, led by master xalam player Demma Dia, is a five-member xalam group including a griot (praise singer) that preserves traditional music rarely heard outside of villages of the Senegal River Valley.

Music will be a focal point of the conference, Clark says. On April 25, journalist ValÃ©rie Nivelon of Radio France Internationale and [Matt Sakakeeney](#), Tulane assistant professor of music, will interview Demma Dia together with New Orleans banjo player Don Vappie and Mardi Gras Indian leader Cherice Harrison-Nelson.

The Njum Waalo Band and Don Vappie will offer a public concert on April 25 at 6:30 p.m. at the Williams Research Center of the Historic New Orleans Collection in the French Quarter.