

TALK: *Copyright, Piracy, and the Artist: Music and the Politics of Culture in Postcolonial Mali*

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Music and African American & African Studies,
The Ohio State University

Friday, June 1 / 4:00 PM
The Orfalea Center Seminar Room
1005 Robertson Gym

(Detached office wing in front of main
Ocean Road entrance)

In Mali today, appeals to confront the “scourge” (fléau) of music piracy and affirm the intellectual property of professional musicians resound within the public sphere. These debates echo anxieties about the social and economic value of the arts in an era of private markets and decentralized politics. In an effort to historicize such concerns, this talk will present a genealogy of copyright (le droit d’auteur) and its criminalized corollary, piracy, through an emergent politics of culture in Mali over the past half-century. Emphasizing the production, circulation, and performance of music, this history reveals the longstanding and steadily deepening social, political, and economic precarity that has shaped the subjectivity of the contemporary Malian artist. Framed as a critique, this talk brings the past to bear on the current era of neoliberalism, highlighting the anomic disjuncture between an unregulated free market and the disciplinary state institutions that neoliberal governmentality has produced in postcolonial Mali.

Sponsored by the IHC’s African Studies RFG, the Center for the Interdisciplinary Study of Music, the Orfalea Center for Global and International Studies and the IHC’s *Public Goods* Series.

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