

The Malian/Burkinabé actor Sotigui Kouyaté, one of the great figures in African theatre and cinema since the mid 1960s, died in Paris on 17 April 2010 at the age of 73.

Sotigui Kouyaté was born on 19 July 1936 in Bamako (Mali) into a family of *griots* (traditional storytellers). He liked to stress how he symbolized African integration: he was born in Mali, his parents were from Guinea and he was Burkinabé by adoption.

A former professional soccer player (he was captain of the national team of Haute Volta, now Burkina Faso), singer, dancer, storyteller, musician and composer, he began his acting career as a favour for a friend. Kouyaté wrote and staged a number of plays himself and was the founder of the Mandeko Theatre in Bamako. He also worked closely with the British theatre director Peter Brook. In 2005 he was in *Tierno Bokar* in Amsterdam, a play based on a story by Amadou Hampâté Bâ and directed by Peter Brook.

In Africa, Sotigui Kouyaté was best known for his film roles. **After a long film career, he became in 2009 an *Officier de l'ordre du mérite des arts, des lettres et de la communication burkinabé* at the Panafrican Fimfestival Fespaco in Burkina Faso and he also won a Silver Bear at the Berlinale Filmfestival in the same year for his leading role in *London River*, which was directed by Rachid Bouchareb.**

According to Burkina Faso's Minister of Cultural Affairs, Filippe Sawadogo, Sotigui Kouyaté's death is 'a great loss for the cinema and the theatre in the world, in Africa and in Burkina Faso'.

[Films starring Sotigui Kouyaté in the ASC Library :](#)

- *Wendemi, l'enfant du Bon Dieu* (1992), directed by Pierre Yaméogo, Burkina Faso
- *La Genèse* (1999), by Cheick Oumar Sissoko, Mali
- *Little Senegal* (2001), by the Franco-Algerian director Rachid Bouchareb
- *Faro, la reine des eaux* (2007), by Salif Traoré, Mali
- Two feature films directed by his son Dani Kouyaté: *Keïta! L'héritage du griot* (1995) and *Sia, le rêve du python* (2001)
- *Le courage des autres* (1983), by Christian Richard, Canada