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[Press Room](#)



Images of Bassem Youssef are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#)

ADDED SHOW!
CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
BASSEM YOUSSEF
THE JOKE IS MIGHTIER THAN THE SWORD
TUESDAY, APRIL 4

Berkeley, February 23, 2017 — Cal Performances presents Egyptian political satirist [Bassem Youssef](#) in *The Joke is Mightier Than the Sword*, Tuesday, April 4, at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall. Following the 2011 Egyptian revolution, the former cardiothoracic surgeon found a new career as a television star through his Egyptian news satire series *Al-Bernameg (The Show)*, as well as the digital series *The Democracy Handbook*, which follows Youssef as he examines American politics while journeying across the US. In his talk on April 4, which will be interspersed with video clips and imagery, Youssef will chronicle how his experience with the Egyptian Revolution and role in the Arab Spring led him to become the satirical voice of the region. Youssef will participate in a question-and-answer

session with the audience immediately following his presentation. His new book, *Revolution for Dummies*, will be published by HarperCollins on March 21. [Tickling Giants](#), a feature film about Youssef's life and creative, non-violent ways to stand up to abusive powers that limit free speech, premieres in New York on March 15 and in Los Angeles on April 7.

About Bassem Youssef

[Bassem Youssef](#), dubbed the Jon Stewart of the Arab World, was a practicing cardiothoracic surgeon in his native Egypt when the Egyptian populist revolution upended the country in 2011. Then on the verge of leaving Egypt to resettle in Cleveland to take a new job as a surgeon, he instead became the creator and host of the popular television show *Al-Bernameg (The Show)*, the first political satire show in the Middle East. Originally a five-minute program shot in Youssef's laundry room and posted on YouTube days after the protests in Tahrir Square unseated Egypt's ruling elite, *Al-Bernameg* became the most-watched show across the region, with 30 million viewers every week. Throughout its three seasons, *Al-Bernameg* remained controversial for its hilarious and bold criticism of the ruling powers. Accused of being "anti-Islam" and insulting the president of Egypt, Youssef was arrested and interrogated before being released on bail. In spite of achieving unprecedented high ratings in its final season, in June 2014 Youssef announced the program's termination due to overwhelming political pressures on the show and the airing channel.

In 2013 Youssef was named one of *Time's* 100 Most Influential People and was awarded the International Press Freedom Award by the Committee to Protect Journalists. In 2015, Youssef served as a resident fellow at the Institute of Politics at Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government, and in the same year, he hosted the International Emmy Awards. He has been a guest multiple times on *The Daily Show* with Jon Stewart, who has called Youssef his hero and said to him: "I do know a little something about the humor business; your show is sharp, you're really good on it, it's smart, it's well executed; I think the world of what you're doing down there." Youssef's 10-episode digital series *The Democracy Handbook* satirizes American culture—guns, immigration, elections—from his distinctive point of view as a recent Egyptian immigrant to this country. His new book, *Revolution for Dummies*, will be published by HarperCollins on March 21. He is currently a fellow at Stanford University, and resides with his family in the United States.

About Cal Performances

Cal Performances is the performing arts presenter and producer of the University of California, Berkeley, fulfilling its mission by presenting, producing, and commissioning renowned and emerging artists in music, dance, and theater. Cal Performances reaches more than 150,000 people annually through concerts and campus and community events, including talks, symposia, lecture demonstrations, and academic courses based on Cal Performances' season. Under the leadership of Matías Tarnopolsky, the organization launched Berkeley RADICAL (Research and Development Initiative in Creativity Arts and Learning) to cultivate the artistic literacy of future audiences and connect some of the most innovative artists in the world with the intellectual capital of UC Berkeley. The 2016/17 season is the second season for Berkeley RADICAL, and embraces three strands of artistic exploration: *Inclusion*, *Innovation*, and *Immersion*. More information on Berkeley RADICAL can be found at calperformances.org/berkeley-radical.

Ticket Information

Tickets for Bassem Youssef *The Joke is Mightier Than the Sword* on Tuesday, April 4 at 8pm at Zellerbach Hall are \$25 (prices subject to change). Half-price tickets are available for UC Berkeley students. Tickets are available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988, and at calperformances.org. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Tuesday, April 4 at 8pm

Speakers

Bassem Youssef

The Joke is Mightier Than the Sword

Zellerbach Hall

Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley Campus

Program: Bassem Youssef, the Egyptian-born cardiothoracic surgeon-turned-satirist and host of television shows *Al-Bernameg*, the first political satire television show broadcast in the Middle East, and *The Democracy Handbook*, which takes a biting look at American politics and pop culture, brings his unique perspective to Cal Performances in a multimedia talk. A question-and-answer session with Youssef and the audience follows the presentation.

Tickets: \$25 (subject to change). Available through the Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall, at (510) 642-9988 and at www.calperformances.org.