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[Press Room](#)



Images of Natu Camara, AlSarah & the Nubatones, and Ensemble Basiani are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY PRESENTS
GLOBAL MUSIC STARS ON TWO CONSECUTIVE FRIDAYS THIS NOVEMBER**

**AFROPOP SPECTACULAR with
ALSARAH & THE NUBATONES AND NATU CAMARA
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8**

**ENSEMBLE BASIANI, GEORGIAN VOCAL GROUP
FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 15**

Berkeley, October 4, 2019 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents three acclaimed international music ensembles over two concerts on consecutive Fridays this November, beginning with **AlSarah & the Nubatones** and **Natu Camara** as part of Afropop Spectacular on Friday, November 8 in Zellerbach Hall, and continuing with **Ensemble Basiani** on Friday, November 15 in First Congregational Church.

Born in Sudan and based in Brooklyn, vocalist AlSarah weaves classic East African pop sounds with electronic textures, Middle Eastern *oud*, driving percussion, and lilting vocal harmonies. AlSarah is trained as an ethnomusicologist, and her music explores themes of cultural exchange and migration, blending original material and traditional music of central Sudan with Nubian “songs of return,” a diasporic form created by Nubians of Northern Sudan and Southern Egypt forced from their land following the building of the Aswan Dam between 1960 and 1970. The Nubatones feature AlSarah’s sister, Nahid, on backing vocals; Togo-raised Mawuena Kodjovi on bass and trumpet; Egyptian-American Rami El Aasser on Middle Eastern percussion; and Ohio native Brandon Terzic on *oud*. Singer, songwriter, and guitarist Natu Camara has been heralded as “the Tina Turner of Guinea” and in the 1990s led the Ideal Black Girls, West Africa’s first all-female hip-hop group, to great acclaim. Now based in New York and Conakry (Guinea), Camara recorded her debut solo record, *Dimedi* (“child”) in Mali at Salif Keita’s legendary Moffou Studio with many members of Keita’s touring band. Her music features lyrics in five languages and blends classic African rhythms with rock, pop, and soul into an innovative hybrid that reflects the influences of some of her musical heroes: Miriam Makeba, Nina Simone, Fela Kuti, and Baaba Maal. The *Afropop Spectacular* touring program, a Cal Performances audience favorite, features a rotating roster of new and iconic voices in African popular music.

Ensemble Basiani returns to Cal Performances after its memorable performances in the 2016–17 and 2012-2013 seasons. The men of Ensemble Basiani are specialists in Georgia’s ancient vocal polyphony tradition (among the world’s oldest), which comprises religious hymns, monastic chants, epic ballads, and folk songs. The choir, celebrating its 20th anniversary this season, was created under the auspices of the Georgian Orthodox Church to reclaim liturgical music suppressed under Soviet rule. Today, it continues to function as part of the Tblisi Holy Trinity Cathedral Choir, its repertoire gleaned from rare and ancient manuscripts, vintage field recordings and study in remote villages. A pre-performance talk is planned at the venue at 7pm and is free to concert ticket holders.

Due to difficulties in obtaining a US visa, Sidi Touré, originally scheduled for *Afropop Spectacular*, has cancelled his US tour and will not appear in this concert.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Afropop Spectacular: AlSarah & the Nubatones and Natu Camara* on Friday, November 8 at 8pm in Zellerbach Hall range from \$28–\$56. Tickets for *Ensemble Basiani* on Friday, November 15 at 8pm in First Congregational Church are \$42–\$70. All ticket prices are 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, at calperformances.org, and at the door. For more information about discounts, go to calperformances.org/discounts.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, November 8, 8pm

Zellerbach Hall

Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Vocal Celebration

Afropop Spectacular

with AlSarah & the Nubatones and Natu Camara

Program: A double bill of African electro-pop. Born in Sudan and based in Brooklyn, vocalist AlSarah weaves classic East African pop sounds with subtle electronics, Middle Eastern *oud*, driving percussion, and lilting vocal harmonies. Singer, songwriter, and guitarist Natu Camara has been heralded as “the Tina Turner of Guinea” and in the 1990s led the critically acclaimed Ideal Black Girls, West Africa’s first all-female hip-hop group.

Tickets: \$28–\$56 (prices subject to change)

Friday, November 15, 8pm

First Congregational Church

2345 Channing Way, Berkeley

Early Music

Ensemble Basiani

Program: Ensemble Basiani returns to Cal Performances in a concert of ancient Georgian vocal polyphony, featuring the religious hymns, monastic chants, ballads, and folk songs of its Eastern European homeland.

Tickets: \$42–\$70 (prices subject to change)

Pre-performance Talk

Friday, November 15, 7pm

First Congregational Church

With Prof. Maria Sonevytsky, assistant professor of ethnomusicology at UC Berkeley.

Free to ticket holders.

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