

Thursday, February 19, 2015, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

The Nile Project



Mohamed Abouzekry	<i>oud</i>
AlSarah	<i>vocals</i>
Michael Bazibu	<i>percussion</i>
Hany Bedeir	<i>daf, riq</i>
Nader Elshaer	<i>kawala</i>
Dina El Wedidi	<i>vocals</i>
Meklit Hadero	<i>vocals</i>
Jorga Mesfin	<i>saxophone</i>
Kasiva Mutua	<i>percussion, vocals</i>
Sophie Nzayisenga	<i>inanga</i>
Dawit Seyoum	<i>krar, bass krar</i>
Steven Sogo	<i>bass, umiduri</i>
Selamnesh Zemene	<i>vocals</i>

Tonight's program will be announced from the stage.

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Cal Performances' 2014–2015 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

THE NILE, one of the world's most iconic rivers, has captivated the imagination of millions throughout time. Originating in two sources—Lake Victoria in East Africa and Lake Tana in the Ethiopian highlands—the 6,670-kilometer river flows northward through a diversity of climates, landscapes, and cultures before passing through Egypt and emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.

Its 437 million inhabitants are projected to more than double within the next 40 years, placing an ever increasing demand for Nile water; water that is tied to all aspects of life—from the food on tables to the electricity that powers homes to people's health. Even now, people living along the Nile are vulnerable to water-related hardships. At least five nations in the Nile basin are facing water stress. Seven of the eleven Nile countries continue to suffer from undernourishment rates higher than 30%. Less than 10% of basin residents have access to electricity. The core issue at hand is how to peacefully allocate Nile Basin water among eleven nations with different needs and priorities, whose populations are all skyrocketing.

This mounting resource scarcity has contributed to a geopolitical conflict between upstream and downstream riparian states. Tremendous political capital has been expended to draft the Nile Cooperative Framework Agreement, an international treaty to govern water distribution and infrastructure projects differently from the existing 1959 Egyptian–Sudanese treaty giving Egypt the majority water right annually. While



the agreement has yet to win mutual consensus, the arduous negotiation process has exposed the deep-seated mistrust between countries, the absence of opportunities for citizen-led dialogue, and the lack of a unified identity and vision for the future development of a shared Nile ecosystem.

The Nile River Basin is wrought with political, environmental, economic, and social challenges requiring a new approach to better address the myriad challenges it faces. As regional tensions flare, the Nile Project offers a unique grassroots strategy to effectively mobilize thousands of people across the Nile Basin and beyond in constructive cross-cultural dialogue and collaboration.

THE NILE PROJECT



For many projects, music is the end result. But for us, it is just the beginning. The integration of music with youth leadership and innovation, we hope, will create a driving force that will change the way Nile Citizens relate to each other and their shared ecosystem.—Mina Girgis, Nile Project Co-founder and Executive Director

THE FORWARD-THINKING musicians of the Nile Project channel the unsung beauty of East African traditions. In the collective's collaborative compositions, resonant harps and lyres from up and down the river have learned new musical modes, while buzzing timbres and ingenious polyrhythms support vocals in more than ten languages.

Designed to captivate local audiences but feel equally accessible to international listeners, the Nile Project uses music to inspire curiosity about and active engagement with the cultural, social, and environmental challenges of the world's longest river. The Collective's collaborative model is a blueprint for a new way to organize the Nile.

The project began in 2011 by two San Francisco-based East Africans in response to the deepening water conflict in the Nile Basin. In a few years, the vision of Egyptian ethnomusicologist Mina Girgis and Ethiopian-American

singer Meklit Hadero rapidly expanded to bring together musicians of all eleven Nile countries through Nile Gatherings and African and international tours. Building on the success of its musical program, the Nile Project is launching education, leadership, and innovation initiatives to empower university students around the world with the tools they need to make the Nile more sustainable.

The Nile Project is transforming the Nile conflict by inspiring, educating, and empowering an international network of university students to cultivate the sustainability of their ecosystem. The project's model integrates programs in music, education, dialogue, leadership, and innovation to engage students across disciplines and geographies.

Musical Collaborations: The Nile Project brings together artists from the eleven Nile countries to make music that combines the region's diverse instruments, languages, and traditions. The concert experience aims to inspire cultural curiosity, highlight regional connections, and showcase the potential of transboundary cooperation.

Dialogue and Education Programs: Participatory workshops and cross-cultural dialogues provide university students with unique intellectual experiences, deepening their understanding of the Nile ecosystem, and stimulating new ways of thinking, communicating, and doing.

Leadership and Innovation Programs: The Nile Fellowship and Nile Prize programs incentivize university students to apply their education and training toward mobilizing their peers and pioneering innovative solutions to the Nile Basin's complex and interrelated challenges.

For more information, visit nileproject.org, facebook.com/nileproject, or twitter.com/nileproject.

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

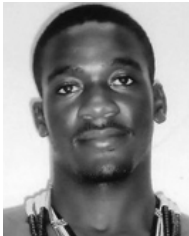
NILE PROJECT ARTISTS



Despite his tender years, *oud* player **Mohamed Abouzekry** has a stunning command of his instrument, as well as an open ear for other forms, skills that got him a recent album deal with Harmonia Mundi.



Based in Brooklyn, soulful Sudanese singer and ethnomusicologist **AlSarah** has won high praise for her songs from roots-music tastemakers like *Songlines*.



A member of Uganda's leading traditional music and dance company, Ndere, for the past 17 years, **Michael Bazibu** plays several traditional Ugandan stringed and percussion instruments with virtuosic grace.



When the biggest stars in the Middle East need *daf* (hand drum) or *riq* (traditional tambourine), they call **Hany Bedeir**, whose percussion skills have also earned him a teaching position at several respected

Cairo institutions.



Born in the culturally rich town of Port Said, Egypt, **Nader Elshaer** taught himself accordion and *ney*, only to fall in love with the tones of the *kawala* (end-blown cane flute) and its role in Arabic classical music.



With experience that spans Arabic classical music, edgy theater, and street protest, singer **Dina El Wedidi** most recently worked with Brazilian star Gilbert Gil on her debut album.



American-based Ethiopian singer and co-founder of the Nile Project **Meklit Hadero** frequently digs deep into soul and hip-hop, but never loses sight of her roots.



Self-taught saxophone player **Jorga Mesfin** meshes jazz with Ethiopia's wealth of musical forms and ideas, both as a respected band leader and favorite sideman for greats like Mulatu Astatke.



Kenyan percussionist and singer **Kasiva Mutua** may have learned drumming from her grandmother, but has developed her own knack for powerful Afropop beats. Her expressive playing can tell a story on its own, or keep a band perfectly in the pocket.



The first female master of the Rwandan traditional zither (*inanga*), **Sophie Nzayisenga** learned at her internationally acclaimed father's knee before setting out to make the instrument her own.



Hailing from a long line of unique culture bearers in Northern Ethiopia, singer **Selamnesh Zemene** has brought her traditions to collaborations with indie darlings like Debo Band and The Ex.



Known for his flexibility, **Dawit Seyoum** rocks both the *krar* and the bass *krar*, the six-string powerhouse harps at the heart of much of Ethiopia's music.



Burundi's leading bassist and multilingual multi-instrumentalist, **Steven Sogo** can play anything with strings, including the *umiduri*, Burundi's answer to the *berimbau*. Add to that Mr. Sogo's wonderful voice, and it's easy to see why he was named a World Bank musical ambassador.

NILE PROJECT PRODUCERS

An Egyptian ethnomusicologist with background in hospitality experience design, **Mina Girgis** (*President & CEO*) explores new ways to cultivate environments conducive to learning, making, and experiencing music. He specializes in curating and producing innovative musical collaborations across diverse styles.

A contrabassist, composer, and arranger, **Miles Jay** (*Musical Director*) has worked with the likes of Youssou N'Dour, Ziad Rahbani, Fathy Salama, Ross Daly, Naseer Shamma, Niyaz, Mashrou3 Leila, and the Cairo Symphony Orchestra.