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**SENEGALESE SUPERSTAR YOUSSEU N'DOUR SINGS MUSIC FROM
HIS GRAMMY-AWARD WINNING ALBUM *EGYPT* AT
CAL PERFORMANCES, FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11 AT 8:00 P.M.**

**EGYPTIAN COMPOSER AND CONDUCTOR FATHY SALAMA LEADS HIS
CAIRO ORCHESTRA, BLENDING TRADITIONAL AND WESTERN INSTRUMENTS**

BERKELEY, October 3, 2005 – Singer and Senegalese cultural ambassador **Yousseu N'Dour** will present an evening of Sufi-inspired African music from his 2004 album *Egypt* on **Friday, November 11 at 8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall as part of Cal Performances' Centennial Season. "African rock's great global star" (*The New York Times*) has turned inward and spiritual with *Egypt*, creating "lush, devotional songs that celebrate his Islamic faith. It is a mature, mystical sound that reminds us what can be accomplished when cultures unite for a higher purpose" (*Associated Press*). N'Dour will appear with seven Senegalese musicians—singers, percussionists, and players of the *bala* (West African xylophone) and *kora* (harp-lute), plus the 13-member **Cairo Orchestra** conducted by **Fathy Salama**, to present a "blend of Western pop and African tradition [which] sounds so organic that to talk about the different elements is to miss the whole" (*The Washington Post*).

YOUSSEU N'DOUR

Born in 1959, **Yousseu N'Dour** grew up singing in Dakar, Senegal. His mother was from a family of *griot*—traditional singers and storytellers who have long served as the oral historians in Senegalese society. N'Dour started singing publicly at age 12 at neighborhood religious festivals and parties, and because of his arresting voice he was soon performing on the radio and in clubs. He is perhaps best known for performing *mbalax*, the popular music of Senegal, which is sung in the Wolof language and combines traditional *griot* percussion and praise-singing with Afro-Cuban flavors that first came to West Africa in the 1940s. In the 1970s, *mbalax* began incorporating complex indigenous Senegalese dance rhythms, guitar and

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saxophone solos, talking-drum soliloquies, and Sufi-inspired Muslim religious chant. It was in this environment—infused with a new kind of music that was at turns nostalgic, restrained, stately, celebratory, explosively syncopated, and indescribably funky—that Youssou N'Dour came of age as a musician.

N'Dour formed a band, Le Super Étoile de Dakar, which became famous in Africa. The band first performed outside of the continent in 1979—in a Paris concert sponsored by an association of Senegalese taxi drivers. Many highly praised tours abroad followed. With fame came offers to perform with Peter Gabriel, Sting, and Wyclef Jean. Super Étoile continues to perform and tour, creating “the finest example yet of the meeting of African and Western music: wholesome, urgent, and thoughtful” (*The Guardian*, London).

With the release of his latest album, *Egypt* (2004), N'Dour has turned his attention homeward with a musical document of his introspective pilgrimage to the heartland of mystical Sufi Islam culture. The compositions on *Egypt* marry Senegalese rhythmic, melodic, and harmonic elements with arrangements from the repertoire of Egyptian and Arab orchestral sound. The album was recorded in Dakar, Senegal with traditional Senegalese instrumentalists and singers in collaboration with Fathy Salama's Cairo Orchestra, thus highlighting the historical links between Sufi Muslims in West and North Africa. “The album is a statement of trans-Saharan African unity, a profession of Islamic faith and, most of all, a collection of humble, loving affirmations, with strings shadowing and fluttering around Mr. N'Dour's exquisite vocals” (*The New York Times*). The album won the 2004 Grammy Award for “Best Contemporary World Music Album.”

FATHY SALAMA & CAIRO ORCHESTRA

The conductor of the Cairo Orchestra, **Fathy Salama**, was born in Cairo and, from an early age, his musical education included both traditional Arab music and Western classics. He

was playing gigs as a pianist in Cairo clubs by age 13, and soon made his way to Europe and New York to study jazz with Sun Ra, Barry Harris, Hal Galper, Malik Osman, Pat Patrick, and Ossam Kareem. A musician of breathtaking range, he has written and performed film and theater music, opera, rock, Arab pop (a form he helped to invent, known as *jeel*), electronic music, traditional and classical Arab music, and jazz. He has formed several groups and toured extensively in Europe, including performances at the *Institut du Monde Arabe* in Paris, where he has lived since 2000. In that year he began his artistic collaboration with Youssou N'Dour.

Fathy Salama's **Cairo Orchestra** incorporates 13 musicians playing western strings—violin, cello, and bass—and traditional instruments including the *oud* (an African lute), *kawala* and *nay* (two different African flutes). This evocative blending of African and European instruments is “magic,” says the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*: “In key passages, the sound becomes cinematic—you can almost see North and West Africa spreading out before your eyes.”

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Youssou N'Dour** and **Cairo Orchestra** on **Friday, November 11** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$30.00**, **\$40.00**, and **\$50.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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Cal Performances' 2005/2006 Centennial Season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, November 11 at 8:00 p.m.

Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley

World Stage

Youssou N'Dour's *Egypt*

Youssou N'Dour, vocals

Cairo Orchestra

Fathy Salama, conductor

Program: Senegalese superstar Youssou N'Dour will present an evening of Sufi-inspired African music from his 2004 album, *Egypt*, along with Fatha Salama and the Cairo Orchestra.

Tickets: \$30.00, \$40.00, and \$50.00 available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.

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