Artist Partner Program Presents:

THE NILE PROJECT

Sunday, April 26, 2015 . 7PM
Elsie & Marvin Dekelboum Concert Hall

This performance will last approximately two hours with a 15-minute intermission. Video or audio recording of the production is strictly prohibited.

💬 Please join the artists for a conversation with the audience following the performance.

This performance is funded in part by a generous gift from Charlie Reiher and from Denny and Frances Gulick. Sponsored by The Gazette & Gazette-Star.
**Mohamed Abo Zekry:** Despite his tender years, this *oud* player 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.

**Alsarah:** Based in Brooklyn, this soulful Sudanese singer and ethnomusicologist’s songs have won high praise from roots-music tastemakers like *Songlines* magazine.

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

**Hani Bedair:** When the biggest stars in the Middle East need *daff* (hand drum) or *riq* (traditional tambourine), they call Bedair, whose percussion skills have also earned him a teaching position at several respected Cairo institutions.

**Nader El Shaer:** Born in the culturally rich town of Port Said, Egypt, El Shaer 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.

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

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

**Jorga Mesfin:** This self-taught sax player 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.

**Kasiva Mutua:** Kenyan percussionist and singer 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.

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

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

**Selamnesh Zemane:** Hailing from a long line of unique culture bearers in Northern Ethiopia, this young singer has brought her traditions to collaborations with indie darlings like Debo Band and The Ex.
Mina Girgis (president & CEO), an Egyptian ethnomusicologist with background in hospitality experience design, 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.

Miles Jay (music director), is a contrabassist, composer and arranger, who 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.

About The Nile Project

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 11 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 trans-boundary cooperation.

Dialogue & 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 & 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.

Acknowledgments:
This project is supported in part by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Tour Direction:
SRO Artists, Inc., 6629 University Ave. #206, Middleton WI 53562
608-664-8160 / gigs@sroartists.com / www.sroartists.com.

For more information:
nileproject.org
facebook.com/nileproject
twitter.com/nileproject
The Nile, one of the world’s most iconic rivers, has captivated the imagination of millions throughout time. Originating from 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 11 Nile countries continue to suffer from undernourishment rates higher than 30 percent. Less than 10 percent of basin residents have access to electricity. The core issue at hand is how to peacefully allocate Nile Basin water among 11 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.
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Engagement

As part of their residency at The Clarice, The Nile Project will engage in a variety of activities across campus:

**Performance and Discussion: Female Perspectives on the Nile**

*Monday, April 27, 2015 . Noon . FREE*

Van Munching Hall, School of Public Policy Atrium

Women play a vital role in the use, management and supply of resources such as water, food and energy at community and household levels in all the Nile Basin countries. However, they are often overlooked in decision-making and planning processes. Despite making up more than half of the Nile Basin countries’ population, their participation at the political and organizational levels remains low. What would a Nile Basin look like if its women were fully empowered? Join several female musicians from Nile Project Collective, along with Prof. Sahar Khamis, Associate Professor in the Department of Communication and an Affiliate Faculty in the Department of Women’s Studies and the Consortium on Race, Gender and Ethnicity at UMD, Prof. Chloe Schwenke, McCourt School of Public Policy at Georgetown University and moderator Prof. Stacy Kosko, Assistant Director of the International Development and Conflict Management program at UMD, for music and conversation about the challenges and opportunities these women face in the world of traditional music, and how these challenges relate to broader regional gender issues.

**K-12 School Partner Program: The Nile Project**

*Tuesday, April 28, 2015 . 10AM . $5*

50-minute Performance
Gildenhorn Recital Hall

This School Matinee performance is a demonstration and discussion with some of the musicians from the ensemble and will include a Q&A for students.

**UMD’s Beyond the Classroom Living and Learning Program: Crowdsourcing Solutions for a Sustainable Nile Basin**

*Tuesday, April 28, 2015 . 7PM*

FREE
Leah M. Smith Hall

The Nile Basin runs through 11 countries, spanning ecological zones ranging from rainforests to deserts. The river is essential for the survival of its diverse people. However, it faces grave developmental challenges of poverty, high population growth, environmental degradation, unstable economies and insecurity. How will Nile Basin countries deliver potable water, provide clean energy and feed a projected 945 million people by 2050? Join a discussion with The Nile Project co-founder Mina Girgis, local experts and student leaders to learn how you can actively participate in creating a prosperous and environmentally sustainable Nile Basin.
CREATIVE DIALOGUE

THE ROLE OF MUSICIANS IN PEACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Co-presented by
Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
Presented in partnership with the UMD
Maryland PIRG Student Organization
THE ROLE OF MUSICIANS IN PEACE AND ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENTS

Meklit Hadero,
singer and co-founder of The Nile Project
Mina Girgis,
ethnomusicologist and co-founder of The Nile Project
Ken Conca, Professor,
International Relations, School of International Service, American University
L. Jen Shaffer, Assistant Professor,
Ecological & Environmental Anthropology, UMD Department of Anthropology
Atesh Sonneborn,
Associate Director for Programs and Acquisitions, Smithsonian Folkways
Kojo Nnamdi
Moderator

Baird Auditorium, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History
Monday, April 27, 2015 . 6:45 PM
FREE, Registration recommended
Register online at: www.go.si.edu/creativedialogue

Across societies and throughout history, music has brought people together and united them through the power of emotional connection, the development of a collective identity and the ability to transform and inspire minds. Music offers a unique space for cultural and political dialogue and has played a critical role in the evolution of social movements. This conversation will illuminate pressing issues about water conservation and security on the planet, and describe how artists are responding to environmental challenges through community-based work, their own artistry and development of creative methods to spread important messages about sustainability and climate change. Join co-founders of The Nile Project, Mina Girgis and Meklit Hadero, along with American University professor Ken Conca, UMD professor Jen Shaffer and Smithsonian Folkways Associate Director for Programs and Acquisitions, Atesh Sonneborn, for what promises to be a stimulating conversation about music and social transformation. The Nile Project was founded in 2011 to address the Nile Basin’s cultural and environmental challenges. Using music, education and innovative programs, The Nile Project inspires, informs and empowers university students to work together to foster the sustainability of their ecosystem.

Creative Dialogue Series funded in part by a generous gift from Aron and Karen Primack.
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