

## **Global Currents**

*A free all-day event celebrating world cultures and earth's shared resources*

**Saturday, February 25 from 1:00 – 6:00pm**

## **The Nile Project**

*"a committed, euphoric international coalition." – The New York Times*

**Saturday, February 25 at 7:00pm**

(Los Angeles, CA) January 30, 2017 – On Saturday, February 25, Valley Performing Arts Center will host a special all-day event -- Global Currents, an event that celebrates water itself, starting with the outdoor Global Currents Festival at the Valley Performing Arts Center Lawn and Courtyard, free to the public, from 1-6pm and featuring six Los Angeles ensembles representing six regions of the world.

The day culminates in a ticketed performance in the Great Hall from The Nile Project, in which twelve artists from along the Nile River share a message of cultural unity and global sustainability.

The Nile River is thought of as the longest river in the world, coursing north through over 4,200 miles of Africa. Eleven countries share its resources, starting at Lake Victoria, and flowing north through Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Congo-Kinshasa, Kenya, Ethiopia, Eritrea, South Sudan, Sudan, and Egypt – emptying into the Mediterranean Sea.

One of the tightest cross-cultural collaborations in musical history, The Nile Project brings together artists from the 11 Nile countries, representing over 450 million people, to compose new songs that combine the rich diversity of one of the oldest places on Earth. Kindred harps and resonant lyres from the Nile's sources in East Africa and Ethiopia to its deltas in Sudan and Egypt have united to learn new musical modes while buzzing timbres and ingenious polyrhythms support vocals in more than ten languages.

On the surface, The Nile Project blends traditional musical idioms into one seamless Nile sound. But look a little further and you'll begin to see a 35-member Musicians Collective modeling contemporary organizational concepts such as system thinking, network theory, and participatory leadership.

The Global Currents Festival features six Los Angeles ensembles, representing five continents: Ballet Folclorico do Brasil (Brazil), Futa Toro West African Drummers & Dancers (West Africa), Halau Keali'i O Nalani (Hawaii), Las Colibri (Mexico), On Ensemble (Japan) and the Yuval Ron Ensemble (Middle East). At the Global Currents Festival, there will be a special appearance by The Nile Project artists, with Los Angeles area master artists. The free afternoon performance will feature a grand finale in which a master musician from each LA ensemble will join The Nile Project onstage for a celebration of conservation and cooperation.

Barbara Leonard, producer of the event says, “Water is life. It sustains us, and everything around us. It’s the original ‘highway,’ linking us together. And it inspires us—the subject of poems, songs and dances. VPAC honors arts and culture from around the globe, and uplifts the artists who honor what is most elemental to all of us — H2O.” Leonard has had extensive experience with world performance and community involvement. She served as the Artistic Director of *World City*, a family performance series celebrating global cultures in the W.M. Keck Foundation Children’s Amphitheatre at Walt Disney Concert Hall.

In addition to the free outdoor performances, VPAC will also open its doors for family activities in the lobby including water-themed visual arts workshops, an African Drumming workshop and a Brazilian dance workshop. Outside the venue, food trucks will line the street with a diverse selection of global cuisines.

Thor Steingraber, VPAC’s Executive Director said, “This event will be an inspirational mix of art and global stewardship as well as a celebration of water, and a way for performing artists to address sustainability. The daytime performance festival in the VPAC Courtyard features six Los Angeles ensembles with origins in six regions of the world; all of the performances have one thing in common: music and dance that honors and evokes water.”

Steingraber continued, “Sustainability is a top priority at CSUN and the University has taken action to ensure we are doing our part to conserve our natural resources -- and sustainability is integrated into all aspects of the university from operations and infrastructure to outreach, education and research. Traditional arts have always been attuned to the environment and natural resources, so it makes sense that VPAC do its part in bringing music and dance to the foreground of the sustainability efforts to CSUN.”

Austin Eriksson, Director of CSUN’s Sustainability Programs continues, “We are a proud signatory to Second Nature’s Presidents’ Climate Commitment and have set a campus goal to achieve climate neutrality by 2040. Due to the ongoing California drought, one of the main focuses of the sustainability program over the past two years has been water conservation. Last year the university conserved over 55 million gallons of water. This was accomplished through several projects including a campus-wide irrigation upgrade, the removal of over 210,000 square feet of grass and turning off irrigation to an additional 230,000 square feet of grass. The CSUN Institute for Sustainability is also working with the community through an LADWP grant to educate over 1,300 grade school students in the San Fernando Valley about energy and water conservation.”

At 7pm, The Nile Project will perform in VPAC’s Great Hall. Straight from the heart of Africa, 12 artists and 7 nations will come together for a night of infectious rhythms and joyous melodies that have brought audiences to their feet worldwide.

The Nile Project will be on CSUN’s campus for three days prior to their public performance, doing outreach with CSUN students, as well as student matinees for K-12 students. Outreach will include a panel discussion with the CEO of The Nile Project and CSUN’s Geography of Africa Class to discuss The Nile and African identity as well as meetings between The Nile Project, CSUN’s Geography Counsel and the Black Student Union.

The Nile Project’s new feature-length album, *Jinja* was released on January 18. *Jinja* is the long awaited follow-up to *Aswan*, the live recording from The Nile Project’s debut concert in 2013. Featuring artists from Burundi, Egypt, Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Sudan, and Uganda, the album consists of ten original compositions born during The Nile Project’s 2<sup>nd</sup> annual musicians gathering in Jinja, Uganda.

The *New York Times* describes The Nile Project as “a committed, euphoric international coalition.” *Afropop Worldwide* calls it “seductive and beautiful [...] nothing short of revolutionary.”

From its debut concert, captured live on the 2013 release entitled ASWAN, it was clear that The Nile Project was something completely new. National Public Radio named the recording one of five “Must Hear International Albums.” Fast forward a few years – through tours in Africa, Europe, the US and UAE – and almost all major media outlets agree that The Nile Project is much more than just a band.

### **About The Nile Project**

The Nile Project is pioneering a new approach to transform transboundary water conflicts by using music to ignite cross-cultural empathy and spark environmental curiosity. And its collaborative model offers a blueprint for new ways in which Nile citizens can organize themselves to strengthen the sustainability of their river. In an evolving series of interlocking programs that spring from the concert experience, the project works to inspire, educate and empower Nile citizens to collaborate on developing innovative solutions to the challenges at the root of their water conflict.

Recent invitations to lead workshops and performances for key diplomats and policymakers at the United Nations, the European Commission, and the African Union attest to the capacity of these collaborations to transform the way we think and interact with respect to the many challenges we collectively face.

### **Calendar Listing for Global Currents**

**Venue:** The Valley Performing Arts Center Lawn and Courtyard  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330

**Date:** Saturday, February 25 from 1:00 – 6:00pm

**Tickets:** **Price:** Free Admission  
**In Person:** VPAC Ticket Office, located in the VPAC Courtyard  
**By Phone:** (818) 677-3000  
**Online:** [ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org](http://ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org)

### **Calendar Listing for The Nile Project**

**Venue:** Valley Performing Arts Center  
18111 Nordhoff Street  
Northridge, CA 91330

**Date:** Saturday, February 25 at 7:00pm

**Tickets:** **Price:** Starting at \$38  
**In Person:** VPAC Ticket Office, located in the VPAC Courtyard  
**By Phone:** (818) 677-3000  
**Online:** [ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org](http://ValleyPerformingArtsCenter.org)

**Press Contacts:** Tim Choy, Niki Blumberg, Davidson & Choy Publicity  
323-954-7510 | [t.choy@dcpublicity.com](mailto:t.choy@dcpublicity.com); [n.blumberg@dcpublicity.com](mailto:n.blumberg@dcpublicity.com)  
Gary W. Murphy, Public Relations Consultant  
310-914-0178 | [gmurphypr@gmail.com](mailto:gmurphypr@gmail.com)

**Photos:**

Click here for photos from the 2016-17 Season:

<http://www.valleyperformingartscenter.org/press/press-photos/>