



Friday, November 8, 2019, 8pm
Zellerbach Hall

Afropop Spectacular with AlSarah & The Nubatones and Natu Camara

Natu Camara

Natu Camara, *lead vocals, electric-acoustic guitar*

Rocco Dellaneve, *keyboard*

Matthew Albeck, *guitar*

Djibril Toure, *bass*

Oscar (Amos) Debe, *drums*

Foluso Mimy, *percussion, djembe, congas, hand percussion*

Lindsey Wilson, *backing vocals*

INTERMISSION

AlSarah & The Nubatones

AlSarah, *lead vocals*

Nahid, *backing vocals, keyboards*

Rami El Aasser, *backing vocals, percussion*

Brandon Terzic, *oud*

Mawuena Kodjovi, *backing vocals, bass, trumpet*

Cal Performances' 2019–20 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

Alsarah is a Sudan-born singer, songwriter, and ethnomusicologist. Born in the country's capital city of Khartoum, where she spent the first eight years of her life, she relocated to Taiz, Yemen, with her family to escape the ever-repressive regime in her native country. She abruptly moved to the United States in 1994, when a brief civil war broke out in Yemen.

Alsarah started her musical training at the age of 12. After attending the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter high school in Hadley (MA), she spent four years at Wesleyan University, studying music with a concentration in ethnomusicology.

Residing in Brooklyn (NY) and currently working on various projects, she has been involved with the The Nile Project, and was featured on their debut release, *Aswan* (named by National Public Radio as one of the top five must-hear international albums of 2013). She has also collaborated with French producer Débruit on the album *Aljwal*, released via Soundway Records. Alsarah toured the release in July 2014.

She released *Silt*, her debut album with her band, Alsarah & The Nubatones, in the spring of 2014, followed by *Manara* in September 2016.

Charismatic and independent, the author, composer, and ethnomusicologist is considered the new standard bearer of East-Africa retro-pop music. Major influences include Bi Ki Dude, the charismatic legend of *taarab* from Zanzibar, and the iconoclastic Grace Jones. Baptized “the new star of Nubian pop” by the *Guardian*, Alsarah belongs to the generation of artists pursuing an atypical path by drawing upon her origins and influences and combining them with her everyday concerns and interests.

Alsarah & The Nubatones have built a repertoire inspired by both the golden age of 1970s Sudanese pop music and the effervescence of the New-York music scene.

In the late 1990s, **Natu Camara** led West Africa's first all-female hip-hop group, the Ideal Black Girls (IBG). Their breakout album, *Guineya Momonera (It's Not a Shame to Be a Woman)*, sold over two million units and transformed the young group into instant celebrities. The girls' tiger-like stage performances and powerfully sung lyrics have inspired a new generation, earning them respect across Guinea and beyond.

After Natu tragically lost her husband, she made New York her home and began writing and recording new material, drawing on her roots and the influence of African artists such as Mory Kanté, Bembeya Jazz National, Kanté Manfila, Miriam Makeba, Fela, and Baaba Maal.

Natu has woven the intense musical journey of her life into her first solo album, *Dimedi (Child)*. Recorded in Mali at Salif Keita's legendary Moffou Studio (with many members of Keita's touring band), the album is a beguiling masterpiece of Afro-rock, pop, and soul, performed in five languages. Natu's inventive vocal arrangements lend power and sweetness to the meaningful stories she shares throughout the entire album.

Known as “the beloved R&B and hip-hop queen,” Natu has transformed herself into a singer and songwriter of both strength and significance. Her work deals with responses to social and political issues, empowering women and children and encouraging everyone to break the mold and live free. Guitar in hand, Natu emerges on the world stage with heart and soul in her music, calling for unity.