

A RIVER OF MUSIC

The diverse cultures of the Nile tackle cultural and environmental issues with the help of music and workshops

The Nile is the world's longest river and flows through ten countries – from Egypt to Ethiopia, Uganda and Burundi. "Although we all share the same river," says Ethiopian born singer Meklit Hadero, "most of these countries know very little about each other." Together with Egyptian ethnomusicologist Mina Girgis, Hadero has set up The Nile Project, a four-year plan to address the Nile basin's cultural and environmental challenges through education, enterprise initiatives and music.

The first Nile Gathering has just taken place in Aswan – famous, of course, for its High Dam, completed in 1970, creating one of the largest reservoirs in the world. There was a meeting of experts in water, energy, agriculture, ecology and conflict resolution followed by a two-week musical workshop in

which nearly 20 musicians from the entire length of the river collaborated on music about the cultural and environmental issues of the area. There will be a Nile Gathering each year in a different location on the river, international tours to Europe and the US (including the Smithsonian Nile Festival in June 2016), recordings of traditional music for Smithsonian Folkways and an album and documentary film of the new music created by The Nile Project.

The first chance to hear music from The Nile Project will be on two *World Routes* programmes, presented by Simon Broughton, on BBC Radio 3 on February 10 and 17.

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ONLINE www.nileproject.org
www.bbc.co.uk/radio3/worldroutes



STAFF BENDA BILILI News just in that the band have cancelled forthcoming dates following the departure of two members. Look out for a future blog with more info