



## African Heritage Month Celebration

### 6<sup>th</sup> DC Africa Festival 2015

### Performers Bios

#### EMCEE

#### Nunu Wako



NuNu Wako is an internationally recognized broadcast journalist, independent filmmaker, spokesperson, and health advocate. Ethiopian-born and American-raised, NuNu Wako jump started her broadcasting career in 2006 as one of the founders of a website based television show –Africa in Demand, to bring African issues to the forefront. She joined the team at EBS in early 2008 and KaliTV in 2014. With a background in international relations, communications and broadcast journalism, NuNu Wako is able to steadily and respectfully build her broadcasting career as a trusted source discussing range of topics linking our global community with Africa as the focus of the conversation.

#### DJ Underdog



Born Timoteo Fabrega in Panama, DJ Underdog came to DC at age seven, where he would eventually start to lay down his strong weirdo/subcultural roots. He sees dging as a mix of all genre's and new aesthetics without conformity. Today, he is one of DC's most sought after DJs and has shared the stage with many well-known artists including Questlove, Common and Femi Kuti to name a few. His versatile and unique mixes resonate well with many who have heard them.

#### Moto Moto Marimba



Led by Jona Masiya. Moto Moto Marimba is a dynamic group of musicians performing Shona songs from Zimbabwe. Moto is a Shona word meaning fire. Just like fire, Moto Moto Marimba music's hot rhythms compel you to get up and shine on the dance floor. Their music can be enjoyed by all ages. Moto Moto Marimba band, based in Northern Virginia brings Marimba music to the East Coast of the United States of America. Marimba music is already popular in the United States especially on the West Coast.

#### Sahel



Sahel honors the rich diversity of musical backgrounds by drawing inspiration from their own backgrounds, several musical traditions, and their own creative evolution. Their repertoire includes island Zouk, Senegalese Mbalax, Samba, Reggae and Salsa .

## **Kankouran West African Dance Company**



In over three decades of its existence, KanKouran West African Dance Company has been committed to preserving and promoting traditional West African culture. Their performances provide quality entertainment and educational programs to local and national audiences, thereby encouraging cross-cultural exchange and enrichment. To name a few of this ta. Fox 5, performed for the former President George W. Bush and have performed in several countries outside the U.S., to name a few of their accomplishments.

## **Chief Obi**



The Crown Prince of African Comedy, Chief Obi is a true force to reckon with in the comedy industry. The Nigerian born comedian has shared the stage with legendary African Comedians including BasketMouth, Michael Blackson and Mr. Ibu. With amazing performances across the United States and Canada, Chief Obi has thrilled audiences with his quick wit and charisma. In 2014, Chief Obi won the Best Comedian award at the DMV Awards.

## **Kignet Traditional Ethiopian Band**



Kignet's combined experience spans over two decades of performance in Ethiopia's esteemed stages. This 18-member band performs classic folkloric songs and compositions from all around Ethiopia with grooves that invite their audience to move!

## **Jollof Boys**



Jollof Boys was founded by Kwesi Adoko, Isaac Asante, Henry Obiefule and Qobe Wisdom. In order to fully represent the nationalities of group members, Jollof Boys performs to music from West Africa as well as different French speaking countries. The group made its debut in 2014, at the 2nd Annual International Showcase put together by Morgan State ISA and Golden Key Honor Society. Jollof Boys is now an award winning dance group that hold several awards and nominations including the African Entertainment Awards, best DMV dance group and a nomination in the NEGA Awards.

## **Eme &Heteru**



Eme & Heteru is a whirlwind of music and culture based in D.C. . With DC based Nigerian Eme as its lead singer, this band sets itself apart with exotic world music that continues to break the identity barrier with mass appeal that goes straight to your sweet spot.

# Festival Headliner

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## Mahmud Ahmed and Hahu Band

### Hahu Band



Hahu Band has 7 band members including two vocalists led by the tenor saxophonist Besufekad Mekonnen and fronted by charismatic vocalists Yohanes Alemu and Aragaw Alemu. The band is known for its groundbreaking take on Ethiopian music which incorporates traditional approaches with a modern twist. Hahu has made appearances in the Ethiopian Music Festival in Silver Spring and other big events. The group has shared stages with musical giants such as Mahamud Ahmed, Getachew Kassa, and Tshaye Yohanes to name a few well known Ethiopian Musicians

## Mahmoud Ahmed The “Golden Voice” of Ethiopia

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Mahmoud Ahmed has graced the stage for over fifty years – gaining the reputation of a living legend among his peers and fans that span several generations. As an Ethiopian singer of Gurage ancestry, Mahmoud has loaned his rich vocal vibrato to traditional and contemporary compositions that reflect the social and cultural life of Addis Ababa. Mahmoud gained great popularity in Ethiopia in the 1970’s among Ethiopians at home and abroad before rising to international fame among music fans in Europe and the Americas. He has won numerous awards including the BBC World Music Award in 2007, and was most recently celebrated by Sheger Radio for his half-century

contribution to modern Ethiopian music in Addis Ababa.

Mahmoud Ahmed was born May 8, 1941, in Addis Ababa. Although no one in his family was in the music business, Mahmoud made no effort to hide his passion for the art. Leaving school unqualified, Mahmoud began work as a shoe shine boy at an early age. A series of jobs followed until he ended up as a handy-man at the local Arizona Club. One evening Mahmoud persuaded the house band to let him sing and soon he was a member of Haile Selassie’s ultra-official Imperial Band, remaining there until the military coup of 1974.

Among Ethiopia’s most notable singers of its “golden era” of music, the three albums reissued of his recordings by French label Buda Musique as part of their *Ethiopiennes* series have captured Western listeners in the same way that, say, the reissues of Robert Johnson’s Delta blues did a previous generation. Mahmoud continues to enthrall audiences today as he did decades ago with his electrifying numbers and powerful delivery.