



HOPKINS CENTER

presents

Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars

Reuben Koroma *lead vocal*

Ashade Pearce *lead guitar*

Jahson Gbesse Bull *key board, rhythm guitar*

Dennis Bakarr Sannoh *bass guitar*

Mohamed 'Makengo' Kamara *vocals, percussion*

Black Nature *rap vocals, percussion*

Christopher Davies *drums*

Kobina Valcarcel *guitar*

This performance is cosponsored by the Student Programming Board, the John Sloan Dickey Center for International Understanding and by Class Divide, the Hopkins Center's three-year, cross-campus/community programming initiative. The concert supports the Dartmouth Centers Forum theme "Conflict and Reconciliation."

CLASS
DIVIDE

The Class Divide Initiative is made possible by a grant from the Association of Performing Arts Presenters Creative Campus Innovations Grant Program, a component of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation.

the summer
arts
festival

Part of Dartmouth's Summer Arts Festival eMotion

Friday, June 26, 2009 • 5 pm

Hanover Green • Dartmouth College

CLASS DIVIDE CONCLUDES

Today's concert concludes the Hopkins Center's Class Divide Project, a three-year, cross-campus/community programming initiative featuring a thought-provoking series of events, performances and residencies to raise awareness and spark discussion about Class Divide in our Upper Valley communities. Class Divide is the first substantial cross-campus/community project in the country to examine the issue of class through the arts. It has offered a transformational framework for artists, students, faculty and community members to engage with this timely and important topic, bringing people into the minds and hearts of others they've never met and creating connections within Upper Valley communities.

We salute Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars and their global celebration of the power of art to spread the important message of peace and equality. The arts

are at the center of social dialogue around the world; today's concert and the work of many visiting artists over the past three years have opened a dialogue about class throughout the Dartmouth community.

We wish to thank the students, visiting artists, community members, faculty, staff, the Hopkins Center Class Divide Community Advisory Board, Employee Task Force and many other partners, whose efforts made this initiative a success. We invite you to learn more about the Class Divide Project at hop.dartmouth.edu/classdivide.

Though the project ends, we're still hard at work to take in the lessons learned about our own community and how the Hop can be even more accessible to all.

~~CLASS~~
DIVIDE hop.dartmouth.edu/classdivide

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

With a spirited and infectious fusion of traditional West African music, roots reggae and rhythmic traditional folk, Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars craft melodies that transform and uplift. The collection of songs on their debut album, *Living Like A Refugee*, decry the insanity of war and call out for social justice, while instantly compelling audiences to get on their feet and dance. Born in the midst of a violent, decade-long civil war, the band has lived through unimaginable tragedy. Yet Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars have found a place of refuge, a sense of purpose and a source of power through music. Their unflinching spirit and joyful sound have become an inspiration to us all. The All Stars share their message of peace and love to fans worldwide and from all musical backgrounds.

Near the turn of the 21st century, rebel forces attacked Freetown, the capital city of Sierra Leone, forcing a panicked mass exodus to neighboring countries. Among the thousands who fled were musicians and future band mates Reuben Koroma and Francis "Franco" Lamgba, who connected in a refugee camp in Guinea, West Africa. Along with Reuben's wife Grace, they began making music for their fellow refugees, providing a welcome distraction to life in the camps. Safety in the Kalia Camp quickly disintegrated, however, when it came under attack from the Guinean Army and citizenry. The fledgling band was evacuated and relocated to a camp set deep in the remote Guinean countryside. It was here, thanks to a Canadian refugee aid organization, that the developing band was able to acquire

ABOUT THE ARTISTS CONTINUED

the rusted-out sound system and beat-up electric guitars that helped officially launch the group.

It was also in this camp that American documentary filmmakers Banker White and Zach Niles, along with Canadian singer/songwriter Chris Velan, encountered the group, which by that point also included Alhaji Jeffrey “Black Nature” Kamara, a teenaged orphan with a gift for rap, as well as Abdulrahim “Arahim” Kamara and Mohamed “Medo” Bangura, both of whom had limbs amputated by the rebels. The first-time filmmakers followed the band for three years, as they moved from camp to camp. While filming, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) sponsored a trip for the group to return to Freetown so they could see for themselves that the war was indeed over and safe for thousands of refugees to return home. As part of the trip, the UNHCR offered the band the opportunity to make its first studio recordings, which led leader Reuben Koroma to unite the core group from the refugee camp with his former band mates, The Emperors, many of whom had remained in Freetown during the war. Together they recorded their debut album as Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars. The current touring lineup features members of both entities.

Produced by Chris Velan, the CD *Living Like A Refugee* was recorded between August 2002 and October 2005, at the same time as the production of the film about Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars. Each song is an original composition, written during the band’s years in exile. Taken as a whole, the album serves as a musical document of the band’s incredible journey. It features field recordings from the refugee camps in Guinea, as well as studio efforts at Sam Jones’ Island Studios in Freetown. While each of the stories in these songs is told from the band’s personal experience, Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars’ messages of hope, healing and peace are truly universal.

Soon after emerging from refugee status, the All Stars began helping others in need through work with Amnesty International, the United Nations ninemillion.org campaign, the ONE campaign, Witness and numerous organizations in the United States and internationally, speaking out for peace and against war, while calling attention to issues in Africa and the plight of refugees throughout the world.

Backed by the likes of Keith Richards, Sir Paul McCartney, Ice Cube, Angelina Jolie and executive producers Steve Bing and Shelley Lazar, the documentary film, *Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars*, has won 13 major awards, including the Grand Jury Prize for Best Documentary at the 2005 AFI Film Festival, the Audience Favorite Award at the 2006 Miami Film Festival, the Filmmaker’s Award for Social Change and the Emerging Pictures Audience Award, bestowed on the winner by voting audiences in 11 cities at the Full Frame Documentary Film Festival.

Sustaining hope in a landscape dominated by rage and loss is at the core of this heartbreaking, yet life-affirming story. The documentary aired on PBS nationwide as part of the independent documentary film series *Point of View (P.O.V.)* and was released on DVD. The film has conquered the hearts of festival goers, including Aerosmith guitarist Joe Perry, who told *Billboard*, “I was just so overwhelmed by the movie and the message of hope they’re carrying. Their music is so buoyant and joyful.” But it is the music and live performances of Sierra Leone’s Refugee All Stars that are now winning over legions of new fans. Lauded for their infectious sound and engaging concerts, the All Stars are, as Don Heckman of the *Los Angeles Times* says, “establishing an identity based as much on skill, imagination and charisma as on their undeniably touching story.”

ABOUT THE ARTISTS CONTINUED

After screenings of their documentary at film festivals and the release of their debut CD, Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars have played on five continents. Their touring highlights range from performances at The Kennedy Center, the Save the Children's 75th Anniversary Benefit (honoring former Presidents Bill Clinton and George H. W. Bush, as well as Melinda Gates) and the Hollywood Bowl. The band has also headlined at Central Park's Summerstage, attended a post-screening Q&A in New York City with fellow Sierra Leonean and best-selling author Ishmael Beah and had stand-out appearances at the Montreal Jazz Festival, the Fuji Rock Festival in Japan, Chicago's African Festival of the Arts, Transmusicales Festival in France, the Winnipeg Folk Festival, Scotland's T in the Park, the Oxegen Festival in Ireland and Bonnaroo Music and Arts Festival. The All Stars' most recent summer tour followed a successful cross-country tour of Australia, playing the country's famed East & West Coast

Blues & Roots Festivals, and two performances at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland.

The group has appeared on the *Oprah Winfrey Show*, CBS' *Sunday Morning*, CNN and NPR's *Talk of the Nation*. Their music was featured in the five-time Academy Award-nominated film *Blood Diamond* starring Leonardo DiCaprio, and the band was joined onstage in Nashville by new friends Joe Perry and Steven Tyler of Aerosmith, who later asked the All Stars to open for them at the Mohegan Sun Arena in Connecticut. The All Stars are also included with R.E.M., U2, Green Day and others on the hit recording *Instant Karma: The Amnesty International Campaign to Save Darfur*, which was released in June 2007. This benefit double-disc compilation of John Lennon songs features Sierra Leone's Refugee All Stars collaborating with Aerosmith on *Give Peace A Chance*.

HOP '09/10 SEASON PREVIEW AND HOP TOURS

Thursday, August 6 • 12 & 5:30 pm • The Moore Theater

Be among the first to sample the sights and sounds of the Hopkins Center's new performing arts season in this multimedia presentation by Programming Director Margaret Lawrence! Enjoy delicious refreshments, courtesy of the Canoe Club, plus convenient on-site ticket ordering and the chance to win Hop tickets, dinner at the Canoe Club and more.



NEW! BEHIND-THE-SCENES HOP TOURS

Following the presentations, starting at Top of the Hop, Hop staff members guide you on free, 30-minute tours.

Nicola
Benedetti



HOPKINS CENTER MANAGEMENT STAFF

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Assistive Listening Devices available in the lobby.



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