

Working Group Theatre

All Recipes Are Home

Featuring Awful Purdies

Friday-Saturday, April 17-18, 2015
Johnson County Fairgrounds, Barn 2
Hancher
University of Iowa



HANCHER

THE
UNIVERSITY
OF IOWA

A HANCHER COMMISSION

WORKING GROUP THEATRE *ALL RECIPES ARE HOME*

FEATURING AWFUL PURDIES

CAST

Christopher Cruz	Raul / Ensemble
Jennifer Fawcett	Abigail / Ensemble
Kristy Hartsgrove-Mooers	Marie
Frankie Rose	Josef
Katy Slaven	Andrea / Ensemble
Cara Clonch Viner	Erin / Tilly
Aaron Weiner	Mr. Coleman / Ensemble

AWFUL PURDIES

Sarah Driscoll	guitar, bass, vocals
Katie Roche	accordion, percussion, penny whistle, vocals, narrator
Marcy Rosenbaum	mandolin, guitar, bass, vocals
Katie Senn	cello, violin, vocals
Nicole Upchurch	banjo, vocals

COMPANY

Sean Christopher Lewis
Playwright / Director

Shawn Ketchum Johnson
Scenic Design

Courtney Schmitz
Lighting Design

Osean Perez
Costume Design

Patrick DuLaney
Choreography

Rachel Potthoff
Stage Management

Jennifer Fawcett
Props

All Recipes Are Home was commissioned by Hancher/The University of Iowa,
Center Stage Series/Luther College, and Grinnell College.

Funding for the performances was provided, in part, by the F. Wendell Miller Fund.



Photo: Miriam Alarcón Avila

SONGS

Written and performed by Awful Purdies

Choruses of “Heartland” are borrowed from a poem by Miriam Alarcón Avila.

Act One

1. “At the Veil” (Nicole Upchurch, Frankie Rose, Cara Clonch Viner)
2. “Settle Down Matty” (Frankie Rose)
3. “Pennies in the Dustpan” (Katy Slaven, Katie Roche)
4. “Rest These Bones” (Katie Roche, Company)
5. “Kill Floor” (Katy Slaven, Awful Purdies)
6. “I Don’t Know You Anymore” (Cara Clonch Viner, Sarah Driscoll)

Act Two

1. “Common Ground” (Marcy Rosenbaum)
2. “Wild Sorrel and Strawberry” (Cara Clonch Viner, Nicole Upchurch)
3. “Heartland” (Cara Clonch Viner, Nicole Upchurch)
4. “Mountain Man” (Frankie Rose)
5. “Too Many Words” (Kristy Hartsgrove Mooers, Frankie Rose, Katie Senn)
6. “All Recipes Are Home” (Awful Purdies, Company)
7. “Yes, but” (Awful Purdies, Company)

There will be one intermission.

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

By Sean Christopher Lewis

So it started two years ago. My company, Working Group, had just finished our second residency for Hancher at the University of Iowa. We were coming off the large success of *The Broken Chord*, our piece about caregivers and Alzheimer's in rural communities—a beautiful play that had explored dance and imagery to a degree we had not yet experienced in our own work—when Chuck Swanson at Hancher approached us with an idea.

Would we like to make a piece about food? After all, everyone likes food, right?

I proposed an idea: I wanted to write an Iowan Odyssey, a Homeric ode to my adopted home state. I would then go across the state and interview farmers, meat-packing workers, lunch ladies—basically anyone connected to food—and ask them about their connection to Iowa, the land and the food that they grew, served and prepared on a daily basis.

Rachel Bly at Grinnell hopped on board and Tanya Gertz at Luther College immediately invited me to Decorah to see the multiple food connections in her area. Decorah became fortuitous in my research. I went to Seed Savers and became obsessed with the American immigrant story (I am first generation Irish-American, so it's close to me). I loved the idea of travelers coming from Europe and Latin America with seeds in their pockets, little pieces of home that they would bring to this new country, America, and add to the landscape there. I thought about Iowa—the corn state! And realized maize is a visitor! I spent time in the local school cafeterias, surrounded by women (I should share, my mother is a lunch lady in upstate New York), and found myself drawn to their stories: working class, lower income but completely connected to nurturing and feeding.

As I traveled west across the state I found myself interviewing people connected to the meat-packing industry. In these towns I found more diversity



Seed Savers Exchange's Heritage Farm in Decorah, Iowa



Above: Members of the Women's Land Army
 Right: Women's Land Army Recruiting Poster



than on most of the streets of Iowa City or Des Moines. I also spoke with a woman from Altoona who told me a story of her grandmother belonging to the Women's Land Army south of Council Bluffs. She talked about the first canning locale in her hometown and how it was run by the women in this town while the men were at war. She spoke about the pride it sparked in her grandmother and how she passed that on to her granddaughters (along with a killer chicken soup recipe).

At this point I had already started to see a play—a young man wanting to make his way in the world and provide a life for his fiancée. But I also started to see the fiancée. We hear often of the plight of the farmer, the solitary man alone and quiet on the plains. What about the women?

I had already contacted Awful Purdies. I had seen this amazing band—five incredibly talented and gracious women playing such beautiful melodies—at a storytelling event my company had presented in Iowa City. Four years later I was listening to their songs and it struck me: they were telling the story of the women I was meeting on my travels. The richness of their songcraft began to influence my writing. What is it to love and work and dream together? To face the difficulties that come with family and marriage but coupled with droughts and floods both emotional and physical?

At this point the play began to emerge. It would not be solely of a man trying to find who he is in the expanse of the Iowan fields; it would be about the love of his life, too. They would need to find themselves, together.

This is really my love letter to my adopted home state, its people, and its landscape and to its women. I didn't know I was writing about you until it was obvious that I was.

Thank you,

See C Ji

THE ARTISTS



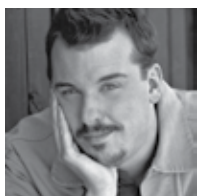
CARA CLONCH VINER (Erin / Tilly) is thrilled to be performing in Iowa City again in her second show with Working Group Theatre, after spending a year in France and living four years in Los Angeles. While obtaining her B.A. in Theatre Arts at the University of Iowa, notable show credits include *Versailles*, *Liberation of Tom*, *Cell Cycle*, and *The Exhibitionists*. Other favorite credits include Fiona in *After Ana* (Working Group/In the Raw), Luisa in *The Fantasticks*, Chrysanthemus in *Shatter the Sky*, and Lucille in *The Rehearsal*. Cara thanks the cast and Working Group for a wonderful experience and her husband, Nick, for the love, support, and rides home.



CHRISTOPHER CRUZ (Raul / Ensemble) is a third-year M.F.A. Graduate Acting Candidate from the University of Iowa. Originally from Texas, Chris has been part of many enriching performances at the university and is ecstatic to be a part of this wonderful story created by Working Group. Chris would like to thank his mother, of course, and Iowa.



SARAH DRISCOLL (Awful Purdies) is originally from Ladora, Iowa, and now lives in Cedar Rapids with her woodworking husband, Ben, and their new baby boy, Desmond. Sarah also performs with Diplomats of Solid Sound, The Derelicts, and solo. Sarah is opening a yoga studio this spring in Cedar Rapids.



PATRICK DULANEY (Choreography) is delighted to be a part of his first Working Group production. Patrick's local choreography credits include *Title of Show* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for Riverside Theatre, *Oliver!*, *Chicago*, and the upcoming *Mary Poppins* for City High School, and *Children of Eden* for Kirkwood Community College. Director/choreographer credits include *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* and *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum* for City Circle Acting Company. Thanks and welcome.



JENNIFER FAWCETT (Abigail / Ensemble) is the Associate Artistic Director of Working Group Theatre. For WGT, she has written *The Broken Chord*, *Out of Bounds* (NEFA National Theatre Project Award), *The Toymaker's War*, *Atlas of Mud* (National Science Playwriting Award/Kennedy Center), *Telling: Iowa City* (co-written with Jonathan Wei), and *Odysseus, Iowa* (co-written with Sean Lewis). Other recent credits include *The Kreutzer Sonata: A Play in Five Tiny Movements* (MusicIC) and *Birth Witches* (Riverside Theatre/Cornell College), which was nominated for the ATCA/Steinberg Award. As an actor, Jennifer has appeared in *Lucky Me* (Riverside Theatre), *Mayberry* (WGT), *Denali* (WGT), *Ah, Wilderness!* (Riverside Theatre in the Park), *Fuddy Meers* (Iowa Summer Rep), and others. Up next, she is writing a new play about Robert and Clara Schumann, which will premiere in June as part of MusicIC.



KRISTY HARTSGROVE MOOERS (Marie) is an Artistic Associate of Working Group Theatre, where she has appeared in *Out of Bounds*, *The Broken Chord*, *Mayberry*, *Rust*, *Atlas of Mud*, and in the road company of *Denali*, which won the Cincinnati Acclaim Award for Best Ensemble. She was most recently seen onstage as Aunt Debra in *Kimberly Akimbo* and as Margie in *Good People* at Riverside Theatre. She has appeared regionally with the Iowa Summer Repertory, Riverside Theatre, the Old Creamery Theatre, the Illinois Shakespeare Festival, and the Bohemian Theatre Ensemble. She teaches at Coe College and the University of Iowa, and holds an M.F.A. from Illinois State University. Love to MHM.



SHAWN KETCHUM JOHNSON (Scenic Design) is a visual artist who was drawn to theater out of a fascination with the collaborative process and a commitment to community engagement. While exhibiting artwork nationally and abroad, he began working with theaters as a scenic designer, drawing intuitively on his experience in installation art and large-scale sculpture. He has worked primarily in the Midwest, finding the deepest connection to socially engaged ensembles such as Combined Efforts and Working Group Theatre, where he remains an Artistic Associate. For WGT, he has designed *Atlas of Mud*, *The Toymaker's War*, and *The Broken Chord*. Recent credits include Northwestern University productions of *Pride and Prejudice*, *Nickel and Dimed*, *Machinal*, and *How to End Poverty in 90 Minutes*, an original work devised by Michael Rohd of Sojourn Theatre. He is on the Stage Design Faculty at Seattle University. www.shawnketchumjohnson.com



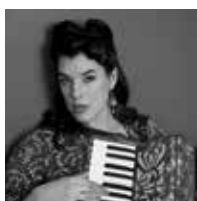
SEAN CHRISTOPHER LEWIS (Playwright / Director) is the Artistic Director of Working Group Theatre. With them, he has directed each production and co-created many including Hancher commissions *Mayberry*, *Out of Bounds*, *The Broken Chord*, and *All Recipes Are Home*. His work with the company and as a solo artist has been seen throughout the United States, Canada, Europe, and East Africa. These pieces have been awarded the NEFA National Theatre Project Award, the National Performance Network's Creation Fund Award, the Smith Prize, the NEA Voices in Community Award, the Barrymore Award, the Kennedy Center's Rosa Parks Award, and more. He has been heard as a storyteller on NPR'S *This American Life*, and his first feature film, *These Hopeless Savages*, has played 25 film festivals in the United States, Canada, and Germany.



OSEAN PEREZ (Costume Design) is an alumnus of Cornell College in Mt. Vernon, Iowa, with a degree in theatre and an emphasis in design. Previous costume work includes *Lucky Me*, *A Christmas Carol*, and *Red* at Riverside Theatre. Osean has also worked for Shakespeare Santa Cruz, the University of Iowa Department of Opera and Dance, Combined Efforts Theatre, and the Cornell College Department of Theatre.



RACHEL POTTHOFF (Stage Manager) lives in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. For Working Group, Rachel stage-managed *The Broken Chord* and *Rust* at Legion Arts. Recent experience includes productions with Riverside Theatre, Theatre Cedar Rapids, Iowa Theatre Artists Company, Urban Theater Project of Iowa, and Brucemore Children's Theater. Rachel would like to thank Working Group for the opportunity.



KATIE ROCHE (Awful Purdies) plays accordion, xylophone, penny whistle, and washboard for Awful Purdies and is also the lead vocalist for the eight-piece 1920s early jazz group The Dandelion Stompers. Katie also enjoys writing music with the children of Family Folk Machine, an inter-generational non-auditioned folk choir that operates out of The Center in downtown Iowa City.



FRANKIE ROSE (Josef) is currently an undergraduate Theatre Arts major at the University of Iowa where he has appeared in a total of eight productions. He appeared most recently in Riverside Theatre's production of *Kimberly Akimbo* as Jeff, and in the university's productions of *Falls for Jodie* as John Hinckley and *Speed of Light* as Nevik Kier.

He is thrilled to be a part of a production that emphasizes the importance of one of his favorite aspects of the human experience: food.



MARCY ROSENBAUM (Awful Purdies) has played mandolin, guitar, and bass in the Awful Purdies since the band formed in 2006. She also plays in the indie folk group Half Fast. She lives in Johnson County and teaches at the University of Iowa.



COURTNEY SCHMITZ (Lighting Design) is a freelance designer based in Minneapolis who received her M.F.A. in lighting design from the University of Iowa in 2009. In addition to Working Group Theatre, she has designed professionally for 20% Theatre, crash.dance productions, Yellow Tree Theatre, Six Elements Theatre, Freshwater

Theatre, Theatre in the Round, Lyric Arts Company of Anoka, Savage Umbrella, Nimbus Theatre, Open Window Theatre, Bucket Brigade Theatre, Inver Hills Community College, Riverside Theatre, the University of Iowa Department of Dance, Cornell College, Iowa Summer Rep, Florida Players, and the University of Florida Opera Department. This is her fourth WGT/Hancher collaboration, having designed the lights for *Out of Bounds*, *Mayberry*, and *The Broken Chord*.



KATIE SENN (Awful Purdies) began studying the cello at age six, violin at 14, and bass at 19. She graduated from Coe College in 2005 with a degree in music education with emphasis in cello. While at Coe, Katie served as vice-president and later president of the co-ed music fraternity Mu Phi Epsilon. Katie has been teaching private cello and

violin lessons for 15 years. She has served as the director of orchestras at Jefferson High School in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, for the last eight years. Katie has been selected to conduct at honor orchestra events and has chaired numerous orchestra festivals while at Jefferson. In June 2014, Katie founded a company with family members in the international manufacturing industry. She will begin traveling the world once school lets out in June 2015 with her new carrier path. Katie has been gigging and recording with numerous musicians and projects and orchestras in the Midwest. She lives in North Liberty with her husband, Bob, and children, Jackson and Ashleigh.



KATY SLAVEN (Andrea / Ensemble) is thrilled and thankful for this unique opportunity to collaborate with Working Group and the Purdies. Other recent projects include *Out of Bounds: Youth Version* (Working Group), *Seven Year Itch* (SPT Theatre), *A Grateful Nation* (Riverside Theatre), *A+* (Working Group/Dollar Dog reading), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Fourth Room Theatre), *The Summerland Project* (MORE Productions), and *Othello* (Riverside Theatre). For more about Katy, please check out KatherineSlaven.com.



NICOLE UPCHURCH (Awful Purdies) is a singer/songwriter and claw hammer banjo player living in Tiffin, Iowa. She is currently involved in two musical projects - the Feralings and Awful Purdies. Nicole has recorded two albums with Awful Purdies. She has had the privilege of sharing the stage with talented bluegrass/folk musicians like the Andy Statman Trio, Joy Kills Sorrow, and banjo legend, Bob Black. Nicole is also the preschool teacher and early elementary Music and Spanish teacher at Prairie Green School in Cosgrove, Iowa. Her husband, Benj, plays mandolin with the Feralings and together, they are working hard to raise three children.



AARON WEINER (Mr. Coleman / Ensemble) is beyond pleased to be working with such a wonderful group of people and Kristy. He would like to thank his friends and family for their unflinching love and support, and Awful Purdies for bringing this show to life with their beautiful music. Recent shows include *After Ana* (Working Group Theatre/In the Raw), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (ICCT), *Bad Seed* (Iowa Summer Rep), and *Exit Interview* (Riverside Theatre). Aaron is descended from Midwestern farmers and would like to thank his grandparents, Grandma Norm and Grandpa Dale, for keeping the settler spirit alive by passing down the ethos of compassion, hard work, and making us big delicious family meals.



Photo: Miriam Alarcón Avila



AWFUL PURDIES are an eclectic quintet of female multi-instrumentalists who take turns stepping up as songwriter and lead singer. The ensemble purdify's each song they meet, letting the song lead the way. With "The Katie's" (Katie Senn on cello and Katie Roche on accordion) laying down each songs base, their songs sound full and orchestrated, while Nicole Upchurch's banjo, Marcy Rosenbaum's mandolin and Sarah Driscoll's guitar skillfully root Awful Purdies fully in the modern folk genre. Awful Purdies have received national radio play, film and television placements, most recently with a taped performance in the televised PBS documentary *Food Forward*. Awful Purdies new album (which comes in the form of a download card with a packet of Seed Savers Seeds) is also titled *All Recipes Are Home*. It is available at the band merchandise table at all performances and also at www.awfulpurdies.com. The 2015 release is the third album by Awful Purdies and features music commissioned by Working Group Theatre for the play and created as part of a grant project which was supported, in part, by the Iowa Arts Council, a division of the Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



WORKING GROUP THEATRE was founded in 2009 by Sean Lewis, Martin Andrews, and Jennifer Fawcett, three M.F.A. graduates from the University of Iowa. Since its founding, Working Group has created over 30 new plays and events, fostering community dialogue around important

issues and gaining a national reputation for challenging and insightful work. *All Recipes Are Home* marks WGT's fifth collaboration with Hancher/The University of Iowa. Previous commissions include *Mayberry* (2012), *The Broken Chord* (2013), *Out of Bounds* youth version (2013), and *Out of Bounds* full length (2014). In their 2014-15 season, Working Group began collaborating with The Englert Theatre to present *In the Raw* as part of the Englert's Intimate Series, bringing new plays to audiences in a bold, stripped down style. Most recently, WGT was awarded the NEFA National Theatre Project Award for *Out of Bounds*, a two-play project about cyber-bullying. *Out of Bounds* will tour nationally in 2016. For more information about Working Group and to sign up for our mailing list, go to workinggrouptheatre.org.

THANK YOU

Working Group Theatre would like to thank the following for their financial support in 2014-15: ACT, Robin Butler and Janelle Rettig, Barbara Buss, Michael Lensing/Lensing Funeral & Cremation Service, Charles and Georgene Lynch, John Menninger, Mary McNroy, Carrie Norton, Rockwell Collins, Serena Stier, Alan Swanson/Blank & McCune, the University of Iowa Community Credit Union, Amanda and Ryan West, and Carrie Houchins Witt.

FOOD INSECURITY

AFFECTS ONE IN NINE IOWANS.

YOU CAN HELP CHANGE THAT.

By Patti Fields

food insecurity: the state of being without reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Each day, food insecurity is experienced in every community. It affects social foundations and local economies. It creates instability in education, income, and health, the building blocks of a high quality of life. Although connected to poverty, food insecurity involves additional issues, including access to fresh and nutritious food. One in six Americans—and one in nine Iowans—struggles with food insecurity. Iowa's data trendline is going in the wrong direction. According to research completed by the Iowa Policy Project, Iowans' food insecurity is 50 percent higher than it was a decade ago.



But the heart of food insecurity is not in data. Rather, it is in the lives of our neighbors and those who skip meals so that others can eat. And it is in the lives of children, to whom proper nutrition is critical for development. Poor nutrition can have lasting consequences for mental and physical health, academic achievement, and overall success in life. It is in the lives of senior citizens, who may find themselves on fixed incomes, facing critical medical and mobility challenges, and who may have to choose between buying groceries and buying medication. And it is in the lives of families who do not have enough resources for or access to fresh and nutritious food.

Though assistance can be found through a complex network of government and nonprofit programs—including the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), meal programs, food pantries, backpack programs, and school lunch programs—the programs alone cannot meet the need. In the SNAP program, the average monthly benefit is \$116 per person; 76% of households include a child, elderly person, or disabled person, and 90% of SNAP benefits are redeemed by the 21st day of the month and are not enough to last the month.

90% of Federal SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program) benefits are redeemed by the 21st day of the month, are not enough to last the month.

We all have a role to play in reducing food insecurity, and there are many ways to be involved. Become engaged in your local community by donating, hosting food drives, and volunteering for the meal programs, food pantries, and backpack programs. Advocate for increasing food security by talking about the issues of hunger and food insecurity with the people in

your life. Great impact can be achieved when we increase awareness of the issues. Advocate with your elected officials to strengthen and fund the programs developed to help those who experience food insecurity.

To find more information on becoming involved in your community, contact your local United Way:



www.unitedwayjwc.org

United Way of Johnson and Washington Counties



***Patti Fields** joined the team at the United Way in 2007. In her work as Vice President for Community Impact & Engagement, Patti partners and collaborates with local governmental entities, businesses, and many nonprofit agencies in the areas of Education, Income, and Health. She directs the Community Investment work and Disaster Response for United Way of Johnson & Washington counties and supervises the United Way Volunteer Center.*

ARTS & MINDS | BUILDING ON IOWA'S CREATIVE LEGACY



Future Hancher

Arts & Minds: Building on Iowa's Creative Legacy is a \$30 million fundraising campaign to support replacement facilities for Hancher, the UI School of Music, and the UI School of Art and Art History. Our flood recovery is well underway—we've moved from reimagining to rebuilding—and when all the work is complete, the landscape of our campus will forever be changed.

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"This campaign is a crucial step forward in providing state-of-the-art facilities for our arts campus."

-Jane Downer
Arts & Minds Campaign Co-chair

"Seldom can a gift to a campaign have such a profound and immediate effect on generations to come."

-Steve West
Arts & Minds Campaign Co-chair,
pictured with his wife, Victoria



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THE NILE PROJECT RESIDENCY exemplifies Hancher's interest in cultural diplomacy through the arts

By Erin Donohue, Hancher's Education Programming Director
Photos by Miriam Alarcón Avila

Hancher presented The Nile Project at the Englert Theatre on Wednesday, March 11, 2015. The musicians were in Iowa City for a four-day residency March 9-12. The group had extensive engagement with the Iowa City community. It was incredible to see the deep connections the artists made in each of their activities and performances.

The musicians of The Nile Project are forging a new path to collectively creating music. They are not creating a fusion of styles, but teaching each other the traditions and techniques from their different homelands along the Nile River. A drummer from Kenya must learn an entirely new rhythmic style from Uganda; a xylophone player creates new keys on his instrument to play with an Egyptian flute. This also has political and social impacts; no group of musicians from opposing countries has ever played in a group like this before. The band is also making a clear statement in supporting female musicians. For example, the inanga (harp) player is the only female who plays the instrument in all of Rwanda. These musicians are changing the landscape of music in their region but also fostering a new atmosphere of collaboration, trying to find commonalities between these countries that share the Nile River.

One of the ways Hancher thinks about its education programs is through a lens of cultural diplomacy, creating an opportunity for exchange and



Members of The Nile Project perform at the Pheasant Ridge Community Center in Iowa City on March 9, 2015.

dialogue between artists from around the world and people in our community. This group was a great example of this, highlighting traditions from many countries in Africa, while also exploring their contemporary take on music. The band interacted with a wide range of ages during their time in town, performing for elementary students, spending time in a high school, and encouraging college students to sing and dance in class.

The Nile Project started their residency with an improvisation workshop with UI music majors studying to be teachers. The students learned several new scales and tried improvising with an Egyptian song. The band had two lecture demonstrations at West High School for a variety of classes, including English Language Learners and those taking classes like Middle East/North African Studies and World Literatures. The Nile Project musicians soon had the high schoolers riveted with their music. Students were eager to ask questions and learn more about the group. The musicians also had lunch at the high school cafeteria, spending time hanging out with students.

On Monday evening, the band had an exchange at the Pheasant Ridge Community Center. Pheasant Ridge serves a large population of immigrant and refugee families, many who come from Sudan and South Sudan. The evening started out with a musical performance by a couple of local musicians; dancers from the community also performed a few routines. Then, The Nile Project musicians packed into a corner and started to play—the whole community center erupted in dance and song. It was a joyful celebration for many of the residents in the community. To hear the music of their homeland played by guest artists was a rare and wonderful thing. The



Members of The Nile Project in an Arabic class at the University of Iowa.

center was packed with people of all ages. After leaving the center, The Nile Project musicians noted that this was the boost in energy they needed after a long couple months of touring. “It felt like coming home” one musician said. This was a highlight of the week and made a significant impression on the Hancher staff.

The group also worked with UI students studying Arabic and Swahili. The students were really engaged in the discussion and were excited to learn more about the music and culture from a number of countries. The musicians even got the college students to sing! The group also played a sold-out school show for Iowa City elementary students. The Englert Theatre was full of students dancing, clapping, and laughing to the music. The students were able to ask the musicians questions during the school show, learning more about the instruments and regions of Africa.

Iowa City elementary school students clap along to The Nile Project at The Englert Theatre.





The Nile Project musicians Kasiva Mutua and Michael Bazibu engage the crowd at the group's public performance on March 11, 2015.

Mina Girgis, the co-founder and CEO of The Nile Project, was with the band on the tour. He visited a couple university classes including Global Health and Human Rights, and New Ventures in the Arts. In both of these classes, he discussed how The Nile Project was conceived as a way to connect musicians from the Nile River Basin who often don't hear the music from neighboring countries. It's turned into a much larger project that also focuses on water management issues since that is such a contentious topic in the region. "Music has been the avenue to open up difficult conversations," Mina said. Mina also participated in a pre-performance talk with audience members and was a part of a panel with UI professors, discussing the politics of the Nile River Basin and how it relates to water issues in the United States.

It was a thrill for Hancher to present a great week of immersion in the music and culture of the Nile River.

Hancher Education Programming Director Erin Donohue, The Nile Project co-founder Mina Girgis, and Hancher Programming Director Jacob Yarrow.



THANK YOU

Hancher thanks our Partners for their unwavering loyalty and crucial support.

Their generosity enables us to bring the world's finest performing artists to our region.

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