

Bob Marley's 60th Birthday

Written by Robert ID545

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Bob Marley

The program to celebrated Bob Marley's 60th birthday, titled "Africa Unite," will be spearheaded by a globally televised concert on Feb. 6, featuring the Marley children and his former backing singers the I-Threes. The month-long program of events will be held in Ethiopia in February 2005

Harry Belafonte , Quincy Jones and top African acts including Angelique Kidjo, Baaba Maal and Youssou N"Dour will also perform.

The concert will be held in Addis Ababa's Mascoll Square, on what would have been Marley's 60th birthday. The singer died of cancer on May 11, 1981. Negotiations are under way for international rights to broadcast the concert.

Partners in "Africa Unite" include Unicef, the World Bank and the Africa Union, an umbrella organization of 53 states. The program was unveiled earlier this week by the Bob Marley Foundation and the Rita Marley Foundation, the two charitable organizations dedicated to furthering the singer's legacy.

"Brother Bob sang "music gonna teach them a lesson,"" commented Rita Marley, the singer's widow and president of "Africa Unite." "We plan to teach the world about the power of love, unity and hope through this proud celebration."

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Ethiopia was chosen as the venue because of its role as the home of the late Emperor Haile Selassie, the spiritual leader of the Rastafarian faith, to which Marley subscribed.

Africa Unite will also utilize nine Marley song titles for related events throughout the month of February, including seminars, symposiums, exhibitions, a film festival and a gala fund-raiser under the banners "War," "So Much Trouble (In the World)," "Uprising," "Get Up Stand Up," "Redemption Song," "No Woman No Cry," "One Drop," "Exodus" and "One Love."

"UNICEF will be flying in children from different countries on the continent to be part of a parade uniting areas of conflict," says project coordinator Marcia Stewart, who is based at the United Nation UNICEF office in Addis Ababa. "They will be holding hands with the flags of their respective countries in a message of peace."

Reuters/Billboard