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*High-res images and videos available upon request

Traditional Ethiopian Music and Dance Will Kick Off Vegetarian Awareness Month at Montclair Restaurant

Mesob Ethiopian Restaurant to feature Ethiopian Music and Dance group on U.S. tour to Celebrate Global Vegetarian Awareness Day



Mesob Ethiopian Restaurant, a family-owned restaurant in Montclair, NJ specializing in Ethiopian cuisine, will kick off Vegetarian Awareness Month with traditional Ethiopian music and dance on October 1, 2010.

The restaurant will also feature a completely vegan menu for the occasion, and introduce 2 new vegan specials to celebrate the start of Vegetarian Awareness Month. A new pumpkin stew, Duba Quanta, and Portobello Mushroom Stew, Ingudai Quanta will be featured on the menu for the first time. Ethiopian jerky is traditionally made with beef, but patrons can enjoy these dishes prepared vegan style.

The one night only performance at Mesob will feature Zena Bel Band, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, and two Ethiopian dancers. True to the tradition of the wandering azmari musicians

from the Ethiopian countryside, the colorful performers will dance and play their instruments as they move throughout the restaurant.

The evening of Ethiopian music will feature the traditional drum "kebero" played by Asrat Ayalew, five-string acoustic violin, played by Kaethe Hostetter, evoking the "masinqo," a one-string bowed instrument, and vocalist, Selamnesh Zemene, specializing in the "azmari" style.

Joining Zena Bel Band will be two top Ethiopian dancers, Melaku Belay and Zinash Tsgegaye, of the Ethiopian dance troop, Fendika. Mesob Ethiopian Restaurant was able to book the group for this Vegetarian Awareness month kick off, as the musicians and dancers are on their first North American tour with the well-known Boston-based Debo Band.

Berekti Mengistu, one of the two Ethiopian sisters who own Mesob, says, "We want to share just more than Ethiopian food with our community, but also our culture. Many of our patrons are vegetarians and may not be aware that all of our vegetarian dishes are prepared vegan style. This is because our Ethiopian vegetarian dishes evolved as Ethiopian Orthodox Christian fasting days restrict us from eating animal products. Vegetarian Awareness Month is a perfect time to share our rich culture – not only with a special menu, but with our special music as well."

A sharing of Ethiopian culture is part of the charm of this eclectic restaurant. In Ethiopian culture, an "azmari bet," is a place where people come to listen and enjoy traditional Ethiopian music. For this evening, Mesob Ethiopian Restaurant will become a vegan "azmari bet" something rarely seen in the U.S.

The Global Vegetarian Awareness Celebration music and dance event will have seatings at 7 and 9 pm. Reservations are required.

Mesob Ethiopian Restaurant is located at 515 Bloomfield Avenue, in Montclair, NJ. For reservations or more information, call 973-655-9000 or visit Mesob online at <http://www.mesobrestaurant.com>.