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**Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Announces
Appointment of Meklit Hadero as new Chief of Program**

SAN FRANCISCO (September 5, 2019)—Vocalist, singer-songwriter, composer, and cultural activist Meklit Hadero will join the leadership team of **Yerba Buena Center for the Arts** effective September 3, 2019, assuming the newly created role of Chief of Program. She will drive YBCA’s multidisciplinary program strategy and oversee the implementation of programming in visual arts, performing arts, film, and civic and community engagement.

“Meklit Hadero’s experiences are rooted in a deep commitment to inclusivity,” **remarks YBCA CEO Deborah Cullinan**. “She has an amazing ability to hold at heart the concerns of both the community and artists. She has been part of the YBCA family for many years and has contributed to the organization in deep and meaningful ways. With her shepherding our programming team, YBCA can expand its ability to support artists and curators and develop systems and structures that catalyze artist-driven change.”

“I cannot name any other large-scale arts institution putting social impact at its core in the way that YBCA does,” **says Hadero**. “This mission, along with YBCA’s commitment to artistic excellence, has kept me involved with the organization for the past eleven years. At a personal level, YBCA is home. I’m looking forward to collaborating with its dynamic team of curators and staff to create an artistic home and build on YBCA’s commitment to reimagining the role an arts institution can play in the community it serves.”

Hadero is known for her electric stage presence, innovative take on ethio-jazz, and her fiery, emotive live shows. As Meklit, she has released four studio albums, tours regularly, and is currently signed to Six Degrees Records. She is a TED Senior Fellow and her TED Talk, “The Unexpected Beauty of Everyday Sounds,” has been watched by more than 1.2 million people. She first collaborated with YBCA in 2008 when she served as a Bay Area Now 5 co-curator of performances in the *Room for Big Ideas*. In 2016 YBCA debuted her body of ethio-jazz music, ***This Was Made Here/When The People Move, the Music Moves Too*** for a three-night run to great acclaim. The following year she served as the musical director for *UnderCover Presents: A Tribute to the Miseducation of Lauryn Hill*, co-presented by YBCA as part of the Clas/Sick Hip-Hop Festival. Hadero served on YBCA’s Board of Directors from 2015 to 2019 and recently wrapped up a three-month artist residency in spring 2019 with the organization.

As Chief of Program, Hadero will work with YBCA’s newly formed Program and Engagement Team. She will develop a cross-disciplinary programmatic and curatorial staff of change makers in support of YBCA’s mission to be a creative home for the diverse communities of the San Francisco Bay Area and to cultivate a thriving ecosystem of artists who are working to support societal movement.

Under the new programmatic structure, Hadero will work closely on the YBCA 100 Summit, YBCA Fellows, and film, performing, and visual arts programs. She will usher in new initiatives, including a Senior Fellows program that will enable deeper relationships with artists and curators, and an open call for exhibition and experimental ideas for YBCA’s second-floor gallery spaces.

Adds Hadero, “My core philosophy has always been that when you make space for others, you make space for yourself. I am, quite simply, energized by this role and the fertile possibilities that come with it, including: growing the field of cultural activism, nurturing and actualizing tangible movement goals through arts and creative engagement, inspiring policy, empowering and amplifying the work of relevant artists, expanding the model of what an arts center can be, and, of course, generating culture that moves people.”

About Meklit Hadero

Meklit Hadero is an Ethiopian American vocalist, songwriter, composer, and cultural activist making music that sways between cultures and continents. Known for her electric stage presence and innovative take on ethio-jazz, her music has taken her around the world, from her home base in San Francisco to her home city of Addis Ababa (where she is a household name) to New York, London, Montreal, Nairobi, Rome, Zurich, Helsinki, Rio de Janeiro, Cairo, and more. She has collaborated with the Kronos Quartet, Preservation Hall Jazz Band, Andrew Bird, NASA Kepler co-investigator Dr. Jon Jenkins (and his star sounds), musical legend Pee Wee Ellis, and members of the BBC Philharmonic.

Hadero is a National Geographic Explorer, a TED Senior Fellow, and former codirector of the Red Poppy Art House. As cofounder of the Nile Project, she was at the heart of an international initiative using musical collaboration as a model for trans-boundary resource sharing. As lead artist for YBCA's Home [Away From] Home Project, Hadero commissioned ten Bay Area-based East African artists to create new works inspired by oral histories of migration from Ethiopian and Eritrean immigrants. These new works were then installed in a pop-up gallery on Lake Merritt as a public statement of African immigrant social presence. As an artist in residence at Harvard University, Hadero supported a group of Boston-based immigrant musicians to break institutional barriers to success in the music industry. As an artist in residence at New York University, Hadero pioneered a collaboration between Lincoln Center and NYU, creating a performance series exploring the multiplicity of African diasporic identities.

Hadero has received musical commissions from Lincoln Center and the MAP Fund, and is a featured singer in the UN Women theme song. Her TED Talk has been watched by more than 1.2 million people, and her music videos air daily on Ethiopian National Television. Her latest album, *When the People Move, the Music Moves Too* (Six Degrees Records) reached number 4 on the iTunes World Charts and was named among the best albums of 2017 by the *Sunday Times UK* and Bandcamp.

Hadero's music and projects have been covered by NPR, the BBC, CNN International,

Vive magazine, *USA Today*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *New York Magazine*, MTV Iggy, *Gizmodo*, PBS, PRI's *The World*, *Wired UK*, WBEZ, KQED, WNYC, *Paste Magazine*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, and many more. Hadero holds a BA in political science from Yale University.

ABOUT YERBA BUENA CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is one of the nation's most innovative contemporary arts centers. Founded in 1993, YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, YBCA is committed to creating an inclusive culture that awakens personal and societal transformation. YBCA presents a wide variety of programming year-round, including performing arts, visual arts, and civic engagement. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787). For more information, visit ybca.org.

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