



Somi is performing at GlobalFEST. (Credit: Glynis Carpenter)

Somi, Ginkgoa and Astrid Hadad to perform at GlobalFEST

By Hal Bienstock Special to amNewYork *January 13, 2016*

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For more than a decade, globalFEST has been bringing bands from around the world to New York for a one-day festival. But its aim is about more than just showcasing great music. The festival aims to narrow the gap between cultures while helping international artists develop sustainable, long-term careers. This year's festival features 12 acts on three stages at Webster Hall. Here's a guide to what to expect from each of the regions represented.

North America

Those with the shortest distance to travel include the **Music Maker Blues Revue**, which celebrates classic Southern blues, and **Debauche**, a New Orleans group that plays what it calls "Russian Mafia Music," merging punk with traditional Russian, klezmer, Ukrainian and Balkan sounds.

New York will be represented by **Somi**, a jazz/R&B singer of Rwandan and Ugandan descent, who was born in Illinois but received a master's degree from NYU. Sometimes

compared to Nina Simone, Somi's 2013 album "The Lagos Music Salon" hit No. 1 on the Billboard jazz chart and featured guest appearances from Angelique Kidjo and Common.

Mexico gives us **Astrid Hadad**, who has been performing since the 1980s. Her shows are part cabaret, part performance art, filled with outrageous costumes and sharp political humor. Haiti is represented by collective **Lakou Mizik**, which combines African, French, Caribbean and American influences.

South America

Tribu Baharu, which is making its U.S. debut, is a Colombian Afro-champeta band that promises a dance party. It performs an upbeat mix of African, Colombia and Caribbean music with elements of calypso, soca and reggae.

Western Europe

Europe's entries epitomize the cross-cultural collaborations globalFEST aims to support. London's **The Dhol Foundation** plays Indian bhangra music combined with electronic dance beats. Its music has appeared in movies including "Gangs of New York" and "The Incredible Hulk."

France's **Ginkgoa**, which is made up of a woman from New York and a man from Paris, is an electro-influenced duo that met at a Parisian jazz club and decided to make "French songs with an American vibe and American songs with a French touch," all meant to make people dance. A more traditional take on European music comes from the **Stelios Petrakis Quartet**, which performs music from Crete.

Eastern Europe

Mariana Sadovska, a Ukrainian who now lives in Germany, is a singer, actress and composer who is sometimes referred to as "the Ukrainian Bjork" for her ability to combine traditional folk music with avant-garde experiments.

Africa & the Middle East

Melaku Belay is one of Ethiopia's leading dancers and musicians, performing with traditional Ethiopian groups as well as jazz bands. His group **Fendika** appears here. **Simon Shaheen's Zafir** combines the Arab music of Al-Andalus, which began in the Middle East and North Africa, with flamenco from Spain, demonstrating the cross pollination between the regions that began more than a thousand years ago.