

# Mikael Seifu —Zelalem

**Mikael Seifu's** *Zelalem* is an ode to – and a fearless break from – the storied lineage of Ethiopian music.

The literal Amharic translation of *Zelalem* is “eternity,” and through Seifu’s conceptual frame it becomes a “vector of light.” Seifu shines this light on the music of his home country while guiding us through an uncharted “Ethiopian Electronic” – a coinage Seifu uses to describe the music he and his peers are producing in Ethiopia’s capital city of Addis-Ababa.

Illuminating the rich sounds of Addis-Ababa’s *azmaris*, Seifu’s music becomes a “dream brew” in which these traditional musicians collaborate and contribute vocals and lead voicings from folk instruments such as the *Masenko* and the *Krar*.

Seifu was educated at the Lycée Guebre-Mariam in Addis-Ababa. The French academy’s international group of students was Seifu’s first exposure to a world outside Ethiopia; his second was at Ramapo College in suburban New Jersey. Here Seifu met a mentor in **Ben Neill**, the composer and music technologist who trained with **La Monte Young**. Seifu was inspired by Neil to take serious his calling in music.

A calling of a different, spiritual nature brought Mikael back to Ethiopia. As a repatriated young man in Addis-Ababa, Seifu felt a renewed sense of allegiance to his home country and allowed its ubiquitous music to guide his creations. Seifu’s early work was shared across a string of EPs for stalwart Washington D.C. imprint 1432 R, demonstrating an interplay of regional folk music and international electronic music.

Mikael’s music does not westernize or electronicize extant Ethiopian music. Instead, Seifu uses Ethio-Jazz’s spirit of brewing estranged styles for his own musical tincturing. Seifu’s passion above all else is to create something befitting of its time, yet “eternally Ethiopian.” The latter phrase was the mantra guiding Seifu through the creation of *Zelalem*, and a source of inspiration for the cover artwork.

*Zelalem* spotlights the music of Ethiopia’s past as well its future. Mikael Seifu illustrates the potential for reinterpreting sacred and proud sources through energized palettes. His latest effort heralds the future of this new music and signals the genesis of Ethiopian Electronic, where the known and unknown commune.

## Additional Retail Notes

- Hometown: Addis-Ababa, Ethiopia
- Key Markets: New York, London, Los Angeles, Berlin, Los Angeles, Chicago, Paris, Tokyo
- RIYL: Traditional Ethiopian and African folk music, Four Tet, Congotronics, UK garage
- Mikael Seifu’s debut release for RVNG following a string of amazing singles on 1432 R
- Past press history in Pitchfork (Rising profile, Best New Track), Wire (Full page Byte feature), DAZED, FACT, Dummy, etc. EP press confirmed for Ableton, Fader, Musikexpress, RBMA, XLR8R.
- Lead single “How To Save a Life (Vector of Eternity)” followed by a proper video for “ዘላለም” (Vector of Light)”
- Mikael will tour lightly around the EP release, including a show at CTM Festival in Berlin on February 5th.



## Track Listing

01. The Protectors
02. The Solipsist
03. Soul Manifest (Mikael Seifu feat. L.A.)
04. How To Save a Life (Vector of Eternity)
05. ዘላለም (Vector of Light)

## Info

Cat#— RVNGNL34  
Artist— Mikael Seifu  
Title— Zelalem  
Genre— Ethiopian Electronic / Electro-Traditional / Eternal

## Release date

March 4, 2016

## Formats

12" EP, Digital  
Vinyl Is Not Returnable

## Box Lot

12" EP— 40

## RVNG Intl.

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## 12" EP UPC

798295512574



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