



## Krar Collective: Biography

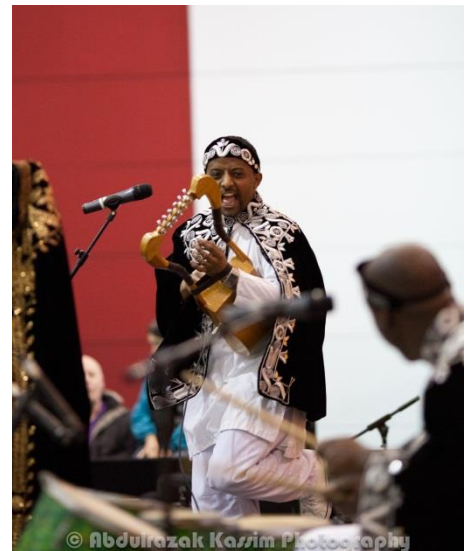
*"This London-based Ethiopian three-piece, centred on the traditional krar harp, were one of the grooviest and most hypnotic bands at Damon Albarn's recent Africa Express bonanza. Expect an ultra-repetitive funky dance marathon."* **Time Out**

*"One of the most rousing, reliable new African bands of the year"* **The Guardian**

Led by Temesgen Zeleke, a former student of Ethiopian jazz legend Mulatu Astatke, Krar Collective perform a rootsy yet contemporary take on traditional music from Ethiopia based on other-worldly modes and driven by hypnotic rhythms. Their repertoire is drawn from the songs that represent different regional and tribal traditions in Ethiopia; with over 80 languages and the second largest population in Africa, the country has a rich treasure of musical wealth to explore.

The traditional acoustic krar lyre is associated with the *azmari* minstrel tradition; electrified, in the hands of Zeleke it becomes a gritty, ancient rock guitar. Accompanied just by traditional kebero drums and fronted by the stunning voice of Genet Assefa, the core trio of Krar Collective create a surprisingly full band sound, leading one critic to name them *'The Ethiopian White Stripes'*. Sometimes augmented by bass krar, horn section, or dancers and with gentle ballads and funky high-energy dance tunes, Krar Collective never fail to surprise and delight.

With their first album released on the Riverboat label of the World Music Network in 2012, they have been described as *"one of the most rousing, reliable new African bands of the year"* (**The Guardian Newspaper**). In 2012 they represented Ethiopia in the London 2012 Cultural Olympiad alongside artists such as Angelique Kidjo and Staff Benda Bilili. Shortly after this, they were picked out as *"one of the grooviest and most hypnotic bands at Damon Albarn's recent Africa Express bonanza"* (**Time Out**), where they travelled for a week with 80 musicians on a private train performing on stage with African greats such as Baaba Maal, Amadou, Rokia Traore, Fatoumata Diawara, and non-African musicians such as Damon Albarn, John Paul Jones and Paul McCartney.



### Web site & social media

[www.facebook.com/krarcollective](http://www.facebook.com/krarcollective)

[www.myspace.com/krarcollective](http://www.myspace.com/krarcollective)

[www.twitter.com/krarcollective](http://www.twitter.com/krarcollective)

[www.krarcollective.com](http://www.krarcollective.com)

[www.lafriquedanslesoreilles.com/spectacles/221-krarcollective](http://www.lafriquedanslesoreilles.com/spectacles/221-krarcollective)

### Videos

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tmuoKluXvol> Krar Collective at Africa Express

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7O5NG4ADSI> MAD Festival India

<http://youtu.be/IGFrPGSWi4E> Guragegna

<http://youtu.be/6mSOFHnrfU> Three songs



## PRESS

"Tonight's highlights swing from the Krar Collective's charged collaboration with Afrikan Boy and Rye Rye to a crowd-silencing version of Gorillaz track Melancholy Hill, featuring Malian singer Rokia Traore" **The Guardian**

"one of the most rousing, reliable new African bands of the year"  
**The Guardian**

"This London-based Ethiopian three-piece, centred on the traditional krar harp, were one of the grooviest and most hypnotic bands at Damon Albarn's recent Africa Express bonanza. Expect an ultra-repetitive funky dance marathon." **Time Out**

"Krar Collective rock!" **fRoots magazine**

"They may use ancient instruments, but there's nothing arcane about the way that they play them. This is hot 'n' hypnotic dance music." **fRoots Magazine**

"I never expected to find this Ethiopian music gem hidden away in London. Krar Collective manage to achieve the right balance between the rawness of their roots and the subtleties of their innovative spirit. Precise without being too academic, funky without being too loose. I was really impressed." **Andy Morgan, former manager of Tinariwen.**

"Krar Collective... worked their minimal instrumentation of a drum kit, two voices and the eponymous krar... into a joyous thrash; now twanging like the soundtrack of an Amharic Western, now turning traditional songs into a full galloping wail." **David Honigmann of the Financial Times**

"Ethiopian music has gradually become a bit of a cult in recent years — and not just among African music fans. There's something about the soulful bluesy sound that has a wide appeal. This is the debut recording of the Krar Collective, a London-based Ethiopian band who have supported some of the big names and are deservedly making a name in their own right. The band features dynamic female vocalist Genet Assefa, drummer Robel Taye and, most importantly, krar (Ethiopian lyre) player Temesgen Zeleke, whose plucked pentatonic lines drive the album. It's a lean but compelling sound encouraged by Ethiopian jazz hero Mulatu Astatke. The opening tracks are dancy but the later ones settle into a more acoustic and meditative groove that is quite captivating." **Simon Broughton Evening Standard**

"Using effects pedals, Temesgen Taraken makes the krar sound like a 12-string guitar one minute, and the chunkiest, funkier electric guitar the next...they completely won over an initially reserved crowd, getting them to dance the night away... they are certainly unique" **The Arts Desk**

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