



May 2010,

Issue 3

Beethoven, one of many **NEW GUESTS** at Beit Almusica

Our new production, Beethoven at Beit Almusica, is only one example of the growing variety of original productions and programmes Beit Almusica is devising and performing.

Beethoven has two main protagonists: children and European classical music. The idea is to bring classical music to younger people so that they lose the idea that classical music is boring. Listeners can enjoy and learn while listening to a guided musical experience characterized by being inter-disciplinary, inter-active and entertaining.

This production will be presented on the occasion of Europe Day 2010, sponsored by the Spanish Presidency, the European Union and the Municipality of Shefa Amr.

Meanwhile, through the **Affirmative Action for Children Today** (AACT) pilot project, we are offering what we hope will be an inspiring helping hand to disadvantaged Palestinian children. A sad reality is that 60% of Palestinian children in Israel live in poverty.

The project, which is generously supported by the Welfare Association and an anonymous donor, provides music education to more than 50 Palestinian children aged from 8 to 10 years old from the Shefa Amr and Ibillin areas. In order to ensure the programme's continuity, and in an innovative approach for Palestinian civil society in Israel, we have launched a **Scholarship Fund** to benefit children who are committed to continuing their music education.

In another novel step, Beit Almusica has produced a CD, **Wa Hanin** ('Nostalgia'), the first digital recording of a production by our Eastern Music Group. The recording is a compilation of nine traditional Arab songs that have been given a new musical dimension through fresh arrangements. The songs were chosen because we believe it is important to recover music that belongs to our heritage and to arrange them in ways that appeal to old and new generations at the same time. We are grateful to the Qattan Foundation for its support.

Lastly, but not least, two events marked important new developments in our work: the launch of a **Cultural and Educational Dialogue** with the Guildhall School for Music and Drama; and an innovative meeting of Arab and Portuguese musical cultures. We have had an invaluable opportunity to establish a rich and respectful cultural dialogue between East and West thanks to the assistance of the British Council's BiArts Programme and the Instituto Camões.

I am certain that many **new guests** will visit us at Beit Almusica in the coming months and we eagerly await the chance to host them.

Amer Nakhle, General Director



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About Us

Beit Almusica is a non-profit organization (NGO) established in 1999 by a group of young artists. Our mission is to promote cultural rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel, to enrich society through the development of musical environments, to open prospects for artists, and to interact musically with other cultures.

We believe that the Palestinian community in Israel is entitled to equal opportunities for cultural and musical expression, to have their own cultural identity, and to benefit from a music education at high professional standards. Providing this rich cultural experience will ensure Palestinians in Israel feel proud and confident of their heritage, thus reinforcing their sense of belonging to society.

Conservatory



I was so excited when I was asked to write a couple of lines about the trip to London and the C.E.D project for the second newsletter of Beit almusica. I have so much to share regarding this experience, but I would like to write a brief explanation about the project.

In general, the collaboration is about musical exchange and cooperation between different institutions and conservatories. Beit almusica in Shafa-amr and the Guildhall school of Music and Drama in London were so fortunate to meet through this special project.

It all started back at the end of October 2009 when a group of teachers, students and graduates from Beit almusica flew to London to work with a group of students from the Guildhall. I was lucky to be one of them. We got to London, and the purpose of the first day was to get some rest in addition to getting ready for the next one in order to start working on music. However, seeing London for the first time made that mission really difficult! When we got to the Indian YMCA and put our luggage in the rooms, I found myself wandering the streets of London. London was so easy to connect to and so amazingly inspiring. I thought that being here was the best part of the trip, until the next morning arrived.

I still remember that feeling of fogginess when we first started working with the guys from the Guildhall. I was participating in the exercises that they prepared, but I could not help the questions popping into my head; "How is music related to what we are doing?", "Where are the notes for the pieces that we are supposed to play and work on?" I could not help thinking that what we were doing is not related to music. However, at the end of that day the picture was crystal clear- it was pure music. The simple rhythm that we started with at the beginning of the day turned into one big beautiful musical piece. We were divided into small groups, and each group was supposed to come up with a



'There and Back' by Saied Silbak

melody that fits the rhythm. Once the groups had joined back together, each group would play its melody and all the melodies would be put together to make one whole piece- amazing!

Working with the younger students in the school was just as great. They were so creative, so amazingly gifted and so much into music. We were also lucky enough to work and perform with a group of percussionists from Gambia, a country in Western Africa. In the last day of the project we had an unforgettable concert in a jazz club called "The Vortex".

Although it is hard to summarize such an amazing week in one page, I hope I did it in the best way possible.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all of those who arranged this project and made it possible for musicians from Beit almusica and the Guildhall's amazing staff that started this blessed project, and of course the British Council for sponsoring and funding the collaboration.

Finally, I would like to thank eight amazing musicians who accompanied us through this wonderful musical journey: Preetha, Letty, Eiko, John, Filipe, Fernando and of course Detta and Rob for guiding the group from the Guildhall school.



Did you know that...

At the beginning of the 2009-10 school year, **300** students enrolled at our conservatory. In the same year, we provided **75** scholarships and supplied musical instruments to students. The Scholarship Fund enables students from low-income families to pursue a professional music education. Financial support is also provided to students whose music education is under threat from financial problems to ensure they can continue their studies. At Beit Almusica, no student is turned away because of a lack of funds.

Conservatory

Cultural and Educational Dialogues (CED): Step by Step

The first step to the Cultural and Educational Dialogues (CED) project was taken unintentionally. In 2008 Amer Nahkleh visited community music projects in the UK with the support of the British Council's BiArts program. One of the organizations Amer visited was the Guildhall School for Music and Drama, where he met Robert Wells and Sean Gregory. His visit to one of Europe's leading conservatories, which opened its doors in 1880, left quite an impression.

In March 2009 Beit Almusica and the Guildhall School moved one step closer to realising the CED project when they received approval from the British Council. CED aims to provide a unique opportunity for cultural and educational exchanges, with the hope of creating new musical expressions as a result of cultural dialogue. In the longer term, the project opens the possibility of co-productions and artistic exchanges that should enrich the professional development of talented musicians.

A series of rhythmical steps have followed.

A group of six graduates from Beit Almusica and two accompanying teachers arrived in London on October 25, 2009 for an exciting and intensive week. For most of them it was their first time abroad. Four days later they gave a concert at the Vortex Jazz Club in London, which has a capacity of around 200 people. The venue was fully booked and the diverse audience included many young people.

On January 12 2010, the same group came to Shefa Amer for a different but equally exciting and intensive experience. Again, four days later, a concert was held at Beit Almusica with 200 participants. A second concert was staged the next day in cooperation with Assiwar, the Feminist Arab Movement in Support of Victims of Sexual Assault, at the Mahmoud Darwish Cultural Center in Nazareth in front of an audience of 250 people.

The beneficiaries of the project so far include 12 young professional musicians from the UK and Israel, four senior teachers from Beit Almusica and the Guildhall School for Music and Drama, as well as 60 students from Beit Almusica and audiences of more than 650 people.

Feedback from the participants was overwhelmingly positive. All agreed that it was an extraordinary project that made a significant contribution to their professional development and opened doors to future partnerships and exchanges.

The steps taken through the CED project left footprints leading to a wide horizon of possibilities for exchange.

"Amazing exchange; the success of the meeting of the two cultures and musical fans has certainly planted the roots of future collaborations and cultural understanding."

Preethna Narayanan

Zubin Mehta's 'Turning Point'

One of the partners of the program called 'Turning Point' is Beit Almusica. The project was developed at the initiative of the director of the Israel Philharmonic, Zubin Mehta and it provides music instruction, workshops, scholarships and camp programs for young talented Arab musicians.



On October 12, 2009, a concert was held at Beit Almusica to launch a new music education program in the Arab community. Amer Nahkleh, General Director, emphasized during the ceremony that such efforts are only the beginning of a long process. The event was attended by an audience of more than 180 people.

During the concert, which featured performances by students and faculty from the Beit Almusica conservatory, Mehta discussed music's role in bringing people together. He mentioned that "music is an international language, and this was shown here".

The program is supported by the Bank Leumi and the Arab Israeli Bank and is being run in cooperation with the Israel Philharmonic and several educational institutions.

New Production: Wa Hanin CD

For the first time in its history, Beit Almusica has released a CD of a production by our Eastern Music Group.

The name of the new album is "Wa Hanin" (Nostalgia) and it includes nine traditional Arab songs, from the Andalusian period to the more recent times of Sayed Darwish and the Rahbani brothers. The album draws on Palestinian, Levantine and Iraqi heritage, and Samir Makhoul has written the music for one song.

While the songs' structure and original music have been preserved, they have been given a new musical dimension through fresh arrangements that create a dialogue between the singers and the musical ensemble.

CD price: 50 NIS

For more details, call +972 (0)4 950 0230 or email info@beit-almusica.org

Festival 2009: Summer & Autumn

Portugal visits the Galilee...

by Rasha Hilwi and Heidi Paredes

Music from Portugal and the Arab world met at a special concert in Haifa and Nazareth, creating a new harmonious sound and revealing a kindred spirit shared by both music traditions.

Fado is Portuguese folk music that can be traced to the 1820s, but probably has much earlier origins. It draws on the faces, names and history of Portugal, and tells stories of sadness, farewell and nostalgia, often concerning the fate of women who were separated at the shore from husbands and lovers as they set to sea. Amália Rodrigues (1920-1999) – known as the "Rainha do Fado", or "Queen of Fado" – popularized Fado worldwide.

During four days in August last year, our Queen of Fado was Claudia Picado, who was accompanied by Jose Manuel playing Portuguese guitar and Bruno Costa on classical guitar. Together with a Palestinian group of Sana Musa (singer), Yousef Hbeish (percussion), Amer Nakhleh (buzuq) and Ihab Nemer (oud and violin), they produced a unique merging of Fado and Arabic music, at times going their separate ways and at others coming together.

The highlight of the evening came close to the end of the event with a fusion of two very different songs. 'Your Absence' was composed by Claudia Picado for her father, who died 11 years ago, in acknowledgement of the fact that he was the first person to support and encourage her decision to sing Fado. The second song, an Arabic classic performed by Sana Musa called 'What is Beyond the Sea', wonders about stories and legends of the sea.

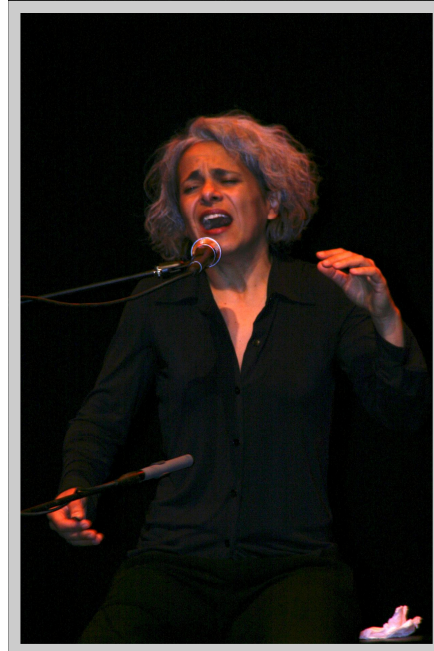


'Your Absence'

Your absence, my father
Suffers and burns
Clearly
In my life ...
And your warmth
Earned with time
The sweetness of existence
Which moved from father to his daughter.
Now I know that my first wish is to live while hugging
her until the end.

Lyrics by Claudia Picado

After 10 Years: Kamilya Jubran again in Haifa



To celebrate Beit Almusica's 10th anniversary, we had the honor of hosting internationally renowned Palestinian singer Kamilya Jubran at the Auditorium Hall in Haifa on November 22, 2009. Before this concert, Kamilya had not performed in the city for 10 years.

The enthusiastic response from the 1,000-strong audience, which applauded and cheered her performance, brought tears to Kamilya's eyes. She sang all the tracks from her new album 'Makan,' as well as popular songs from her time with Sabreen and a few childhood favourites.

Kamilya was born in Acre and raised in Ramah, a village in the Galilee. Her father, Elias Jubran, a music teacher and instrument maker, educated her in classical Arabic music.

In the 1980s and 90s, she made her name as the lead singer of the Jerusalem-based group Sabreen, in which she also played the oud, qanoon, and other oriental instruments. Sabreen is widely credited with having created a new style of a modern Arabic song, while at the same time giving voice to the Palestinian struggle for freedom.

In recent years Kamilya has toured widely in Arab and European cities performing her albums Mahattaat (2002), Wameedd (2004) and Makan (2009).

Community Outreach

Beit Almusica AACTs to Support Disadvantaged Children

Affirmative Action for Children Today, or AACT in its acronym, promotes bold moves to support children in the clearly disadvantaged Palestinian minority in Israel: 60% of such children live in poverty.

Beit Almusica is playing its own part by selecting 60 children from Shefa Amer and Ibillin who are benefitting from music education at Beit Almusica's conservatory. To this end we approached eight schools where auditions involving 96 children were held. The criteria in selecting the 60 children were the students' socio-economic situation, as assessed by the schools, and their musical talent, as judged by Beit Almusica's professional staff.

The AACT musical education program was launched at a special ceremony on December 7, 2009 at Beit Almusica, with more than 130 in attendance. The event was presided over by Said Silbak, one of the first students to begin his musical career with Beit Almusica. Today, as well as being a student at Haifa University and on the board of directors at Beit Almusica, he is a volunteer teacher of the program. We believe he is an inspiring role model for the students, able to lead by personal example and share his deep commitment to music.



Currently, 50 students regularly attend music lessons at the conservatory, learning various Eastern and Western instruments such as the oud, violin, viola, cello, flute saxophone, among others. Participation of students is high with 90% attendance. We have invested much effort in encouraging and urging the children to persevere with their music education.

The positive influence of the project can be felt already. One example is Rawi, a third grade student, whose father is unemployed. A very shy boy who was struggling at school, he started qanoun lessons in mid-December 2009. When his mother picked him up from the conservatory one day, she told the staff: "Since he started his music education at Beit Almusica, he became more self-confident and proud of himself. Ever since he saw children in his age group playing at a concert, he has had an aim to study music."

Julia, from the fourth grade, also has an unemployed father. She is now learning flute with her teacher, Sahar Kardosh. Both Sahar and Julia's mother noticed a dramatic change in Julia's behaviour. "Our whole home is undergoing a positive change in concert with Julia's positive development," said her mother.

Why Music?

"When people put on a play or a dance piece together, they learn to cooperate – and find they must go beyond tradition and authority if they are going to express themselves well. The sort of community created by the arts is non-hierarchical – a model of the responsiveness and interactivity that a good democracy will also foster in its political processes. And not the least, the arts can be a great source of joy. Participation in plays, songs and dances fills children with happiness that can carry over into the rest of their education."

Martha Nussbaum, University of Chicago; Newsweek International, August 2006; "Teaching Humanity."

Please AACT with us with your Support

In order to ensure the good work initiated by AACT continues even after the project comes to an end, we have launched a Scholarship Fund for the benefit of children who are committed to continuing their music education.

The fund is designed to ensure that these children and others in the future can benefit. For more information, or to make a donation, please visit:

<http://www.globalgiving.co.uk/pr/2700/proj2620a.html>

Special Event: Europe Day

Beit Almusica, the Spanish Presidency of the European Union,
the Delegation of the European Union to Israel and the Municipality of Shefa'Amr
have great pleasure in inviting you to a
Europe Day Celebration



Beethoven at Beit Almusica
a special production, which is
a musical/educational play
intended to introduce children
to European classical music.

Wednesday, May 12, 2010
Beit Almusica in Shefa'Amr
Registration at 17:00
The event will start at 17:30
Reception at 18:30



بيت الموسيقى
بييت אלמוסיקה
Beit Almusica

How to support Beit Almusica?

If you would like to help us promote the cultural rights of the Palestinian minority in Israel and enrich society through the development of musical frameworks, there are many ways in which you can support our work:

A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION – by allocating grants and other funds, or by making an individual donation.

A PRACTICAL CONTRIBUTION – by providing musical instruments, equipment or services or by providing technical or administrative assistance.

VOLUNTEERING – by supporting our work through a number of volunteer options.

BECOME A FRIEND – through a small annual membership fee.

JOIN OUR FACEBOOK GROUP – Facebook reaches across countries, communities and age groups and the more people who sign up to our group, the more impact it will have.

PASS THE WORD – tell your friends about us and our work.

CONTACT US AT: heidi@beit-almusica.org, Phone: +972-4-9500230.

Newsletter

P.O.Box 787, 20200 Shefa-Amr
Tel.: +972-4-9501135
Fax: +972-4-9501026
E-mail: heidi@beit-almusica.org
www.beit-almusica.org

Editor: Heidi Paredes
General Director: Amer Nakhleh

Promoting Cultural Rights of
the Palestinian Society in Israel



On behalf of
Beit Almusica,
we would like
to take the
opportunity to
thank you for
your support!