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***Brooklyn Arts Council Announces Full Concert Schedule for
Arab Music Festival***

Legendary Arab Musicians to Perform at "Brooklyn Maqam"

March 2 – 30, 2008 New York City

BROOKLYN, NY – (February 12, 2008) Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC) announces the performance schedule for **Brooklyn Maqam Arab Music Festival**, the first-of-its-kind month-long music festival celebrating Brooklyn's diverse Arab music scene in concerts, symposia, and workshops, March 2-30 in New York City. Nearly 100 local musicians and groups representing music traditions from Egypt, Yemen, Palestine, Iraq, Morocco, Israel, Syria, Tunisia, and Lebanon will perform at a range of venues including nightclubs, theaters, and coffeehouses. The festival features Arab music legends such as Simon Shaheen and Fahim Dandan as well as emerging artists in a range of pan-Arab music styles from traditional and classic to fusion and jazz-infused. Brooklyn Maqam continues in May with a series of cultural walking tours.

Brooklyn Maqam Arab Music Festival offers audiences an involved, complex listening experience based in the diversity of genres and styles practiced in Brooklyn and the metro area. Thematic events include a Moroccan party night; two programs devoted solely to women's vocals, both popular and traditional; instrument-focused sessions such as "All About Oud"; workshops on how to listen to Arab music; a symposia on the history of Arab music traditions in Brooklyn; and cultural walking tours of Atlantic Avenue and Bay Ridge in May 2008. The Festival is free and open to the public. Venues are located in Brooklyn and Manhattan. A full schedule and venue addresses are below and at: <http://www.brooklynartscouncil.org/documents/64>

BROOKLYN MAQAM ARAB MUSIC FESTIVAL - MARCH 2 - 30, 2008

SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Sunday, March 2, 2 - 5pm

Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College (BCBC), Whitman Theater
Brooklyn Maqam Begins

Dance and music from the Arab world: Simon Shaheen, world renowned, Brooklyn-based violinist and oudist. Folk Feet Arab Traditional Dance Showcase: Egyptian zeffa, saidi and tannoura, Levantine debkah, Yemeni bara'a, Moroccan gnawa, and more.

Tuesday, March 4, 6:30 - 8pm

powerHouse Arena

Tuning Your Ear: Learning to Listen to Arab Music

Tareq Abboushi, buzuq specialist and teacher, leads a workshop on Arab music basics. If you're new to the music, this is the way to get an "ear up."

Wednesday, March 5, 7 - 9pm

Najeeb's Place

Oud-Off I: Oud and Qahwa

The "Oudman" Najeeb Shaheen improvises on and explains the revered stringed instrument of Arab music, the oud. Sip an Arabic coffee with cardamom (*qahawa arbiyya*) while listening.

Thursday, March 6, 6:30 - 8:30pm

Safe-T-Gallery

Tuning Your Ear: Learning to Listen to Arab Music

Karim Nagi, percussionist and widely regarded workshop teacher, leads a session on Arab music basics including how a listening audience responds. Followed by: Jam in 3-D: Dumbek, Darbukah, Derbekki. Demo and jam session with the legendary Michel Merhej Baklout and Middle Eastern Percussion Ensemble featuring Karim Nagi and Brooklyn's own Egyptian tabla masters Gamal Shafik and Mohamed Yhya.

Friday, March 7, 9 - 10:30pm

(doors open at 8pm)

BAM Cafe at the Brooklyn Academy of Music

Elebash Concert Series: *Brooklyn's Maqam: Reinventing Arab Music in the Borough*

Featuring Fahim Dandan, the renowned singer whose presence at Arab weddings in Brooklyn and across the country is virtually required! And the experimental jazzy-Middle Eastern sound of Shusmo, led by Brooklyn's multi-talented Tareq Abboushi.

Sunday, March 9, 2 - 4pm

Brooklyn Historical Society

Roundtable: Arab Music Traditions and Their History in Brooklyn

A panel of music scholars and local community representatives discuss the history and relevance of Brooklyn's evolving Arab music traditions. Panelists: Dr. Anne Rasmussen, ethnomusicologist, Samuel R. Thomas, ethnomusicologist; Ray Rashid, owner, Rashid's Music; Dr. Ahmad Jaber, President, Arab American Association; Ahmad Hisry, local historian of Atlantic Ave.; Phaedra (Dr. Phyllis Saretta), scholar and former soloist with Ibrahim Farrah's Near East Dance Group; and Samiha Koura D'Aiuto, owner of the former Ibis nightclub, famous for dance and live music from the mid 1970s-90s.

Friday, March 14, 7:30 -10:30pm

Lafayette Grill and Bar (Manhattan)

Arab-o-rama: New York Bellydance Music and Dance Review

This evening features Brooklyn's Eddie "The Sheik" Kochak with his band; a reunion of

1980's Cedars of Lebanon/ Ibis Nightclub musicians; and Scott Wilson & Efendi. Accompanying dancers include Samara, Layla, Rayhanna, and others.

Saturday, March 15, 9pm - Midnight

Sultana

Sha'abi Shake Down

Party down to Moroccan and Tunisian popular musical traditions, such as sha'abi and rai with Mostafa El Jdidi, Salah Rhani, Nouredine, Jowad Bohsina, Reeyad El Tounsi, and others. The evening concludes with the Moroccan Sephardic fusion ensemble, Asefa.

Sunday, March 16, 3 - 5pm

Kingsborough Community College, Leon M. Goldstein Performing Arts Center

Elebash Concert Series: *Sawt al-Mar'a: Voice of the Woman*

Malika Zarra, Shoshana Tubi, and Gaida Hinnawi, with their ensembles, sing Arab classics and folk genres of the Levant, Egypt, Morocco, and Yemen, along with innovative original compositions.

Wednesday, March 19, 9pm - Midnight

Layaly (Manhattan)

Ladies Night at Layaly

A night with some of the Metro area's most in-demand vocalists: Al Sarah soloing Sudanese Arabic music, Rana Beyrouti, specializing in popular Lebanese djbeli song; and Ahlem, covering the best in classics and pop from around the Arab world. Stay until dawn for Layaly's live-music programming.

Thursday, March 20, 9 - 10:30pm

Joe's Pub (Manhattan)

Elebash Concert Series: *Timeless Traditions from Egypt and Iraq*

Zikrayat, led by Sami Abu Shumays, plays a classical repertoire from the Golden Age of Egyptian cinema, and Safaafir, led by Amir ElSaffar, revives the classical urban vocal tradition of Iraqi maqam.

Thursday, March 27, 7 - 9pm

Barbés

Oud-Off II: All About Oud

An evening of classic repertoire and improvisations with Brooklyn's Palestinian oudists of distinction: Zafer Tawil and Georges Ziadeh.

Friday, March 28, 9pm - Midnight

Tarboosh Cafe

Coffeeshop Hafla

Hafla (party) featuring Lebanese singer Basil Touma and Brooklyn Tunisian vocalist Ahlem. Dance with local Bay Ridge debkah group and taste shisha flavors and mezzes.

Saturday, March 29, 9 - 11pm

Alwan for the Arts

Diverse Traditions: Arab Folk Music in Regional Expression

This evening features Ahmed Alrodini, accompanied by Isaac Gutwilik, (Yemeni, Red Sea coast); Naji Youssef (Lebanese, djbeli); and Abdel Rahim with Brahim Fribgane (Moroccan, Berber).

Sunday, March 30, 1:30 - 3:30pm

Brooklyn Public Library/Grand Army Plaza, Stevan A. Dweck Center

Answering the Call to Prayer: Arab-Influenced Song Traditions in Jewish, Christian, and Islamic Brooklyn

Artists include the choir of the Catholic Melkite Byzantine Church of the Virgin Mary, led by Barbara Giancola; the ensemble, Tarab, specializing in Sufi repertoire; Yeheskel Zion, rabbi, cantor, and singer of pizmonim, songs with sacred Hebrew texts, set to the melodies of Arab music; and singer of nasheed, an Islamic-oriented song form popular throughout the Muslim world.

All programs are subject to change. Seating is on a first come basis.

ELEBASH CONCERT SERIES: TRADITION AND EVOLUTION IN ARAB MUSIC

These concerts are made possible with major support from Baisley Powell Elebash Fund. See full description in schedule.

Friday, March 7

BAM Cafe at the Brooklyn Academy
of Music

Brooklyn's Maqam: Reinventing Arab Music in the Borough

Sunday, March 16

Kingsborough Community College, Leon M. Goldstein Performing Arts Center
Sawt al-Mar'a: Voice of the Woman

Thursday, March 20

Joe's Pub

Timeless Traditions from Egypt and Iraq

VENUES

All venues are in Brooklyn unless noted as Manhattan. All admissions are FREE but venues marked with an asterisk*** require a food/drink minimum.

Alwan for the Arts, Cultural Center
16 Beaver St., 4th Floor (corner New St.)
Manhattan, Financial District • 212-967-4318

BAM Cafe at Brooklyn Academy of Music
Peter Jay Sharp Building
30 Lafayette Ave. (corner Ashland Pl.)
Ft. Greene • 718-636-4100

Barbés Bar and Performance Center
376 9th St. (corner 6th Ave.)
Park Slope • 718-965-9177

Brooklyn Center for the Performing Arts at Brooklyn College (BCBC), Whitman Theater
2900 Campus Rd. and Hillel Pl. (near intersection Flatbush/Nostrand Aves.)

Flatbush • 718-951-4600

Brooklyn Historical Society
128 Pierrepont St. (corner Clinton St.)
Brooklyn Heights • 718-222-4111

Brooklyn Public Library/ Grand Army Plaza, Stevan A. Dweck Center
Grand Army Plaza
(intersection Flatbush Ave. and Eastern Pkwy.)
Prospect Heights • 718-230-2100

Joe's Pub ***
425 Lafayette St. (corner Astor Pl.)
Manhattan, East Village • 212-967-7555

Kingsborough Community College, Leon M. Goldstein Performing Arts Center
2001 Orient Blvd.
Sheepshead Bay • 718-265-5343

Lafayette Grill and Bar ***
54 Franklin St. (corner Lafayette St)
Manhattan, Tribeca • 212-732-5600

Layali (Restaurant and Lounge) ***
98 Ave. B (corner 6th St.)
Manhattan, East Village • 212-358-1166

Najeeb's Place (Restaurant)
374 Graham Ave. (corner Skillman Ave.)
Williamsburg • 718-387-8333

powerHouse Arena
37 Main St. (corner Water St.)
DUMBO • 1-866-992-7362

Safe-T-Gallery
111 Front Street, Suite 210
DUMBO 718-782-5920

Sultana (Restaurant and Lounge)
160-2 North 4th St. (btw. Bedford and Driggs)
Williamsburg • 718-218-8545

Tarboosh Cafe ***
7222 Fifth Ave (btw. 72nd and 73rd Sts.)
Bay Ridge • 718-666-1632

BROOKLYN MAQAM CULTURAL WALKING TOURS - MAY 2008

Brooklyn Maqam doesn't end in March! On Saturday, May 10 we walk Atlantic Avenue with stops at Rashid's Music Store, Sahadi's Import Co., Damascus Bakery, Malko Karkanni Bros. Grocery and other high points of this animated avenue, one of the oldest Arab centers in America. On Saturday, May 17 we head out to Bay Ridge to explore the burgeoning Arab communities of Fifth Avenue. Visits to Meena Coffeehouse, Pyramids Jewelry, Beladi Grocery, El Amira Music, Diana Fashion, Islamic Society of Bay Ridge, and Tanoreen Restaurant are planned.

Register for tours at www.brooklynartscouncil.org in April.

Brooklyn Maqam Cultural Walking Tours are made possible by American Express

ABOUT BROOKLYN MAQAM

Brooklyn Maqam is a project of the Brooklyn Arts Council Folk Arts program which has been documenting Brooklyn musicians of Arab descent, many of whom are rarely heard outside their local communities and some of whom are known throughout the world.

ABOUT BROOKLYN ARTS COUNCIL (BAC)

Brooklyn Arts Council (BAC), an arts and services organization founded in 1966, is the umbrella for Brooklyn's range of cultural groups and individual artists working in the visual, performing, media, and literary arts. BAC helps Brooklyn's artist population—from the experimental to those preserving and evolving traditions of cultural heritage—create and present their work. BAC ensures that thousands of people throughout Brooklyn have access to a variety of free arts programming each year. Our programs are essential to the livelihoods of thousands of artists, creative professionals, and arts organizations across the borough.

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Use the American Express® Card at Brooklyn Maqam venues.

Additional support is provided by New York State Council on the Arts, New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, New York City Council and its Brooklyn Delegation.