

## **US performing arts teachers train young Lebanese talents at AUB; 2-week workshop wraps up with free concerts**

Wednesday, August 4, 2010

From July 27 to August 7, 2010, the Youth Excellence on Stage (YES) Academy has returned to Lebanon for a second consecutive year to bring its groundbreaking performing arts training featuring American and international artist teachers to aspiring young artists. The Academy is a comprehensive performing arts program located on the campus of American University of Beirut for musicians, dancers and actors aged 6 through young adult.



The YES Academy offers training opportunities to the emerging generation of music, dance and theater teachers in the nation's public and private schools and cultural institutions. The 150 youth have been recruited from Lebanese cities and regions including Beirut, Tripoli, Bekaa Valley, Saida, Chouf, and Beit Meri. In addition, a significant number of talented youth have been recruited from UNRWA schools performing arts programs. Specific courses of study include piano, classical voice, conducting, violin, viola, cello, bass, children's theater, Broadway musical theater and dance, as well as Broadway and Hip Hop dance for young adults. Eight string, piano and Broadway students are joining YES Academy Lebanon to continue their training from Syria and the Kurdistan region of Iraq.

**The YES Academy will culminate in three public performances by the faculty and students featuring Hip Hop, Broadway, String Orchestra, Piano Voice and Jazz. The first concert on August 6, 2010 at 7:30 pm in Assembly Hall will feature string orchestra, chamber music, classical voice, piano and jazz. The second concert, in Bathish Auditorium in West Hall, will be on August 7 at 6 pm and 8 pm.** This gala feature Broadway, Hip Hop and Children's Theater performances. Both concerts are free and open to the public. Highlights of the Academy will be featured again at a performance at the Clock Tower downtown on August 14 in cooperation with the LEBAM Band Festival ([www.lebam.org](http://www.lebam.org)).

The YES Academy is supported by The Levant Foundation (Jamal Daniel Family), The U.S. Embassy, the American University of Beirut, the American Community School of Beirut and the National Conservatory of Music. Additional support has been provided by First National Bank (FNB) and Unite Lebanon Youth. The YES Academy has facilitated gifts of over 1000 donated volumes of books, method books and educational materials for the National Conservatory as well as eight quarter and half sized violins given to needy students at the National Conservatory.

The faculty of 13 artist teachers is recruited from the United States' best universities and cultural organizations including Baylor University, St Louis Symphony Orchestra, Theatre Under The Stars, and HaviKoro Break Dancers. The YES Academy teachers are no strangers to the Middle East region having participated in numerous cultural projects and student trainings since 1998.

The YES Academy in Lebanon is one of three Middle East Academies provided in Erbil, Damascus and Beirut during the summer of 2010. According to YES Academy Director, John Ferguson “The Yes Academy brings an American education experience to Damascus and creates opportunities for young people to either perfect their skills or try out new styles and genres of music, dance and theater with an internationally recognized faculty. I hope that young talent from throughout the region will continue to enjoy and benefit from this unique program”.

The YES Academy is organized by American Voices, a Houston-based NGO, active in the Middle East and Asia with similar programs in Iraq, Syria, Nepal and Thailand. Information regarding the YES Academy can be found in English and Arabic on [www.YESAcademy.info](http://www.YESAcademy.info). Videos and photos of each academy can be found on the American Voices YouTube Channel You Tube at <http://www.YouTube.com/americanvoices> and the website: [www.americanvoices.org](http://www.americanvoices.org).

Members of the press are invited to visit the program on the campus of the American University of Beirut daily from 10 am to 6 pm as well as to attend the free final performances on August 6 at AUB’s Assembly Hall and on August 7, 2010 at the Bathish Auditorium in West Hall. All concerts are free and open to the public.

**For information contact:** [info@americanvoices.org](mailto:info@americanvoices.org)

**Contact:**

Mahmoud Awale 00961 70 026273 –YES Academy (Arabic and English)

Aimee Fullman 00961 70 239640– YES Academy (English and French)