

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 15-12-2021

Music and song back in Ras Beirut:

“an initiative by the AUB Neighborhood Initiative with Al Madina Theatre”

The Al Jar Lil Jar series of music and song performances in Ras Beirut neighborhood have kicked off this December 11 and will continue till the 29th, with the aim of bringing back liveliness and joy to the neighborhood in the Christmas and New Year season. These events are presented by the American University of Beirut (AUB) Neighborhood Initiative and the iconic Al Madina Theatre.

“We planned an inclusive joyful program to re-enliven Ras Beirut this festive season,” said Mona El Hallak, director of the AUB Neighborhood Initiative. “We hope to create positive vibes and to spread the joyful Christmas spirit in our Ras Beirut neighborhood despite the stressful conditions that people are suffering from in Lebanon today.”

The program includes a Christmas parade with three street performances featuring young Palestinian and Syrian refugee musicians as well as a group of migrant workers; and seven concerts by great local choirs, bands, singers, and performers ranging from established artists to young upcoming faces.

The concerts are livestreamed on a huge screen on Hamra street, and on the AUB YouTube channel, so that everyone can enjoy the performances regardless of their location or ability to purchase tickets.

As for all the concerts held at Al Madina Theatre, strict COVID-19 regulations are followed. Only 50 percent of the theater capacity is used (200 seats), masks are obligatory inside the theater, and the theater is sanitized before every concert.

The parade

A Christmas Parade was held on December 11 from AUB Main Gate to Al Madina Theatre, with children from private and public schools in the Raas Beirut neighborhood and in collaboration with the Lebanese Scout Association Band and Ahla Fawda, an independent Lebanese non-profit organization. Three musical performances also took place on Hamra street, by migrant workers as well as the Al Kamandjati and Beit Atfal Assumoud Band. The band is an initiative by two associations that give Palestinian children inside Shatila and Borj El Barajneh camps access to music, and that are gathering and empowering talented students to perform their own music. The third performance was by graduates of the Action for Hope music school which offers cultural development and aid programs that support distressed and displaced communities.

The concerts at Al Madina Theatre

Jeelan, a Lebanese band which consists of two generations of two fathers and two sons, performed on December 12, a unique mixture of rock and jazz with Oriental, Tarab and Sufi songs. Khaled Al Abdallah was on oud and vocals; his son Adam was on piano, keyboard, and vocals; Oussama Al Khatib was on bass and vocals, and his son Ibrahim was on drums.

Additional concerts will be held on December 20, 21, 27, 28, and 29. Performing artists will include RAND, a Lebanese band formed by three siblings: Youssef, Lili, and Jamale Abou Hamad; Ghada Ghanem who will sing as she prepares fresh pasta on stage with her friends, accompanied by Olga Bolun on the piano; Ziyad Sahhab and Lamia Ghandour performing "Tahlab w Doud"; and the Fayha Choir conducted by Maestro Barkev Taslakian. This is in addition to "Not Too Long Ago," a special performance of musical memoirs to support Al Madina Theatre, with Nidal Al Achkar, the director, and Khaled Al Abdallah, the music composer who will also be on oud and vocals, featuring Mohamad Akil on oud and vocals, Ibrahim Akil on nay, and Nabil Al Ahmar on percussion.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 365-bed hospital.

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