

Bethlehem Inaugurates its New Building



On the 14th, 15th, and 18th of September, the ESNCM celebrated the opening of its new Bethlehem Branch building in the adjacent town of Beit Sahour. This building, designed according to latest international criteria for music conservatories, will be the teaching venue for 300 students from the towns of Bethlehem, Beit Sahour, Beit Jala, and other villages in the area.

The launching of the new building was celebrated by outstanding musical performances of ESNCM students and renowned artists who volunteered to participate in this landmark event. Opera singer June Anderson, the young/Palestinian soprano Dima Bawab, Argentinean pianist and human rights activist, Miguel Estrella and accompanist Jeff Cohen from Paris, and accompanied by Mrs Tania Sfeir chairperson of "A Child -A Promise", all came for this occasion. Performances of ESNCM Arabic and classical ensembles delighted their special guests and major donors, some of whom took the trouble to come all the way from abroad, to attend the event.

This unique 800 m2 building, designed by young architect

Elias Anastas, consists of two stories. It includes 11 teaching rooms for individual and group training, a specialized music library, a multipurpose music hall, musical workshops for repairing instruments, a cafeteria, administrative offices, and two small apartments to accommodate teachers coming from abroad.

On this occasion, the ESNCM wishes to express its deep appreciation of the generosity of all those who contributed towards achieving this vital project: The Palestinian Authority, The Beit Sahour Municipality, The Spanish Cooperation, A Child - A Promise, Mr. Mohammad Abu Ghazaleh, CCC, Abu Dhabi Culture and Arts Group, Al Hariri Foundation, His Royal Highness Prince Karim Aga Khan, Bank of Palestine, Mrs. Sumaya Jabsheh Abu Ghazaleh, Mr.Maher Abu Ghazaleh, Mrs. Fatmeh Abu Ghazaleh, Mrs. Maha Abu Ghazaleh, Mrs. Hanan Abu Ghazaleh, Mr.Abd Alraziq Odeh, Mr.Alberto Qassis and his family, Mrs. Fawziyeh Saed and her family, Mr. Mario and Mrs. Jenna Nazzal, Mrs. Randa Qadoura, Mr. Munther and Mrs. Salwa Farah, Mr Fahmi Alghusein and Mr.Marwan Shihadeh.

Culture is NOT an accessory

By: Rasha Sansur

It was a fluorescent lit room, with a large conference table with the notes and pens of artists in several fields, gathered to advance their management skills. Those artists gestured restlessly while gripping their precious pens, as they expressed their grave concern about the status of the cultural sector around the world.

Their faces portrayed a shared and common anxiety; culture around the world suffers from the economic slowdown.

They all had jobs that manage arts and other cultural activities; however, they were apprehensive about their status as they were aware that they would be the first to suffer from government cut backs because most governments around the world treat culture as an accessory.

They all sat there listening to experts in the field of managing culture and arts. Those wise experts taught them how to treat art as business and as a source of income without compromising its artistic integrity.

They debated with renowned economists urging them to include management of culture in school curricula around the world, which is bound to advance the state of culture and arts in the future and strengthen the sectors working in the field. When people, at a young age begin to realize that the box office of a musical, for example, can generate income and increase the gross domestic product of a country, then, they can start defending this sector. It is important for them to link the financial benefits from cultural activities, with social benefits. Income from state of the art cultural activities, that would attract people from all over, can be utilized among other things, to help the health sector, provide homes for the homeless and increase employment.

Those experts also taught them how to find alternatives to promote their projects by using new technologies that surround us nowadays. They also spent entire days visiting museums and cultural premises to learn how to promote their projects from experienced people, who "survived" the cut backs by creativity and innovation.

They all came out wiser men and women and joined the others in their battle against ignorance of inexperienced people. They all earned their title as "Knights of the Cultural Table", the same table that started the whole debate at the fluorescent room, in Brussels Belgium.

After all, culture and arts aren't just a necklace people wear whenever they want.

Message from the President of the Italian Republic on the occasion of the Italian tour of the Palestine Youth Orchestra - Rome, 28 July 2012

The Palestine Youth Orchestra

I wish to transmit my warmest greetings to the young artists, to the managers and to those who accompany the "Palestine Youth Orchestra" in its Italian tour which will see them engaged from today in concerts in Vernazza, Genoa, Florence, Ravello and Rome.

Through the universal language of music the orchestra offers a high testimony of dialogue and hope. The young musicians, whom Italy is happy to greet, remind us of the necessity to renew the efforts towards the achievement of a just and durable agreement between Palestinians and Israelis, which would allow these two nations, who are both our friends, to live side by side in peace and security.

It is with this spirit that I cordially salute the members of the "Palestine Youth Orchestra" and all those who will attend their Italian concerts

[Signed Giorgio Napolitano]

In collaboration with the Conservatorio Niccolò Paganini in Genova and the Conservatorio Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, the Palestine Youth Orchestra (PYO) completed a five-city tour of Italy, travelling the length of the country from North to South. After a week-long workshop at the conservatoire in Genova, sixty young musicians from Palestine and the Diaspora were joined by eighteen Italian students from the partner institutes in Genova and Rome. The tour started in Vernazza, a small coastal village which the orchestra reached by boat. The PYO went on to perform successful concerts at the Teatro Carlo Felice in Genoa, a packed outdoor concert on the Piazza della Signoria in Florence, a concert on a sizzling evening at the historic Salla Accademica of the Conservatorio Nazionale di Santa Cecilia in Rome, and closed the tour with a spectacular 'sunset concert' at the Ravello Festival, from a stage on the cliff tops overlooking the Amalfi Coast.

Directed for the fourth time by the English conductor Sian Edwards, the orchestral highlights of the programme included Beethoven's Symphony No. 8 and Rimsky Korsakov's energetic and colourful Capriccio Espagnol. The tour included performances by three exciting young Arab soloists: Fresh from her performance at the BBC Proms, the Palestinian soprano Dima Bawab performed Delibes lively song 'Les Filles de Cadix,' and Dvorak's captivating 'Song to the Moon' from his opera Rusalka. Maias Al Yamani, a violinist who recently performed his own music with Gidon Kremer, and is one of the most popular young Arab composers working today, performed his own composition 'Sea Waves,' for Arabic violin and orchestra. In celebration of his extraordinary achievements for the PYO and his contribution

The Palestine Youth Orchestra Tours Italy and Jordan



to music in Palestine, PNO clarinetist and ESNM teacher Mohamed Najem, a member of the PYO since its founding, became only the second soloist ever, to perform Kinan Azmeh's November 22nd for solo clarinet and strings. Mohamed's short, improvised encore at the Genoa concert became an unexpected musical highlight of the tour for many musicians, and gave us a rare glimpse of his own compositional talents. More to come? Let's hope so.

Upholding its reputation for unusual and spectacular chamber music concerts, PYO students performed a traditional Arabic music program at an outdoor restaurant, followed by a more formal concert the following day in the courtyard of the Palazzo dei Rolli in Genoa, which included music for percussion ensemble, Piazzolla arrangements for bass and viola sections, music for solo vibraphone, solo flute music by Debussy and an unforgettable choreographed performance by the lower brass musicians (trombones and tuba), which included music from the Super Mario computer game, after which Yassar Sa'adat, Majd Qadi, Michele Fortunato and Midhat Husseini fell flat on their faces, mimicking the computer game. Maias Al Yamani performed his own solo violin composition 'Valse Arabe', before the audience was treated to a beautiful song by PYO flutist Nay Barghouti, who then joined forces with Maias Al Yamani, spontaneously and with virtuosity, in a traditional Arabic tune performed as a flute and violin duo.

Due to popular demand, the PYO performed three concerts

in Jordan in November, conducted by the rising British conductor Tom Hammond, two concerts at the Hussein Cultural Centre in Amman, and a third concert at the King Hussein bin Talal Convention Centre on the shores of the Dead Sea, with the rising mountains of Palestine visible as a backdrop from the theatre.

The PYO was assisted by a group of expert coaches. This year's team had a special touch of prestige with sponsorship from flagship Norwegian orchestra, the Oslo Philharmonic, who sent three members of their orchestra: Torbjørn Ottersen (percussion), Anders Rensvik (viola) and Steinar Børmer (double bass). Other tutors taking time out from their busy performing careers included Giuseppe Laruccia (woodwind) and Gloria Merani (second violin), both from the Conservatorio Paganini, Francesco Bartoletti (cello), from the Haute Ecole de Musique in Geneva, Switzerland, and Richard Ward (brass), of Zone One Brass, based at the Royal College of Music in London.

The ESNM would like to thank all those who contributed towards holding the events in Italy and Jordan: Al Qattan Foundation, The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), Friends of the PYO Orchestra Committee, Prince Claus Fund for Culture and Development, Jett Bus Company, Crown Plaza Hotel, Greater Amman Municipality, Al Hussein Cultural Center, the Franco-German Cultural Center, and the Osteoporosis Society in Jordan.



The Palestine National Orchestra Celebrates its Second Year

The Palestine National Orchestra (PNO) conducted by the Australian Lebanese Maestro, Mathew Khoury, performed at the Ramallah Cultural Palace on the 15th of March, offering the audience a thrilling program, starting with Beethoven's Corolian Overture, Op.62, followed by an amazing performance of November 22nd by the Syrian composer himself, Kinan Azmeh. The performance captured the attention of the audience, and took it on a dreamy journey of fantasy and yearnings.

Later, the prominent German-Palestinian cellist, Alexander Suleiman, performed Robert Schumann's Cello Concerto in A minor, op.12, followed by Mozart's symphony No.35, K.385 and ending with Stravinsky's Pulcinella Suite.

Trumpet player, Rani Elyas, considered himself lucky to have had the chance to perform in Palestine for the first time, fulfilling a life time dream of visiting Palestine and Jerusalem.

The artistic director of the PNO, Michele Cantoni, pointed out that the orchestra embodies the Palestinian national dream of establishing a sovereign state that reunifies Palestinians from all over the world. Two days later, and in collaboration with the Balad Theater, the Orchestra performed in The Hussein Cultural Center in Amman and was received with great enthusiasm by the audience.

Major sponsors of the PNO were the Bank of Palestine, the Palestinian Investment fund, Mr. Sabih Al Masri, and several friends of the Orchestra. In Amman the performances were further generously supported by the Greater Amman Municipality, The Jordan Ahli Bank, El Hikma Pharmaceutical Company, Al Nisr Al Arabi Insurance Company, the Housing Bank for Trade and Finance, Jett Bus Company, Kempinski Hotels, Palace Hotel and Fakhr El Din restaurant.

The Bank of Palestine: Permanent sponsor for the PNO - By Hashim Shawa, CEO of Bank of Palestine

The sponsorship of the Palestine National Orchestra comes out of his vision of the need to create an artistic and musical culture that revives the Palestinian Heritage, and the PNO will be the ambassador of Palestine in international events and activities abroad.

As such the Bank of Palestine strives to elevate the image of Palestine in all cultural and artistic fields.

As part of the Bank's policy of keeping a link with Palestinians in the Diaspora, it has established a unit to stay in contact with them. This policy has been translated into our sponsorship of the Orchestra to distribute the culture and civilization of Palestine in their home country and abroad.

The Bank chose ENSCM after noticing their continuous achievements. We are extremely happy with this partnership to accomplish our common goal in supporting the country, the Palestinian culture, and the arts. The Bank is committed to support the PNO in the years to come, so our country will maintain its rich cultural heritage and boost economic capabilities.



Nura Abu Madi, The winner in the singing competition



The Palestinian National Music Competition

On the 16th of March, the ENSCM launched its fourth National Music Competition from occupied East Jerusalem. Since 2006, every two years, contestants between ages 8-30 years performed before international and Palestinian juries.

The contestants came from all historic Palestine and the occupied Golan Heights. Due to the Israeli siege of Gaza, and the closure of Jerusalem to West Bankers, many of the participants had to perform via video conference.

Besides the already established categories, a competition for ensembles was introduced this year. This included chamber music, Arabic music ensembles and bands.

The final ceremony after almost a month of competing was held on the 11th of April at The Ramallah Cultural Palace. The last competition in singing took place during the ceremony and the vote of the audience after listening to the contestants was taken into consideration when the final results were announced by the jury. Nura Abu Madi got the first prize, Nay Barghouthi, and Rawan Elyan from Gaza won the second and third prizes respectively.

Marcel Khalife Music composition competition was distinguished in the year of 2012 by discovering three new Palestinian talents with a shining future, these were Donia Jarrar who won the first price, Tareq Abboushi the second, Mohammad Najem the third, Wishing them all a successful future.



The ENSCM would like to express its gratitude to all the organizations that contributed towards this national event: The European Union, The Welfare Association, Ford Foundation, the Franco-German Cultural Center, Instruments for Peace, Jerusalem Hotel, AL Qattan Foundation, and PalMedia.



The Children's Orchestra and Music Kindergarten in Ramallah

Double Bass teacher, Ramadan Khattab, along with teachers from the Conservatory, Liesbeth Debruyne (violin), Jay Crossland (brass), Christine Gebler (double bass), Daniele Spada (cello), Marko Mazzi (viola), and Mohammad Nijem (clarinet), organized a music camp for young children on the 28th of April at the ESNCM activity center in Birzeit. The activities of the camp included music and singing and the fabrication of the children's own percussion instruments. At the end of the day, the children from the kindergarten and the baby orchestra performed a concert for their parents and teachers.

Such activities are introduced at a young age to strengthen the children's musical abilities and group performances. The Children's Orchestra later performed at the graduation ceremony of the Ramallah Branch, on the 26th of May.



Asmahan: a 100 Years Legacy

The ESNCM and Ramallah Municipality organized a concert in memory of the late Arab singer, Asmahan, on the 28th of July.

The Al Quds Ensemble for Arabic Music along with singers: Rula 'Azar, Samah Mustafa, and Sameera Kharroubi, performed a selection of popular Asmahan songs.

The concert was sponsored by the Ramallah Municipality, Chili Chili restaurant, the Welfare Association, and Sida.

At another event, the Jerusalem Arabic music group performed songs by Asmahan at the opening of the Yabus Cultural Center annual Jerusalem Festival, on the 12th of July, the singers were: Nay Barghouthi, Samira Kharoubi, Mariyan Baransi, Samah Mustafa, Rula Azar and Hani As'ad.

ESNKM Students Abroad

Zeina Alkhatib (qanoun), from Jerusalem and Kareema Toman (oud) from Gaza, participated in a cultural exchange music camp in Sweden, sponsored by the Center for Christian Swedish studies from the 29th of July till the 8th of August.

Tamer Nassar (saxophone), Ayham Jalal (clarinet), Mario Qumsieh (percussion), and Muhammad Qutati (Accordion), took part in a Jazz music camp from the 17th - 23rd of July, organized at William Patterson University in New Jersey, USA, and funded by the Bassem and Muna Hishmeh fund.

Jaber Jubran (Qanoun), Lordina Baboun (violin), Zaki Jadaa' (oud), and Sameer Kharoubi (voice) participated in two music camps, one in Germany and another in Tunisia.



Singer Christine Zayed with Turath Ramallah

Layali A'Tarab 2012 A Festival of Arabic Music

ESNKM launched for the fourth consecutive year Layali A'Tarab Festival, a festival that takes place mainly in Jerusalem and in other cities in the West Bank such as Hebron, Bethlehem, Ramallah, Nablus, and for the first time in Gaza.

However, due to the Israeli raid in the last days of November on the Gaza strip, the Festival was withheld for a period of two weeks, which resulted in the cancellation of the participation of some international Arabic music groups. However, after the end of the raid on Gaza, the

(legends), and "Sirr" (secret). These musical compositions demonstrate how developed and complex Palestinian music is.

Siraj choir performed songs by the famous Egyptian composer Sayed Darwish. Dalal Abu Amneh, a prominent singer, also performed "An Baladi ihkili" which means, tell me about my country. The Festival also included performances by ESNKM student groups.

Mr. Suhail Khoury, the General Director of ESNKM, said in an interview with "Alakhbar" Lebanese newspaper, that the purpose of the Festival is to emphasize the Palestinian identity in the occupied city of Jerusalem. The society in Jerusalem faces many cultural challenges,



Siraj choir in a Special night with Sayed Darwish

Singer Hani Asaad with Maqamat Al-Quds

Festival was resumed with success, warming the hearts of the Palestinian and international audience during this cold autumn month.

The Festival included, for the first time, a performance by the young Palestinian singer, Nai Barghouti, who usually participates on the flute in her oriental music group "Maqamat Al Quds".

This year, the Festival included prominent local Palestinian music groups from the Galilee; Watar(String) music group performed pieces from their Albums "Asateer"

including musical ones. Israeli music seems to dominate the scene as it blasts loudly from passing cars in the city. This Festival comes as a way to affirm and restore the Arab cultural heritage in Jerusalem and in the occupied Palestinian territory as a whole.

The festival was sponsored by: the Ministry of Culture (Palestine Culture Fund), the Swedish Consulate, Sida, the Welfare Association, Drosos foundation for Development, Ford Foundation, The Housing Bank, Alzahra Hotel, and the Jerusalem Hotel.

Gaza Music School ESNCM's Fifth Branch

The Gaza Music School, founded by A.M Qattan Foundation in July 2008, joined the ESNCM family to become one of its branches. This is an outstanding achievement in the ESNCM's long life of fulfilling its main vision in encouraging a lively creative musical culture in every Palestinian home.

At the onset of its foundation, the Gaza Music School started with 25 students, and 5 music teachers on the piano, guitar, oud, qanoun and violin.

In an interview with the Executive Director of A.M Qattan foundation, Mr.Ziad Khalaf mentioned that the idea to establish the school was when the Foundation found out that very few young people were applying for music scholarships within their scholarship program, even though many children seemed eager to study music during the occasional workshops the foundation organized. With this in mind the organization decided to establish the music school pilot project in Gaza.

During the Israeli raid on Gaza in December 2008, the 7 story music school building, along with its equipment and other important contents, was completely demolished.

Three months later, the Palestinian Red Crescent offered the School one of its premises to continue with the music education. Later in the interview Mr.Ziad said: "Keeping in mind that the A.M Qattan foundation is not a specialized music institution, we chose the ESNCM , as a specialized



music institution, to pursue the work. In April 2012 the Gaza music project turned into ESNCM's fifth music branch.

In an interview with the Academic Supervisor of the new branch, Mr. Ibrahim Al Najar described the branch as being a candle lit in the darkness of the siege imposed by the occupation. The Gaza branch offers music education to children aged 6-14. Since its opening in April 2012, the branch established many music groups and oriental music ensembles that are in demand for performing at events for local institutions. Furthermore, the Branch has also attracted many foreign delegations that monitor the situation in Gaza. Mr. Al Najar hopes that in the future a new specially designed music building will be established according to the international criteria for modern music conservatories.

Notably, The number of students for the Academic year 2012-2013 exceeds 185 students that are taught by 14 experienced teachers.



The ESNCM Graduation Ceremonies

Between the 24th and the 26th of May, the ESNCM branches celebrated the graduation of their students from the elementary and intermediate levels.

On the 24th, the Jerusalem Branch held its graduation ceremony at the Jerusalem Center for Near Easter Studies, which is situated on the Mount of Olives; the audience enjoyed a magnificent view of the Old city of Jerusalem, while listening to their children performing a superb program of classical and oriental music. What made the event unique was the birth of the Palestine Youth Choir; a choir made up of 35 young girls. It was founded by Mr. Suhail Khoury, the ESNCM General Director to encourage and enhance group singing and to develop musical creativity.

Those from Jerusalem Branch who received their certificates are: Osama Abu Arafeh and Kan'aan Ghoul on Oud, and Maen Ghoul -percussion.

On the 25th, the following elementary level students of the Bethlehem Branch graduated; Albert Baseel on percussion, Jaber Jubran on the qanoun, and Lourd Hathweh on the clarinet.

On the 26th, the Ramallah Branch held its annual graduation ceremony at the Friends School auditorium. The following students graduated from the elementary level: Layan Anabtawi, Mays Hanatsheh, Leila Atta, Noor Taha, Dina Alzer'i, Hala Saqf Al Heit, Ameer Atta, Khalil Khoury, Anton Barghouth, Ashraf Afouri and Khalil Turjman, while Sasha Khoury on the piano, and Rasha Sansur on the flute, graduated from the intermediate level, thus ending 8 years of music education at the Conservatory.



Maqamat Oriental Music Group Activities

From the 19th - 21st of March, the ESNCM Maqamat Oriental Music ensemble, participated in a workshop in Brussels, Belgium, during a youth conference under the title of " The Role of Refugee Youth in light of the Current Changes in the Arab World".

Locally, the group performed at a charity event on the 11th of February for Rawdat El Zuhur School in Jerusalem. On the 14th they performed at an event held by the "Injaz" organization, at the Leaders Hall in Ramallah and at the Franco-German Cultural Center, to honor volunteers.

Members of the group also performed at the opening of Saint George Hotel in Jerusalem.

Along with teachers from the Conservatory, Maqamat performed at the Chamber Music and Guitar festival in Jerusalem on the 7th of May. On the 19th the group performed at the student graduation ceremony of Hind El Hussein College.





The ESNCM Celebrates Mrs. Rima Nasir Tarazi's 80th Birthday

The ESNCM paid a special tribute to Mrs. Rima Tarazi, chairperson of the Supervisory Board of the Conservatory, on her 80th birthday. Mrs. Tarazi was not only one of the founders of the Conservatory, but has also contributed greatly to the musical movement in Palestine, as a pianist, composer and teacher. Furthermore she has been a political and social activist enjoying a wide circle of friends.

The celebration which took place at the Ramallah Cultural Palace on March 21st, started with a special film about Mrs. Tarazi entitled "Composing History" which had just been produced by Sawsan Qaoud as a documentary for Al-Jazeera. It was a beautiful documentary showing the human aspect of Mrs. Tarazi, her involvement in public life, her personal passion for music and the national cause, her relationship with her children and grandchildren and her commitment to the Conservatory.

The program included musical pieces played by three of her grandchildren Sari, Leen and Sama who played with Jamileh Ezbeidi, Sari Ezbeidi and Marina Eichberg, a string quartet by Haydn. Jiries Boulata, one of the teachers at the Conservatory played beautifully a Liszt piano piece which he dedicated to Mrs. Tarazi on the occasion. Two of her close friends and colleagues, Nuha Barghouti from the Union of Palestinian Women, and Farideh El-Ammad from Ina'ash El-Usra, gave very warm testimonies. Her sister Samia described Mrs. Tarazi's personality in a humorous rhyme, and in his few words, her brother Hanna expressed how proud he was of his older sister. Tania, her sister-in-law and lead singer in Mrs. Tarazi's songs, spoke about her musical partnership with Mrs. Tarazi.

Mrs. Tarazi accompanied the small choir as they sang two of her compositions, Jerusalem, and Nafha which she dedicated that evening to Hana El-Shalabi, the Palestinian prisoner who was on hunger strike, and to all the prisoners who had joined the hunger strike. She recalled the time she wrote and composed Nafha during the hunger strike of the prisoners of Nafha prison in 1980 which led to the death of two inmates. Joining the choir were: Tania Nasir, Maha Khoury, Nadia Abboushi, Georgette Shamsoum, Haifa Baramki, Abla Nasir, Abla Aranki, George Ghattas, Marwan

Tarazi, Kamal Shamsoum, Tareq Wahbeh, and Sani Meo.

After the rendition of the songs, Yacoub Odeh, an ex-inmate of Nafha, took the opportunity to express his admiration of Palestinian women whose fortitude and courage in general, and especially during the Nafha hunger strike, contributed greatly to the endurance and steadfastness of the prisoners for a whole month.

The audience was very moved when Mrs. Tarazi accompanied a group of lovely young children from St. Joseph's school, in one of her well known children's songs. "I am a Palestinian child"

At the end of the celebration, Mrs. Tarazi was also honored by Dr. Leila Ghannam, the Governor of Ramallah and El Bireh and the Bank of Palestine. The ESNCM presented her with a pottery tableau engraved with the words of a song that she had written upon the release of her nephew Suhail from jail "Celebrate with Flowers and Lights". The celebration ended by Mrs. Tarazi cutting the cake made in the shape of a grand piano while the Conservatory Jazz group Al' El Raseef, who had welcomed her at the entrance, played "Happy Birthday" with everybody singing, rejoicing, and wishing her many more healthy years.

ESNCM Nablus Activities

On the 13th of March, the Academic Supervisor of the Nablus Branch, Habeeb Aldeek and teachers from the conservatory of Lille in France, participated in a concert that blended Arabic music heritage with French music heritage, at the French Cultural Center in Nablus.

The Branch also held a concert for guitar and piano, performed by guest jury members of the Palestine National Music Competition, on the 24th of that month.

Later, on the 27th, the branch hosted the Sapphire Trio, a famous chamber music group in the US. The trio organized a master class for the students of Nablus, and ended it with an exciting performance.

A month later, on the 27th of April, the Conservatory organized a master class with teachers from the conservatory of Lille.

The events at Nablus branch were sponsored by the Drosos foundation.



Teacher Workshop in Jordan

The ESNCM and Beit Almusica – Shafa Amr, organized a workshop for 30 Oriental music teachers from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and Iraq. The venue for the 4 day workshop (3-7 July) was in Jerash, Jordan.

The workshop included seminars on instrumental music, rehearsals in oriental music groups known as Takht, and individual classes. It also included lectures on the various Arabic musical schools and methods, compositions, music arrangements, music management, as well as the manufacturing of the oud.

The workshop was supported by the "The Conservatory Project" funded by the European Union.

Al Sununu Choir Celebrates its Second Anniversary

Al Sununu project, which aims at reuniting Palestinian children in Refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza, Syria, Lebanon and Jordan, by teaching them the Palestinian and Arab folkloric music, organized a concert on the 21st of June at Al Fawwar refugee camp in the Hebron district and another concert at Deir Ammar refugee camp in the Ramallah district on the 23rd. The concerts were well received among the local communities.

In the summer, Al Sununu started a new choir for the children of Jerusalem, who, after an extensive summer program gave an outstanding concert on the 18th of July.

This project is in partnership with Association Rostropovich-Vishnevskaya (ARV), UNRWA, and sponsored by ARV and Welfare Association.



ESNCM Students in the UK

The Ingenium Academy is an annual three week international summer school for music based in the United Kingdom, offering young music students from around the world specialized musical education of the highest caliber, combined with an immersive cultural experience. Four students from the ESNCM were offered scholarships at this summer's academy.

Participating in the Academy's orchestral programme Naseem Halabi (violin), Laila Abu Khater (flute), Hikmat Qaimari (oboe), and Layan Najem (viola), were coached by tutors from the City of London Sinfonia, in chamber music, orchestral performance and solo repertoire. Alongside these classes the group took part in choral practice, African drumming workshops; beat boxing and extracurricular activities including cultural tours and excursions. For one of the students the highlight of the trip was learning to surf on the ice cold English waters.

During the same period, another group composed of Sama Tarazi (violin), Sasha Khoury (piano), and Marina Eichberg (viola), were invited by the Choir of London and the British council to attend two music workshops from the 10th to the 24th of August, which was an experience they valued greatly.



The ESNCM honors Mrs. Nadia Aboushi: a Dedicated Piano Teacher

After 18 years of contribution to music education in Palestine, Mrs. Nadia Aboushi co-founder of the ESNCM decided to retire. In her honor, the ESNCM organized a special farewell celebration for her at the Ramallah Friends School Auditorium.

The event included two musical performances of two graduate students of Mrs. Aboushi, Sasha Khoury and Dina Shilleh, as well as other performances of classical and oriental music by her colleagues.

After honoring her with a plaque, Suhail Khoury surprised Mrs. Aboushi by announcing that her name will be given to one of the music rooms of the Ramallah new building.

In paying tribute to Mrs. Aboushi, Rima Tarazi, chairperson of the Supervisory Board, pointed out that the musical landscape in Palestine is strongly linked with the name of Nadia Mikhail Aboushi. She said that Nadia was amongst the foremost musicians to receive a university degree in music, after which she dedicated her life to the advancement of music in Palestine, teaching, performing and accompanying the Jerusalem Choir. As a co-founder and Supervisory Board member of the ESNCM, she contributed greatly to its development and to its outstanding

achievements. As a teacher, her dedication, humility, gentleness and caring invested her students with self-confidence. It implanted in them the passion for music and inspired them to strive for excellence and perfection.

ESNCM Honors Rawdat El Zuhur School

The ESNCM gave a special tribute to Rawdat El Zuhur School in Jerusalem, and its principal Mrs. Salwa Zananiri and staff, for offering the premises of the school during the afternoons as a temporary teaching headquarters for the ESNCM until the renovation works at its new premises at the Shihabi building were completed. This has enabled the ESNCM to continue its role as key music provider in Jerusalem for more than 200 students.

The event took place on the 11th of March at the Yabous Cultural Center and it included performances by both teachers and students of the Jerusalem branch, playing oriental, classical and modern music.

At the end of the celebration, the general director of ESNCM, Mr. Suhail Khoury, and Mr. Simon Cuba of the Supervisory Board, honored Mrs. Zananiri with an ornate handmade plaque and a beautiful Palestinian embroidered shawl. In turn, Mrs. Zananiri praised the Conservatory's role in enhancing the music culture in Palestine, particularly Jerusalem, and raising a generation of music lovers.

The Palestine Strings performs at the Jerusalem festival with Nigel Kennedy

Only one person can claim the title of bestselling classical violinist of all time, and that's Nigel Kennedy. The British violinist and his Quartet teamed up with the Palestine Strings, to take the Jerusalem Festival by storm in July. Undeterred by difficulties posed by the Israeli authorities who didn't give them permits to rehearse in Jerusalem until the third day of rehearsals, Nigel and the group shifted all their equipment by road to Ramallah to rehearse there at the last minute. Opening the concert with the Spring concerto from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, the work Kennedy is perhaps best known for performing, the concert featured many of the violinists own compositions, composed for acoustic and electric violin solo, string orchestra and jazz rock quartet. After a fine classical performance, the audience was treated to otherworldly electronic sounds, often more reminiscent of Jimi Hendrix's music than classical violin repertoire, which swirled through the Jerusalem night sky. The concert was produced together with Yabous Productions and funded by the British Council.

The Bethlehem Branch Celebrates Easter

On the 29th of March, The ESNCM in Bethlehem, organized a musical titled "Pains and Life" at St. Catherine Nativity Church. The play demonstrated the difficult political situation that Palestinians live in, by showing Jesus trying in vain to cross the separation wall. The musical was influenced by Byzantine music and was performed by 40 oriental musicians and a choir.

Later, on the 31st, the musical was performed at the Ramallah Cultural Palace, in cooperation with the World Council of Churches.

The event was co-organized with Bethlehem and Beit Sahour Municipalities, Sabeel Palestinian Liberation Theology Center, Open Doors Foundation, and Terra Sancta Scouts.

ESNCM Staff Take Part in IAPSS

Within a project funded by the European Union and co-organized with Beit Almusica in Shafa Amer in the north, Amal Shashtari the Director of the Nablus Branch, and Rasha Sansur, Al Sununu project coordinator, participated in the International Arts Professional Summer School (IAPSS) at Kent University-Brussels, and in partnership with ENCATC (European Network of Cultural Administration Training Centers) in Brussels Belgium from the 2nd - 6th of July. The workshop aimed at introducing new art and cultural management techniques.

The summer school included contributions from leading international experts and cultural leaders from the UK and Europe. Some of the topics incorporated within the program were: public and private investment in the arts, algorithms as the new aesthetic, developing markets for the arts, leadership in arts and cultural organizations, evaluation of culture and arts projects, and finally involving the audience, and audience development, and many other topics.

Piano Festival

On the 26th of April, the ESNCM launched a music festival solely for piano in all four of its branches. The Festival lasted for four days of classical music performances by piano teachers, Nadia Aboushi, Janet Inoue, Dina Shilleh, Ranan Rishmawi, Jiries Boullata, Diego Cembrola, and Paolo Baglieri.

The festival in Nablus was organized with the support of drosos foundation.



Meet Our New ESNCM Staff



Jonathan Reed

27 years old from UK, Trumpet and theory teacher, and a graduate of the Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance in the UK. Hobbies: Running and doing sports. His wish: to keep teaching music to his students and making it enjoyable, and to perform more often.



Paulina Tarnawska

Violin and viola teacher, 26 years old from Poland, studied music in Holland. Hobbies: rock climbing. Her wish: she doesn't care for future wishes, because she lives the moment and is happy about how her life is.



Wassim Odeh

Oud teacher, 33 years old, worked in ESNCM. Hobbies: fishing and sports. His wish: To see music become independent from the current pop music.



Nidal Jaddeh

The Activities Coordinator in Jerusalem, 24 years old, from Palestine. He has worked as an activities coordinator in many Palestinian institutions. Hobbies: sports and reading. His wish: to leave his fingerprints in this world.



Pedro Lopez

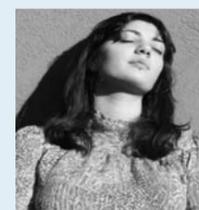
Guitar teacher, 32 years old from Spain, worked as a guitar teacher in Italy and Spain, and performed in many European countries. Hobbies: reading and writing musical stories. His wish: teaching talented students and composing good music.



Ula Kinderyte

Violin and viola teacher, 24 years old, and she worked as a violin teacher in her country

Lithuania. Hobbies: cooking and reading. Her wish: travelling the world, and being happy and free.



Maya Khaldi

Theory and Choir teacher, 25 years old, from Palestine. She graduated from Berkley College of Music. Hobbies: socializing and visiting art galleries. Her wish: that her music, which is a blend of many cultures, reaches a wide audience.



Ghassan Sa'adat

Accountant, 30 years old, from Palestine. He worked at the Palestinian Water Authority. His hobbies: swimming. His wish: freedom for all the Palestinian political prisoners.



Alessio Mastrodonato

Piano teacher, 26 years old, worked as a piano teacher in his country Italy and Holland. Hobbies: Reading and listening to music. His wish: to excel in his work.



Tareq Abboushi

Buzuq and oud teacher. 34 years old, from Palestine. He worked in Norway and New York as a freelance musician; he recorded two albums with his band "Shu Usmu". Hobbies: travelling, cooking, and a certain passion for Arts. His wish: blending oriental music with different kinds of music from around the world, as long as it doesn't become commercial.



Noura Asmar

Theory teacher, 30 years old, from Egypt, she worked as a music teacher at the Rosary Sister's School in Nablus. She studied composition and conducting at the Egyptian Higher Music Conservatory. Hobbies: Playing music. Her wish: to establish her own music band which will play her compositions and classical, oriental and Palestinian folkloric music.



Raneen Sandouka

The Secretary of the Jerusalem Branch, 20 years old, from Palestine. She is a graduate of the YMCA and worked as a folkloric dance trainer in the Frere School. Hobbies: shopping and reading. Her wish: to pursue her studies in Tourism.



Ida Hansen

A Violin teacher, 29 years old from Norway. In addition to her rich teaching experience, she is a member of the Kristiansand Symphony Orchestra. Hobbies: learning languages. Her wish: to spread happiness in the spirits of the children she teaches.



Andrea Vigna-Taglianti

Piano teacher, 35 years old, and he worked as a piano teacher in Italy at "Scuola di Alto Perfezionamento Musicale". He is an Artistic Director at Steinway Society Piemonte-Valle d'Aosta and Music therapy teacher at "G.F. Ghedini" state conservatory.



Donia Jarar

Theory teacher, 26 years old, from Palestine. She worked as an assistant teacher in Michigan University, she has a master's degree in composing, and she won the first prize in the composing category of the Palestine National Music Competition. Hobbies: Modern Dancing, Ice skating, and jogging. Her wish: to become a professor in teaching composition and to write a symphony about Palestine.



Yara Mattar

Secretary of the Bethlehem Branch, 30 years old, from Palestine. She is a graduate of Bethlehem University and she worked in many Palestinian institutions. Hobbies: Travelling. Her wish: to become famous.

Summer Music Camps

Seven summer camps were organized at the Birzeit Activity Center during the month of July, with the first time participation of 40 students from Gaza branch (established as a school of Music By Al-Qattan Foundation), their presence was made possible by the efforts of SDC (Swiss Development Cooperation) and the Center for the Defense of Freedom of movement.

The summer camps were held for piano, guitar wind instruments, strings, Arabic music, the Palestine Strings, and the students of outreach programs.

The camp activities also included classes in dance, drama, the environment, and workshops on sound techniques and music management.

All seven camps were organized by Mohammad Maragha under the academic supervision of violin teacher Lisbeth Debruyne.



Mourning Gabi Baramki

Dr. Gabi Baramki, member of the ESNM Supervisory Board and the Birzeit University Board of Trustees, sadly passed away after a rich life of service and sacrifice. His death was a great loss to the ESNM, as he was one of the foremost supporters of the Conservatory since its establishment in 1993. He wholeheartedly believed in the humanitarian and educational mission of music, exerting all efforts to advance the ESNM and to encourage its students and its innovative projects. Our only consolation is that Dr. Baramki left behind generations of highly cultured young men and women who have imbued the spirit of selflessness and dedication from their teacher who was also a loving and compassionate father to them in the various stages of student lives at Birzeit College and Birzeit University.

May his soul rest in peace. The ESNM shall miss him. The Orchestra which brought tears to his eyes shall miss him and the choirs to which he remained faithful to the end, shall miss him.