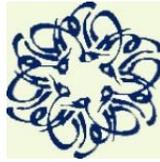


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Alwan for the Arts

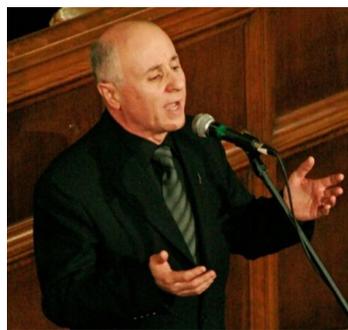
Is Proud to Present

Musical Performance: Alwan Festival of Sacred Music Presents Naji Youssef – Melkite and Maronite Hymns and Chants

Saturday, February 26, 2010 at 9:00 p.m.

Alwan for the Arts, in the second concert of its 2011 Festival of Sacred Music, is proud to present acclaimed singer **Naji Youssef** in a solo performance of a program featuring hymns and chants from the from the musical liturgy of the Byzantine Melkite (a/k/a Greek Catholic) and the Maronite catholic traditions stemming from the Lebanese mountains. **A master of expressive vocal ornamentation, Naji Youssef's** voice is reminiscent of the Lebanese “jabali” (mountain) style exemplified by such vocal masters as Wadi’ Assafi. This event will be held at Alwan for the Arts at 16 Beaver Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10004. Admission is \$20 regular, \$15 students/seniors/members. Doors open at 8:15 pm.

About the Musician:



Born in the northern Shouf mountains of Lebanon, **Naji Youssef** started singing in his church choir at a tender age. He immigrated to the United States in 1988 and has been a leading figure in the Arab-American music scene, performing in many venues and festivals and in many projects with such artists as Simon Shaheen, Philip Glass, and Bassam Saba, including performances with the New York Arabic Orchestra at Symphony Space and at Columbia University's Miller Theatre. Naji's clear and strong voice is reminiscent of the Lebanese jabali (mountain) style exemplified by great masters such as Wadi’ Assafi, yet the cantorial tradition adds nuance and subtle phrasing to his singing. Naji has mastered many repertoires besides the Melkite hymns, including old poetic singing styles such as mijana,

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'ataba, shruqi and zajal. For many years, Naji has been cantor and deacon in the Catholic Melkite Church of the Virgin Mary in Brooklyn, New York.

Reviews

"Naji Youssef, a Lebanese singer who came to the United States in 1988, sang long-breathed, improvisatory songs in a soaring baritone, drawing applause for the intricacy of his melismas." - *New York Times*

"A beautiful, nuanced tenor, Naji Youssef also serves as a cantor in the Catholic Melchite Church of the Virgin Mary in Brooklyn ... his lavish melismatic vocal work incorporated sinuous Arabic melodic patterns (maqamat) intended "to touch the heart." - *Afropop.com*



About Alwan for the Arts

Since its founding in 1998, Alwan for the Arts has been an organization dedicated to the presentation and production of the arts and cultures of the Arab world, Middle East and North Africa. Alwan organizes film festivals and screenings, book/poetry readings and signings, lectures and conferences, art exhibits, musical and theatrical performances, and language and literature classes. In 2003, Alwan established a center at 16 Beaver Street in lower Manhattan. In the second decade of its existence, Alwan remains committed to providing a space for reflection, dialogue, and growth in the arts and cultures of the peoples of the Arab world, Middle East, North Africa, and their diasporas, serving their communities and educating the broader public through programs that enrich the artistic and cross-cultural encounter.

*Alwan for the Arts is grateful to **Union Square Awards** for its support in 2007 and 2008. Alwan is also grateful for support from **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council** and the **New York City Department of Cultural Affairs**.*