



INFORMATION PACK

Dash Arts
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www.dasharts.org.uk



Dash Arts Arabic Series

In May 2010 Dash Arts, under the Artistic Direction of Josephine Burton and Tim Supple, launched the **Dash Arabic Series**: four major new commissions of work by artists from the Arabic-speaking world of theatre, contemporary dance and music. The series which will run over two years has been created in collaboration with venues including Sadler's Wells, the Barbican, and the Roundhouse. Four years in the planning, these events of international significance will be accompanied by a wider programme of talks, films, participation projects and cafes.

The **Dash Arabic Series** will be a vital celebration of Arabic artistic identity which will challenge pre-conceived notions of Arabic culture, offering new perspectives and unheard voices.

Beginning in May 2010 at Sadler's Wells with **Babel^(words)**, a new work by Sidi Larbi Cherkaoui, Damien Jalet and Antony Gormley, the Dash Arabic Series will continue with **Lyrical Alliance**, a night of Arabic hop-hop at the Roundhouse, and at the Barbican with a major event in celebration of the unrivalled icon of Arabic song - **Oum Kalsoum**. The Dash Arabic Series will culminate in the autumn of 2011 with an epic production of **One Thousand and One Nights / Alf Layla wa-Layla**, dramatised and directed by Tim Supple, commissioned by Toronto's Luminato Festival where it will have its world premiere.

Dash Arts & Roundhouse present **Lyrical Alliance Featuring Talib Kweli**

Premiere: Roundhouse, 16th October 2010, Doors 7pm Tickets £22.50

Lyrical Alliance is collaboration between leading hip hop artists from the Arab world alongside the cream of European hip hop with featured artists from the UK and US headline act **Talib Kweli**.

Hosted by UK hip hop lynchpin **DJ MK** (KISS FM, Roots Manuva, Dizzee Rascal), Lyrical Alliance is a ground-breaking, international urban music event that transcends language and cultural barriers to celebrate the common pillars of hip-hop all over the world: the beat and the word. Our featured Lyrical Alliance artists include **Rayess Bek (Lebanon / Paris), Tamer Nafer (Palestine), Shadia Mansour (UK), Rabah Donquishoot (Algeria), Samm (Jordan), and Jana Saleh (Lebanon)**.

Taking the legendary Mu'Allaqat poems - written at a time when the Arab region was the cultural and intellectual centre of the world – as a starting point, the artists will dig deep into the roots of their art form, developing new work together in a series of live sessions and workshops throughout the year that will reach a climax with a series of major concerts in Europe in Autumn 2010.

The second half of the evening features major US artist Talib Kweli. Ever since emerging alongside Mos Def as a member of Black Star in the late 90s, Talib Kweli is one of the few artists making commercially viable music that matters – hard hitting and able to simultaneously educate and entertain, his socially conscious brand of rap counts Jay-Z and Fifty Cent amongst its biggest fans. His 6th album Ear Drum was released in May this year on his own label Blacksmith Music.

Talib Kweli will be joined by members of the Lyrical Alliance posse for a momentous finale to this righteous and inspirational hip hop collaboration.



Lyrical Alliance Artists - Top row: **Tamer Nafar (Palestine), Shadia Mansour (Palestine), DJ MK (UK)**
Bottom row: **Rayess Bek (Lebanon), Samm (Jordan), Rabah Donquishoot (Algeria)**

Artist information

TALIB KWELI

Ever since emerging as a member of Black Star in the late 1990s, Talib Kweli is one of the few artists making commercially viable music that matters. The Brooklyn bred rapper's hard-hitting music has been able to educate and entertain simultaneously. So it is no wonder that at the peak of their fame, both Jay-Z and 50 Cent named Talib Kweli as one of their favorite rappers.

With *Ear Drum*, his first album released on his own Blacksmith Music and his sixth album overall, Kweli has delivered his career-defining work, a polished collection showcasing his advanced lyricism and his penchant for picking music that resonates long after the song ends. "The image of the ear and of the drum are powerful enough by themselves, but when you put them together, it's an instrument that's in your body that helps you hear," he explains. "They're also two very simple, yet powerful words. I wanted to focus on finding a sound that makes you move, and that's where the word 'Ear Drum' popped in my head."

Since his stellar debut with Mos Def as Black Star, Kweli has been one of rap's most exceptional and consistent artists. Released in 2000, *Reflection Eternal*, the RIAA-certified gold album with Hi-Tek, was one of the most acclaimed albums of the year. In 2002, smash single "Get By," the biting political commentary "The Proud" and the insightful examination of America's gun culture on "Gun Music" made *Quality* a landmark recording and Kweli's second gold album. Subsequent recordings in 2004 (*The Beautiful Struggle*) and 2005 (*Right About Now*) solidified his status as one of rap's most talented and important voices.

Now, after establishing himself as a rap visionary, Kweli along with long-time manager Corey Smyth launched Blacksmith Music. The pair signed an exclusive deal with Warner Bros. to market, promote, and distribute the music of Blacksmith artists. Following Kweli's release on Blacksmith/WBR there will be a new solo album from Jean Grae, the critically acclaimed South African-born female rapper who is among the most respected female rappers in the history of the genre. Rolling Stone called her "the best kept secret on New York's indie hip-hop scene," while XXL, Spin, Village Voice, URB and others have labeled her an artist to watch. Strong Arm Steady, a forthcoming Blacksmith/WBR release, is a super group whose members are Los Angeles underground star Phil The Agony, lyrical assassin Krondon and San Diego rap pioneer Mitchy Slick. Strong Arm Steady has been one of the few West Coast acts to build a rabid fanbase through mixtapes.

Kweli hopes Blacksmith will create a movement with Jean Grae and Strong Arm Steady, much as his own music has. "With Blacksmith, I want it to be a flag that everyone can wave," he says. "I want to be packing shows and I want people to feel like they were up on Jean Grae and Strong Arm Steady before anybody else was."

In the mean time, the lyrically and sonically potent *Ear Drum* demonstrates that strong, powerful messages can serve as the backbone for music at its best. "The vast majority of my subject matter focuses on black self-love, black self esteem, black self worth," Kweli says. "That translates to other communities because if you're a human being, it doesn't

matter what color you're talking about. You've been through some sort of struggle and you can apply it to your own life."

Kweli released his highly anticipated second Reflection Eternal LP "Revolutions Per Minute" from Blacksmith Music/WBR on 5/18/2010 and is on national tour with his partner Hi Tek.

DJ MK (UK)

DJ MK is one of the UKs leading Hip Hop deejays. He has been a favourite on the club scene for the last 10 years, displaying his turntable dexterity up and down the UK and throughout Europe, Australia and the United States. What sets MK apart from many of his peers is his ability to rock a crowd wherever he plays, be it Londons Ministry Of Sound, an Underground UK Hip Hop Jam, Pacha in Ibiza or an Arctic Monkeys after-party. MK was the first UK DJ to release regular, well-packaged Hip Hop mixtapes at a time when no other DJ was doing so. These mix tapes earned him his props and a slot on the Capital rap show with Tim Westwood from 93 to 95. His mixtapes are now sold all over the world. The man has done it all from providing cuts on various tracks for the likes of Roots Manuva, Dido, Jehst, Skitz and Lewis Parker to promoting Londons premier Hip Hop jams (The Hop and Live & Direct). MK held down one of the most popular shows on London based Hip Hop station Itch FM for four years before being headhunted by Kiss 100 FM. He joined the station in May 2004, initially hosting their Thursday night Hip Hop show alongside DJ Skully. Providing the very best in upfront Hip Hop from the U.S. & the UK, the show is essential listening. Guests have included Rev Run, Guru, Russell Simmons, Jehst, LL Cool J, Roots Manuva, Lupe Fiasco, The Beatnuts, Young Jeezy, DJ Babu, Boot Camp Clik, Maseo, Pharoahe Monch, Skinnyman, Percee P, Madlib, Task Force and Peanut Butter Wolf. MK continues to tour the world as Roots Manuvas DJ and is also a member of the powerhouse DJ crew Extended Players, alongside Shortee Blitz, Mr Thing and Harry Love. He judged the DMC UK & World finals between 1995-2004, helping to determine the outcome of winners such as DJs Craze, A-Trak, Plus One and Tony Vegas. He was behind the homegrown Hip Hop anthem Its All Live on Stonegroove Recordings, has released two volumes of his London Underground mix CDs to great acclaim and recently he compiled & mixed Bangers & Mash Vol. 2 (out now on Boombbox). MKs mixtape buzz led him to ink a deal with Antidote / Sanctuary Records for his first official album Above Board. Just released, it boasts 100% exclusive tracks from the cream of the UK Hip Hop scene. The first single lifted from the album is the DJ MK & Fallacy club banger My Show, which also finds MK weighing in with his debut production credit.

<http://djmksworld.blogspot.com/> (DJ MK)

<http://www.myspace.com/deejaymk>

RABAH DONQUISHOOT (Algeria)

Rabah was born in Algeria in 1977. Today he is based in Barcelona, Spain. He started making music in 1994, during the civil war in Algeria, with his group MBS ('Le Micro Brise le Silence' - 'The Microphone Breaks the Silence'). They produced five albums, and alongside he produced three solo albums.

Rabah's rap is very engaged socially and politically and talks about street life of Algerian youth. He caused quite a stir when he posed as the Algerian president

Bouteflika on one of the group's album covers in 1999, 'Rabah President', which was banned in Algeria. He left the country for the first time in 1999 to France. Since then he has been performing all around the world "to pass the message and make his music freely, far away from control".

MBS, short for *Le Micro Brise Le Silence* (the microphone breaks the silence), is a rap group formed in 1988 in Algeria. They sing in Algerian and French, and are led by Rabah Ourrad. Their lyrics mostly speak out against the Algerian government.

<http://www.nme.com/artists/mbs> & wikipedia

"Rabah Président" as a media coup

In July 1999, President Bouteflika announced an amnesty for imprisoned Islamic extremists – a deed that's generally held to mark the end of the Algerian civil war. Nonetheless, Algeria's rap musicians haven't stopped criticising their country's political and social shortcomings.

One of the cleverest and most courageous rappers around is Rabah Ourrad of MBS, who describes the state of things in Algeria with the blackest of sarcasm. When he released the album "Rabah Président", the MBS rapper landed a media coup. The cover depicts Rabah posing as Algeria's

President Bouteflika; it's a photo-montage, with the rapper's head perched on the President's body.

"We made 'Rabah Président' just before Bouteflika was re-elected", explains Rabah. "The CD was released during the run-up to the election. I presented myself as if I were a candidate for the presidency. Then I went to Algeria and gave a press conference there. The journalists came in droves, and there were loads of articles in the Algerian press about the CD and all the things I'd said against the President. I didn't want him to be re-elected because he really is a little dictator... and he makes peace with all the terrorists!"

Rabah is a musician and rapper who has produced a 'Music Freedom Day' signature song for Freemuse together with his group MBS and rappers around the world.

In this interview he speaks about **music censorship in Algeria** and about the role of the Algerian musician **Matoub Lounes** who was assassinated in 1998.

Rabah Donquishoot (real name: Rabah Ourrad) took part in the session 'All that is banned is desired' at the **3rd Freemuse World Conference** in Istanbul, Turkey, in November 2006.

Profile on MySpace.com:
myspace.com/mbsofficiel

<http://www.islamonline.net/English/ArtCulture/2006/01/article02.shtml#1>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=puncp37PSSY> (Rabah D)

http://www.dailymotion.com/video/xchpdm_rabah-donquishoot-live-at-momo_music

http://www.google.co.uk/search?q=Rabah+Donquishoot&hl=en&prmd=v&source=univ&tbs=vid:1&tbo=u&ei=HIvxS_e6L4T20gSW8bnrBw&sa=X&oi=video_result_group&ct=title&resnum=1&ved=0CCEQqwQwAA

SHADIA MANSOUR (Palestine)

<http://www.myspace.com/shdiamusic>

Married to music... British born Palestinian Shadia Mansour, delivers her luxurious, velvet voice, both mournful and mesmerizing, over Arabic Phrases of loss, longing, struggle and life. She is as authentic as the heavily-embroidered thawb she wears whilst performing live.

Shadia has independently become one of the leading female Arabian MC's worldwide. Her natural, flawless ability to switch between rapping and singing is rapidly becoming a cultural phenomenon.

Shadia started singing at the tender age of 5 years old appearing on various Arabic, British, American TV and radio shows. She is currently working on her highly anticipated album (yet to be titled) featuring many of the top producers of the industry. She has also been featured on tracks with "The X-Vandals", DAM (Palestinian Rap Group), Olikinary (French Rapper) and many more... Shadia has opened up for Busta Rhymes and Mobb Deep at the Palladium Club in New Rochelle, NY. Last summer Shadia toured US and received a tremendous welcome in Chicago, Milwaukee, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Shadia also took part in the Annual Pre Black August Concert in NYC with DJ Johnny Juice (Public Enemy) alongside her giving her performance an authentic New York touch.

In May 2008 Shadia went to Holland to perform in a 4 city tour (all of which – sold out) with an orchestra of 200 people and a children's choir of 50 (you can go to www.youtube.com and search "Shadia Arabica symphony"). Shadia opened last year Annual Black August Benefit for Political Prisoners alongside major hip hop legends such as Q-Tip, EPMD, Bilal, Blackmoon, Smif N Wessun and Immortal Technique. Shadia also headlined the Arab World Fest in Milwaukee which was a huge success. Shadia was asked back to Holland for a Gala Dinner event hosted by Music In Me beginning of November 2008. This year she completed three Hip Hop tours in the West Bank and hosted two tv shows, one with FredWreck called "Beit II Hip Hop" based in Dubai with the finale in Egypt and the other in the West Bank with Video conference with Gaza called "HipHopKom" which was the first Palestinian Hip Hop Idol show. Shadia is also featured in the AAlikes documentary coming out this month titled "Bullet or the Ballot". Shadia just performed for the 2009 Annual Black August Benefit Concert in NC at BB Kings. Please see full "Past Events" list to follow. All inquiries regarding Shadia's music, production, bookings and investments can be sent to shdiamanagement@gmail.com

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE ONLY OFFICIAL SHADIA MANSOUR SITES ARE AS FOLLOWS:

www.myspace.com/shadiamusic

www.ridzdesign.com

RAYESS BEK (Lebanon)

At a time when all rappers in the Middle-East were putting out records in English and French, Wael (a.k.a. Rayess Bek) decided to flip the script and rap in Arabic. Rayess Bek is the founder of Rap and Hip Hop in Arabic. He adapted Rap music to his background and created his own sound and style. His lyrics - always polished, sharp and committed - speak about Lebanon, its crisis, its war, its youth and disillusionment with politics by the new generation.

Rayess Bek, with his band AKS'SER, had their debut at the 'Fete de la Musique' concert summer of 1997 in Beirut - This concert earned them critical respect. Aksser released two albums "Ahla Bi Chabeb" in 2000 and "Khartouch" in 2002 on the independent label ChichProd. In 2003, Rayess Bek released his first solo album '3am behkeh bil sokout' as independent and went on tour throughout the Middle-East and Europe.

In 2004, the band AKS'SER got signed to EMI and released their third album "Aks'ser" in 2005.

Last year, Rayess Bek was commissioned by the UN to compose and produce a song for the special program on disability. The song and video, Ekhtilef Tabiyeh (Difference is Normal) was the first media campaign promoting acceptance of handicapped people in the Middle East. It has been broadcast in over 20 countries in North Africa and the Middle East.

Rayess Bek was more recently featured in a PBS documentary "Dissonance and Harmony" produced by Miles Copeland for the series "America at a Crossroad". The film captures the process of Wael's collaboration with Nile Rogers, Rza from the Wu-Tang Clan and Shavo from System of the Down as well as Rayess live performance at the Roxy. 'Dissonance and Harmony' will premiere on PBS in the fall of 2007.

In June 2007 Wael completed his Doctorate in Fine Arts in Paris (France), and began work on another campaign for the UN, this time for an anti-war campaign, along with American co-writer and producer Frank Fitzpatrick. The song/video is titled Just Like You is scheduled to debut throughout the Middle East and North of Africa in August 2007.

<http://www.rayessbek.com/>

<http://www.myspace.com/rayessbek>

http://rfimusique.com/anqlais/musique/articles/097/article_7998.asp (Rayess Bek)

SAMM (Jordan)

Samer Zaki AKA "Samm" is a Jordanian rapper, who started rapping back in 2001, at that year Samm recorded an album on his expense though he didn't get the chance to distribute it due to the lack of support, Samm waited until 2007 to get the needed attention.

In 2008, Samm met the Jordanian hip hop producer Osama Abbas AKA "Damar", and they started working on various songs, some of them got huge recognition in the Arab Hip Hop scene through the Internet which led to Samm to be interviewed on Jordanian Satellite channel "Nourmina".

One of the most recognized singles Samm introduced is "Ana Saw7" (translation: I am the man) which was they key element of the success of many live shows Samm was part of. In mid 2008 Samm introduced the hit "Alam Aswad" (translation: A Black World) a hit to be remembered as a masterpiece for Samm. By the end of 2008 Samm received an invitation to join the a Jordanian Hip Hop group, Samm confirmed the invitation and contributed with the group in a song called "Le'ajleki Gaza" (translation: For you Gaza), Samm also took part in some live shows with the group around Amman, Samm left the group to work on his own solo project. By the beginning of 2009 Samm got chosen among 6000 Arab rapper in the Arab world to represent his country in the Hip Hop talent show "Beit El Hip Hop" which was on "Wanasa" Satellite network, a show presented by "Fredwreck", Shadia Mansour, .

Samm is currently working on several projects with some of the most recognized figures in the Arab Hip Hop scene. Samm performed in many Hip Hop Concerts and Shows. Samm is working as a teacher in a workshop that aims to teach the Hip Hop culture and to train the Jordanian youth the skills of the art that is Hip Hop! He has participated in a lot of projects about freedom, political and society issues, and Human Rights as a teacher and a performer. One of Samm's Songs "Freedom Messengers" was chosen as the best Alternative Song in Jordan in a project called "The Arabic Voice", and Samm is the only rapper in this project between eight participants from different Arabian countries.

Personal Life: Samm was born at 1984 in a poor refuge camp in Amman. He studied in "UNRWA" Schools for his elementary education, despite all of the obstacles that faced him, Samm started his Hip Hop career, when he reached University he wanted to study Sound Engineering which was to expensive to pay, he studied MIS "Manager Information System" and took the Bachelor Degree Certificate, which was worthless for his Hip Hop Career.

<http://www.myspace.com/sammrap> (Samm, Jordan)

TAMER NAFAR (Palestine)

Tamer Nafar (Arabic: *النفار رماة*), is an Palestinian Israeli rap artist. He and his former mentor, Israeli Jewish rapper Subliminal, are the subjects of the documentary film *Channels of Rage*. Tamer was born on June 6, 1979 in Lod, Israel. He began writing and making rap music in 1998 and in 2000 his brother Suhell and their friend Mahmoud Jrere joined him to start the first Palestinian-Arab rap group, DAM. Singing mostly in Arabic but also in Hebrew and English, DAM has become a popular Palestinian rap crew in recent years. The members of DAM compose their lyrics and music by themselves. DAM's work and art are influenced by the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and the struggle for equal rights for Palestinian-Israelis. The group's songs deal with social, political and personal issues.

And much more at myspace

<http://www.myspace.com/damrap>

<http://www.rootsmanuva.co.uk/rootsmanuva/>