



Media Release
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LIVERPOOL ARABIC ARTS FESTIVAL
a celebration of Arabic arts and culture
02 – 11 July 2010
www.arabicartsfestival.co.uk

SUPERSTARS AND MUSICAL ENERGY AT LIVERPOOL ARABIC ARTS FESTIVAL

The award winning Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival (LAAF) proudly presents Egyptian superstar **Mohamed Mounir** in partnership with Liverpool Philharmonic Hall on Friday 9 July.

It's hard to understate the impact Mounir has had in his home country where he is feted as the darling of Egyptian youth. His hugely popular and ground-breaking blend of traditional Nubian and African reggae and jazz influenced music are combined with lyrics which often tackle social and political subjects.

He is widely considered a living legend in Egypt and regularly performs to crowds of tens of thousands at outdoor venues in Cairo. This is a fantastic and rare opportunity to revel in the excitement and drama of 'The King' performing in the UK.

There's a double chance to catch Mounir live since LAAF is delighted to announce that he will personally introduce a special screening of Yousef Chahine's acclaimed film *Destiny* on Thursday 8 July (Picturehouse at FACT).

The strong musical influence at this year's Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival, sponsored by UNISON North West, continues courtesy of Iraqi chanteuse **Farida** on Thursday 8 July, the Bluecoat.

Now based in Holland, Farida Mohammed Ali is widely regarded as the leading exponent of the once male-dominated genre of Maqam. Along with her musical director and husband, Mohammed Gomar who is a jooza (four string spike-fiddle) virtuoso, Farida's Iraqi Maqam ensemble has enthralled audiences worldwide with the sound of ancient Mesopotamia.

The Telegraph reviewed her performance as ..."austere, deeply sensual and heartening evidence of profound traditions persisting in a troubled land," while *The New York Times* simply described the sound as "sumptuous."

Once, all the best Nubian weddings resounded to the rango, a vintage wooden xylophone with gourd resonators. But with the rise of DJs playing Arabic pop, the instrument fell into disuse. **Rango**, the group, are reviving it, under the talents of its

last surviving player, Hassan Bergamon and generating wide acclaim on the world music circuit.

Join Rango on Sunday 4 July (the Bluecoat) for what *The Independent* describes as "polyrhythmic explosions of love, possession and pure joy" and *Metro* declares as "rabble-rousing exhortations... witty and life-affirming."

Festival Manager Ngozi Ikoju said:

"The programme of music events is a real highlight of this year's festival and we are tremendously excited to welcome stars of such calibre. Together with our dance, food, film and visual arts activities the LAAF 2010 line up offers everyone a chance to sample the richness and diversity of Arabic culture."

Frank Hont, Regional Secretary, UNISON North West said: "Our union is supporting LAAF as part of our commitment to community cohesion and we are delighted that the team have put together such an exciting music programme for everyone."

Festival and ticket information:

www.arabicartsfestival.co.uk or call 0151 702 5324

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Notes to editors

Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival (LAAF)

Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival was co-founded by the Bluecoat and Liverpool Arabic Centre (LAC) in 1998 and the first festival took place in 2002. It has since grown rapidly in size and confidence, audience expectation and ambition. It has become a hugely popular fixture at the heart of the city's cultural calendar and remains the only one of its kind in the UK. Over the years the festival has grown to involve more partners from the city's arts and Arabic communities. Official partners include the Picturehouse at FACT, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall and National Museums Liverpool. LAAF is the recipient of the Arab British Culture & Society Award 2010 for its outstanding contribution to the British public's knowledge and understanding of the life, society and culture of the Arab people.

LAAF remains a key part of the Bluecoat's www.thebluecoat.org.uk activities and reflects the diverse nature of its programme. It is part of LAC's purpose to strengthen the awareness of the Arabic community within the wider society through the celebration and promotion of all aspects of Arabic history, language, cultural heritage and identity www.liverpoolarabiccentre.org.uk.

UNISON North West

UNISON North West organises, represents and negotiates on behalf of more than 200,000 members in the region. Our members work in Education, Health, Local Government, the Utilities and the third sector, providing essential services to the community all year round.

We believe public services are a life line for communities – they keep people in work and support local economies. We believe in an expansion of those services that help people who are struggling to cope such as welfare and housing advice, health and social care and community support.

UNISON also campaigns on behalf of its members and one of our main campaigning priorities is to oppose discrimination and fight racism. Therefore we are proud to

sponsor the Liverpool Arabic Arts Festival and its work to promote Community Cohesion.



**with the
Bluecoat.**



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Thanks to the City of Liverpool for its financial support