



Beirut & Beyond International Music Festival Press release // 19 June 2017

About Beirut & Beyond International Music Festival

Dedicated to promoting the Arab region's independent music with emphasis on strong artistic merit, Beirut & Beyond was founded in 2013, in partnership with Oslo World Music Festival, and quickly succeeded in positioning itself as a key player on the map of regional festivals and showcases. As a platform for meetings, showcases and exchange, Beirut & Beyond encourages networking and collaboration. It furthermore aims to offer solutions to the urgent needs of the young Arab independent music scene, such as the necessity to provide outlets for its bustling artistic productions.

Members of the board of Trustees

Rima Frangieh - Founder & director of Ehdeniyat & Cinemaiyat Festivals (Lebanon)
Ghazi Abdel Baki - Musician & producer (Lebanon)
Alexandra Archetti Stolen - Director of Oslo World Music Festival (Norway)
Brahim el Mazned – Artistic director of Visa for Music Festival (Morocco)
Soudabeh Kia – World music advisor at Theatre de La Ville Paris (France)
Jumana al Yasiri – MENA manager of Sundance Institute Theatre Program (USA)

2017 Partners

Oslo World Music Festival (Norway) - Institut du Monde Arabe (France) – Theatre de la Ville Paris – Mundial Productions (Netherlands) – Ehdeniyat International Festival (Lebanon) – Roskilde Foundation (Denmark) - Art Link (Switzerland) – Rich Mix (UK) – Arts Canteen (UK)

More information

Press release in doc format and high-resolution photos available for download here:
<http://www.beirutandbeyond.net/press/>

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Beirut & Beyond International Music Festival reveals 2017 guest curator, new partnerships and December highlights

In the presence of HE Minister of Tourism Mr. Avedis Guidanian and Mr. Nizar Daher, representing the Minister of Culture Dr. Ghattas Khoury, Beirut & Beyond International Music Festival held a press gathering attended by the members of the festival's board of trustees: Ms. Rima Frangieh (Founder and Director of Ehdeniyat and Cinemaiyat Festivals), Soudabeh Kia (World Music Advisor at Theatre de La Ville Paris), Brahim el Mazned (Artistic Director of Visa for Music and Timitar Festivals in Morocco), artistic advisor of BBIMF Lebanese artist Wael Kodeih and a number of local and international cultural figures.

Festival director Amani Semaan focused on the importance of the local and international partnerships that the festival has established since its launch in 2012. "Without the faces we see here today, it would be very difficult to continue an independent festival that supports music in Lebanon and the Arab region" she said, as she announced a new partnership with the Ehdeniyat International Festival for 2017, focusing on the international dimension of BBIMF and aiming to provide more opportunities for rising local artists. Commenting on this partnership, Rima Frangieh said: "Ehdeniyat believes in embracing the young talents who have chosen arts and culture as a form of expression. We strongly believe that initiatives such as BBIMF are vital to our society, as they promise a more inclusive future".

Semaan revealed the identity of the guest curator for the fifth edition of the festival, to be held from 7 to 10 December 2017, Egyptian musician Maurice Louca, and announced four artists who will be part of the 2017 line-up: Dina el Wedidi from Egypt, Porest from the United States / Iraq, Kid Fourteen from Lebanon and Susanna from Norway. Alexandra Archetti Stolen, director of Oslo World Music Festival focused on the role of OWMF as a founding partner of BBIMF, and the importance of equivalent local support to ensure the sustainability of the BBIMF.

HE Mr. Avedis Guidanian, Minister of Tourism, affirmed the commitment of the Ministry of Tourism to support and accompany BBIMF. "I believe in every small and promising initiative and I will be a contributor and supporter closely following Beirut & Beyond. This festival launches talent to the world in a way that challenges general perception of Lebanon as a country experiencing tensions and difficulties. It is a vital project that we are delighted to support". M. Nizar Daher, representative of the Minister of Culture stressed the importance of such a festival in the complex times the region is going through and he said "emerging talents are the hope of the future and we are all responsible for trying to leave an imprint capable of making the world better than it was".

The press gathering was held in STATION and was followed by a fundraising concert, under the patronage of Lebanese Minister of Culture Dr. Ghattas Khoury. The concert featured "The Wedding Reception" a new collaborative audio-visual performance by photographer and filmmaker Mohamed Abdouni, multidisciplinary producer and musician Liliane Chlela and singer-songwriter and frontman of Mashrou' Leila Hamed Sinno. Using film footage and original music, it explored the tensions running beneath the surface of a wedding held in Beirut in 1988.

Notes to editors

Festival dates

BBIMF 2017 edition will run from 7 to 10 December 2017. The festival will feature a line-up of some of the region's most exciting musicians, alongside a comprehensive professional programme of meetings and discussions welcoming music industry professionals from around the world.

Guest curator

"I'm grateful to BBIMF for the trust; the excitement is overwhelming and we can already promise everyone a great edition" – Maurice Louca, BBIMF 2017 guest curator

In line with BBIMF's strategy to develop the festival as a platform for innovation and a support system for artists, and following the great success of the collaboration with guest curator Wael Koudaih (aka Rayess Bek) in 2016, BBIMF extends the 2017 invitation to Cairo-based Egyptian composer and musician Maurice Louca. Hailed as an "electronic wizard" by the BBC and "an exciting underground musician... with a post-everything attitude" by The Guardian, Maurice is inspired by many influences, from psychedelia to Egyptian shaabi. His second album, "Benhayyi Al-Baghabghan" (Salute the Parrot), was released on Nawa Recordings in November 2014 and shattered the conventions of musical and cultural labelling. It received widespread critical acclaim and was dubbed a game-changer for the region's bustling independent music scene. As well as being the co-founder of the bands Bikya, Alif and Dwarves of East Agouza, Maurice has lent his sound to numerous projects, composing for theatre, film and contemporary dance. A long-time collaborator with BBIMF, Maurice performed in the first edition of the festival in 2013, and participated in the BBIMF European tour in 2013 and 2014. For more information: www.mauricelouca.com

Partnership with Ehdeniyat International Festival

Building on the collaboration that began in 2016, BBIMF is delighted to announce an evolving partnership with Ehdeniyat Festival. "Ehdeniyat believes in embracing the young talents who have chosen arts and culture as a form of expression. We strongly believe that initiatives such as BBIMF are vital to our society, as they promise a more inclusive future," says Rima Frangieh, founder and director of Ehdeniyat International Festival and a member of BBIMF's Board of Trustees. The partnership aims to explore further links between local festivals with a focus on supporting BBIMF's professional programme in 2017. The programme is designed to enable regional and international music professionals to discover local artists and operators and stimulate debate on issues pertaining to the music industry today. In 2016, the BBIMF professional programme gathered more than 70 international professionals to discuss topics including music, identity and infrastructure, as well as participate in "Meet the artist" speed-meeting sessions featuring 10 Lebanon-based artists.

Sneak-peak into the December line-up

The festival in December is set to feature a diverse set of regional and international acts. BBIMF is proud to announce Dina el Wedidi (Egypt), Susanna (Norway), Kid Fourteen (Lebanon) and Porest aka Mark Gergis (USA) who, along with many others, will make this edition an unforgettable experience.

Dina el Wedidi (EG) With her powerful, nuanced voice and authentic style, Egyptian singer and composer Dina El Wedidi has spent the past six years carving out her place in the Egyptian music scene. While studying oriental languages at the University of Cairo, Dina joined El Warsha Theatre Troupe, exploring Egyptian folklore and performing in such unlikely places as a Cairo prison. In 2011, she formed her own band and became one of the first members of the Nile Project, a project in collaboration with musicians from all of the Nile Countries, with touring through East Africa and the US. In 2012, Dina became a Rolex Program award winner mentored by legendary Brazilian songwriter Gilberto Gil. In 2013, they performed together at the Cairo Jazz Festival, and he advised her on her debut album *Turning Back* (Tedawar W'Tergaa), guest performing on the song "El Leil". Dina also performed at TEDGlobal in Scotland, participated in workshops with Grammy award winner Fathy Salama, Kamilya Jubran, and has worked with the Mazaher Ensemble in Cairo. She has performed throughout the Arab region and Europe.

Susanna (NO) Susanna has been releasing music through independent labels since 2004, and through her own label, SusannaSonata, since 2011. She is known for transforming the songs of AC/DC, Dolly Parton, Thin Lizzy and ABBA, amongst others, but also for her strong original compositions and her work making music for and singing the words of Norwegian poet Gunvor Hofmo. She has released 11 highly acclaimed albums and is the recipient of multiple international awards.

Kid Fourteen (LB) Khodor Ellaik is a Lebanese musician currently working under the solo moniker Kid Fourteen. Between 2010 and 2014, Ellaik was the frontman of punk band Beirut Scum Society and short-lived post-punk/no-wave outfit Friendly Faces. Ellaik then adopted a solo aesthetic blending punk sensibilities and noise-pop elements. His debut album "Dream Kids Never Sleep" was released in 2016. Khodor's most recent project is *The Cripple*, an electronic/free jazz duo with Alex Zhang Hungtai (ex Dirty Beaches/Last Lizard).

Porest (USA) Across decades, Porest (aka Mark Gergis) has issued a trail of confounding agitprop sound art, post-globalised hate-pop, diabolical radio dramas and carefully re-arranged realities on multiple labels. His blatant embezzlement of human syntax and cultural misunderstanding broadcasts vital mixed messages. Since 2003, with the Sublime Frequencies label, an ethnographic music and film collective out of Seattle – and more recently with his own label, Sham Palace – Mark has shared decades of research of scores of archived international music, film footage and sound recordings from the Middle East, South East Asia and elsewhere.