

What people said about MEME

Hi All,

I wanted to thank you all for a wonderful evening! I really had a great time being on stage with all of you, it is an honor and a privilege. The main reason for me to play music is to have the best seat in the house.

Thank you again Issa for putting this event together, I know it takes so much effort to do that. I hope next season will be even better.

Best regards always,  
maged

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Hi Maged and All,

Many thanks to Issa for his tremendous commitment, leadership and "behind the scenes" efforts that made this entire concert season a reality.

It requires *more* than our love for these musical traditions, in order to make an event like last evening's a reality. I can only imagine what logistic challenges Issa faced in order to create a venue for us all to express ourselves individually and collectively, to an obviously receptive and appreciative audience.

Over the many years that I have played, I can count on one hand, the occasions when others sharing the stage were as focused and engaged in the repertoire as you all were last evening. It was an inspiration! , and I am grateful to both Issa and each and every one of you for the opportunity to be part of your team.

In many respects, you are also "messengers", not only of the musical traditions that we are hoping to preserve, share and propagate to a broader audience- but also to others who aspire to preserve *other* traditions important to them, and who are energized and inspired to do so by *your* example last evening.

Jim ( Dimitri) Stoyanoff

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Hi Issa and all others,

It is indeed an honor to receive such magnificent support from you and all the musicians that made my song, East and West, possible to be sung. I am indebted to all of you for the extraordinary performance and an unforgettable evening. I would like to thank in a very special way Issa Boulos and all the members of the orchestra.

Best wishes

Shlimon Bet-Shmuel

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martin & issa,

The ensemble performance Friday night was really wonderful, and I was especially delighted to experience the warm and enthusiastic response of all of the families and friends in the audience -- I wish that you could have been in both places at the same time! I hope that everyone in the Music Department appreciates the fantastic work you're doing, and the university-wide and community support that was shown Friday evening. One of our (Evol. Biol) grad students has also obviously become attached/involved, taking photographs all through the performance. Two college students adjacent to me, busily taking notes throughout, even got past their obvious "assignment" and joined in the standing ovation at the end. Thanks for a really fine event and performance. Best,

Carolyn Johnson.

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Today I have been working on what will eventually be CDs of my audio recording of the concert, reliving inspiring details of beautiful moments and feeling very fortunate to have been a part of the music making of such fine artists. With Issa's permission, I intend to give cdr copies to those who performed. Was video tape made? I have a friend who has expressed interest in bringing the video to Morocco. He thinks that it would be inspiring to some of the musicians he has contact with there to see the culturally diverse makeup of our group performing this type of music.

I want to thank Issa, the University of Chicago, guest artists, and everyone else who gave/give so much of themselves to make the event and the functioning of the group possible....I feel it is a cultural and artistic exchange of a level higher than I have the words to express thanks for, and I just hope I can be involved in the future.

[note to Issa: After I wrote this, I decided to send it to you alone first before passing on to the rest of the list, since I don't want to get people's hopes up if for some reason we need to keep a lid on distributing the recording. Feel free to forward if you find the idea presentable.]

Weldon

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Dear Issa,

I'm a first year graduate student in department of mathematics. I come from Iran, and have played santur for many years. I took lessons while in

Iran for about 7 years, and the past few years I have been playing it on and off on my own. I've been looking for an inspiration to play it more often, perhaps in a group. The excellent music concert that you had friday night was such an inspiration. I was wondering if we could meet up sometimes and chat. I understand that the current season is almost over, but I'm going to be at UC for at least 5 years, so I'm not really worried. I hadn't heard of the middle east musical ensemble before, otherwise, I would've tried to contact you sooner.

regards,  
Masoud Kamgarpour

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Hi Issa,  
This is Serpil. I wanted to send some photos we took. Their size's are large , so I can send them one by one.  
Thanks again for your extraordinary effort and perfect organization for making this group and event possible.  
Take care of yourself and Hala, of course:)  
Serpil

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Hello Issa.

Congratulations on a wonderful concert and thank your for inviting me over to the reception after the concert.

By the way, i realy enjoyed your video clip on <http://www.mikeouds.com/video/>

You are an inspiration to oud players around the world.

Regards,

Harry G.

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To all my dear MEME friends,

I was most challenged by our last concert. I have not been able to participate in MEME most of this year but was fortunate that Issa allowed me to join you for this last concert. I have much to learn about the more sophisticated aspects of MEME music. I hope to be able

to continue playing with this fine group of musicians and pick up many more of this music's nuances.

I would like to complete a video of the concert. It would be great if I could edit in Nathan's still photos and the footage from Issa's sister video camera. For now I will run off a copy of my footage from my video camera which was stationed way in the back of the auditorium.

Everyone should get to hear, play or sing this music. It is the root of many types of music both East and West. Dizzy and Trane would have loved to play with us last Friday night (they would have even played for free). The drum duo would make Elvin Jones's eyes bug out !

May peace and happiness be with you,  
Dave Grilly (aka Don Pockets, Px.D.)

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Issa, CONGRATULATIONS!!! It is wonderful!!! Let me know about your concerts in the Fall, I promised myself to attend already many times, but, this year was terrible for me (too much work as a single composer in the Department!). All the best,  
Marta Ptaszynska

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Dear Issa,

I've meant to say this before, but let me say it now: You've worked beautiful miracles with the Middle East Music Ensemble! The concert on April 30th at the Oriental Institute was stunning, proving just how important your vision is at the University of Chicago. Thank you for your time and effort!

With deepest admiration,

Philip Bohlman

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Dear Issa:

I've been extraordinarily impressed by your work and energy this year in leading the MEME. You have singularly raised this to a new level, and I couldn't be happier or more proud of you.

Needless to say, we are re-appointing you for next year, and I am requesting an increase in salary for you to \$5000. You clearly would deserve more, given how little the job pays as it is. But it is a gesture to at least say that we recognize all the work you have done. In addition, I want to reiterate my offer to you to help support the acquisition of music instruments for the ensemble.

Thanks so much for a rousing success in your first year of directorship!

Warmly,

Thomas

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Hi Issa,

This is a wonderful article, and gives well earned recognition for all of your untiring efforts, both on behalf of MEME as well as for your life-long commitment to preserving and disseminating Middle East music and culture, in an interactive way,

Jim Stoyanoff