



2. A CULTURAL EVENING WITH THE LEBANESE EMBASSY

NOVEMBER 7, 2017
RESIDENCE OF THE LEBANESE AMBASSADOR
WASHINGTON D.C.



On Tuesday, November 7th, at the residence of the Lebanese Ambassador in Washington D.C., over 100 guests gathered for a cultural event to celebrate the author and poet Kahlil Gibran. This event was a collaboration between Ambassador Carla Jazzar, Chargé d'Affaires ad.interim, of the Embassy of Lebanon in Washington D.C. and the Kahlil Gibran Chair for Values and Peace. The gathering reflected a deep love for Lebanon and respect for Gibran and his work.



Ambassador Carla Jazzar, Chargé d'Affaires of the Embassy of Lebanon in Washington D.C. welcomes guests at the event

The theme of the night was Gibran and his dear Lebanon. The event opened with remarks by Ambassador Jazzar, who spoke on the importance of Gibran's message of peace, cultural interconnectedness, and her appreciation for the arts, specifically music. To Gibran, melodies form a wordless language of the spirit that supports self-reflection and dialogue with others. Gibran's first book in Arabic, "Al-Musiqah", published in 1905, was about music.

Ambassador Jazzar concluded her remarks by paying her respects to Professor Emeritus Suheil B. Bushrui, a "beacon of cultures and languages," in recognition of his outstanding services to world peace and his contributions to both Gibran and Arabic literary studies. The Ambassador dedicated the event at the Lebanese Embassy to his memory.

The Director of the Gibran Chair, May Rihani, echoed Ambassador Jazzar's sentiments about Gibran, adding that "Gibran is international because of his message of the Oneness of Humanity". "This message", she said, "resonates with individuals and communities around the world." Rihani then shared her perspective on those disparate elements that influenced Gibran's life, noting that Lebanon, nature, tragedy, women, and the intersection of East and West were among those influences that marked him deeply.

Great figures from the East and the West inspired Gibran and shaped his vision, including: Nietzsche, William Blake, Tagore, Auguste Rodin, Henri David Thoreau, Ralph Waldo Emerson, Ameen Rihani, Ibn Al-Farid, and Abdu'l-Baha. Rihani concluded by stating that due to Gibran's universal message, the University of Maryland established a Chair in his name. The University holds the only Chair in the world crowned with the name of this universal figure and "Lebanese giant." The Chair pays homage to Gibran's legacy. Rihani noted and it furthers the study of Values and Peace, "two international aspirations so relevant in these turbulent times of the 21st century."



Rev. Paul Gordon Chandler and Director May Rihani deliver their remarks

Featured at the event was Rev. Paul-Gordon Chandler, founding president of CARAVAN arts and author of "In Search of a Prophet". Rev. Chandler spoke about his book and the journey he went on to connect with the all-embracing spirituality of Kahlil Gibran. Rev. Chandler explored how Gibran, an "East-West figure can be a much-needed guide for our time." He also related peace and harmony to building bridges between creeds of the Middle East and the West.

Members of the choir of Our Lady of Lebanon, a Maronite church in Washington D.C., accompanied the melodies. Among those melodies were: "Kan Li Bil Amsi" (Yesterday, I Had), "A'tini Elnay" (Give Me the Flute), "Lamma El Watan" (When the Country), and "Ya Bani Oummi" (Citizens of My Country), as well as "Sakan El Layl" (The Silence of the Night) which was inspired by Gibran's writings. ■

The presentation was followed by a live performance of Gibran's poetry put into songs, performed by two Lebanese-American vocalists: Cynthia Samaha and Raymond Ghattas.



Vocalists Raymond Ghattas and Cynthia Samaha standing in a room dedicated to Kahlil Gibran

Choir members standing behind the audience during their performance at the Lebanese Embassy



Vocalist Cynthia Samaha during her performance

Rev. Paul Gordon Chandler, Dr. May Riham, Ambassador Carla Jassar, and Dean Gregory Ball

Members of the choir of Our Lady of Lebanon