



NEWS

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El Camino College Students Perform at Carnegie Hall;
Directed by ECC Director of Choral Activities Joanna Medawar Nachef

El Camino College students recently traveled to New York and performed at the renowned Carnegie Hall, led by ECC Director of Choral Activities Joanna Medawar Nachef.

Nachef, who made her fifth conducting appearance at Carnegie Hall, led 55 El Camino College students among 150 singers from California and 100 singers from Lebanon to perform on the main stage.

Nachef designed this performance to include colleagues from Lebanon who gave their conducting debuts. Maestro Toufic Maatouk opened the concert with Puccini's "Messa Di Gloria" with the adult singers from Lebanon and the El Camino College Chorale. Maestro Khalil Rahme conducted the western premiere of his own composition "Paulus," a Mass on the life of St. Paul, in Arabic. The concert culminated with Nachef conducting all singers, including 60 children (30 from California and 30 from Lebanon) in a performance of Rutter's "Mass of the Children."

"This is the best type of cultural exchange, with students from Lebanon and the United States standing side by side and making music together in a great concert hall," Nachef said.

Participating choruses from the U.S. and Lebanon include: California Academy of Mathematics & Science, Carson; Capistrano High School Camerata, Mission Viejo; El Camino College Chorale, Torrance; Los Cancioneros Master Chorale, Torrance; Voce Angelicus, Torrance; Antonine University Choir, Hadat-Baabda, Lebanon; Antonine Young Singers, Hadat-Baabda, Lebanon; and Notre Dame University Choir, Zouk Mosbeh, Lebanon.

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Nachef moved to Los Angeles in 1977. She earned a bachelor's degree in piano performance from California State University, Dominguez Hills, and master's and doctorate degrees in music from USC. The director of choral activities at ECC, Nachef also directs the Peninsula Community Church Choir and the Los Cancioneros Master Chorale (LCMC). Her work with LCMC was recently recognized by the Torrance Performing Arts Consortium's 2014 Mercury Stage and Theatre Award.

Nachef is a speaker and citizen diplomat for the U.S. State Department with the Global Education Through Technology project, a charter board member and president of the LA/Beirut Sister City Organization, and an alumna of the U.S. Institute of Peace, Washington, D.C. She recently returned from Lebanon, where she was an invited guest conductor for the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra

Among other honors, Nachef is the recipient of the 2015 Distinguished Faculty Award from El Camino College. She was also awarded the 2005 Excellence in Arts Award for Music by the City of Torrance, and the 2008 Daily Breeze/Torrance Performing Arts Consortium's "Making a Difference" director's award.

Nachef made her debut in Lebanon at Al Bustan Festival in 2009, was named a living legend for the African Diaspora of Sacred Music and Musicians in 2010, received the 2012 Lifetime Achievement Award by the Lebanese Ladies Cultural Society, and the 2013 National Americanism Award by the Daughters of the American Revolution, El Redondo Regent.

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