Visiting Artist Series presents
RAHIM ALH AJ
Oud

November 16 . 8PM
MilkBoy ArtHouse
The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center’s Visiting Artist Series presents

RAHIM AlHAJ
Oud

Rahim AlHaj, oud / composer
Sourena Sefati, santour
Issa Malluf, percussion

This performance will last approximately 1 hour 11 minutes.

Program to be selected from:

Dialogue
Let’s Have Fun
Dancing Planet
Wondering
Fly Away

INTERMISSION

Lamia Nada Yatathnah
Dasht
Akoob
Salam to Mother Earth
Kurdish Rhythm
Iraqi oud musician and composer Rahim AlHaj began playing the oud at age nine, going on to study under Munir Bashir at Institute of Music in Baghdad, receiving various awards there. In 1991 after the first Gulf War, Rahim was forced to leave Iraq due to his activism against the Baath regime. He moved to the US in 2000 as a political refugee.

Considered one of the world’s finest oud players, Rahim has recorded and performed with many other master musicians of varied backgrounds and styles including guitarist Bill Frisell, accordionist Guy Klucevsek, sarod player Amjad Ali Khan and indy-rockers REM. He has composed pieces for solo oud, string quintet, symphony and more. Delicately combining traditional Iraqi maqams with contemporary styling and influence, his pieces establish new concepts without altering the foundation of the traditional “Iraqi School of Oud”. His compositions evoke the experience of exile, consequences in a post-war reality and of new beginnings. Rahim has released eleven CDs, receiving 2 Grammy® nominations. His latest, Letters From Iraq (Smithsonian Folkways, 2017), is inspired by letters he received from Iraqi women and youth and is performed with percussion and string quintet. In 2015, he was awarded the NEA Heritage Fellowship.

Rahim is joined by Iranian santour virtuoso Sourena Sefatim, author of the book Dorrab: One hundred and seventeen Etudes for Santour, and Palestinian-American percussion master Issa Malluf who has also toured with A Hawk and A Hacksaw and Amjad Ali Khan.

Tom Frouge Avokado Artists / 505.771.3166 / tom@avokado.net

Rahim Alhaj has been very generous with his time this week. On Wednesday he performed and spoke in a combined class event for "Select Musical Cultures of the World" and "The Impact of Music on Life," both in the ethnomusicology division of UMD's School of Music. In the evening he was interviewed by Anas "Andy" Shallal, founder of Busboys and Poets, artist and activist as part of our Do Good Dialogues series. Tomorrow Rahim will perform and speak about his life for several students in UMD’s Arabic Flagship Program. Please join us immediately following tonight’s performance for a meet-the-artist party.
Artists lead complicated lives. They collect material for new work, they often teach and engage with community groups and they are always developing their craft.

In SIDE NOTES, we are providing good reads and fun facts to give you a sense of who our visiting artists are and what makes them do what they do. Contributing writers include students, faculty, staff and alumni from the extended Clarice family.

You began playing the oud at an early age, but what inspired you to pick up the instrument, and then commit to it?

A teacher. I was 8 years old. He brought his oud to class one day, it was so beautiful. And, though it was not common, as teachers are to be treated with the utmost respect, I somehow got up the courage to ask him if I could touch it! He let me hold the oud and play it and then asked if I wanted to take it home for the evening! I came back the next day and showed him what I had figured out and he was amazed. He gave me the instrument! I was immediately committed and knew the oud would be part of my life forever. In fact, I would sleep with it! It drove my father up the wall. He thought I was insane!

We don’t often see the oud in concerts... can you give a brief history or description of the oud?

The oud is the world’s oldest string instrument dating back over 5000 years. One of the first depictions is a statue from Mesopotamia of a women playing one. The first written description of the instrument dates to the ninth century. The oud has a rounded back made of strips of wood, with a wooden top with sound holes and a fretless neck [like the violin not the guitar]. The head, with the tuning pegs is bent
back at an angle to the neck. It has six “courses” of strings: 5 double and one single, so eleven strings total. Most Arabic ouds are tuned in the Egyptian style, although Iraqi tuning is unique. In any case, I use my own alternate tuning.

**A foundation for your music is Iraqi maqams. What are maqams, and is there anything unique about Iraqi maqams?**

In simple terms, maqams are modes, a micro-tonal [with intervals smaller than a half-step, the space between two notes on a piano] melodic, 24-tone system. They are also a way of improvisation. But they are, of course, much more than that! In Iraq, maqams and how we use them—particularly with the oud—are unique and very special. First, maqam is the foundation of the soul. We say in Iraq that your soul must be settled to play music; if it is not, you are just playing notes, not music. Iraqi maqams and the way they are performed are different than Arabic or Middle Eastern modes. For example, in Iraq we use modulation, going from one maqam to another using common notes. Also, the “Iraqi School of Oud” developed the oud as a solo instrument, not as an accompaniment. It takes the place of the voice, which for centuries has been used to sing poems using different maqams.

**How have your experiences as a political activist and then refugee influenced you and your music?**

All my music is based on and/or influenced by my experiences. My goal as a composer is to give voice to the voiceless: the women, children, and all those affected by war and violence. My experiences being jailed, hunted, tortured, and exiled from my home inform my work at its core. My past and my present has allowed me a certain empathy and understanding toward others’ experiences. My latest work, *Letters from Iraq*, is an example. Each piece was written from and about a letter received from women and youth in Iraq. It is a meditation on consequences in a post-war reality. If I do not speak through my music, then why am I here?

**In what ways can or should music be used in times of political conflict?**

There are so many ways that music can and absolutely should be used. Music soothes when angry. It calms when there is anxiety. It helps to heal pain. Music can be intimate and immediate. It can rally people together, uniting them to action. It can often articulate in emotional and moving ways that which speech or talk cannot. In the case of music from other places, it can open a door to understand different cultures, perhaps create a kind of dialogue that did not previously exist and allow us to see people in a different light, or maybe for the very first time! Music can be a powerful voice and tool for change.
THE ARTIST PARTNER PROGRAM at The Clarice curates a multi-arts performance with regional, national and international artists and creative innovators program dedicated to creating performance and learning opportunities for students and our community through artist residencies workshops, master classes, K-12 student matinees and artistic exchange. We believe artists can be a catalyst for community change, leadership and empowerment.

As part of a major public research university, the Artist Partner Program is committed to the creation and investigation of new work and new ways of participating in the performing arts.

The Artist Partner Program has three primary missions:

To supplement and extend the academic learning and investigation of the classroom for UMD students;

To provide artistic and cultural opportunities as part of the UMD experience for students, faculty, staff, alumni and university friends;

To enhance and develop the artistic and cultural ecology of the community that surrounds and supports the university.

Visit theclarice.umd.edu/app for more info.

ERICAN PARTNER PROGRAM STAFF

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For the 2017-2018 season, The Clarice is proud to present several artists whose beliefs in social justice and the power of the human spirit inform the art they make. These powerful voices will speak about their work through a series of public events in a variety of formats. Designed to complement UMD’s Do Good campus initiative to create a hub of activity for philanthropy, nonprofit management, public policy, social change and leadership; these events will educate, inspire and reinforce the importance of taking action to make a positive change in our society and in the world.

**DO GOOD DIALOGUE**
**ARTMAKING AS AN ACTIONABLE TOOL**
**TUE, FEB 13 . 7PM**
**MILKBOY ARTHOUSE**
In this Do Good Dialogue, wild Up founder Chris Rountree and UMD faculty from the College of Arts and Humanities host a public conversation, examining how artists create change in society. Rountree writes, “what a set of gargantuan tasks lays out before us. Many of us feel like our work couldn’t possibly be enough to do what it needs to do…but I’m eager to talk about how it can and what we can do to make that happen.”

**DO GOOD DIALOGUE**
**NO PLACE TO HIDE: A CONVERSATION ABOUT PRIVACY OR THE LACK THEREOF**
**WED, FEB 28 . 7PM**
**MILKBOY ARTHOUSE**
The Plurality of Privacy Project in Five-Minute Plays (P3M5) is a transatlantic theater project focused on the value of privacy. In cooperation with the Goethe-Institute Washington, theaters across the US and Europe have commissioned playwrights to write five-minute plays exploring the central question, “What does privacy mean to you in the digital age?” In this dialogue, UMD faculty members will host a round-table conversation with three of the participating artist/playwrights.

This season, many of The Clarice’s artists are working to raise awareness of a multitude of pressing social issues, including the environment, human trafficking, race relations, homelessness and much more. We stand by their efforts and deeply believe in the power of the arts to create change.

Rahim became aware of injustice in Iraqi society under the repressive Ba’athist regime began at a very young age. While in college, he became active in the underground revolutionary movement. Indeed, Alhaj gave that movement its anthem, setting to music a poem written by a friend. His song *Why* gave voice to ordinary people’s dissatisfaction with the regime and was sung with seditious relish across the country. Today, Alhaj continues his journey of determined optimism, seeking to bring the world to a compassionate understanding of our shared destiny and to give the oppressed a voice for justice. Information about how to help Iraqi refugees can be found at [www.rescue.org/country/iraq](http://www.rescue.org/country/iraq)

He has also been awarded for his work towards peace from Veterans for Peace: [www.veteransforpeace.org](http://www.veteransforpeace.org)

Your curiosity is an indication of your concern and we appreciate your thoughtful consideration. We hope you may be moved to do good by doing something, too.
Holiday Inn
College Park

is proud to be the official host hotel for The Clarice's Artist Partner Program.

- Banquet Space to accommodate up to 400 guests
- Meeting Space to accommodate up to 500 guests
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- Easy Access to I-495 Capital Beltway
- Getaway Packages
- Corporate and Group Rates Available

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THE CAMERI THEATRE OF TEL-AVIV (ISRAEL)
BASED ON STORIES BY ETGAR KERET
DIRECTED BY ZVI SAHAR, PUPPETCINEMA
FRI, DEC 1 & SAT, DEC 2 . 8PM
Join the artists for a conversation after each performance.
Adapted from acclaimed Israeli author Etgar Keret’s book
of short stories, this multimedia performance inventively
combines puppetry, theatre and film, exploring what
happens when the story begins to control the storyteller.

TINE THING HELSETH, TRUMPET (NORWAY)
TUE, DEC 5 . 8PM
Join us for a conversation at 7pm about tonight’s
program, moderated by School of Music Ph.D.
candidate Elizabeth Massey.
RESERVED: $25+ (STUDENT/YOUTH: $10)
In this unique concert experience, rising star trumpet
soloist Tine Thing Helseth showcases her virtuosic
technique and ability to span genres.

DONNY MCCASLIN GROUP (USA)
THU, DEC 7 . 7PM & 9PM
MILKBOY ARTHOUSE - DOWNSTAIRS
Known for his collaboration with David Bowie on Blackstar,
jazz saxophonist Donny McCaslin performs with a high-
energy, rock- and synth-influenced sound.

WENDY WHelan, BRIAN BROOKS AND BROOKLYN RIDER (USA)
SOME OF A THOUSAND WORDS
SAT, DEC 9 . 8PM
Join the artists for a conversation after the performance,
moderated by Vladimir Angelov from Dance ICONS.
A ballet-inflected contemporary dance work from Wendy
Whelan and Brian Brooks, accompanied live by the string
quartet Brooklyn Rider.

35TH ANNUAL CHOREOGRAPHERS’ SHOWCASE
SAT, JAN 27 . 3PM & 8PM
The 35th annual showcase featuring an evening of works
by new and established choreographers. Presented in
partnership with the Maryland-National Capital Park and
Planning Commission.

GRUPO CORPO (Brazil)
SUITE BRANCA / DANÇA SINFÔNICA
WED, JAN 31 . 8PM
An evening of hypnotic, athletic contemporary Brazilian
dance, accompanied by original instrumental music by
Samuel Rosa of the band Skank.

STEFAN JACKIW & JEREMY DENK with UMD SCHOOL OF MUSIC VOCAL QUARTET (USA)
CHARLES IVES VIOLIN AND PIANO SONATAS
THU, FEB 1 . 8PM
Two of America’s most thought-provoking, multi-faceted
and compelling classical chamber artists perform Charles
Ives’ complete sonatas for violin and piano.

ETIENNE CHARLES (TRINIDAD)
CREOLE SOUL
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 2 . 7PM & 9PM
MILKBOY ARTHOUSE
Trumpeter and bandleader Etienne Charles ushers jazz
into new territory in this buoyant performance embracing
his Afro-Caribbean roots.

WILD UP (USA)
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2018 . 8PM
MILKBOY ARTHOUSE
This modern music collective committed to creating
visceral, thought-provoking happenings, believes that
great ideas, empowered by art, are capable of affecting
great social change.

KYLE ABRAHAM/ABRAHAM.IN.MOTION (USA)
DEAREST HOME
FRIDAY, FEB 23 & 24 . 8PM
An interactive theatre performance focused on loving,
longing and loss. Experience the show in silence, or don
headphones to layer on a rich soundscape.

ST. LAWRENCE STRING QUARTET (CANADA)
THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018 . 8PM
This world-class chamber ensemble brings every piece
of music to the audience in vivid color.
UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

November 17
BALLYHOO!
A rock band with punk energy and pop reggae grooves

November 30
RAINBOW FULL OF SOUND
Grateful Dead Tribute Band

December 6
CREATIVE SPIRITS SERIES:
PINTS AND PRINTS
Traditional art with the timeless art of bar drinking

December 7
DONNY McCASLIN GROUP
High-energy, rock and synth influenced show

December 11
BOHEMIAN CAVERNS
JAZZ ORCHESTRA
Some of DC’s best perform jazz & big band

January 20
BOAT HOUSE ROW: THE PREMIER
YACHT ROCK EXPERIENCE
Prepare to be rocked...lightly

More events + information at milkboyarthouse.com
7416 BALTIMORE AVE. COLLEGE PARK, MD 20740 | 240.770.3607
MilkBoy ArtHouse is supported by the Community Investment Tax Credit program. This program grants Maryland taxpayers an additional 50% in tax credits for qualifying donations of money, goods or property of at least $500.

For more information, Contact Cecily Habimana at habimana@umd.edu or www.collegeparkpartnership.org/arthousedonation
We believe artists can be catalysts for community change, leadership and empowerment.

This season, our Visiting Artists will:

- CREATE opportunities for young audiences to experience live performances and creative conversations through the K-12 School Partner Program
- ENHANCE our understanding of the world through Do Good Dialogues, exploring social justice and the ways the human spirit informs art
- SUPPORT creation and development of new work by UMD students through master classes, coaching and performances of their work by visiting artists
- ENGAGE students through intimate, unplugged performances in residence halls throughout the year, creating connections through art, food, and shared experiences

Immerse yourself in a world of artistic discovery with our 2017-2018 visiting artists and strengthen the future of the arts by making your gift today.

To support the Visiting Artist Series visit theclarice.umd.edu/make-gift. Or call 301.405.4517.