

Excerpts from Rajai Khouri's first CD cover

about his musical activities & as a co-founder of

The Peace and Prosperity Trust

Rajai has a Bachelor of Architecture degree from the American University of Beirut and he is the founder of the "AIC Group of Consultants for Project Development and Construction", with projects in the Middle East, the Americas, Africa and Europe. He devotes a considerable amount of his time in supporting and promoting aspiring singers and musicians in the UK and in the Middle East – especially those with an interest in the fusion of Western and Middle Eastern cultures. He serves as the Chairman of the music committee and member of the Board of Directors of the "British Lebanese Association" since 1992. He, along with HRH Princess Dina of Jordan, was a Founding Trustee of "The Peace and Prosperity Trust" which raises funds for charities through the universal language of music, opera and the performing arts. He served for 15 years as a member of the Board of Directors of the "British Youth Opera", whose Patron is HRH Prince Charles, and of the much acclaimed young British ensemble "Chamber Domaine".

He is an active member of the Anglican Church. He currently sits as the representative of the Anglican Bishop of Jerusalem on the Board of "The Jerusalem and the Middle East Church Association", whose president is the Archbishop of Canterbury. In the mid nineties, he was requested by the Archbishop to sit on the committee for the formation and the running of the Anglican Investment Agency (AIA). He also arranged for the Archbishop's delegation to visit President Arafat which resulted in the Anglican Communion's participation in the Bethlehem 2000 regeneration plan. Her Majesty the Queen sanctioned his admission as an Officer (Brother) in "The Order of St. John" and he was invested in Jerusalem by Her Majesty's representative, The Lord Prior Mr. Eric Barry, in November 2005.

Rajai started singing at a very early age when he was a student at the International College (IC) and a Cub Scout at the Boy Scout gatherings in Lebanon. He founded the Glee Club at IC and was the main "bonfire" caller for the Lebanese Boy Scouts Association's annual camps as well as at other camps which were attended by many students (like Stewart Copeland, the drummer of the rock band "The Police", when he lived in Lebanon in the early sixties).

While still a student at IC he was invited to join the American University of Beirut's (AUB) Men's Choir under the directorship of Professor Kamal Salibi. He started his vocal training with Alvarez Bulos in Beirut in 1963 and joined the Beirut Orpheus Choir (BOC) where he became the main baritone soloist in 1964.

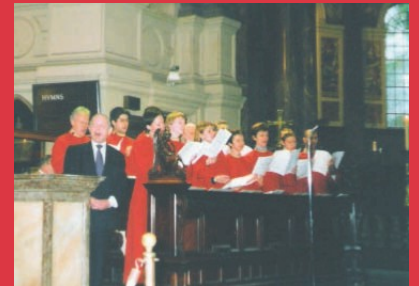
He also joined the main choir of AUB in 1964 and became the baritone soloist of the choir in 1966. He was also a soloist in two main church choirs in Beirut and sang in Arabic where he premiered "How Great Thou Art". Later this became one of his favourite songs and he sang it around the world, once for a 20,000 person audience in Paris in 1999.

- In December 1974, he premiered "The Holy City" at the BOC's Christmas concert and sang it again at the BOC Christmas concert of 1978. Since then, this has become his favourite work as it represents his vision for an everlasting peace in Jerusalem and the rest of the world. This poignant song's lyrics are timeless and meaningful; "I saw the Holy City beside the tide less sea, the light of God was on its streets, the gates where open wide, and all who would might enter and no one was denied". He was invited in 1994 to sing it in St. Georges Cathedral on his first visit to Jerusalem since he left this city in 1948. That was a dream come true for him. A year later, he was invited by Cannon John Peterson to sing that song at Lambeth Palace Chapel, in the presence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, during the service to welcome and commission Cannon Peterson as the Secretary General of the Anglican Communion. Rajai also sang "The Holy

A Message Of Peace At Christmas

Carols and Songs for Peace, Love and Hope in the Holy Land

Sung by Rajai F.khouri



City” in November 2005 in the same Cathedral in Jerusalem in the service following his investiture as a “Brother” in the Order of St. John.

- Between 1965 and 1983, he appeared as one of the main soloists in most of the concerts of the AUB choir (under the baton of Salvador Arnita) and the BOC (under the batons of Alvarez Bulos, Allan Hovey and Vatche Barsoumian). He also appeared in title roles in most of the BOC’s Gilbert and Sullivan productions, last of which was conducted by the British guest conductor Simon Wright.
- From 1983, he continued his vocal training in London with Patricia Clark, Kenneth Bowen and Richard Alda. Later, he started receiving coaching from Ms. Tina Ruta at the Guildhall School of Music and at The Royal Opera House. Ms. Ruta (who has worked with the likes of Placido Domingo, Jose Carreras and Montserrat Caballe) contributed significantly to his interpretation of Italian music in general and of Italian opera in particular.
- In 1984, he started supporting the London Chamber Orchestra and its conductor and musical director, Christopher Warren Green. With the help of Richard Branson he helped the LCO in producing a mini CD in support of the children of Lebanon. Christopher Warren Green was kind to participate in his first recording in London in 1991, when he played the violin.
- In 1985, I worked with the Arab legend, Fairuz, in London in preparation for a Christmas concert for the British Lebanese Association (BLA). He arranged for a full orchestra and Choir to accompany Fairuz, and he acted as the production manager for this concert at St. Margaret’s Church, Westminster.
- He organised concerts for the British Youth Opera (BYO) at the BLA’s “End of Year Dinners” of 1992 and 1993. In the latter concert, he appeared with the BYO as a guest soloist.
- Between 1993 and 1996 he worked closely with Mathew Epstein, the Director General of the Welsh National Opera, as well as with the conductors Carlo Rizzi and Daniel Gatti. He was also coached by his friend, the renowned Welsh tenor Dennis O’Neil, and together they made a private recording of the “Pearl Fisher’s Duet”.
- In 1994 he convinced Luciano Pavarotti to perform in Lebanon and introduced him a year later to Mrs Rafik Hariri (the wife of the late Lebanese Prime Minister) when it was agreed that Pavarotti will perform in Beirut. To this end, he coordinated with Prime Minister Hariri, the Finance Minister Fuad Sinyora and Luciano Pavarotti to hold the concert in the newly refurbished Sports City Stadium as part of the Beirut Festival.
- In 1995, he recorded in London, as a soloist in Arabic, a CD of ‘Zayed’s Anthem’ for orchestra, choir and soloists (an anthem dedicated to HRH Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan). He also sang opera in Arabic with the soloists of the Egyptian Opera in two private concerts in London.
- In 1998, he organised a concert for The Peace and Prosperity Trust performed by the London Welsh Male Voice Choir and the Lebanese soloist Sonia Ghazarian at the Queen Elizabeth Hall, London.
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- In 1999, with the help of the late opera producer, Alan Sievwright, he produced in London, the British Lebanese Association’s first opera, Mozart’s “Il Re Pastore”, with the aim of also organising a performance in Sidon, Lebanon, where the opera is set.



- In 1999, he assisted the Palestinian Authority in organizing concerts on the occasion of the Bethlehem 2000 festivities, both in the Palestinian territories and in London.
- That same year, he worked with Alan Sievwright and with Iambic Productions to organize a fund raising concert for The Bethlehem Presidential Committee at the Royal Albert Hall with major international artists. This was unfortunately cancelled at the last minute. Similarly, he had also assisted Vanessa Redgrave in the late 1980's in producing a concert at the Royal Albert Hall for Jerusalem when he worked extensively with the leading country singer, Kris Kristofferson.
- In 2004, after an absence of more than 20 years from the Lebanese stage, he returned to participate as a guest soloist in the Lebanese American University's annual Christmas concert.

Rajai has long believed in the crossover of popular music and classical music as well as western and eastern music. He regularly promotes young musicians and singers and especially those who share this belief. For example he produced a performance in London with Alan Sievwright in 2001 for the Palestinian leading pianist, Salim Aboud, a prominent member of Daniel Barenboim's and the late Edward Said's "West-Eastern Divan Orchestra". He had also agreed with Edward Said to help him expand on his collaboration with Daniel Barenboim to incorporate vocal music. This project never came to fruition due to Edward's unfortunate sudden death.

He is known for his rendering of the AUB Alma Mater, first when he was "maestro" at the Engineering School for four years, and later in most of the AUB activities in London and some in the United States. The same is also true for the IC Alma Mater, particularly when he recorded the anthem with members of the IC Alumni Association in London in 1992.

Since he started singing, he has been a soloist at private concerts and at weddings in cathedrals and churches around the world.

RAJAI AND THE MESSAGE OF PEACE

Rajai is an architect by profession and a keen music lover. He is a trained opera singer who has been singing since he was 15. Rajai, who has been living in London for more than 30 years, has performed in the Middle East, Europe and the United States, both on stage and in Concerts. "My love for opera and sacred music has led me to meet many talented artists in the music world, as well as many patrons active in spreading the message of peace". Coupled with this love of music, his project development work in the Middle East led him to play an active role in the Peace Process starting with the Oslo Agreement.

Born in Jerusalem, he lived in Lebanon throughout his childhood and part of his adult life where he studied at the International College and the American University of Beirut. Seeing first hand the unfolding troubles in that part of the world, and having suffered from the wars there, he became involved with many political and religious personalities, all active in finding ways of achieving lasting peace in the Holy Land. "I have supported peace as a businessman and as a musician for many years now. I am releasing this compilation because I believe it is time for me to promote this message of peace through my singing and music. Music transcends all boundaries and I believe that vocal music, in particular, is one of the strongest and most effective ways of spreading this essential and noble message".

Rajai wishes to promote the message of peace, love and hope in the Holy Land and also Lebanon and other neighbouring countries. He believes that peace specifically in Jerusalem is vital for achieving peace in the rest of the world.



This CD IS PROMOTED BY

"The Peace and Prosperity Trust"



THE PEACE & PROSPERITY TRUST

Through the universal language of music, opera and the performing arts, The Peace & Prosperity Trust seeks to raise funds for charities in the Levant and other Middle-Eastern countries. Its aim is to integrate internationally renowned artists with aspiring young talent.

Based and registered in London, the Peace & Prosperity Trust hopes to share in the renewal of such countries by education and the relief of poverty.

The Peace & Prosperity Trust was established by H.R.H. Princess Dina of Jordan, Mr. Rajai Khouri, Dr. David Sambar and a group of Arab, European, and American personalities.

The Trust is overseen by a Board of Trustees supported by a Board of Advisers all of whom are highly regarded and influential individuals from the Middle-East and the West, as well as prominent members of the global art community.

Trustee Leila Buheiry is the current Trust Administrator, assisted by Mr. Antoine Mattar.

Following are some of the projects which the Trust was involved with:

- The Trust Organised a Gala Concert for charities in the Lebanon with The London Welsh Male Voice Choir and Lebanese/Armenian soprano Sona Ghazarian, in the Queen Elizabeth Hall on March 2nd 1998. Charities benefiting included The Chronic Care Center for Thalassaemia and Diabetes, Hamazkayin and the Lebanese American University.
- The Trust was instrumental in the development of projects involving Luciano Pavarotti performing in London, Amman and Cairo for an educational charity, as well as a concert given by him in Lebanon for the Beirut Festival in June 1999.
- The Trust assisted one of its Founding Trustees in the development of a project for the performance in London of Mozart's "Il Re Pastore", produced by Alan Seivewright for the British Lebanese Association in November 1999, in aid of the BLA Scholarship Fund.
- The Trust helped produce the recording of 'Zayed's Anthem' (an anthem dedicated to HRH Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan) by Elie Barrak, a Lebanese composer, with Lebanese soloists as well as a British orchestra and choir.
- The Trust has helped organise the performance of the ballerina Anastasia Volochkova and the pianist Saleem Abboud Ashkar during the gala dinner of the Arab Women's Association, on 9th October 2000.
- The Trust organized in late 1999 a major concert at the Royal Albert Hall in London to create awareness of the Bethlehem 2000 project in the Palestinian Territories, with the participation of major international stars and with world-wide television coverage. This project unfortunately did not come to fruition because of events in the area.

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