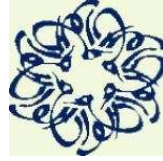


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PRESS RELEASE/FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



## Alwan for the Arts

*Is Proud to Present*

### The Okbari Middle Eastern Ensemble

Saturday, June 26, 2010 at 9:00 p.m.

Alwan for the Arts is proud to present The Okbari Middle Eastern Ensemble in concert on Saturday, June 26, 2010. The Okbari Middle Eastern Ensemble makes its Alwan debut tonight, in an evening of Ottoman classical instrumental and vocal music, along with Turkish folk and Arabic contemporary compositions, including original works by their late teacher, oud master and composer Udi Alan Shavarsh Bardezbanian. This event will be held at Alwan for the Arts at 16 Beaver Street, 4<sup>th</sup> Floor, New York, NY 10004. Tickets are \$15 and are available online at [www.alwanforthearts.org](http://www.alwanforthearts.org) or at the door. Doors open at 8:30 p.m.

#### The Okbari Middle Eastern Ensemble:



The Okbari Middle Eastern Ensemble has performed at venues throughout New England, the East Coast and the Midwest, including such prestigious institutions such as the Old Town School of Folk Music in Chicago and enjoyed the honor of being invited to perform at the 2009 Chicago Arabesque Festival. The Ensemble has shared the stage in Istanbul, Turkey with the Kemani Serkan Ensemble and the Rumeli Meyhane Fasil Ensemble. In 2008, Ensemble oud player and vocalist Amos Libby appeared onstage as a guest percussionist with the legendary Gypsy clarinetist Selim Sesler in Istanbul.

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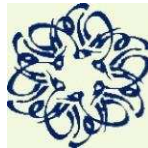
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### The Musicians:

**Amos Libby** began his study of Middle Eastern music and oud technique with the late oud master and composer Udi Alan Shavarsh Bardezbanian. Amos currently travels to Turkey to study Ottoman classical and Turkish contemporary art music with Istanbul Conservatory veteran and oud and yayli tanbur master Osman Nuri Ozpekeli, and has also studied in Istanbul with renowned oud virtuoso Necati Celik. Amos also studied with Lebanese oud master Charbel Rouhana at Simon Shaheen's Arabic Music Retreat at Mount Holyoke College. Amos is the co-director of the Bowdoin College Middle Eastern Ensemble, teaches oud as a member of the Applied Music Faculty at Bates College, and is an adjunct instructor of oud technique at Bowdoin College.

**Steve Gruverman** plays various woodwinds in a variety of styles but especially loves the ethnic dance music of Europe, from Brittany to Bulgaria. Steve also plays with the Casco Bay Tumblers, Shavarsh Kef Ensemble, King Pirogi Polka Band and the Flying Tomatoes.

**Eric LaPerna** has been a percussionist since 1987. He has studied African rhythms with Nigerian drummer Alani Ogunladi, Armenian, Greek and Turkish rhythmic systems with Alan Shavarsh Bardezbanian, and Riqq, Tabla, Duff and the Iqa'at with Master Arabic percussionist Michel Merhej Baklouk. He was the lead percussionist of the late Alan Shavarsh Bardezbanian's Middle Eastern Ensemble and is a founding member of Okbari. Eric also studies the nay (Middle Eastern reed flute) with Ali Jihad Racy, Bassam Saba and Boujemaa Razgui. Eric is the Director of the Bowdoin College Middle Eastern Music Ensemble, and is a member of the Applied Music Faculty at Bates College as well as adjunct instructor of hand percussion at Bowdoin College.



### About Alwan for the Arts

Since its founding in 1998, Alwan for the Arts has been an organization dedicated to the presentation and production of the arts and cultures of the Arab world, Middle East and North Africa. Alwan organizes film festivals and screenings, book/poetry readings and signings, lectures and conferences, art exhibits, musical and theatrical performances, and language and literature classes. In 2003, Alwan established a center at 16 Beaver Street in lower Manhattan. In the second decade of its existence, Alwan remains committed to providing a space for reflection, dialogue, and growth in the arts and cultures of the peoples of the Arab world, Middle East, North Africa, and their diasporas, serving their communities and educating the broader public through programs that enrich the artistic and cross-cultural encounter.

*Alwan for the Arts is grateful to **Union Square Awards** for its support in 2007 and 2008. Alwan is also grateful for support from **Lower Manhattan Cultural Council** and the **New York City Department of Cultural Affairs**.*