

## PRESS RELEASE

### **16th edition of Mawazine Festival Rhythms of the World**

#### **Le Mohammed V National Theatre (re) discovering great artists from all over the world.**

Charles Aznavour, Anoushka Shankar and Susana Baca, among others in an exceptional program on the emblematic Mohamed V Theatre stage.

**Rabat Tuesday, April 11th 2017:** Hotspot for Mawazine mythical concerts, Mohammed V National Theater is not only a symbol of cultural life in Rabat, but also a witness to the great moments of the festival's history. Highly appreciated by the artists, in view of its unique setting and its welcoming atmosphere, it will host international figures performing anthology concerts.

For proof, the inauguration of the 16th edition will see the living legend of French chanson: Boasting over 100 million records sold, 1,200 songs, 80 feature films, 294 albums, hundreds of gold, platinum and diamond records, and thousands of concerts in 94 countries around the world, Charles Aznavour is indisputably a living legend of French music. Coined by CNN as the "Entertainer of the Century" in 1988, Charles Aznavour has made a lasting, unforgettable impression on his millions of fans with his greatest hits.

Charles Aznavour has sung and recorded in seven languages and many artists have covered his songs. In addition to his opening concert, Charles Aznavour will perform a second time, Tuesday 16 May.

Saturday, May 13th, it will be the turn of **Badr Rami**, a Syrian artist born in Casablanca, to shine in the technique of Mouwachahates (poems with fixed form) and Koudoud Halabiya (Aleppo chants). His father is the famous violinist, Mohamed Rami Zeitouni, from Aleppo, a town

renowned for its unique passion for the art of Tarab. A disciple of the great school of Sabah Fakhri, a figurehead of Arabic song and Tarab in particular, Badr is a rising star of the Mouwachahates and Koudouds Halabiya (Aleppo songs). For years, he has been committed to the preservation and interpretation of the most representative songs of Arab heritage in a unique and original way.

On Sunday May 14<sup>th</sup>, the Theatre will host another iconic artist, this time coming all the way from Greece. Born in Piraeus, **Eleftheria Arvanitaki** is to many an iconic Greek musician. She began her career in the 1980s by interpreting the great tradition of popular songs with the Opisthodomiki Kompania band, with which she began her career. Quickly, her deep and delicate timbre and rich musicality, at once sensual and light, her tender and deep expressiveness, softness and finesse make her a reference in Hellenic poetry and song, which she mixes with the influences of jazz and variety. In August 2004, she participates in the closing ceremony of the Athens Olympics. Eleftheria has worked with great artists such as Javier Limón and Buika, Cesaria Evora and Dulce Pontes and Philip Glass.

On Monday, May 15<sup>th</sup>, the festival audience will have the privilege to enjoy the performance of the great **Anoushka Shankar**, a faithful representative of classical Indian music and sitar. Like his legendary father Ravi Shankar, Anoushka Shankar continues to push the boundaries of his instrument not only in its traditional Indian classical form but also by breaking the boundaries and working with new sounds and artistic forms. This has earned Anoushka no less than five Grammy nominations. After the success of his album, *Traces of You*, Anoushka Shankar is back with an innovative repertoire evoking the journey.

As she was born near Lima in the black district of Chorillos, **Susana Baca** found herself at an early age at the crossroads of several cultures: the Andes, Africa and Spain. The combination of these influences has irremediably influenced her music, which mixes Spanish guitar, African rhythms and Andean instruments. Recognized in her country and around the world, Susana Baca will perform on Wednesday May 17<sup>th</sup>, as she has been singing and testifying for nearly 40 years to the importance of the popular culture of black peoples in South America. In 2011, her commitment enabled her to become the Minister of Culture of Peru.

On Thursday, May 18th, the Tunisian **Lotfi Bouchnak** will reveal his sensitivity and love for traditional Tunisian and Eastern music—a music that has made of him an outstanding singer with vocal and technical possibilities reaching new heights of perfection. From an early age, he became interested in music and picked up the songs of Oum Kalthoum and the masters of the Egyptian song. He later joined the Tunisian Musical Youth (La Jeunesse Musicale Tunisienne) and then La Rachidia as first soloist.. Lotfi is a UN Peace Ambassador.

On Friday May 19<sup>th</sup>, it will be **Rafael Amargo**'s turn to enchant Mohamed V Theatre audience. Dancer and choreographer, Rafael Amargo is famous for bringing together flamenco and the most avant-garde trends, such as those taught in Martha Graham's school during his stay in New York. Born in Pinos Puente (Granada) in 1975, as Jesús Rafael García Hernández, Rafael Amargo, takes his artist name from Federico Garcia Lorca's poem "Romance Del Amargo. Soloist in different dance companies, he won critical acclaim with his first show Amargo in 2000. He was rewarded two years later for his greatest success, *Poeta* in Nueva York, named best show of the decade. Rafael Amargo participated in 2008 as jury and professor of body expression in Season 8 of Star Academy. He also played his own role in some episodes of the Spanish series Un, dos, tres.

For the closing night of Mawazine on Saturday, May 20th, the Theater will finally welcome **Jahida Wehbe**. An excellent artist in poetry, the theater or music alike. Born in 1969 in Lebanon, she learned Oriental, Syriac and Lyrical songs as well as playing the Oud at the Lebanese National Conservatory of Music where she also studied Sufi songs, avant garde music, recitation of the Holy Quran, and the composition of musical and poetic plays for the theater. Her participation with leading theater directors in Lebanon and with the great actress Nidal al Achkar make her popular in Lebanon where she is recognized for the exceptional quality of her voice and the rigor with which she chooses her repertoire.

**Useful Information:**

**16<sup>th</sup> edition of Mawazine Festival Rhythms of the World: May 12th**

to 20th 2017.

### **About Festival Mawazine Rythmes du Monde:**

Established in 2001, the Mawazine Festival Rhythms of the World is the essential rendezvous for music amateurs in Morocco with, for the last 15 years, over 2 million festivalgoers at each edition. Held every month of May over nine days, Mawazine offers a rich and diversified program where world stars from the four corners of the world make of the cities of Rabat and Salé a world stage for music. Committed to promote Moroccan Music, the Festival devotes more than half of its shows to national artists. As a firm believer in the values of peace, tolerance openness and respect, 90% of the concerts are free of charge so that everybody can enjoy it. Mawazine also participates in the region's economy, attracting tourists from all over the world; thus making of Morocco once every year a world music stage.

### **About Maroc Cultures Association:**

Created in compliance with the provisions of November 15, 1958 Dahir, and further to a General Assembly held in Rabat on October 23, 2001, Maroc Cultures is a non-profit association whose main mission is to offer to the public of Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaër region a highly professional cultural and artistic entertainment worthy of the capital of the kingdom. Echoing the fundamental values of His Majesty King Mohammed VI development policy, Maroc Cultures materializes this mission through Mawazine Rhythms of the World Festival as well as various events, multi-disciplinary symposia, plastic art exhibitions and concerts.