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Questscope & Music for Life International
Music Residency Program in Za'atari, Jordan Refugee Camp
21-25 August 2014

Questscope hosted a music residency program in the Za'atari refugee camp with Music for Life International, supported in part by the Institute for Global Leadership at Tufts University, to share the transformative impact of music with the children of Syria.

"Za'atari String Quartet"

Four outstanding musicians performed together for the first time to share in the beauty and hope of music with Syrian children and families in the Za'atari refugee camp. Directed by George Mathew, founder and artistic director of Music for Life International, the "Za'atari String Quartet" held three performances at Questscope's site followed by music education workshops. Participants included children, youth, community elders, families and even members of the Jordanian Public Security Directorate in Za'atari—many attending all performances.

"We have been anticipating this event ever since we heard about it four months ago. You have brought beauty and joy to us here."

Syrian Mentor Coordinator for Questscope

Deborah Greitzer, Violin, Buffalo Philharmonic

Mary Ann Mumm, Violin, MET Opera Orchestra (former); Professor, Montclair State University

Craig Mumm, Viola, MET Opera Orchestra; Professor, Rutgers University

Rosanna Butterfield, Cello, New World Symphony Orchestra, Verbier Festival

With guest Hisham Alhadrab, Oud, Timpanist/Percussionist, Jordan National Orchestra; Music Therapist, Classical Percussion Instructor, Jordan National Music Conservatory; Principal Timpanist, Palestine Youth Orchestra

George Mathew, Piano, Music for Life International

"You have nourished our spirits."

*Captain, Public Security Directorate,
Za'atari Camp*

During their weeklong visit, the musicians taught master classes for students at the National Music Conservatory/King Hussein Foundation, supported by Maestro Mohammed Sidiq. Tobias Bradford, Cultural Attaché of the United States Embassy, hosted a private evening performance on August 26.

"There is a radiance and a resilience that these children emit when they are focused on their future. Their engagement with music then becomes a hopeful representation of that future for the entire community."

George Mathew, Music for Life International

Music Education Workshops

Marwan, a 10-year old Syrian with passion in his eyes, greeted Curt Rhodes, international director of Questscope, at a performance by pointing to Craig Mumm and saying, "I am his student." For disadvantaged children, who have been left out, lost and forgotten, music education is about much more than the development of a sound. It creates a safe space where children can heal through creative expression. It opens up doors of endless opportunity, giving children who have lost everything the courage to say, "I can do anything."

"This is not about giving food or offering a fun activity. This is about building hope. Music offers a way of communicating in a shared language."

Muthanna Khreisat, Questscope Jordan Country Director

The Za'atari music residency program with Music for Life International is an exciting partnership with potential for phenomenal impact through music with youth in Jordan. Experience in this pilot program underscores the importance of introducing children to possibilities that were not there for them before.

"Music is about sharing and making space for beauty in our lives. It is a tool for healing and building community. These children have so much potential. They are hungry for something to hold onto—for something to inspire them."

Rosanna Butterfield, Cello

Thanks to George Mathew and Music for Life International, three violins and a collection of recorders have been donated to Questscope to continue music education in Za'atari. Just as the children of Syria never give up, we also cannot stop here—there is more to do! Sustainability of this project is key to creating a powerful vehicle for youth empowerment through music.

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