

Noa returns to Toronto with her Letters to Bach

BARRY LIVINGSTON

SPECIAL TO THE CJN

Noa, Israel's leading international singer, will be returning to perform in Toronto on March 2 alongside her longtime collaborator, guitarist Gil Dor.

Joining them will be award-winning Palestinian vocalist, Mira Awad. Both singers have performed together many times over the years, including on their critically-acclaimed recording, "There Must Be Another Way." A 2009 Eurovision Song Contest entry, both singers describe "Another Way" as a song that emphasizes hope and understanding through our common humanity.

This will be the only Canadian date on her current tour. Noa and Awad will be doing an integrated performance, singing together and separately. Also, Noa and Dor will be showcasing songs from their upcoming album, *Letters to Bach*.

Anyone who has seen Noa perform will attest to the fact that her concerts are simply stunning. The level of her vocal artistry, and her almost telepathic rapport with guitarist Dor, leaves audiences spell-bound and uplifted.

From her home outside of Tel Aviv, Noa

reflects on how she first met and started working with Awad. "I first met Mira in the year 2000," Noa recalls. "We recorded the song "We Can Work It Out" with a Middle Eastern style arrangement, for my album *Now*. We have stayed close friends ever since, often performing together on stages in Israel and around the world."

In the two years since Noa last performed in Toronto, she has been deeply involved in many projects and initiatives. "I have been touring extensively," Noa explains, "and involved in many initiatives focused on dialogue and co-existence between Israelis and Palestinians. I have also been collaborating with interesting artists in the process of writing and recording my new album *Letters to Bach*, due for release in mid-March."

"The album," Noa elaborates "is all dedicated to J.S. Bach, with lyrics I have written. The executive producer is Quincy Jones. The lyrics are very contemporary, touching upon subjects ranging from politics, feminism, religion and technology, to the generation gap, global warming, euthanasia and love. We are very proud of this album and happy to present it in our upcoming concert."



Israeli singer Noa to perform in Toronto

Why letters and why Bach, especially considering she's been performing original music for decades?

"The short answer is that Bach is amazing, incredible! The letters are lyrics, but

also a correspondence across the generations with this amazing composer."

"Throughout our career," Noa explains, "one of the major themes has been building bridges, and trying to see how things connect. To me, Bach is that, first and foremost. He is the ultimate bridge builder. He connects generations and cultures through his incredible polyphony. We can all walk across this golden bridge that he has created to a more beautiful and spiritual place.

"Bach's music gives me hope that things can work together," Noa adds, "if you just touch upon that special place in melody, harmony, lyrics, voice and guitar. It's all about how things work together."

In that same spirit, Noa returns to the subject of her collaboration with Awad. "Mira is a wonderful artist, and an amazing woman. I have learned so much from her, and I feel our collaboration is truly unique, our symbiosis and the way our voices merge, rare and beautiful. I think she and I have not said the last word yet." ■

Noa performs at the Koerner Hall, Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto on March 2. www.rcmusic.com

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