

For Immediate Release



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## **Statement by the Zaki Nassif Program for Music at AUB**

In one of his press interviews, the late Zaki Nassif said, "Music in Lebanon is clearly one of the major artistic assets that are sorely lagging behind international standards, because we did not start to care for it until very recently. We must all act, state and people, to disseminate fine music in homes, schools and among the young."

Since 2009, the Zaki Nassif Program for Music at the American University of Beirut (AUB) has been organizing the annual contest "A Choir from every School". This contest is designed particularly to encourage public and private schools to establish choral choirs within their programs, to develop and enhance the knowledge of music in Lebanese society and to preserve the national heritage and spread a national culture of collective singing.

The contest "A Choir from every School" has become an annual tradition that many schools in various areas of Lebanon await with anticipation. It brings together students from different backgrounds, gathered by their passion for heritage musical performance. The contest consists of two rounds and each takes place in front of a jury committee consisting of choral music experts General George Herro (Lebanese Army Military Band; committee chair), Dr. Reem Deeb, and experts of choral music Gizele Hibbo and Manal bou Malhab. Every committee member gives a grade on a scale of a hundred, based on academically recognized standards. The choirs compete with very high sportsmanship to land one of the first three places. The winning choirs are respectively awarded gold, silver and bronze shields, with parallel cash prizes. All schools in the contest get remarks on their performance and certificates of quality (good, very good...).

In the year 2019, thirty choirs from public and private schools took part in the contest. Sixteen of these schools qualified for the final round, which was held in Assembly Hall at AUB on Friday evening, May 3 in the presence of all competing teams.

The results came as follows: First Place: Rosary School, Al-Muntazah; Second Place: Al-Qualaa Secondary School, Saida; Third Place: Shared by Armenian Evangelical Central High School Ashrafieh and Patriarchal School Al-Rabweh.

Before the results were announced, the Choir of the Imam Sadr Foundation rendered three songs that included Baladi Habibi (Zaki Nassif) and Midhwiyyeh (Fayrouz)). Founded in 2004, this choir is lead by Mrs. Diana Mustafa. It has repeatedly participated in the contest “A Choir from every School”. It landed in the first three places every year and won first place in 2013, 2017.

The Imam Sadr Foundation Choir strives to contribute to the creation of an advanced society via spreading love between all Lebanese faiths.

ENDS

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**Note to Editors**

**About AUB**

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to bachelor’s, master’s, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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