

FOREWORD



EMBASSY OF THE
SYRIAN ARAB REPUBLIC
LONDON UK



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sami Khiyami'.

Dr Sami Khiyami
Ambassador

A year ago, I had the chance of attending the celebration of the launch of a Phoenician ship from the coastal island of Arwad in Syria. A ship that has been commissioned by the British Museum and built by the Syrians to emulate the famous expeditions undertaken by our forefathers, the Phoenicians, around the coast of Africa and then north towards the British Isles to introduce vital trading traditions in the ancient world.

At this launch ceremony, held under the patronage of the First Lady of Syria, a chant was sung by a young lady and I was amazed to learn that the music intoned words of this song can be attributed to the Hurrians, another great civilization which dominated north eastern Syria some 3500 years ago. Music has undoubtedly found its roots in our ancient country and was among the many arts and sciences Syria has been able to export to the world since the dawn of time.

Modern Syria is the inheritor of great civilizations that made it the centre of the world and the capital of the Omayyad Arab Empire. Following these ancient traditions, it is only right for contemporary Syrian Art and Music to once again spread to the world at large. The concert today is a step in this direction and I expect it to be an important landmark in Syrian-British relations.

The Syrian Embassy in London in collaboration with the Latin American and Caribbean Cultural Society (LACCS) is pleased to present to the British audience "A Musical Voyage from Syria to Europe and Latin America" performed by a very talented duo, Ashraf Kateb, violin and Ramune Neris, piano.

London, 8th March 2010