



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Live Arts Miami Presents World Premiere of "Ya Habibi," Groundbreaking Documentary Film Bridging Cuban and Arab Cultures

*Enjoy this special free one-time screening of the documentary film as part of the 2020 Havana Habibi Festival Online, four days of activities including film, music, and traditional Egyptian Raks Baladi (aka Bellydance) to foster healing and cross-cultural connection.*

**Miami, Nov. 6, 2020** - From the trail-blazing dancer-producers behind Miami's most unique cultural exchange program and the award-winning documentary "Havana Habibi" comes the new documentary film **"Ya Habibi, The Story of a Song."** The upcoming documentary will make its world premiere **Saturday, November 21, at 8:00 p.m. EST** at the 2020 Havana Habibi Festival Online, presented by **Tiffany "Hanan" Madera**, founder of **Hanan Arts**, and **Live Arts Miami (LAM)**, in collaboration with **National Arab Orchestra (NAO)**, **FilmGate Miami** and **O Cinema**.

"Ya Habibi, The Story of a Song" is a relevant and timely documentary short film exploring the hidden links and shared histories of Cuban and Middle Eastern identity and culture through the peculiar story of "Ya Habibi Ta'ala," a classic Egyptian love ballad with some surprising and unexpected origins. Made famous by Asmahan, the legendary Arabic singer and actress, "Ya Habibi Ta'ala" — which translates to Come My Darling — turns out to be an unacknowledged adaptation of an obscure Cuban song, borrowed, transported, and in the process transformed, from its Cuban origins to the Middle Eastern classic it became. The song serves as a perfect metaphor of the permeability of culture and identity and the often invisible processes that blur the borders and differences that would otherwise distinguish us, implicating us instead in each other's histories, even against historical odds. It's a one-of-a-kind cinematic experience for a world increasingly fractured by distancing and divisions.

Immediately following the premiere, "Ya Habibi" director **Gina Margillo** will join co-producers **Vivian Marthell** and **Tiffany Madera**, and **Michael Ibrahim**, director of the world-renowned **National Arab Orchestra**, for a live **Panel Discussion and Q&A** about the evolution of the project over time, the eventual production of the film in the context of a global pandemic, and the various themes and issues explored by the film itself, moderated by LAM.

The virtual premiere will be the centerpiece of the **2020 Havana Habibi Festival Online**, a special four-day virtual event to celebrate the connection of the Cuban and Arab diasporas through film, music, and the power of traditional Egyptian Raks Baladi (a.k.a. Bellydance) in advancing women's empowerment. The Festival will also include special on-demand film screenings of **"Havana Habibi,"** the award-winning documentary film that gives the festival its name, and which documents Hanan's 15+ years of work to empower Cuban women through the practice of bellydance in Havana, Cuba, where "Havana Habibi," as a film and project, was first born. Other activities will include the on demand premiere of **"Diasporas,"**



which records the 2018 Havana Habibi Gala performance at the Teatro Nacional de Cuba and features the **Cuban Soho Dance company**; **virtual dance workshops** led by Cuban born dancers **Amar Garcia** and **Ana Danse**, and more.

“I’m extremely proud of this new film and online festival project,” said Tiffany Madera of Hanan Arts. “Against all odds and under the hardest conditions, we’ve managed to create something beautiful and meaningful in equal parts, gathering a remarkable cast of international artists to collaborate on an innovative and powerful new project at a time when grief, loss and uncertainty can seem paralyzing for artists and audiences alike. The 2020 Havana Habibi Festival Online creates a healing bridge through dance and music centered on the experiences of women in the diaspora showing how music and dance help to connect, dismantle and re-imagine borders.”

**Full information about the other activities of the festival which runs from Wednesday, November 18 to the headlining virtual film premiere on Saturday, November 21, 2020 is available at [hananarts.org](http://hananarts.org).**

## **2020 Havana Habibi Festival Online**

Weds., November 18 → Sat., November 21, 2020

**WHAT:** LIVE World Premiere of *Ya Habibi, The Story of a Song*

**WHEN:** Saturday November 21, 8 p.m. EST

**WHERE:** Live on Crowdcast and Facebook LIVE → RSVP essential.  
Visit [liveartsmiami.org](http://liveartsmiami.org) to register.

For more information visit [LiveArtsMiami.org](http://LiveArtsMiami.org) and [Hananarts.org](http://Hananarts.org) and follow [@liveartsmiami](https://www.instagram.com/liveartsmiami) and [@hananarts](https://www.facebook.com/hananarts) on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter for the latest updates.

### **ABOUT LIVE ARTS MIAMI**

**Live Arts Miami** is one of the city’s oldest and boldest performing arts series: an action-driven, people-centered platform for powerful performances, impactful community programs and learning experiences that spark dialogue, raise awareness around pressing issues, and open minds and hearts in all who take part. Created in 1990 as Cultura del Lobo, Live Arts Miami is proud to be a part of Miami Dade College’s celebrated Department of Cultural Affairs. For three decades, Live Arts Miami has featured extraordinary performing artists and unforgettable performances, collaborations and public art projects from all over the world. Today, Live Arts Miami is a regional model of principled innovation and excellence in public arts programming. A place for artists, audiences, and MDC students to come together as one. For more information, please visit [www.liveartsmiami.org](http://www.liveartsmiami.org)

*The programs of Live Arts Miami are funded by Miami-Dade County Department of Cultural Affairs and the Cultural Affairs Council; the Miami-Dade County Mayor and Board of County Commissioners; the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture; the National Endowment for the Arts; National Performance Network (NPN); the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation. MDC Live Arts is a Partner of the National Performance Network (NPN). Major NPN contributors include*



*the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Ford Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts.*

### **ABOUT HANAN ARTS**

Founded by Tiffany Madera, Hanan Arts is a 501(c)3 arts organization in Miami, Florida. The organization's mission and work centers around healing and transformation through the transformative power of Raks Baladi (belly dance), and manifests in several multidisciplinary projects, workshops, and performances. For over 20 years, Hanan Arts has innovated the genre of Raks Baladi through experimental theatre and film, documentary film, social justice centered practice, philanthropy and interdisciplinary performance.

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