

An Evening of Zajal

8:30 PM, Saturday November 21

Plaza Ballroom A

In November of 2014, Lebanese Zajal, the sophisticated art of spontaneous verbal dueling, was inscribed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity.

In celebration of this great honor, two of Lebanon's master poets, **Antoine Saade** and **Elias Khalil**, will engage in a lively duel, bringing this revered Lebanese oral tradition to this year's MESA annual meeting.

الزَّجَلُ اللَّبْنَانِيُّ يَدْخُلُ ذَاكِرَةَ الْعَالَمِ
عَلَى لَائِحَةِ "تُرَاثِ الْبَشَرِيَّةِ الثَّقَافِيِّ غَيْرِ الْمَادِيِّ"



سهرة زجل ذات لياة قمرية في ضيعة جبلية لبنانية (كاريكاتور پيار صادق)

POETS

Antoine Saadeh is one of the leading *zajal* poets of his generation and one of the most famous senior duelists in Lebanon. He was born in 1948 in Deir Dourit, a village in the Shouf Mountains of southern Lebanon. He participated in numerous verbal duels prior to founding *Al-Masrah*, his own *jawqa* (team) in 1973. In recognition of his unique poetic and improvisatory talents, he earned many honors from various literary circles and organizations. In 1993 he published a volume of poetry, *The Pecks of a Bird*.

Elias Khalil was born in 1947 in the panoramic mountain village of Mayrouba. He taught philosophy, psychology, and Arabic literature at the University of the Holy Spirit, Kaslik and at Notre Dame University in Zouk Mosbeh. He is one of Lebanon's leading *zajal* poets and has appeared on the stage with Antoine Saadeh and other members of the famous *zajal* troupe *Jawqat al-Masrah* from 1987 until the present. His quiet demeanor off-stage is deceptive as he is one of the fiercest duelers on the stage. He has performed with Antoine Saadeh in Lebanon and around the globe. The thousands of students he has taught remember him as the teacher who opened every class session with a couple of *zajal* verses.

PROGRAM HOSTS

Dr. Adnan Haydar, Professor of Arabic, Director of the Arabic Language Program

Dr. Paula Haydar, Clinical Assistant Professor of Arabic

Dr. Joel Gordon, Professor of History, former Director of the King Fahd Center

ABOUT THE KING FAHD CENTER

The King Fahd Center for Middle East Studies is an academic and research unit in the J. William Fulbright College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Arkansas. An interdisciplinary and interdepartmental area studies center that offers diverse cultural, intellectual, and educational opportunities for the University of Arkansas community, the Center promotes research and teaching in interdisciplinary Middle East studies. The Center offers an undergraduate major in Middle East Studies through the Middle East Studies (MEST) Program and supports graduate studies in related departments with graduate assistantships, summer language study, field research grants, and teaching and research by visiting scholars from affiliated universities and programs. More information about the King Fahd Center can be found at <http://mest.uark.edu>. For ongoing news, follow the Center on Facebook and Twitter.