

AGENDA

LEBANON

MUSIC

A Mostly Mozart Concert
Irwin Theater, Lebanese American University, Beirut
July 14-15, 8 p.m.
+961 1 786464
LAU Choir performance, directed by Leila Dabaghi, with pianist Fadi Kallab.

FESTIVALS

Koulsoumiat
Tyre and the South Festival, Tyre
July 14, 9 p.m.
+961 1 611600
National Arabic music troop conducted by Salim Sahab.

EGYPT

MUSIC

Arabic Music Ensemble
Cairo Opera House
July 14, 9 p.m.
+202 737 0601
Singers Mohsen Farouk, Walaa Hamdi, Wael Sami, Mahmoud Abdel-Hamid – accompanied by Asatizat Al-Tarab for Arabic Music Ensemble – performs classical Arabic songs by Mohamed Abdel-Wahab and Riyad El-Sonbati.

Al-Tanboursa Troupe



El-Genaina Theatre, Darassa, Cairo
July 14, 9 p.m.
+010 575 5191
Al-Tanboursa troupe performs folk songs and dances from the Suez Canal area, playing on semsemeya and tanboursa instruments.

DANCE

"Between Dusk and Dawn"
Sayed Darwish Theatre, Alexandria
July 14, 9 p.m.
+203 486 5106
The Modern Dance Theatre Company, directed by Walid Aouni, performs Aouni's most recent show, "Between Dusk and Dawn."

The Great Pyramid may still contain Khufu's intact pharaonic tomb

Discovery of mysterious doors suggests possibility of hidden treasures

Kyle Cassidy
Special to The Daily Star

For years scholars have believed that the pyramid of King Khufu, largest of the three "great" pyramids at Giza, had been plundered in antiquity and everything of value, including the body of Khufu himself, had been removed.

Now, Zahi Hawass, the secretary general of Egypt's Supreme Council of Antiquities and director of the Giza Plateau, suspects that might not be the case.

"I really personally believe," he recently told a sold-out lecture hall in the University of Pennsylvania's Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Philadelphia, "that the secret chamber of Khufu is hidden inside the pyramid."

What changed his mind was the discovery of a set of previously unknown doors, hidden in the shafts of the so-called "queen's chamber" of the Great Pyramid. Located beneath the "grand gallery," the queen's chamber never housed a queen, and in fact, its exact purpose remains unknown. There is some speculation that it was an abandoned burial chamber, or possibly held offerings for the deceased.

In 1872 an archaeologist named Waymann Dixon discovered a pair of what were thought to be ventilation shafts in this chamber hidden behind concealed stones. They were about 20 centimeters square and remained largely unexplored until 1993 when Rudolf Gantenbrink, an archaeologist with the German Archaeological Institute in Cairo, sent a robot up the south shaft.

The robot was stopped after 64 meters by what appeared to be a solid block of stone with copper handles. However, Hawass became intrigued when sonar readings showed that the "block" was only 7.6 centimeters thick. In 2002, Hawass and a team of archaeologists drilled through the door during a live broadcast sponsored by the National Geographic Association.

"We did it [live] because we wanted to show that we had nothing to hide," said Hawass. In the past, although he regularly invited people to test out their bizarre theories, pseudo-scientists have accused Hawass of hiding or covering up secrets of the pyramids, of even building a secret passage from his office bathroom to the Great Pyramid.

Behind the door, Hawass and a live global audience found not answers, but more mystery: a second door only 24 centimeters beyond the first, which



Conventional wisdom holds that riches inside the pyramid at Giza were plundered in antiquity.

once again blocked the way.

The next day, off camera, Hawass and the team sent the robot up the northern shaft. This shaft made a series of abrupt bends, left, and right, and left again, before running into a third door also with two copper handles.

Both shafts terminate somewhere within the structure as there are no holes in the outside of the pyramid. In the past, scholars have speculated that because of their alignment with

the North Star and constellation Orion, these shafts could be symbolic exits for King Khufu's ka, or soul. Many archaeologists today find this unlikely because these small openings are unique to this pyramid. At

the time of Khufu's reign, false doors served as symbolic gateways to the afterlife. As to whether the shafts terminate in larger rooms or not are still anybody's guess.

The doors' copper handles are of much interest to scholars. "If you go to the Cairo museum," points out Hawass, "you'll find the canopic jars of King Tutankhamen, they have two copper handles – just like these. Those are for ropes, so the jars could be pulled. Maybe these

doors were pulled into place."

In October 2005, a robot built by the University of Singapore will return to the queen's chamber to see what lies behind the second and third doors. This drilling, Hawass says, will not be broadcast live, but rather the results will be announced afterwards in a press release.

"If something interesting is discovered," Hawass says, "we're going to show it to people all over the world."

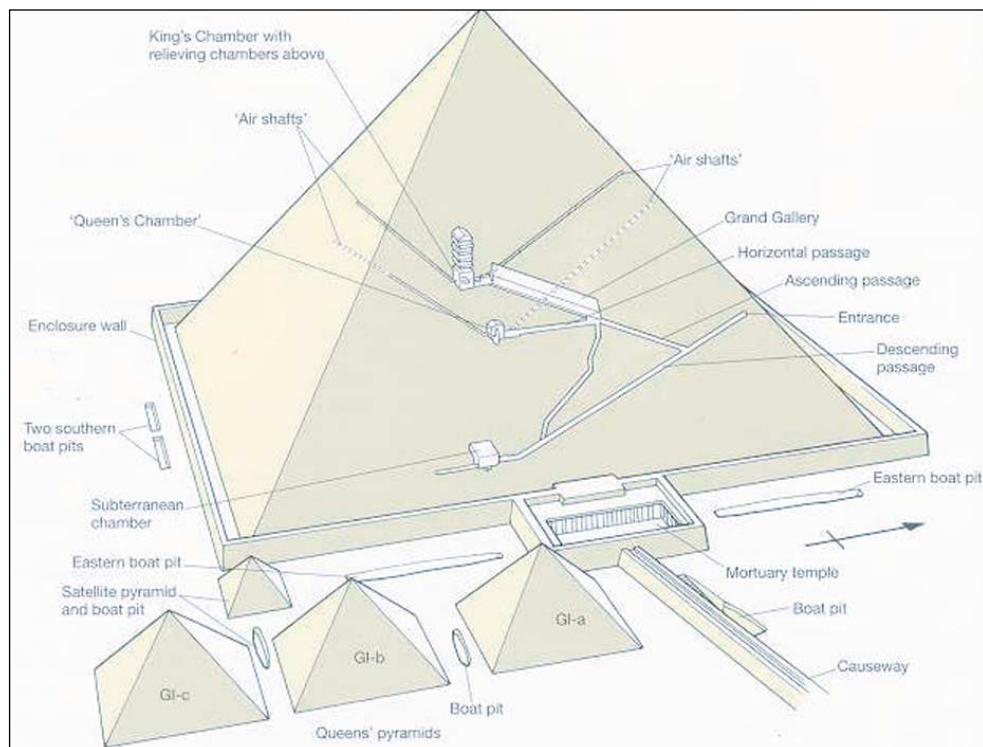
At the same time, a team from Birmingham in the United Kingdom will perform non-intrusive radar mapping on areas in and around the pyramids.

While it is possible these shafts actually lead to an undiscovered burial chamber, Hawass will not be upset or surprised if they turn out to lead nowhere.

There may be nothing inside ... what's important is the adventure

"There may be nothing inside the pyramid. What's important is the adventure of archaeology, and to show this adventure to the people," he says. One thing is certain: There will be answers – and more questions – in Cairo come October.

Kyle Cassidy is a scholar affiliated with the American Schools of Oriental Research (ASOR). This article is published with the cooperation of ASOR.



The pair of ventilation shafts, shown above, are unique to the Great Pyramid.

STAR SCENE



Roger Nasnas, Jeffrey Feltman and Salim Zeenni



Elizabeth Dibble and Taher Helmy



Claude Habib Francis and Bernadette Chidiac



Moushira Youssef, Raouf Youssef and Sana Zeenni

American Chambers of Commerce celebrate MENA agreement

BEIRUT: The American Lebanese Chamber of Commerce held a Gala Dinner last Friday night in celebration of the signing of the AmCham MENA Memorandum of Understanding. The Board Members from the AmChams of Egypt, Jordan, Iraq, and Morocco, were present along with the members of the chamber in Beirut.

The Memorandum of Understanding joined the American Chambers of Commerce in Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, Algiers, and Lebanon together in a regional partnership in order to expand economic growth and opportunities through the enhancement of trade and investment.

HOROSCOPE

- Aries (Mar. 21 – April 19)**
Your accomplishments could exceed your expectations if you mix a little business with pleasure. Talk to those in a position of power about your intentions.
- Taurus (April 20 – May 20)**
You could do extremely well in competitive sports events. Conflicts over joint finances are likely. Look out for those wanting to push you into a disagreement.
- Gemini (May 21 – June 21)**
Opportunities to learn important information will surface through discussions with peers or seminars you attend. Unexpected romantic connections can be made.
- Cancer (June 22 – July 22)**
Get promises in writing or you will be disappointed. Avoid getting involved with married individuals. Help children complete projects they're having difficulty with.
- Leo (July 23 – Aug. 22)**
Minor accidents may occur if you don't concentrate on what you're doing. Secret affairs may be brought out in the open. Do things with children.
- Virgo (Aug. 23 – Sept. 22)**
Take time to do something nice for yourself. When the work is done, they may serve you for a change. You will have an interest in foreigners and their cultures.
- Libra (Sept. 23 – Oct. 22)**
You could find yourself left with someone's dirty laundry. Try to address the real issues in order to turn things around. Consider traveling for pleasure.
- Scorpio (Oct. 23 – Nov. 21)**
Your boss won't be thrilled if you leave things unfinished. Secret enemies will be eager to spread rumors about you. Your home environment appears shaky.
- Sagittarius (Nov. 22 – Dec. 21)**
Enlist co-workers in order to get the job done on time. Social events will be rewarding. You can sell your ideas to those who have the money to back them.
- Capricorn (Dec. 22 – Jan. 19)**
Your ability to converse with charm will entice someone you may have had an interest in for some time now. Make changes to your home that will be pleasing to everyone.
- Aquarius (Jan. 20 – Feb. 18)**
It might be best to work on your own; if possible, do your job out of your home this month. If you try to manipulate emotional situations you will find yourself alienated.
- Pisces (Feb. 19 – Mar. 20)**
Keep your feet on the ground. Get involved in groups that can offer intellectual stimulation. Someone you work with may be withholding valuable information.

British-Kuwaiti dramatist recasts Saddam as a modern 'Richard III'

Ramsay Short
Daily Star staff

BEIRUT: The British-Kuwaiti director Sulayman al-Bassam will stage a pan-Arab version of William Shakespeare's "Richard III" at the Royal Shakespeare Company's "Complete Works" festival taking place in Stratford-upon-Avon, England next year.

In what the director of the RSC, Michael Boyd, is calling the "biggest cultural event going on in 2006-7," al-Bassam's play will be one of the highlights of the 37-play festival – and possibly the most topical.

The modern day update of one of the English bard's most effective and brutal tragedies will be based on Saddam Hussein's journey to power and his early days as a secular Arab hero before he murdered his way through the Ba'ath party of Iraq.

"We all know that Shakespeare is universal, but I believe it goes beyond that for the Arab world," al-Bassam said at the RSC's announcement of the festival on Tuesday. "He (Shakespeare) gives crucial insights into a pre-modern society; into rich, powerful oligarchs who control armies; into conspiracies; into the relationship between God, the state and the individual. These are real issues in the Arab world."

Al-Bassam is the director of the Sulayman Al-Bassam Theater Company, established in

2003 and based in Kuwait as part of the pan-Arab arm of the Zaoum Theater Group. Founded with the aim of producing cutting-edge, world-class contemporary theater in the Arabic language, the company has already received worldwide acclaim for al-Bassam's adaptation of "Hamlet," "The Al-Hamlet Summit," which won the Edinburgh Fringe Festival First Award for excellence and innovation in writing and directing in 2002.

"Al-Hamlet" is set in the official assembly of an unnamed modern Middle Eastern state. Strong lights are cast over six desks with nameplates that identify a familiar bunch of characters from the original play. Moving along with a hyp-

notic force, the characters speak a fresh, heightened language, in which Shakespeare's text has been ditched in favor of a seductive blend of pointed rhetoric and feverish poetry.

Next year's version of "Richard III" will continue Al-Bassam's mission of using Shakespeare to probe into the troubled heart of the modern day Middle East.

"The Complete Works Festival," which begins in April 2006 will also feature such stars as Sir Ian McKellen, Dame Judi Dench and Star Trekker Patrick Stewart. By including a number of foreign performances of Britain's national poet, the RSC hopes the festival will open up a richer dialogue with international theater companies.



'Rich, powerful oligarchs who control armies.' Sound familiar?

SPEND A SUMMER OF DISCOVERY!

RAINBOW ISLAND
Discover the many colors of fun!

Rainbow Island Summer Day Camp welcomes your children at Rainbow Island Hazmieh or Le Royal Dbayeh

Summer 1
July 5th till August 1st

Summer 1 or 2
LBP 250,000 (Including VAT)

Summer 2
August 4th till August 31st

Summer 1 & 2
LBP 450,000 (Including VAT)

- Age: 3 to 14 years
Program includes:
- weekly outings
- Breakfast, lunch & transportation provided
- Monday to Friday: 9 am to 2 pm

Programs are specially tailored to suit different age groups and children's personal interests. A highly qualified team of professionals gives loving and careful supervision.

Experiencing new activities... Learning new skills... Making new friends...

Faubourg St. Jean, Intersection Damascus Highway & Presidential Palace Road, Hazmieh.
Tel: 05 - 956444/5. Fax: 05 - 956446 / Email: iae@terra.net.lb / website: www.rainbowislandjunior.com