

THE NUMBERS ARE IN: ON THE ROAD II IS A HIT!

We are pleased to announce that the world broadcast premiere of the second season of *On the Road in America* took place in primetime on March 19th in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region on MBC1, the oldest and leading pan-Arab free-to-air satellite broadcaster.

The show secured a favorable grid slot on MBC1, with episodes airing every Friday night at 1900 GMT (7:00 PM in Morocco, 8:00 PM in Algeria, 9:00 PM in Egypt and Lebanon, 10:00 PM in Iraq and Saudi Arabia, and 11:00 PM in the UAE). Episodes re-aired on Saturdays at 2230 GMT, with another repeat on Thursdays at 1330 GMT.

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The series focuses on Arab and American attitudes toward each other, as seen through the eyes of the Arab visitors and the Americans whom they encounter in their journeys. While visiting eleven disparate states, the cast of the second season explored important issues such as capitalism, poverty, faith, race relations and education. Ultimately, the second season highlighted the differences and similarities between the two cultures and facilitated a deeper understanding of each.

We have received exceedingly positive feedback about the series from thousands of viewers communicating with us through Layalina's website, the show's blog-site and Facebook page, as well through

the Arabic language *On the Road* micro-site launched by MBC, the broadcaster.

Arab media has covered the show extensively, with articles in several newspapers, including the Saudi *Al-Jazirah*, *Al Bilad*, and *Okaz*, as well as in the Kuwaiti *Al Seyassah* and Bahrain's *Al Bilad*. MBC News filmed a ninety minute debate episode discussing the lessons learned from the second season, and aired this special episode in primetime on April 9th.

The first season of *On the Road* had its premiere run on MBC1 in 2007. According to polling from Ipsos Stat, a leading European polling firm, *On the Road* was the second most-watched show in its primetime slot in the Arab world out of 370 channels, and reached around 4.5 million viewers each night. The first season also aired in the United States in primetime on both coasts in 2008 on the Sundance Channel and last re-aired in primetime in 2009.

On the Road is executive produced by Academy Award-nominated Jerome Gary and Leon Shahabian, Layalina's Vice President. It is created and directed by Jerome Gary. *On the Road* is a Layalina production, in association with Visionaire Media of Los Angeles and O3 Productions of Dubai.

L to R: Musician Greta Gaines performs with On the Road: Season 2 cast members Sara Hoteit and Lama Masri in Nashville, TN

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

Dear Friends,

It gives us great pleasure to announce that the second season of Layalina's hit series *On the Road in America* premiered in the Arab world in primetime in mid-March on MBC1. We are delighted with the ever-growing audience of this series and its continuing success. MBC recently signed an intent to broadcast letter for the third season of the show.

We are thankful to the Center for Strategic & International Studies for hosting the U.S. unveiling of the second season in April to a captive audience. We are equally grateful to MBC senior executive Mazen Hayek for coming to Washington, DC to promote the show.

In April, Layalina participated in the "Building Bridges: US-Islamic Partnerships and Social Change" conference in Washington, DC. These types of conferences play an instrumental part in the effort to further enhance U.S.-Arab relations.

Layalina's success is due to the generosity of supporters like you. Your assistance is critical in helping us develop and bring to fruition a new slate of exciting projects. For information on how to donate, please visit our website at www.layalina.tv. Thank you in advance for your help.

With kind regards,



Richard Fairbanks
Chairman of the Board



Top: L to R: Heba Jamal, Saudi journalist; Ana Escrogima, of the State Department; Dr. Abdalla Altayer, the Cultural Attaché of the Saudi Embassy in the UAE; Leon Shahabian, Layalina's Vice President; and Ali Alghofaily and Ola Alfares, MBC presenters. (Photo: Muhammed Mahdi)

Bottom: L to R: Heba Jamal, Saudi journalist; Talaat Moussa Khalil, MBC senior producer; Joseph Assi; Ali Alghofaily and Ola Alfares, MBC presenters; Dr. Abdalla Altayer, the Cultural Attaché of the Saudi Embassy in the UAE; Leon Shahabian, Layalina's Vice President; Lama Masri and Sara Hoteit, On the Road cast members; Ana Escrogima, of the State Department; and Ahmad AlQurashi, the head of MBC News. (Photo: Muhammed Mahdi)

"Lessons from the Road"

AN MBC TOWN HALL MEETING IN DUBAI

MBC News produced and filmed on April 6th a town hall discussion at its studios in Dubai to discuss the lessons learned from the second season of *On the Road in America* and celebrate its success. The ninety minute Arabic language debate aired in primetime on MBC1 on April 9th immediately following the broadcast of the last episode of the second season of the show. The debate episode re-aired on April 15th. MBC is the leading pan-Arab free-to-air satellite network.

The town hall meeting was anchored by MBC presenters Ali Alghofaily, a Saudi, and Ola Alfares, a Palestinian, and featured three of the four cast members – Lama Masri, Sara Hoteit and Joseph Assi. Panelists at the debate were Dr. Abdalla Altayer, the Cultural Attaché of the Saudi Embassy in the United Arab Emirates, Heba Jamal, a Saudi Journalist and co-anchor of the MBC show Kalam Nawaem, Ana Escrogima, the Deputy Director of the State Department's Dubai Regional Media Hub and Leon Shahabian, Layalina's Vice President and the Executive Producer of *On the Road*. Members of the studio audience included writers, journalists and students from the American University in Dubai.

This special episode of *On the Road* featured clips from each episode of the second season, followed by a discussion of episode specific themes and interactions. The anchors interviewed cast members about their experiences and about how their views evolved during the trip. Lama, Sara and Joseph also tackled questions from the studio audience and from fans of the show who submitted questions through the web. The anchors called on the panelists to reflect on the issues raised in the show, and to provide context where necessary.

On the Road was praised for its ability to create an entertaining and enlightening atmosphere while documenting the experiences of the four cast members as they embarked on a unique and insightful road trip in the U.S. over a period of forty-five days.

Dr. Altayer highlighted the importance of such programs in eliminating tension and creating room for communication and acceptance, despite differences in opinions and attitudes. Altayer indicated that the second season of *On the Road* is an effective U.S. public diplomacy effort which has reached over 20 million Arab viewers on MBC1, and that creating a comparable Arab initiative is essential.

The Saudi diplomat went on to encourage Arab media outlets and production companies to generate similar shows that would reach millions of homes in the U.S. and promote a better image of Arab culture among Americans.

Having lived in the Middle East for several years, Ms. Escrogima remarked that the best approach to eliminating stereotypes and strengthening cross-cultural communication is through programs such as *On the Road*. The exposure to a variety of communities provided viewers of the show with an opportunity to correct pre-conceived notions of "the other."

The "Lessons from the Road" episode was produced by Ahmad AlQurashi, the head of MBC News, and Talaat Moussa Khalil, a senior producer at MBC.

MBC Group and Layalina Event at CSIS

On April 12th, the Center for Strategic & International Studies (CSIS) in Washington, DC hosted the U.S. unveiling of the second season of *On the Road in America*. Andrew Schwartz, the Vice President of External Relations at CSIS, welcomed guests and introduced Hisham Melhem, the Washington Bureau Chief for Al-Arabiya. Hisham moderated a panel discussion between Mazen Hayek, the Group Director for Public Relations for MBC Group, Ambassador Marc Ginsberg, Layalina's President, and Jerome Gary, the Director and Executive Producer of *On the Road*.

Mr. Melhem praised Layalina's efforts in creating cultural "ambassadors" through powerful series like *On the Road*, and for providing the youth in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region with tools and examples to help eliminate preconceived stereotypes. The MENA region is home to 330 million Arabs, two thirds of whom are under the age of 30 -- compared with one third of Americans. Thus, promoting peace, moderation and increased cross-cultural understanding is key. The best vehicle to reach this youthful demographic is pan-Arab television channels, and specifically the Dubai based and Saudi owned market leader MBC Group. Mr. Hayek commented that MBC's partnership with Layalina on entertainment programming rich in substantive content has helped spread a message of hope. We look forward to expanding and deepening our relationship with MBC Group, given our shared vision for a peaceful region and improved U.S.-Arab relations.

The CSIS event included the screening of a clip from the second season of *On the Road* and concluded with a reception. We are thankful to Andrew Schwartz and to CSIS for their continued help and support. To view this event, please visit <http://csis.org/event/road-america-season-2>.



L to R: Mazen Hayek, of MBC Group; Athena Katsoulos of the State Department; Dr. Ziad Asali, President of the American Task Force on Palestine; Richard Al-Khazen of Saudi Arabian Airlines; Hisham Melhem of Al-Arabiya; Leon Shahabian, Layalina's Vice President; Ambassador Marc Ginsberg, Layalina's President; and Jerome Gary, Director and Executive Producer of *On the Road*.

LAYALINA'S CHAIRMAN HONORED AT THE BUILDING BRIDGES CONFERENCE

Layalina's Founder and Chairman, Ambassador Richard Fairbanks, was honored during the "Building Bridges: U.S.-Islamic Partnerships and Social Change" conference hosted by the Cairo-based Middle East Center on International Cooperation and the George Mason University in Washington, DC on April 28th. The award was presented by Center's president, Ambassador Hamdi Saleh, in recognition of Ambassador Fairbanks' "achievements in building a better understanding between the United States and the Arab-Islamic world."

The conference was organized on the margins of President Obama's "Presidential Summit on Entrepreneurship" which aimed at broadening ties between the United States and Muslim communities around the world. The conference featured dozens of participants from Arab NGOs and academic institutions as well as some of their counterparts from the United States.

In his keynote address during the Gala dinner, Ambassador Fairbanks emphasized the importance and effectiveness of citizen diplomacy efforts in furthering understanding and cooperation, as well as strengthening U.S.-Arab relations.



Chairman Richard Fairbanks delivering his keynote address at the conference.

LAD Screening in Baltimore

On May 15th, the Royal Circle Foundation hosted a screening of *Life After Death*, the award winning documentary about the families of Arab, European and American victims of terrorist attacks and their compelling stories of suffering, endurance, and hope.

The screening took place at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore, MD. Dr. Patricia A. Newton, a board member of the Foundation welcomed guests and spoke eloquently about the positive message and lasting impact of the film. Following the screening of the broadcast-hour long documentary, Leon Shahabian, Layalina's Vice President took questions from the audience.

Leon served as Producer and Executive Producer of *Life After Death*. We are delighted to work with The Royal Circle Foundation and look forward to holding a screening of the film in Chicago in October for their Illinois-based members.

Life After Death is a Visionaire Media production in association with Layalina Productions. It is Executive Produced by Academy Award® nominated and multiple Emmy award winning Jerome Gary and Leon Shahabian, Directed and Edited by Shawn Thompson and Produced by Messrs. Gary, Shahabian and Thompson.

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The Layalina Chronicle is a quarterly newsletter that provides updates to friends and supporters of Layalina on the organization's efforts and plans.

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