

# A WORLD OF EMOTIONS

WHETHER OR NOT WALID NAHAS IS PAINTING OR COMPOSING MUSIC HE ALWAYS EMPLOYS MATCHING TECHNIQUES.

'Everything revolves around music. My whole world is emotions, whether it is expressed through music or paintings,' says pianist, composer, and painter Walid Nahas, who recently held an exhibition entitled *Harmony of Shapes and Colours*, at Beirut's Smogallery.

Walid Nahas returned to his homeland - Lebanon - little more than two years ago. Spending most of his life in Montreal, he would often visit extended family in Lebanon, which would 'inspire' him. Now that he resides in Lebanon, this 'inspiration' sends him to his atelier, on an 'artistic pilgrimage' and where he conjures up new ideas, both for his painting and music aspirations.

A self-taught painter, Walid began to paint at an early age. Immediate family members were mainly music enthusiasts and Walid's love of music was nurtured within the family home. This twin interest created a dilemma when the time came for Walid to choose a subject to study at university. Music won and he studied piano for fifteen years, both in Paris and Montreal.

Studying classical piano and jazz, as well as musical composition at the Conservatoire of Montreal, he continued his studies at McGill University in Montreal, where he combined his music studies with finance. 'Besides being good at music I was great at math too,' Walid says.

Walid admits that choosing to study music meant that he had to nurture his painting talent for years



longer. 'This is why *Harmony of Shapes and Colours*, was my first solo exhibition. I had been experimenting and had to work on my painting skills before I was ready to show people my work,' he says.

Walid's music compositions, which he describes as neo romantic, are influenced by the romantic era. He likes the way composers, such as Chopin and Schubert, composed their music in the late nineteenth century. 'These are my masters. Not only have I studied them in depth, I have also

played their music. I try to grasp their melodies; the way they tried to work with them,' Walid says; adding that the forms of his music differ in that they are more modern, in terms of being jazzier.

In the past, most of Walid's efforts in music were in collaboration with other artists and bands. Recently though, he recorded his first solo album, entitled *immersions*, which contains his solo compositions that he interprets on the piano. Currently, he is planning to launch his second

solo piano album, which, according to Walid, will be available in a couple of months. Recorded in Montreal, this album has been influenced by his return to his homeland, with '... a touch of 'the Orient' in its melody and rhythm.'

'Everything revolves around music and there is a big analogy between my music and my paintings. My whole world consists of emotions, whether they are expressed through music or paintings,' Walid says. 'In paintings I try to represent music. First of all, the way I work - my musical compositions are based upon rhythm, the form and harmony, which is the melody. This is the basis of my musical compositions. Strangely enough it is exact way I work with my paintings. I work with the rhythm, using straight lines of colours. The straight lines have a kind of rhythm inside of them. Each tone of colour is like a musical note. The way I play with colours is like the way I play with musical notes: strong



colours, complementary colours; it is the same thing with music.'

When Walid his playing it sends him on a 'trip', he says laughing. And at each concert he performs he asks the audiences '... to close their eyes and let me take them by their hands on a voyage. When I am painting it is same. Yet it is with two different senses for both. One is with the ears and the other one is with the eyes. Both reach different places within you.'

Walid admits his nerves were frayed at his first solo painting exhibition. Yet the outcome (he sold more than half of the 24 paintings presented) dictated that they need not have been. 'The positive response from the exhibition goes imparted positive energy, boosted my confidence and my motivation to continue.' And as for the future... 'Music and art is my future. I know I will go through trying times. But I am ready for it.'