



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW RICHARD PHARAON

PDG of WE group and passionate about culture, Richard Pharaon keeps moving forward, to where his dreams lead him... His latest project, "Les Années Bonheur," brings back the Lebanese audience to a time "life was simpler and human values were more respected... a time when artists were singing for and from the heart, emotions and passion built the content, under the beautiful umbrella of culture," he states.

When: Saturday, April 21st.
Where: Biel
What: "Les Années Bonheur."
A CONCERT NOT TO BE MISSED!



1 | In 1980, a time when Lebanon was in the midst of its war, wasn't it risky to found the WE GROUP s.a.r.l?

At that time, Lebanon was in an unstable phase, on both political and security levels. It was risky and I can even say insane to found and implement a company or any novel project. The rationale behind WE GROUP was just a Passion, a Passion for culture, and especially the French culture and musical event organization, to demonstrate that Lebanon was still the place and reference for culture and tourism.

2 | Did you need a lot of investment at the beginning in order to create such projects, especially that the country was not stable at that time?

As I mentioned previously, it was very risky, as any project needed a start up investment, with no warranty that this event will take place due to the unstable situation –it was like gambling within the time of the project implementation– each time I flash back, I question myself how I did it!!!

3 | If we were to go back in time, what made you so passionate about the French culture at that time?

This Passion started building up since I was doing my studies at school and University later on. I was at the management school at "Universite Saint Joseph", and like most of the Lebanese people and students at that time, I was very impressed and influenced by the French culture and education; remember the days of Le Cid, Corneille,...all this triggered passionate and emotional ties with the French culture, making more frequent my trips to Paris.

4 | Being the CEO of WE GROUP, can you still enjoy the shows you are managing or is it a total other perspective that is based on stressful and demanding supervision?

Believe me, each show follows the same emotional structure; stress is always there, –especially that our motto is Passion for Perfection– so I am following each detail, any uncalculated event that can arise, artists' demands, bands' requests, ticketing, sponsors, sound and light technicians,... and when the show begins, I am just there enjoying while supervising at the same time. I got used to it; a mix of stress, supervision, management, and enjoyment.

5 | Is " Les Annees Bonheur 2012" à la recherche du temps et du Bonheur perdus? (a look for time and lost happiness)

Effectively, at that period of time, "le Bonheur" was easier to live and to feel. Life was simpler, human values were more respected when compared to our current times. Artists were singing for and from the heart, emotions and passion built the content, under the beautiful umbrella of culture. This event is like a time machine that will take the audience back to that period of time, the time of happiness, so "Les Années Bonheur" that will be re-lived for few hours.

6 | According to which criteria did you select the 8 French artists' songs?

Selection criteria were based on the songs that Lebanese people know better, and that link them to these years of "Bonheur retrouvé", and of course, they were also based on the best songs of each artist. I am sure that the audience will like the selection and enjoy the performance.

7 | "We create dreams..." what does it take to make a dream come true in the business world?

As the late Steve jobs stated: "... to succeed, follow your dreams, create new path and move forward..." As you know everything starts with an idea, and the basic source of ideas is dreams and achievement. Therefore, we follow our dreams, try to implement them, and transform them into a tangible reality in the business arena. It is like a "dreams incubator."

8 | Do you think you have realized yours?

I don't think that any person will ever be able to realize all of their dreams; I have realized some of them, and I'm still working on some others, but again, following our dreams and believing in them is a pillar part of success, especially in innovative business.

9 | Where would your dreams take you now?

My dreams will take me to the Lebanon we all dream of; a peaceful country, with a booming economy, a platform for human values, an educational reference and mostly the country of culture, the land of Gibran Khail Gibran and all of our artists, thinkers, writers, and poets.



"LES ANNÉES BONHEUR 2012" ... A STEP BACK IN TIME!

If you attended "les années Bonheur 2012" concert, you definitely couldn't help but wonder whose mind was behind that marvelous energy and colorful, emotional, vibrant, and professional energy.

A 3 hours and a half concert gathered all 80ies French singers, a time when people were deeper, tenderer, less materialistic, and more alive! A time when talents were true and words were authentic was reincarnated on April 21st 2012 in Biel. Michele Torr, Jean-Francois Michael, Jean-Jacques Lafond, Julie Petri, Bernard Sauvat, La Compagnie Creole, Pascale Sakr, and many more were present in an unforgettable night were all heart sang as one...

Thank you Richard Pharaon, for bringing back culture to life, on the rhythm of eternal rhymes...

10 | Any messages to Lifestyle readers?

Follow your dreams, work hard, believe in your country and as Gibran said: "Ask not what your country can do for you - ask what you can do for your country" and join us for the magic Bonheur night at "Les Années Bonheur."

By Marie-Christine Tayah