

Dr. Carlos Martinez-Assad presents his film “The Lebanese in Mexican Cinema” at NDU. LERC acknowledges scholar with honorary award.

Wednesday July 7th 2010, LERC, NDU

Reported by Jared Keyel and Elie Nabhan

The Lebanese Emigration Research Center in cooperation with the Audio-Visual Department at Notre Dame University, Lebanon, invited veteran scholar, writer, film director and producer, Dr. Carlos Martinez-Assad, to present his film *The Lebanese in Mexican Cinema*, on Wednesday 7th July.

The documentary *The Lebanese in Mexican Cinema*, produced by Dirección General de Actividades Cinematográficas de la Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, highlights the golden age of Mexican cinema. It identifies the most reputable sons and daughters of Lebanese emigrants who were able to leave their mark in Mexico’s rich cultural life.



Attending the event: (from left-right) Dr. R. Kazan, Dr. C. Martinez-Assad, Ms. G. Hourani, General M. Nahas, and from the WLCU, Ms. Nena Boulos and Mr. G. Faddoul (July 2010).

Descendants of those who came from Lebanon became interested in local cinema and their support was indispensable in the creation of the film industry. Describing the impact of notable Lebanese artists within the industry, the documentary emphasizes the fact that the contributions of Lebanese immigrants were vital to the establishment of the Mexican film industry itself and almost single handedly for its golden age.

The documentary portrays lovely women with beautiful eyes, handsome leading men, comedians, supporting actors, producers, directors, musicians and singers, all witnesses of the constant Lebanese presence in Mexico’s film industry since the arrival of the early immigrants.

Stars such as Mauricio Garcés, Antonio Badú, Gaspar Henaine Capulina, and Esperanza Issa, from the Lebanese community, who became familiar names and faces for the Mexican public;

had a wide range of talents able to cover all kinds of roles and share with the audience memorable moments on screen.

It traces the careers of actresses such as Donna Bahar and Selma Hayek and Mexico's outstanding director Miguel Zacarías, who went on to produce many films.

With the curtains drawn on the documentary, LERC's Director Ms. Guita Hourani and Former President of NDU Fr. Boutros Tarabay presented Dr. Martinez-Assad with the LERC Acknowledgement Award for all he has done and is planning to do concerning Lebanese migration of all generations in Mexico. Ms. Hourani then read the letter from NDU's President, Fr. Walid Moussa, recognizing Dr. Martinez-Assad's contributions and accomplishments.



Presenting the Award: (from left-right) Dr. E. Sensenig-Dabbous, Ms. G. Hourani, Dr. C. Martinez-Assad and Fr. Boutros Tarabay (July 2010).



Ms. G. Hourani reads out the President's letter acknowledging Dr. C. Martinez-Assad (July 2010).



Dr. C. Martínez-Assad at NDU (July 2010).

Dr. Carlos Martínez-Assad is a Researcher at the Instituto de Investigaciones Sociales, Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México. He is also Professor of History at the Facultad de Filosofía y Letras, UNAM and has been visiting professor at Arizona State University, Universidad Autónoma de Barcelona and Universidad Iberoamericana.

Dr. Martínez-Assad has dedicated a large part of his life towards studying Middle Eastern immigrants to Mexico, publishing articles, essays and books on the subject.

Apart from his film, Dr. Carlos Martínez-Assad has penned a novel and many book chapters and academic articles on the subject, such as *Gibran, el Hijo de los Cedros*, as well as coordinating many books that deal with Lebanese migration. He has also been published in various periodicals and is the founding director and editorialist of the *Gaceta Al-Fannan* (Centro Libanes, México, 2002-2004), published by the *Asociación de artistas e intelectuales de ascendencia libanesa* (Association of artists and intellectuals of Lebanese descent).

In recognition of his work on both Lebanon and Mexico Dr. Martínez-Assad has been acknowledged with some of Mexico's finest awards, the most recent being the Medalla al Mérito Histórico *Capitán Alonso de León*, edición 2009, as well as being honored internationally.

Dr. Martínez-Assad thanked NDU and LERC for the award and answered questions from the audience.

Dr. Martínez-Assad had visited LERC earlier on Friday 2nd July to meet with LERC's Director and members of LERC's staff. He was then given a presentation of LERC's electronic archives and taken on a tour of the Lebanon Migration Museum at NDU.

Dr. Martínez-Assad presented LERC with a copy of the book *Gibran the Prophet* in which he has written an article called *Gibran el Hijo de Los Cedros*. In turn LERC presented Dr. Martínez-Assad with a copy of its latest publication *Our People*.



Dr. C. Martinez-Assad (middle) at LERC with (from left-right), Mr. J. Keyel, Mrs. L. Haddad, Ms. G. Hourani, Ms. B. Abdel Khalek (July 2010).



The LERC Acknowledgement Award presented to Dr. C. Martinez-Assad (July 2010).

In his parting statement, Dr. Carlos Martinez-Assad said: “I congratulate the work done at this Center which is important for everyone, and I hope that this work continues and finds the right support because it focuses on knowledge of the cultural heritage of the Lebanese.”