



8:45 p.m. Saturday
First United Methodist Church

2:30 p.m. Sunday
Buskirk-Chumley Theater

Comoros Islands folk

NAWAL

BY BRIAN WELK | bwelk@indiana.edu

Acoustic instrumentalist Nawal comes from probably one of the most remote places of any artist at the Lotus World Music & Arts Festival.

The singer hails from the Comoros Islands, located northwest of Madagascar, off the coast of Africa.

Yet her soothing and eclectic musical style will feel right at home in Bloomington.

Nawal describes her music as a spiritual call for peace. She said her goal was to broaden the musical space in her songs, this time through a solo album, "Embrace the Spirit," rather than with a backing band on her acclaimed 2007 album, "Aman."

"I want to touch hearts," Nawal said. "I want to go inside again and again and again until we find out what happens inside there."

Her music resembles traditional folk music from the Comoran region, but the style is inspired from a wide variety of cultures including African, Arabic and a hint of the Western world.

"When I compose, all the music just gets in my heart," Nawal said, explaining that her influences are so mixed, it's impossible to pinpoint one exact style.

She joked that although you don't hear any of these influences directly in her music, she had been introduced to the music of Bob Dylan, The Doors, Pink Floyd and various American pop music artists at a young age.

"There are lots of influences in your head, but we really just do things the way we feel them," Nawal said.

Everything communicated in "Embrace the Spirit," including ideas about politics and

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women, is relevant to what is happening now, Nawal said.

"We are in a period of transformation," Nawal said. "People say this is the end of a war, but I believe there is a new war coming. This album is my participation to open hearts and contribute to this transformation."

