



أوركسترا قطر الفلهارمونية Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra

Founded by Qatar Foundation من إنشاء مؤسسة قــطر

#### MALEK JANDALI: SYRIAN SYMPHONY

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# Programme

Malek Jandali: Syrian Symphony

Saturday, January 25, 2025 7:30 PM Qatar National Convention Centre, Auditorium 3

Alastair Willis, conductor Lindsay Garritson, piano

Programme:

Colin Jacobsen & Siamak Aghaei:

**Ascending Bird** 

**Camille Saint-Saëns:** 

Piano Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103 (Egyptian)

Allegro animato

Andante

Molto allegro

Intermission:

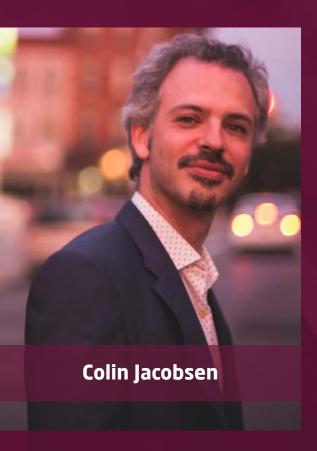
Malek Jandali:

Symphony No. 1 (Syrian Symphony)

Out of respect for the musicians and fellow audience members please silence your mobile phones. Applause between movements is not customary. Please also refrain from flash photography. Seating begins 30 minutes before performances. Latecomers cannot be seated during the concert. Children 6 and over are welcome at Philharmonic concerts. The Philharmonic retains the right to expel anyone disturbing other. Food and beverages can be consumed in the lobby only.



## Composers and Programme Notes



Violinist and composer Colin Jacobsen is "one of the most interesting figures on the classical music scene" (Washington Post). Since the early 2000's, Jacobsen has forged an intriguing path in the cultural landscape of our time, collaborating with an astonishingly wide range of artists across diverse traditions and disciplines while constantly looking for news to connect with audiences.

For his work as a founding member of two gamechanging, audience-expanding ensembles - the string quartet Brooklyn Rider and orchestra The Knights-Jacobsen was selected from among the nation's top visual, performing, media, and literary artists to receive a prestigious and substantial United States Artists Fellowship. He is also active as an Avery Fisher Career Grant-winning soloist and has toured with Silkroad since its founding by cellist Yo-Yo Ma in 2000 at Tanglewood.

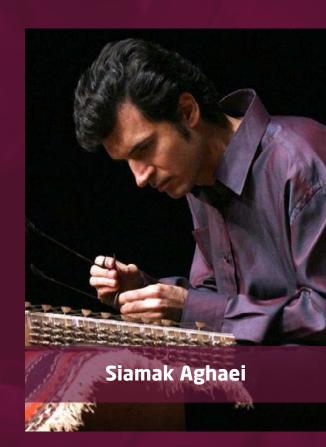
Starting in the 2022/23 season, Jacobsen assumes the position of Artistic Director of Santa Fe Pro Musica, an organisation with which he has had a fruitful long term association as a guest soloist and leader.

Siamak Aghaei, originally from Ahwaz, Iran, commenced his musical education at the age of eight, focusing on the santur within the Organisation of Preservation and Publication of Iranian Traditional Music.

He honed his skills under the guidance of some of Iran's most distinguished santur players, including P. Meshkatian and M. Shenasa. His studies in the Persian classical repertoire, known as the radif, were furthered through mentorship from esteemed masters such as M.R. Lotfi and M. Kiani, both recognised interpreters of the radif. Aghaei earned his music degree from the University of Tehran, where he continues to reside and actively teaches at his santur school, as well as instructing courses on Persian classical repertoire and the fundamentals of Iranian music at the university.

Since 1997, he has balanced his musical pursuits between exploring Iranian folk music traditions and performing classical santur. He has compiled an audiovisual archive documenting music and instruments from Northern Khorasan and has organised a series of radio lectures discussing various schools of santur playing and their techniques.

In 2000, Aghaei was invited by Kayhan Kalhor to join his ensemble and the Silk Road Ensemble, with which he has toured globally. He also collaborates with Ensemble Aftaab and Atlas Ensemble. To further promote the unique performing techniques and sound capabilities of the santur, he established the group Santurnavazan (Santur Players).



#### **Ascending Bird**

Colin Jacobsen and Siamak Aghae's collaboration on "Ascending Bird" is a mesmerising fusion of East meets West, classical tradition meets contemporary innovation. Drawing inspiration from an ancient Persian folk melody, the duo breathes new life into this timeless composition through their virtuosic performances on violin and kamancheh. Aghae's mastery of the traditional Persian instrument adds a rich, exotic texture to Jacobsen's soaring violin lines, creating a hauntingly beautiful tapestry of sound that transcends cultural boundaries.

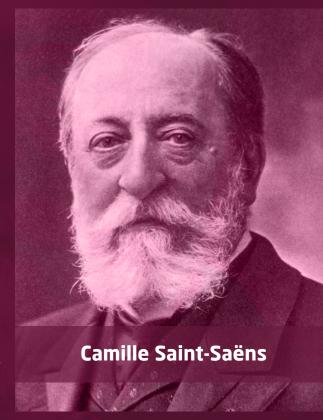
Their seamless blend of styles showcases a deep mutual respect for each other's musical heritage, resulting in a truly unique and captivating listening experience that transports audiences to distant lands and evokes a sense of wonder and longing. Each note resonates with emotion and meaning, making "Ascending Bird" a true masterpiece that celebrates the beauty of cross-cultural artistic expression.

#### Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

French composer and pianist Camille Saint-Saëns was one of the most prolific composers of the second half of the nineteenth century. His operas, concertos, symphonies and chamber music have marked the evolution of French music at the dawn of the twentieth century.

Born in Paris in 1835. Camille Saint-Saëns showed precociously his exceptional musical talent: at age 3, he improvised small piano melodies; at age 11, he performed a Mozart piano concerto and at age 13, he started organ and composition classes at the Conservatory. The young Saint-Saëns aroused early the admiration of great composers such as Rossini, Berlioz or Liszt with whom he maintained friendly relations until the end of his life. Saint-Saëns returned the favour by creating in 1871 the Société nationale de musique aiming to allow young French composers to present their works to the public. In 1877 and 1898, Saint-Saëns created his two operas Samson and Delilah and Déjanire. They gradually obtained an immense success that emphasised the composer's notoriety until the end of his career. In 1886, the artistically-accomplished Saint-Saëns produced two of his most renowned compositions: The Carnival of the Animals and his Symphony No.3 with organ, dedicated to Franz Liszt, who died that year. Elected to the Académie des Beaux-Arts in 1881, Saint-Saëns also was one of the first composers to write an original film score, that of the French historical film The Assassination of the Duke of Guise (1908).

Camille Saint-Saëns was a master of orchestration. He was an absolute craftsman who wrote music of beauty and power in practically all of the available formats. His above-mentioned Organ Symphony is full of powerful inspiration. His piano and violin concerti



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have become staples of the repertoire. Other noteworthy compositions of his are the *Danse Macabre, poème symphonique* (1874), the Septet for trumpet, two violins, viola, cello, double bass and piano (1880), and the Sonata for Violin and Piano n°1 in D Minor (1885). Saint-Saëns was often condemned as old fashioned and un-progressive because of his reactionary attitudes against modernist experimentation. An allusion is perhaps interesting here to the time where the conservative composer stood at the inauguration of his own statue in Dieppe and to an impatient crowd waiting for him to give a long speech, just said: "Since we only raises statues to the dead, so it is that I am dead. So allow me be silent!"

#### Piano Concerto No. 5 in F Major, Op. 103 (Egyptian)

The Piano Concerto No. 5 in F major, Op. 103, commonly referred to as *The Egyptian*, represents the final piano concerto composed by Camille Saint-Saëns. Completed in 1896, this work emerged two decades after his Fourth Piano Concerto and was performed by the composer himself during his Jubilee Concert on May 6 of that year, marking the fiftieth anniversary of his debut at the Salle Pleyel in 1846. The nickname "The Egyptian" is attributed to two primary factors. Firstly, Saint-Saëns created this concerto while vacationing in the temple city of Luxor during one of his regular winter retreats to Egypt. Secondly, the composition is noted for its exotic musical qualities, incorporating influences from Javanese, Spanish, and Middle Eastern traditions. Saint-Saëns described the piece as a representation of a maritime journey. At the premiere, Saint-Saëns took on the role of soloist, and the performance was met with both popular acclaim and critical praise.

The Allegro animato features a recurring interplay between two distinct themes. It opens with a warm introduction, which gains momentum with each subsequent variation. This energetic theme transitions into a slower, more somber motif, the two themes flow into one another like waves, ultimately leading to a serene coda that concludes the piece.

The Andante, which is conventionally recognised as the slow and expressive segment in concerto structure, commences with a striking impact; the timpani accentuate an orchestral chord, which is subsequently followed by a rhythmically vigorous string section and a captivating ascending and descending motif on the piano. This thrilling introduction transitions into the thematic exposition inspired by a Nubian love song that Saint-Saëns encountered while sailing on the Nile in a 'dahabiah' boat. Rich and exotic, this serves as the primary embodiment of the Egyptian influences within the composition and likely contributes to its nickname. As the section approaches its conclusion, the piano and orchestra create impressionistic sounds that evoke the croaking of frogs and the chirping of crickets along the Nile.

The soloist initiates the third Molto allegro with deep, resonant sounds reminiscent of ship propellers, before presenting a lively and energetic first theme that cascades across the piano. The piano maintains its frenetic pace as the woodwinds and strings introduce a compelling new melody. These elements intertwine and overlap, generating a dynamic tension that Saint-Saëns masterfully employs for dramatic impact, ultimately finishing the movement with a resounding flourish.



Malek Jandali is "a uniquely gifted composer" (The Washington Post) and his music has been hailed as "a major new addition to the 21st century's symphonic literature" by (Fanfare magazine). Critically acclaimed for his unique musical voice that has been described as "deeply enigmatic" (Gramophone) and rich with "heartrending melodies, lush orchestration, and creative textures" (American Record Guide), his prolific work includes eight symphonies, seven concertos, four string quartets, other orchestral and chamber music works, as well as an upcoming premiere of his full opera, The Square. A dedicated peace activist, Malek Jandali is the recipient of the 2014 Global Music Humanitarian Award, and in 2015 the Carnegie Corporation of New York honored him as a Great Immigrant, a Pride of America.

His large-scale orchestral works engage major philosophical themes and integrate Arabic magams (modes) with persuasive craft and a marked seriousness of purpose that echo UNESCO's call to preserve and protect the rich cultural heritage of his homeland Syria. Prominent advocates of landali's instrumental music include distinguished conductors Marin Alsop, Sergey Kondrashev, David Firman, Christopher Zimmerman, Alastair Willis, Pavle Dešpali, Robert Franz, Delta David Gier, and Lina González-Granados. His music consistently makes a profound impact on listeners throughout the world. Maestro Alsop states, "landali belongs among the superb composer poets of our time—a meaningful voice of quite astonishing, almost unearthly beauty." Malek Jandali's most recent premieres include his Viola Concerto for Roberto Diaz, his Clarinet Concerto for Grammy-nominated clarinetist Anthony McGill, and his Violin Concerto with Rachel Barton Pine.

His 2023 album Concertos on the Cedille Records label received four stars from the BBC Music Magazine. Jandali's compositions have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic, ORF Vienna Radio Symphony, Russian Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, Zagreb Philharmonic, Stockholm Solister, Norrlandsoperan Symphony Orchestra, Cairo Symphony, and Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. His music has been performed, at major venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Wiener Konzerthaus, Madrid's National Auditorium with the Queen of Spain in attendance, Cadogan Hall, Konserthuset Stockholm, Cairo Opera House, Nidaros Cathedral, Sydney Opera House, United Nations Headquarters, the National Museum of Qatar, and the Museum of the Future in Dubai.

landali has produced ten albums of lauded performances of more than forty of his compositions. He is the first Arab musician to have arranged the oldest music notation in the world, which was featured on his 2008 album Echoes from Ugarit. His albums Syrian Symphony, SoHo, Hiraeth, and The Jasmine Tree were released at Carnegie Hall.

His 2021 album contains Piano Concerto No. 1, recorded in Moscow with the composer at the piano and the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra led by Sergey Kondrashev; and Elegy, recorded in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. His 2022 album The Desert Rose features his Symphony No. 4 for string orchestra and Symphony No. 6, commissioned by Qatar Museums and recorded by the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra led by Marin Alsop. The symphonic poem Silent Ocean (2017) was commissioned by the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. The plight of Syrian children was the inspiration for his second symphony, Luminosity, commissioned and premiered by the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra (ZPO) at Carnegie Hall. The ZPO premiered his third symphony, Hiraeth, at Lisinski Hall under the baton of Pavle Dešpalj.

Malek Jandali is passionate about making the arts accessible to all. He is the founder and CEO of Pianos for Peace, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building peace through music and education. He embraces young talent from all over the world through the annual Malek Jandali International Youth Piano Competition. Jandali enjoys a worldwide career as an acclaimed pianist noted for his combination of passion, imagination and authenticity (BBC WorldNews). Malek Jandali was born in Germany and raised in Syria. He is composer-inresidence at both Queens University of Charlotte and at Oatar Museums, landali now makes his home in both Atlanta and New York City. His recordings are available on Cedille Records, Naxos, Apple Music, Spotify, and Virgin Megastores worldwide.

#### Symphony No. 1 Syrian Symphony

Composed in the United States and recorded with the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra in Moscow, this work aims to preserve and present the rich heritage and cultural identity of Syria at one of the most pivotal moments in the nation's history.

In March 2011, Syrian children ignited the flame of a historic peaceful revolution for freedom, human rights and justice. As the bombs were falling on his homeland and forced millions of families, including his own into exile, the composer defiantly began writing his symphony.

Jandali's work on his symphony was not continuous, but was interrupted by the production of an astounding series of other weighty compositions: a Violin Concerto, the Piano Theme and Variations, the Sinfonietta, a Syrian anthem, and a series of trio works for piano, cello and the traditional Arabic instrument, the Oud. Events of the ongoing Syrian revolution imbued Jandali with a sense of urgency and moral obligation to give the voiceless a voice. The slow movement was completed in only one week, shortly after the chemical weapons attack on Al-Ghouta in Damascus on August 21, 2013.

The symphony continues for four epic movements. After the initial energetic first and second movements, comes an ambiguous and melancholic slow movement. More secure is the fourth movement, a dance in 9/8, though that is swept away by a caustic finale, eking its way towards a dazzlingly victorious coda.

Jandali's F-Major Symphony has a cyclic aspect, unity being provided by the appearance of the main theme in both the first and last movements. This new symphonic mastery was clearly not brought about only by a reaction to contemporary events, but also by sustained contact with the well-springs of polyphonic elegant music.

The first movement immediately sets up the Syrian scene that will remain ever present throughout the symphony. The strength, freedom and individuality of the strings, representing the Syrian people, pitted against the brutal, machine-like rhythms of the brass and timpani - their oppressors. A bassoon solo marks the end of the movement and invites us into a dreamlike atmosphere of total serenity, peace and calm. It is a wistful and nostalgic world, soon to be shattered by tyranny.

The main part of the first movement is a driving Allegro in sonata form, with a Syrian sounding principal theme and a yearning lyric melody that is quintessentially Jandali. The unique and innovative quality of this work is particularly in evidence in the first movement, which consists of two main themes inspired by Syrian street songs.

The principal motivic complex, compressed into five notes (F-E-Db-E-C), needed to be expanded in time and space. As a starting point for a symphonic composition, it is entirely novel, and it is the cause not only of the concentration, the lapidariness of the movement, but also of its character of being unremittingly related to a goal, to a patriotic cause.

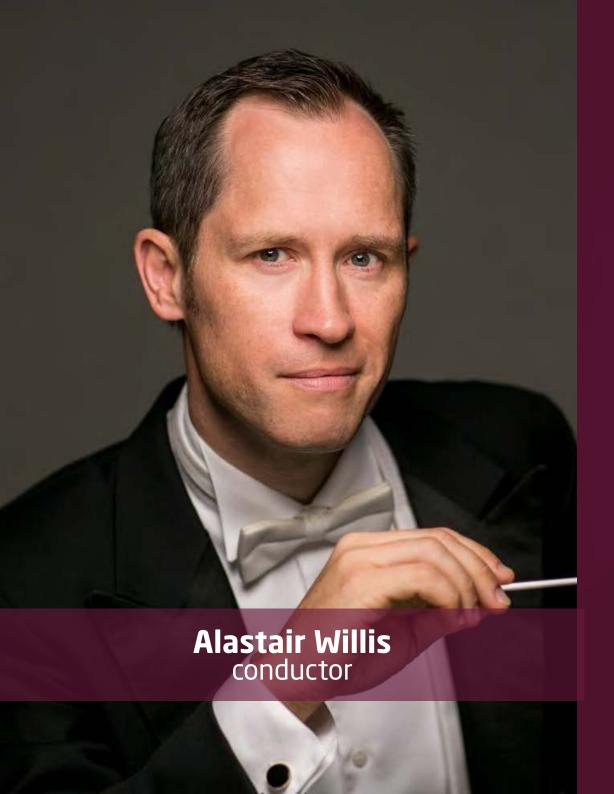
The second movement, Moderato, plays the role of the Scherzo with an interesting 5/4 dance-like theme. The middle section is a very light, mysterious march and the texture is generally soloistic and contrapuntal. Often the accompanimental lines pass from one instrument to another, as a kind of supermelody, which results in striking timbral effects. There are numerous rhythmic and structural devices to frame the textural settings, type and instrumentation. With its musical charm and wit, this is symphonic music of the highest quality. Just when you think it has to end, another surge envelops you. The main theme is repeated with distorted variations of the melody depicting the realities suffered by people under tyranny.

The slow movement is marked as an Andante and begins solemnly, rising to a passionate climax. The ambiguous start seems to describe a mother searching for her missing child. The accompanying footsteps are hesitating, but the purposeful melody is determined. The gloomy motif initially presented by clarinets has been viewed by commentators as representing Fate, and it more or less colors the entire movement. The child is miraculously found and the horns and trumpets announce a bright welcome full of expectation.

Many people wonder whether this movement is optimistic or pessimistic. The long tunnel of darkness ends with a brief glimpse of hope in the middle section of the brass. The central section is melancholic and nostalgic. The emptiness that follows is orchestrated in a way that gives the solo cello an attempt to console.

The structure of this Rondo-Finale movement is A-B-A1-C-A2-B1 plus an insert A3-C1 coda that effectively ends the symphony. The entire movement is built upon a dance melody in 10/8 colored with chromatic harmony and interesting rhythmic patterns. It is as if Jandali is saying if we stick together we will survive. If we all sing, we can't be beaten. The victory will be ours and the triumph of that is the maestoso climax of the symphony on the theme of the first movement. What had been cold, unrelenting and inhuman is now invested with every ounce of human joy. It is the emotional climax of the work saying: the power of people is stronger than people in power. Syrian Symphony was released on January 31, 2015 at Carnegie Hall in New York City.

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Grammy nominated conductor ALASTAIR WILLIS is the Music Director of the South Bend Symphony Orchestra, and Principal Conductor and Artistic Advisor of The Symphonia Boca Raton.

In past seasons, Willis has guest conducted orchestras around the world including the Chicago Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, Mexico City Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfonica de Rio de Janeiro, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonic, Hong Kong Sinfonietta, China National Orchestra (Beijing), and Silk Road Ensemble (with Yo-Yo Ma) among others. His recording of Ravel's L'Enfant et les Sortileges with Nashville Symphony and Opera for Naxos was Grammy nominated for Best Classical Album in

Willis recently completed a successful four-year tenure as Music Director of the Illinois Symphony Orchestra. Last season he was re-engaged by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, Victoria Symphony B.C., North Carolina Symphony, Dresden Philharmonic, Orquestra Sinfonica Barra Mansa, Symphonia Boca Raton, Pacific Northwest Ballet and Orchestra Seattle/Seattle Chamber Singers, and made his debuts with the Wichita Symphony, Boise Philharmonic, Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra, South Bend Symphony Orchestra and Roosevelt Contemporary Ensemble. This season he returns to Seattle Symphony, Pacific Northwest Ballet, Boca Raton Symphonia, and makes his debut with Philharmonie Südwestfalen.

Previous positions include Principal Guest Conductor with the Florida Orchestra's Coffee Concert series 2008-2011, Associate Conductor of the Seattle Symphony 2000-2003, Assistant Conductor with the Cincinnati Symphony and Pops Orchestras, and Music Director of the Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra.

Born in Acton, Massachusetts, Willis lived with his family in Moscow for five years before settling in Surrey, England. He received his bachelor's degree with honors from England's Bristol University, an Education degree from Kingston University, and a Masters of Music degree from Rice University's Shepherd School of Music.



Dr. Lindsay Garritson has performed throughout the United States and abroad since the age of four. She has appeared on stages such as Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and Place des Arts (Montreal), and has been featured as soloist with the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, Charleston Symphony Orchestra, Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, Keweenaw Symphony (Michigan), Las Colinas Symphony Orchestra (Texas), Orchestre Métropolitain (Montreal), Atlantic Classical Orchestra (Florida), Orquestra Sinfônica Barra Mansa (Brazil), the Yale Philharmonic Orchestra, and the European Philharmonic Orchestra, among others. An awardwinning performer, Lindsay has received top prizes at the Montreal International Piano Competition, USASU Bösendorfer International Piano Competition, and the Mozarteum International Chopin Competition (Salzburg). She was selected as a participant in the Van Cliburn International Piano Competition as well as a finalist for the German Piano Award in Frankfurt, Germany.

An avid chamber musician, Lindsay has performed with Ani Kavafian, Elmar Oliveira, Carter Brey, Ettore Causa, and Ian Rosenbaum, among many others. She is currently a member of the Bergonzi Piano Trio with violinist Scott Flavin and cellist Ross Harbaugh, and their first album of Beethoven and Brahms trios was recently released. Their upcoming album of trios by Dvorak and Shostakovich will be released in 2024. Since 2018, she has been a collaborative pianist for the prestigious Steans Institute at the Ravinia Festival.

Lindsay is a passionate advocate for new music, and her Carnegie Hall solo recital debut featured the world premiere of Carl Vine's Piano Sonata No. 4, a work written for her. Concurrently, her second solo album titled "Aphorisms: Piano Music of Carl Vine" was released. In 2022, Lindsay concertized in recital across Australia and New Zealand featuring the music of Carl Vine. She has also recorded the complete works for flute and piano by Samuel Zyman (Albany Records), and premiered works by composers David Ludwig, Nick Omiccioli, and Polina Nazaykinskaya.

Lindsay holds degrees from Principia College (B.A. in Music), Yale School of Music (M.M. and Artist Diploma), and the University of Miami (D.M.A.). Her piano teachers include Santiago Rodriguez, Boris Berman, Luiz de Moura Castro, Choong-Mo Kang, Zena Ilyashov, Emilio Del Rosario, the late Jane Allen, and Jennifer Lim Judd. Lindsay currently resides in Jensen Beach, Florida.

## Upcoming Concerts

Beethoven's Symphony No. 8

February 1, 2025 7:30 PM Qatar National Convention Centre, Auditorium 3

Marcus Bosch, conductor

Experience an unforgettable evening of classical music with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, led by the distinguished conductor Marcus Bosch. The programme begins with Beethoven's magnificent Symphony No. 8. After the intermission, the orchestra will present Anton Bruckner's majestic Symphony No. 4, known as the "Romantic," in its original 1874 version. This concert promises to captivate audiences with its rich textures and expressive depth.

**Programme:** 

Ludwig van Beethoven: Symphony No. 8 in F Major, Op. 93

Intermission:

Anton Bruckner: Symphony No. 4 in E-flat Major (1874 version), "Romantic"

Prokofiev's Romeo & Juliet

Wednesday, February 5, 2025 7:30 PM Katara Cultural Village Opera House

Elias Grandy, conductor Hassan Moataz El Molla, cello

Join the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra for a captivating evening of classical music, led by conductor Elias Grandy and featuring Hassan Moataz El Molla on cello. The programme begins with Mikhail Glinka's vibrant Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila, followed by Dmitri Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 1, a dramatic and virtuosic masterpiece showcasing the expressive range of the cello. After the intermission, the orchestra will bring to life selections from Sergei Prokofiev's iconic ballet Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64. These excerpts, including Montagues and Capulets, The Young Juliet, and The Death of Tybalt, vividly capture the beauty, passion, and tragedy of Shakespeare's timeless love story.

**Programme:** 

Mikhail Glinka: Overture to Ruslan and Lyudmila

Dmitri Shostakovich: Cello Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, Op. 107

Intermission:

Sergei Prokofiev: Selections from Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64

**Montagues and Capulets** 

The Young Juliet

Masks

Romeo and Juliet
The Death of Tybalt

**Friar Laurence** 

**Dance of the Girls with Lilies** 

Romeo at Juliet's Grave (from Op. 64ter)

Juliet's Death

### Musicians



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### Musicians



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### Musicians

























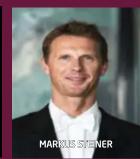














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