



CROSSING CULTURES

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Program

QPO Presents: Crossing Cultures

Katara Cultural Village, Opera House
Saturday, November 1, 2025
7:30 pm

David Navarro Turres, conductor
Mohammed Al-Neaimi, violin
Sonja Park, piano

Program

Dr. Nasser Sahim:

Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 1

Claude Ledoux:

Desert Song

Omar Rahbany:

Concerto for Piano, Strings, & Percussion: Mov. I

Donatas Bukauskas:

Prayer for Peace

Qoutayba Neaimi:

Sounds of Baghdad

Intermission

José Pablo Moncayo:

Huapango

Carlos Gardel:

Por Una Cabeza

Arturo Márquez:

Conga del Fuego

Arturo Márquez:

Danzón No. 2

Alberto Ginastera:

Suite de la Estancia

Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra Narrative

The Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra (QPO) is a pioneering cultural institution that proudly represents Qatar on the world stage. Founded in 2007 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, the orchestra brings together 78 world class musicians from 28 countries, many of whom have performed with the world's leading ensembles such as the New York Philharmonic, Frankfurt Opera, BBC Symphony Orchestra, Tonhalle Zürich, Teatro Colón, and NDR Radiophilharmonie.

Known for its innovative programming and unique sound, QPO blends Western symphonic traditions with the rich musical heritage of the Arab world, creating performances that are globally resonant and deeply rooted in the region's cultural legacy.

With more than 500 performances to date, QPO has graced prestigious stages around the world, including La Scala (Milan), Konzerthaus Wien (Vienna), Théâtre des Champs-Élysées (Paris), Santa Cecilia (Rome), the Kennedy Center (Washington D.C.), and the Royal Albert Hall (London).

QPO is a source of national pride and a symbol of Qatar's commitment to cultural excellence. Driven by a mission to make music accessible to all, QPO continues to break barriers, inspire new generations, and lead the way in shaping a vibrant musical future for Qatar and the region.

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 Program Notes



Dr. Nasser Sahim

Dr. Nasser Sahim, an exceptional musical visionary born in 1979, has etched his name in the annals of Qatari music history through a multifaceted array of artistic accomplishments. A distinguished vocalist-composer, he has artfully crafted a harmonious tapestry that resonates both locally and globally. With a resolute passion for music, Dr. Sahim's artistic journey commenced in 1995, a year that set him on a trajectory of innovation and creativity.

With a repertoire that spans over three decades, Dr. Sahim's discography showcases more than 30 individual tracks in the Gulf region, alongside a remarkable album featuring a collection of twelve compositions. A trailblazer in his right, he has extended his reach beyond mere musical performances. Dr. Sahim has embraced diverse roles, as evidenced by his contributions to musical projects, television programs, sound effects, commercial music serials, and classical compositions for Qatar's esteemed national media outlets.

Dr. Sahim's prowess as a composer knows no bounds, as exemplified by his orchestral opuses. Among his celebrated works is the *Four Seasons* symphony, a symphonic masterpiece that reverberated both domestically and on international stages between 2015 and 2017. Beyond musical boundaries, Dr. Sahim was chosen to represent Qatar as a composer at the International Forum of Music Filmmakers in 2018. The British Embassy's invitation propelled him to participate in a collaboration with international luminaries in the field of music, orchestrated by the British Council, BFI, and Sensoria.

A pivotal year arrived in 2011 with the release of his debut album "Friends," featuring collaborations with Turkish artist Ayson. The following year, Dr. Sahim embarked on an ambitious endeavor, crafting a collection of 12 songs that transcended regional borders. His music resonated in countries spanning not only in his home country, Qatar, but also in Bahrain, Oman, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Iraq, Egypt, and India, highlighting his cross-cultural appeal.

A luminary in Qatar's musical realm, Dr. Sahim was entrusted with significant roles, such as his participation in the Committee for the Ruling of Eastern and Western Classical Music in the 2017 Qatar National Music Competition. Presently, he holds the position of Deputy Executive Director of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra, a testament to his commitment to musical excellence.

Dr. Sahim unveiled an intrinsic connection between Qatar and Uzbekistan, highlighting their shared musical heritage.

The culmination of Dr. Sahim's findings materialized through two captivating concerts organised by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. The inclusion of Qatari and Uzbek music, under the baton of Kamoliddin Urinbaev, brought to life the intricate web of musical interconnectivity Dr. Sahim had uncovered.

Furthermore, Dr. Sahim's compositions, particularly "Al Haneen," reflect his profound belief in music's transformative power. Through this composition, he masterfully fuses eastern and western classical influences, inspired by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra's vision to unite communities through music. Dr. Sahim's musical genius has demonstrated the profound impact that music can have on human emotions and physiology, evoking everything from joy to introspection.

Suite for Piano and Orchestra No. 1

The First Movement of Dr. Nasser Sahim's *Piano Concerto No. 1* represents a fusion of Arab sensibility with classical form, where nostalgia seamlessly integrates with harmony, and Eastern motifs evolve into a universal language that resonates with humanity in all its forms.

The concerto is characterized by both drama and poetry. It opens with a reflective ambiance and classical formality in the interaction between the orchestra and the piano, yet the Eastern essence and Arab fervor swiftly emerge through the melodic lines, imparting a distinctive identity that merges European classicism with a genuine Arab spirit.

Expressive style

- The composition showcases Eastern-style motifs and techniques that traverse subtle nuances of performance, imparting a delicate Arabic quality within a classical context.
- The interplay between the piano and the orchestra is founded on dialogue rather than discord, as they alternately convey the principal theme in remarkable musical harmony.
- This movement serves as a conduit between East and West, bridging classical form and Arab passion, as well as academic precision and innate emotion.





Claude Ledoux

Belgian composer renowned for having composed the compulsory pieces for the Queen Elisabeth International Music Competition of Belgium *Butterfly's Dream*, compulsory piano concerto for the 2016 final round and *V* for violin and piano, compulsory work for the semi-final in 2008.

For many years, this composer has been blending Western sounds with references to non-European music in his works, particularly the aesthetics of Eastern folk and classical music. He has traveled extensively in Asia to discover the qualities of these musical traditions.

Claude LEDOUX teaches composition at Arts2 - Royal Conservatory of Mons in Belgium - as well as at the Paris Conservatory in France.

He is a member of the Royal Academy of Belgium. Moreover he is *Grand Officer of the Crown* of the Belgian Kingdom.

Desert Song

The first part of this work could be the soundtrack to a documentary film about the desert that the composer saw a few years ago. Vast and attractive places. Memories of Arabic music come back, transformed in our Western memory. The music tells a story where Eastern sounds blend with the colorful explorations typical of the "French touch," while the harmonies take us back to frescoes reminiscent of film scores.

The second part presents us with an energetic dance, sometimes violent, sometimes expressive. We imagine stylized music that makes us dance in the evening in the desert around a wood fire. This invented folklore has its roots in the dynamics of composers fascinated by Arabic music.



Omar Rahbany

Born in Beirut, Lebanon, in 1989, Omar Rahbany is a composer, arranger, and pianist belonging to the third generation of the celebrated Rahbani musical family. Immersed in music, theatre, cinema, and dance from an early age, Omar developed an interest in the interdisciplinary concept of total art, an inquiry that continues to evolve and manifest through his diverse artist practice

He began his musical training under Hagop Arslanian, studying piano and composition, before continuing his education abroad. In Barcelona, he studied with renowned conductor Jordi Mora, and later in Munich under Christopher Schlüren, conductor and musicologist, refining his understanding of orchestration, harmony, and musical form.

Omar has performed at some of the world's most esteemed venues and festivals, including Carnegie Hall (New York), Royal Court Theatre (London), the Abu Dhabi Festival, and the Beiteddine Art Festival, as well as in Paris, Geneva, Qatar, Bahrain, Kuwait City, and Beirut. Most recently, he presented his orchestral work "Lubnaniyat" in Doha, Qatar, performing with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra under the patronage of the Ministry of Culture as part of the Doha Book Fair.

Omar Rahbany's music is a rich tapestry that fuses Western classical influences with Oriental sensibilities, jazz harmonies and grooves, and diverse world music traditions, all seamlessly interwoven with his deep-rooted Arabic heritage.

Concerto for Piano, Strings & Percussion: Mov. I

The "Piano Concerto No.1" beautifully combines various Baroque musical styles, drawing inspiration from composers like Bach and Vivaldi, along with Indian rhythms known as Konakul and Brazilian influences, all while preserving a Lebanese and Eastern essence through its melodic phrases. The composition features a range of instruments, beginning with the piano and string quintet, complemented by timpani and drums. The entire performance was captured on film with eight Lebanese musicians, directed by Karim Rahbani.

Omar remarked, "The initial challenge in this musical piece was to create a cohesive language after merging all these diverse styles, while the second challenge was to find the right musicians. After searching across different parts of the world, he found them in Lebanon." He further stated, "I compare the lengthy composition to a grand structure, as it demands extensive construction, engineering, and time."



Donatas Bukauskas

Donatas Bukauskas (born 1976) is a distinguished Lithuanian trombonist, vocalist, and multigenre musician specializing in jazz, folk, and popular music. He graduated from Klaipeda University's Jazz Department in 2001 and earned a master's degree from Lithuanian Music Academy in 2007.

Since 1994, Bukauskas has performed with prestigious ensembles including Klaipeda Brass Band, various Lithuanian jazz groups, and internationally across Europe, UAE and USA. He founded "Jazzmaitija" and was a jazz educator at Klaipeda University (2012-2017).

As a constantly creating composer, Bukauskas has created various works spanning songs, marches, and instrumental pieces for violin, trombone, saxophone, trumpet, and euphonium.

His notable compositions include "We're Volunteers" (National Defence Volunteer Force's unofficial anthem), the first-prize winning "Lancer's March," "Lithuanian Tattoo March" (featured in national celebrations), "Step Up" (included in European Brass Band Championships), and the internationally acclaimed "Prayer for Peace," composed during the Russian-Ukrainian war. His works are featured in the Lithuanian Song Festival and performed by ensembles worldwide, establishing his reputation as a significant contemporary Lithuanian composer.

Prayer for Peace

"Prayer for Peace" by Donatas Bukauskas invites listeners into a quiet but profound encounter with music. The title itself reveals its essence—a composition dedicated to peace, infused with gentle vibrations of love that resonate through every note and chord. Bukauskas masterfully balances power with softness, weaving together deep spiritual presence and serene harmony. This is music not just to be heard, but to be felt—with the ears, the heart, and the soul.

More than a musical piece, "Prayer for Peace" is an experience that opens a space for tranquility, both within and beyond. It carries a quiet invitation to pause, to step into a moment where everything else fades, leaving only pure presence. Through his music, Bukauskas expresses a sincere longing for harmony while gently reminding us that peace begins within ourselves.

This composition feels like a meditation in sound—one that does not impose itself but simply exists alongside the listener. It offers a chance to slow down, breathe, and reconnect. Though rich with energy, it never demands attention. Instead, it lingers gracefully in the mind, leaving behind a trace of stillness. Like a true prayer, "Prayer for Peace" transcends mere melodies to become a state of being—one that calls to be revisited. It radiates warmth and serenity, offering not only inspiration all who encounter its timeless message.



Qoutayba Neaimi

Qoutayba Neaimi is a Belgian/Iraqi composer. A professor of composition and orchestration at the Conservatoire royal de Mons (Belgium), he is also a researcher and former violinist of the Iraqi National Philharmonic Orchestra. He is a member of the Belgian Composers Forum, and a musical advisor to the Emirati Musicians Association and to Opera Liban. After initial studies at the Baghdad Institute for Fine Arts, he obtained a Master's degree and an Agrégation in Composition at the Royal Conservatory of Mons.

His orchestral compositions were performed in prestigious venues in Europe (Belgium, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland...), and in the Arab world (Iraq, Qatar, Egypt, Lebanon, UAE...). His creative work covers a large scope of styles and formations, reflecting his mastery in orchestral, classical, folkloric and cinematic styles alike.

He was applauded for orchestral commissions such as: Amsterdam Concertgebouw & Naseer Shamma (2025); Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra (2024), Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra (2023), Cairo Symphony Orchestra at the Cairo Opera House (2022). He is as much at ease with the re-composition of Arabic heritage music (focusing on Gulf folklore) as with experimental music. He gives conferences in European and Arab countries (ULB, Conservatoire de Lille & Mons, Ain Shams Cairo University, Sharjah, Koweit, Bagdad, Abu Dhabi...).

Extending a bridge between oriental and western musical traditions, he presented his invention: the Polyphonic Maqam Musical System, at the Royal Academy of Arts & Science (Belgium) as well as in

France, Abu Dhabi and Egypt. This achievement was praised as a crucial milestone in music history by several musical figures throughout the USA, Europe and the Arab countries. His works were recorded by the Cypres label (Musiques Nouvelles Anniversary CD, 2022; Belgian Forum Anniversary CD, 2023). Upcoming European premieres include creations by Musiques Nouvelles, and by the Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sounds of Baghdad Notes by Qoutayba Neaimi

Is an evocation of the many faces of my hometown. Baghdad, as I knew it, was a city full of life and filled with more than a thousand years of culture. One can hear this in the sections that use the $\frac{3}{4}$ tones typical of classic oriental music (maqâm), and in the dances inspired by traditional Iraqi rhythms.

Baghdad has been through years of war and desolation. As an acoustic backdrop of my childhood and adolescence, explosions and sirens have their inevitable place in this musical portrait of the city. But moments of dreams and hope run through the piece as well, as homage to the resilience and humanity of the people, and their renewed hope to create a better world. This evocation of the human ability to destroy, to endure, and to rebuild resonates with current events. In these times of uncertainties and fragilities, we must ensure that the hope for change is carried by the younger generation.



José Pablo Moncayo

José Pablo Moncayo García was a Mexican pianist, percussionist, music educator, composer, and conductor.

As a composer, José Pablo Moncayo embodies one of the most significant legacies of Mexican nationalism in the realm of art music. He created several masterpieces that most effectively represent the core of Mexico's national aspirations and contradictions during the 20th century.

Born in Guadalajara, he demonstrated musical talent from an early age, studying at the National Conservatory of Music in Mexico City, where he was influenced by renowned figures such as Manuel M. Ponce.

His commitment to education led him to teach at various institutions and serve as the conductor of the Mexico City Philharmonic Orchestra. Despite his untimely death at 46 due to complications from diabetes, Moncayo's legacy continues to resonate in contemporary Hispanic music and remains a pivotal figure in exporting Mexico's rich cultural heritage to global stages.

Huapango

Huapango made its debut in 1941 at the Palacio de Bellas Artes, performed by Carlos Chávez and the Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional de México.

The *Huapango* style offers a variety of instrumental options, ranging from a trio of string instruments to a full mariachi band that includes strings, percussion, brass, and vocals.

Moncayo's composition inspired by *Huapango* well-known style he utilizes the entire range of orchestral sound, featuring strings, woodwinds, brass, a vast array of percussion instruments from both Latin and European traditions, and even a notable harp.

The intricate rhythmic patterns and lively melodies of *Huapango* capture the essence of the instrumental, vocal, and dance components of the *huapango* style, establishing it as one of Moncayo's most cherished and popular works.



Carlos Gardel

Carlos Gardel (1890 - 1935) was an Argentine singer, songwriter, composer, and actor who was born in France. He stands as the most significant figure in the history of tango music. In the first half of the 20th century, he emerged as one of the most influential performers in global popular music. Gardel is celebrated as the most renowned tango singer ever and is recognized worldwide. His vocal range has led to him being described as either a baritone or tenor, and he was famous for his powerful voice and expressive phrasing. Alongside his long-time collaborator and lyricist Alfredo Le Pera, Gardel created numerous classic tango songs.

Gardel featured in several films, such as 'The Lights of Buenos Aires' (1931), 'La Casa es Seria' (1932), 'Downward Slope' (1934), and 'El día que me quieras' (1935). The latter film, which stars the composer, is titled after one of his most beloved songs and showcases some of his finest music, including *El día que me quieras* itself, 'Sus ojos se cerraron', 'Guitarra, guitarra mía', and *Volver*. Additionally, the film is notable for a cameo appearance by a young Astor Piazzolla as a newspaper boy.

Tragically, Gardel lost his life in an airplane accident while at the peak of his career, becoming a quintessential tragic hero who is mourned across Latin America. For many, he represents the very essence of the tango genre. He is affectionately known by several nicknames, including "*Carlitos*", "*El Zorzal*", "*The King of Tango*", "*El Mago*", "*The Wizard*", "*El Morocho del Abasto*", and humorously "*El Mudo*".

Por Una Cabeza

This is the most renowned tango created by Argentine composer Carlos Gardel. Composed in 1935, during Gardel's peak of creativity and fame.

The G Major chord in *Por una Cabeza* provides a sense of calm, while the unexpected subtle shifts to G Major capture the audience's attention, revealing the more intense aspects of the piece. The chords of "C Major" and "G Major" contribute both emotion and depth to the music, ultimately leading to its peak. It beautifully conveys femininity, directly sharing its gentle passion with the listeners.

In 1935, Carlos Gardel performed in the film "Tango Bar." This piece showcases a softer side of tango, featuring a unique rhythm that makes it perfect for dancing. Because of this quality, it was widely embraced and recorded by many orchestras during the 1940s and 1950s.



Arturo Márquez

Arturo Márquez Navarro, born on December 20, 1950, is a composer from Mexico known for his orchestral music. He blends the musical styles and forms of his homeland into his works. His most famous piece is *Danzón No. 2*.

Márquez was born in Álamos, for a musical family. Growing up, Márquez was exposed to a variety of musical styles, especially Mexican “salon music,” which significantly influenced his future musical works.

His educational journey began in La Puente, California, where he attended middle school and high school. After returning to Mexico, Márquez furthered his studies at the Conservatory of Music and the Institute of Fine Arts. He also had the opportunity to study privately in Paris with Jacques Castérède, thanks to a scholarship from the French government.

At the age of 16, Márquez started composing music and enrolled at the Mexican Music Conservatory, where he focused on piano and music theory. In the United States, he received a Fulbright Scholarship and earned a Master of Fine Arts in composition from the California Institute of the Arts in Valencia, California, in 1990.

Until the 1990s, Márquez’s music remained relatively unknown outside of Mexico. This changed when he became involved in the world of Latin ballroom dancing, which inspired some of his most renowned works.

Conga del Fuego

Created in 2005, *Conga del Fuego* is a brief orchestral piece that is truly vibrant with color. Meaning ‘Conga of Fire’, the ambiance crafted by Márquez’s skillful orchestration and insightful application of conga rhythms transforms this piece into a thrilling journey.

The piece showcases a consistent repetition of rhythmic patterns. The atmosphere that Márquez expertly crafts is both tense and joyful at the same time. The sound of the strings and winds, along with the brass that resembles a fanfare, emphasizes the intensity among the instruments, reflecting both drama and joy.

Danzón No. 2

Danzón No. 2, is an orchestral piece created by the Mexican composer Arturo Márquez for a full orchestra. It was commissioned by the Department of Musical Activities at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and had its premiere in 1994 in Mexico City, performed by the Orchestra Filarmonica de la UNAM, conducted by Francisco Savín.

Danzón No. 2, stands out as one of the most beloved and frequently performed contemporary classical orchestral works from Mexico. It is regarded as a representation of Mexican music and culture, often affectionately referred to as Mexico’s second national anthem.

The piece keeps a rhythmic interest by incorporating different accents and tempos. This essential element of modern Mexican music showcases and contemplates the dance style known as danzón, which originated in Cuba yet holds significant importance in the folklore of Veracruz, Mexico. The music was influenced by a trip to a ballroom in Veracruz. It includes solos for clarinet, oboe, piano, violin, double bass, French horn, trumpet, flute, and piccolo.



Alberto Ginastera

Alberto Evaristo Ginastera (April 11, 1916 – June 25, 1983) was a renowned Argentine composer of classical music. He is regarded as one of the most significant classical composers of the Americas in the 20th century. Ginastera was born in Buenos Aires to a Spanish father and an Italian mother.

Ginastera attended the Williams Conservatory in Buenos Aires, where he graduated in 1938. As a young professor, he taught at the Liceo Militar General San Martín. After spending time in the United States from 1945 to 1947, where he studied under Aaron Copland at Tanglewood, he returned to Buenos Aires and took on various teaching roles. Notable students of his include Ástor Piazzolla.

In 1968, Ginastera relocated to the United States, and in 1970, he moved to Europe. He passed away in Geneva, Switzerland, at the age of 67 and was laid to rest in the Cimetière des Rois.

Ginastera categorized his music into three distinct periods: "Objective Nationalism" (1934-1948), "Subjective Nationalism" (1948-1958), and "Neo-Expressionism" (1958-1983). Each of these periods is characterized by varying degrees of traditional Argentine musical elements. His Objective Nationalistic compositions often feature Argentine folk themes presented in a direct manner, while the works from his later periods incorporate these traditional elements in more abstract forms.

Many of Ginastera's compositions drew inspiration from the Gauchesco tradition, which celebrates the gaucho, a landless native horseman of the plains, as a symbol of Argentina.

Suite de la Estancia

Estancia is the second ballet created by Argentinian composer Alberto Ginastera, which premiered in 1952 and was written by American writer Lincoln Kirstein.

Ginastera drew inspiration for the ballet's narrative from the epic *Martin Fierro* by Argentine author José Hernández, weaving in nationalist themes and language into his musical composition. This ballet was developed in the same year that the composer met American composer Aaron Copland. Originally, the ballet started as a four-part orchestral suite in 1941 before it was transformed into a one-act ballet. The ballet lasts about half an hour and narrates the tale of a boy from the city who falls in love with a rancher's daughter.

The girl perceives the boy as lacking bravery compared to the gauchos. However, by the conclusion of the ballet, he impresses her by outdancing the gauchos in a contest.



David Navarro-Turres

conductor

Fascinating presence on stage, Chilean-Belgian conductor and arranger David Navarro-Turres has been acclaimed for his dynamic performances, versatile conducting style, technical expertise, intensity of his music making and the deep vision of his interpretations. Navarro-Turres has worked with a variety of orchestras and ensembles, earning praise for his ability to bring out the best in musicians.

Artistic Director Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra, Brussels Philharmonic Chorus & Serenata Vocale (chamber choir) and the Winner of the Belgian French Federation Community Price and the Chilean National Conservatory Price, David Navarro-Turres is Artistic director of the Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra/Brussels Philharmonic Chorus, chief conductor of the Wien Akustik Symphonie and the Serenata Vocale chamber choir.

As a guest conductor, he has appeared with the Belgian National Orchestra, the EST OUEST ensemble, the Confluences ensemble, El Sistema Belgium orchestra, Brussels Choral Society, Brussels Chamber Choir, The Euro-Persian Art Orchestra, The Chilean Chamber Orchestra, La Serena Symphonic Orchestra, The Symphony Orchestra of Concepción, The Symphony Orchestra of Antofagasta, The China Hong Kong Symphony, the Orchestre Symphonique du Conservatoire Royal de Bruxelles, the the HKU Utrecht Conservatory Orchestra, The St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra, the Commonwealth Symphony Orchestra, Pazardjik Symphony Orchestra, the Caméra Lirica and recently a China Tour with the Wien Akustik Symphonie.

Born in Antofagasta, Chile, Mr Navarro-Turres began conducting at the age of fifteen with the Youth Symphony Orchestra at the Liceo Experimental Artístico. He is a graduate of the Modern Contemporary Music School, the National Conservatory of the University of Chile and the Royal Conservatory of Brussels. He has won scholarships for conducting masterclasses in Zurich with David Zinman and the Tonhalle Orchestra, in London with Benjamin Zander and the London Masterclass Orchestra, and with Guerassim Voronkov and the St Petersburg Symphony Orchestra.

In 2017, he conducted Goran Bregovic's "Three letters from Sarajevo" at the opening concert of the BALKAN TRAFIK Festival, with the composer on stage. In 2018, he conducted the Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra in the Brel Symphonique show, at Forest-National in Brussels, then in Ghent and Antwerp. In 2022, with the Ensemble Confluences, he opened the Festival des Musiques Sacrées at the Festival international de musique contemporaine de Mons (Belgium). He ended 2022 with a tour of the operetta "Bluebeard" in various Belgian towns, recordings with the Brussels Philharmonic Orchestra and premiering Belgian composers at least 10 times per year. Reviews from such performances often highlights "his strong leadership on the podium", "his ability to bring out nuances in complex pieces" and "his commitment to delivering a cohesive and impactful musical experience".

In October he will make his debut with the Royal Symphonic Band of Belgian Guides and in November with the the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra.



Sonja Park
piano

As a young child Sonja Park visited Ronald Reagan in the White House only to sing in a children's choir from Seoul. Nothing is scripted like an American President's schedule. Yet Sonja played the piano as well, delighting Reagan so much that he dandled her on his knee.

At the age of 21 Ms. Park's life changed dramatically when Prof. Alexander Jenner heard her in Vienna. Telling her she was "the most talented student he had ever met," he demanded she become a professional concert pianist, even though she was largely self-taught at that time. Professor Jenner dedicated his last years as a teacher to her at the prestigious University of Music and Performing Arts Vienna where she studied piano performance and piano chamber music with him and professor Avedis Kouyoumdjian.

As a fully developed artist Sonja continues to make an impact. While still studying, Dora Schwarzberg and Mark Drobinsky asked her to replace Martha Argerich and Alexander Rabinowitsch. With 7 days' notice she learned and performed six Beethoven piano trios with them at the Beethoven Festival in Brescia, Italy.

Sonja's litany of remarkable stories continues. Shortly after moving to Doha, Qatar, Ms. Park was invited to open the Katara Cultural Village Opera House in Doha, performing Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto with the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra.

'She is a unique talent. When she plays one can forget everything. All one feels is love for music. She leads you to another world. She has everything that a musician needs. She is a born artist.' Andrezej Jasinski, Former President of Chopin Competition

Born in Seoul, Sonja Park was educated there and in Vienna. The University of Vienna honoured her with awards and scholarships from Gonda Weiner, Herbert von Karajan Society, Gesellschaft für Musikfreunde, Ministry for Transport and Science, and Sobotka-Janicek Foundation.

Ms. Park is a prize winner and finalist of competitions such as the Brahms International, Karajan Society, Premio Rodolfo Caporalli, Premio Vittorio Gui and Premio Trio di Trieste. Sonja has appeared on ORF, MEZZO, ABC Australia, RAI, NHK, Magyar TV, Qatar TV, Al Rayyan TV, Kuwait TV and Al Jazeera.

As a sought-after soloist and chamber musician, she has collaborated with musicians such as Dora Schwarzberg, Anton Sorokow, Michael Gutman, Otto Edelman, Niklaas Harnoncourt, Philippe Entremont, Benoit Fromanger, Dionysis Grammenos, Maxim Rysanov and Lorin Maazel in venues such as La Scala Milan, Musikverein and Konzerthaus Wien, Teatro del Maggio Florence, Wigmore Hall and the Royal Albert Hall London and Suntory Hall Tokyo in addition to performances in more than 30 countries in 4 continents.

Park was a founding faculty member of Qatar Music Academy and has served as a jury member of international piano competitions such as International Brahms Music Competition in Austria and Gulf Chopin Piano Competition.

In 2013, following her heart, Sonja has founded a Non-Profit-Foundation MYA "Moving Young Artists" together with her husband and fellow musician Joris to promote and generate interest in classical music and culture and more to support young musical talents in Qatar.

In 2017, Sonja and Joris made history by creating and organizing the first Qatar National Music Competition (QNMC), supported by 19 embassies and the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. This event drew over 700 participants, significantly impacting aspiring young musicians. In April 2018, Sonja initiated the "International Chamber Music Concert Series for Peace and Unity," supported by six European embassies, fnac 51 East, and Qatar Airways. This series promotes European classical music, fosters cultural exchange between Qatar and Europe, and unites people through the power of music.

In December 2019, she won the Chair of Principal Keyboard in the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. Currently residing in Qatar, Sonja balances a busy schedule of performing, organizing concerts for young local talents, and overseeing Development of the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sonja is a Steinway Artist.



Mohammed Al-Nuaimi
violin

A distinguished violinist from an artistic family, Mohammed Adnan Al-Nuaimi has served as First and Solo Violinist with the Iraqi National Symphony Orchestra, as well as Concertmaster of the Arab Youth Orchestra and the Iraqi Youth Orchestra.

He holds a Master's degree in Violin Performance from Dresden, Germany. Al-Nuaimi has appeared as a soloist with numerous Arab and European orchestras and has performed a wide repertoire of Western works for the violin.

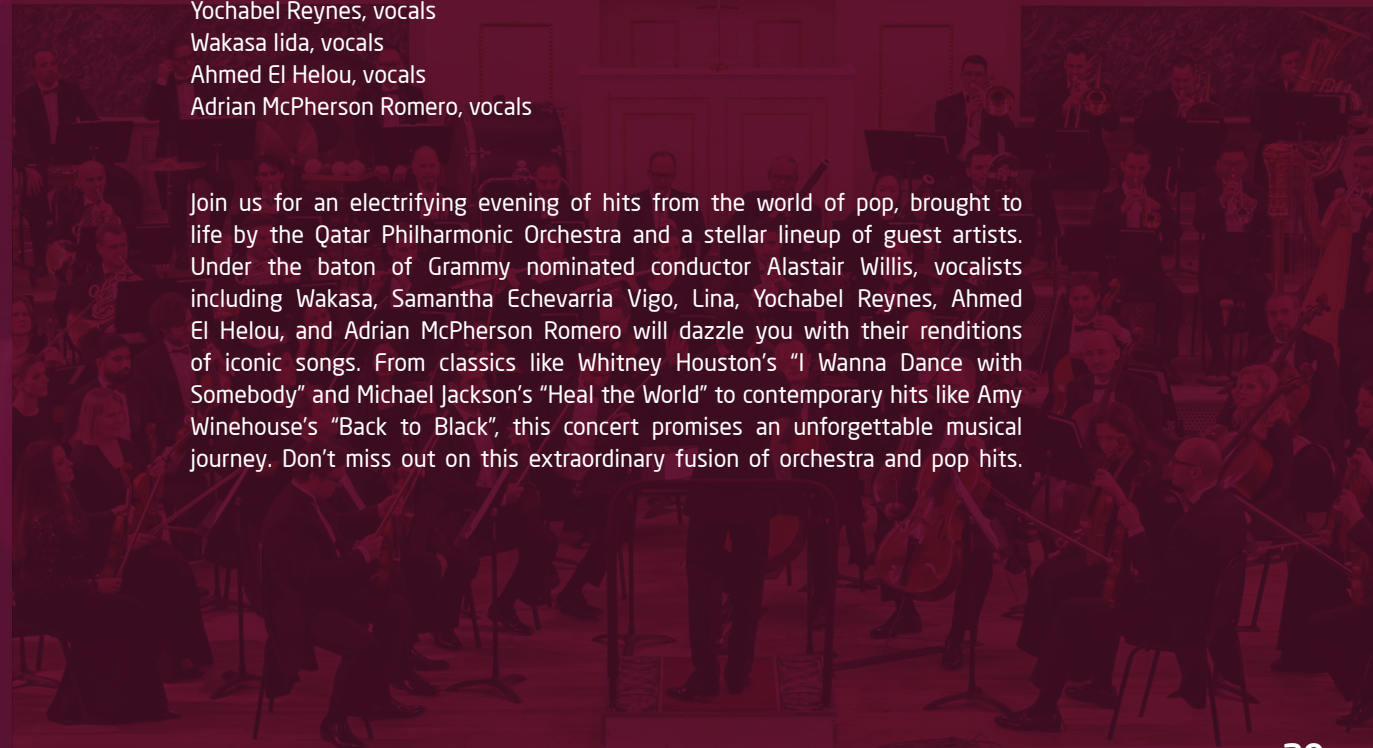
Upcoming Concerts

Pop Greatest Hits

UVenue, Al Muraikh Area
Thursday, 13 November 2025
8:00 pm

Alastair Willis, conductor
Lina Osman, vocals
Samantha Echevarria Vigo, vocals
Yochabel Reynes, vocals
Wakasa Iida, vocals
Ahmed El Helou, vocals
Adrian McPherson Romero, vocals

Join us for an electrifying evening of hits from the world of pop, brought to life by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra and a stellar lineup of guest artists. Under the baton of Grammy nominated conductor Alastair Willis, vocalists including Wakasa, Samantha Echevarria Vigo, Lina, Yochabel Reynes, Ahmed El Helou, and Adrian McPherson Romero will dazzle you with their renditions of iconic songs. From classics like Whitney Houston's "I Wanna Dance with Somebody" and Michael Jackson's "Heal the World" to contemporary hits like Amy Winehouse's "Back to Black", this concert promises an unforgettable musical journey. Don't miss out on this extraordinary fusion of orchestra and pop hits.



Musicians



LIONEL SCHMIT



JOO YOUNG OH



VITALII PERVUSHYN



LORENA MANESCU



DMITRI TORCHINSKY



TOBIAS GETTE



MICHAELA LINSBAUER



TAEHYUN KIM



ANNEMARI AINOMAE



DINA LEINI



PAVLO DOVHAN



RALUCA GETTE



ANA MARIA RUSU



FULVIO FURLANUT



ROLANDA GINKUTE



MAIAS ALYAMANI



REEM KHOURY



GEORGES YAMINE



ISLAM EL HEFNAWY



SHAZA OWEDA



JULIA KORODI



ANNE-CATHRIN EHRLICH



MOHAMED OWEDA



EGLE VALUTE



GIOVANNI PASINI



ANCA BOLD



ANDREA MEREUTA

Musicians



VICTOR SUMENKOV



MERVE BULUN



INES WEIN



ISLAM ABDELAZIZ



KAHRAMAN SEREF



KIRILL BOGATYREV



HASSAN EL MOLLA



ANTON PAVLOVSKY



CHRISTOPH SCHMITZ



HARALD GEORGI



NICOLAS ROJANSKI



GENNADY KRUTIKOV



SANDOR ONODI



MATTEO GASPARI



RADOVAN HETSCH



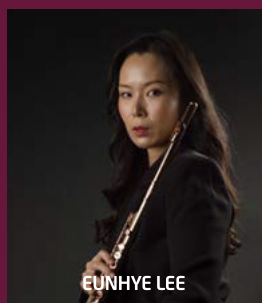
SERGIY KONYAKHYN



ALEKSANDR HASKIN



JIHOON SHIN



EUNHYE LEE



GERMAN DIAZ BLANCO



MOHAMED IBRAHIM SALEH



CLAIRE GLAGO



RONY MOSER



THOMAS GNAUSCH



SIMONE ZANACCHI



DANIEL HRINDA



YOSHIKO KOYAMA

Musicians



MIROSLAV STOYANOV



PETER DAVIDA



GIDEON SEIDENBERG



ATILLA SZÜCS



ZSOLT PÉTER



LASZLO FROSCHL



JORIS LAENEN



DANIEL EDELHOFF



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