



NEIGHBORS

ABU DHABI FESTIVAL ANNOUNCES LINEUP

Crafting the Emirates state of mind

Under the patronage of Her Highness Sheikhha Shamsa Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan, Wife of HH Sheikh Hamdan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler's Representative in the Al Dhafra Region, Chairperson of the Emirates Red Crescent (ERC), Assistant to the Chairman of the ERC for Women's Affairs, and Chairperson of the Higher Committee for Ataya Initiative, the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF) has announced the programme for the 19th edition of its flagship Abu Dhabi Festival 2022 under the theme 'Crafting The Emirates State of Mind: Creation, Innovation & Joy' today.

In addition to world-class events, the programme features a unique combination of local events set to take place at the Emirates Palace Auditorium, Umm Al Emarat Park and Expo 2020 Dubai, in line with ADMAF's efforts to enrich the UAE's cultural vision and further its position as a cultural hub worldwide.

Abu Dhabi Festival is supported by its lead partner Mubadala Investment Company (Mubadala) and energy partner GS Energy.

In her opening remarks, H.E. Huda I. Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation and Founder and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival said, "To an artist, a simple inert log of wood or a slab of marble assumes life. It carries a promise: a shape to be teased from the material, beauty to be carved out, a thought to be expressed. And what carries the visionary towards their vision, transforming an idea into reality is craftsmanship."

ADMAF has strived to support visionary artists who allow us each year to witness this intricate process. Over the last 25 years, we have been privileged, as an organization, as individuals and as citizens, to be part of a vision that was brought to life by our late founder, Sheikh Zayed (God rest his soul), who crafted the United Arab Emirates and shaped our society."

"Sheikh Zayed knew that the nation's heart is its people. With wisdom, patience and humility, he crafted a multi-cultural country – diverse yet united, rooted in its place yet open to the entire world, proud yet friendly, strong yet peaceful, traditional yet innovative.

Today, the UAE is entrusted to a new generation of visionary "craftsmen", leaders who extend and amplify the legacy of Sheikh Zayed. Creation, innovation and joy are part of the cultural DNA that makes up the Emirates state of mind," she added.

"Creating and innovating takes profound effort, but it is joyful work, and those who crafted this nation have instilled this as the values of our culture.

Together, we overcame the pandemic with creativity and innovation, and now we share our joy with the world as we celebrate the Emirates state of mind.

Join us as we cross the bridge into our next fifty years and continue to reach out to the world, for the wealth of a nation is not in what it owns but in what it shares," HE concluded.

This was followed by a number of speakers, including Dr. Maitha bint Salem Al Shamsi, Minister of State; Sheikh Mahmoud Al Tohamy, the leading spiritual chanter in Egypt; Emirati composer Ihab Darwish; prolific music producer Robert Townson, Head of Robert Townson Productions, and Emirati artist, poet and film director Nujoom AlGhanem.

The conference also featured recorded messages from participating artists in ADF 2022, such as composers David Shire and John Debny, the American mezzo-soprano Joyce Didonato, one of the most internationally renowned Flamenco artists María Pagés, the Italian danseur Roberto Bolle, and the Middle East Institute's Vice President Kate Seelye.

During the conference, Her Excellency Dr Maitha bint Salem Al Shamsi, Minister of State, shared insights from her book Fatima bint Mubarak: Enlightenment in Ideology and Work, which chronicles the life of Umm Al Emarat, Mother of the Nation. HE Al Shamsi highlighted that the book is a reference for experts in the field of educating the youth. HE said: "The book focuses on the life of HH Sheikhha Fatima bint Mubarak over 12 chapters and how Her Highness supported the late Sheikh Zayed bin Sultan Al Nahyan, in building the foundations of the Union, evolving the Emirati society and enhancing the status of women, as well as in supporting all development aspects to realise a truly prosperous and progressive country with great achievements."

Her Excellency Al Shamsi will discuss the book during workshops at UAE universities as part of the ADF 2022 Education and Community programme.

Ihab Darwish, an Emirati composer, said: "This year, which marks the 19th edition of the Abu Dhabi Festival, I'm here to present a new piece of work titled The Abrahamic Symphony: Unity of Three, which reflects the UAE's core values of peaceful co-existence between diverse religions and cultures, tenets on which this nation was established 50 years ago. This is a land that embraces all - a creative hub that thrives on tolerance."

In turn, Sheikh Mahmoud Al Tohamy said: "It is my pleasure to renew my collaboration with Abu Dhabi Festival, the leading arts and culture event in the region. The Festival has played a significant role in keeping the civilisation thriving throughout the challenging period of the pandemic.

In 2022, I will take part in the Abrahamic Symphony, a compelling artwork that combines the three monotheistic religions to deliver noble values and confirm the deep ties between humans, regardless of their beliefs."

Music producer Robert Townson said during the conference: "This year the United Arab Emirates celebrates its 50th Anniversary, and while that truly represents a glorious history, I would suggest that it is merely the beginning or opening act, if you will. Contributing in such a powerful way to world culture and the arts, with commissions like this, through the Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation and Abu Dhabi Festival, is an enormous gift to the world. Truly great music is timeless and eternal. I believe that the Abrahamic Symphony: Unity of Three, will take a place among the great classics of the repertoire and share its message with mankind for all eternity."

Nujoom Alghanem commented saying: "I am honoured to be part of this event, especially that it coincides with the 50th anniversary of the United Arab Emirates."



Founder H.E. Huda I. Alkhamis-Kanoo

She added, "The Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation's support for my efforts since 2007 until today has been very instrumental to my work. And again today, my latest work, a film entitled Passage will be shown in Manarat Al Saadiyat as part of Abu Dhabi Festival, allowing the audience in the UAE to see it, after it debuted in the National Pavilion in Venice, Italy, back in 2019."

"I am glad to see the film return to its homeland where most of its parts were shot, in the Emirates," she concluded.

Sponsors and Partners

His Excellency Antonio Alvarez Barthe, Spanish Ambassador to the UAE, said: "We are much honoured and grateful that the finest and most representative Spanish art will be once again part of Abu Dhabi Festival in 2022.

The vision and leadership of the Founder over the years and her attachment to the best Spanish music and dance remains and will always be fundamental to maintain the cultural bonds between both our countries."

His Excellency Nicola Lener, Ambassador of Italy to the UAE, said: "Music is one of the fundamental elements in defining Italy's national identity, a mirror of the changes sweeping through our society and a great example of the Italian ability to produce innovation: from harmony to musical theatre, from opera to the symphony or sonata, to the experiments of contemporary music, let alone popular music, which is always vital.

Thanks to the fruitful collaboration with ADMAF, the Embassy of Italy and the Italian Cultural Institute will offer major events to the Abu Dhabi public. I am delighted that these performances will enrich this year's already vibrant and outstanding Abu Dhabi stage offering."

Homaid Al Shimmari, Deputy Group CEO and Chief Corporate & Human Capital Officer, Mubadala Investment Company, said: "The Foundation aims to position the UAE as a global artistic hub where the nation's potential for arts and culture is being unlocked to inspire future generations of artists. The UAE's artistic talent has transcended borders and boundaries to foster close communities, cross-cultural dialogue, and cultural expression through the Foundation. Mubadala is delighted to support ADMAF as a lead partner."

Mr. Sangwon Lee, President & General Manager, GS Energy Abu Dhabi, said: "We are happy to be supporting Abu Dhabi Festival, one of the most prominent events in the world, in its mission to elevate culture and arts through a unique vision and strategy."

"We believe that it is a collective responsibility upon all of us to ensure a global cultural conversation, aimed to build bridges between different civilizations, is properly sustained," he added.

Recognition and awards

The 19th edition of the Abu Dhabi Festival appreciates the contribution of all nations of the world throughout the 18 years of its existence. The Abu Dhabi Festival Award 2022 will be presented to Sir Ian Isaac Stoutzker, former chairman of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, and Itzhak Perlman, Israeli violinist, orchestra conductor and music teacher.

The vibrant line-up of events

The 19th edition features a vibrant line-up of unique events, combining traditional and high-tech virtual performances, in harmony with accelerated digitalisation and sustainable cultural initiatives.

To enable and promote the cultural sector, Abu Dhabi Festival delivers the latest and most compelling art performances using uniquely creative forms of digital arts and interactive experiences.

Over 1,000 participating artists from around the world will present more than 300 live and digital events. The 19th edition will also include two world tours and 17 world premieres.

Operas and Orchestras

Driven by a firm belief in art's ability to connect people, Abu Dhabi Festival presents a newly restored and updated version of Verdi's Aida, reviving the brilliant composer Giuseppe Verdi's powerful tale of love and betrayal.

Conducted by Maestro Nicola Luisotti, the monumental opera features star performers sopranos Krassimira Stoyanova and Piotr Beczala and American mezzo-soprano Jamie Barton.

As for co-commissions, accomplished mezzo-soprano Joyce Di-

Donato takes audiences across the US, Latin America, Europe, Asia and Africa on an emotional journey with the world tour of Eden, performed by the unique historically informed instrumentation of orchestra il Pomo d'Oro with French stage director Marie Lambert.

In July 2022, Abu Dhabi Festival will continue its rich history of collaborations and work with Festival d'Aix-en-Provence to create a new operatic co-production and a world premiere that will enthrall the global opera audience with its unprecedented scale and presentation.

Abu Dhabi Festival will also virtually host Ihab Darwish's world premiere The Abrahamic Symphony: Unity of Three in October 2022. The Emirati composer's new work celebrates the historic opening of the Abrahamic Family House in Abu Dhabi. Darwish will bring together Grammy- and Academy Award-winning film composer David Shire and one of Hollywood's most prolific composers, three-time Emmy winner John Debney, with top international composers, musicians and vocal ensembles from Christian, Jewish and Muslim backgrounds. They will be joined by a line-up of internationally leading singers and choirs, as well as the acclaimed Beethoven Academy Orchestra, led by conductor Diego Navarro.

Under co-productions and Asian premieres, the Festival will present Ihab Darwish's China Tour with the Beethoven Academy Orchestra in December 2022.

The tour will visit 5 prominent Chinese cities, and each concert will begin with a suite of Darwish's work, followed by performances of music by Brahms, Chopin, Beethoven, Schumann, Tchaikovsky and Strauss.

In October 2022, the Festival will feature the Abu Dhabi Festival Youth Orchestra: Emirates Youth Symphony Orchestra in Dubai, where the UAE's brightest young musicians will perform a repertoire of Paganini and Dvorak, conducted by Maestro Riad Kudsi, featuring a young virtuoso guest musician.

Ballet

In partnership with the Italian Embassy to the UAE, Abu Dhabi Festival will host Roberto Bolle & Friends for the first time in the UAE. Celebrating Roberto Bolle, one of the greatest ballet dancers of our time, this gala performance will feature three strikingly different pieces that showcase the depth and breadth of his skill. Bolle will invite 5 acclaimed dancers to join him on the Emirates Palace Auditorium stage on January 9, 2022.

Film

The seventh art is a vital component of Abu Dhabi Festival. In this regard, the Festival will collaborate with Al-Ain Film Festival in its fourth edition as its strategic cultural partner to support the development of young filmmakers and spread the culture of cinema in the UAE.

The collaboration features director Salem Brahimi's Running for her Life, a documentary about Hassiba Boulmerka, the Algerian olympic champion who emerged during the 1990s as an icon of bravery and resistance in the face of religious extremist persecution.

Recital

Abu Dhabi Festival has prepared a remarkable series of art and culture recitals, presenting the world premiere of Confluence by composers Qoutayba Neaimi and Judith Adler de Oliveira, a co-production with the Festival des Musiques Sacrées & MARS, with support from Festival Musical du Hainaut. The recital depicts a journey from loss to hope and reconciliation, which begins with mourning for the victims of war, followed by an atonement filled with peace and cultural tolerance.

The Festival will also partner with the Italian Cultural Institute Abu Dhabi to present Academy Award-winning composer and pianist Nicola Piovani's and his intimate performance, Music is Dangerous. Piovani reminisces, in music and in conversation, about his encounters with legendary film directors, songwriters and poets, accompanied by a quintet of virtuoso musicians on accordion, sax, clarinet, guitar, mandocello, drums and percussion.

Abu Dhabi Festival then presents Músicas de España. With classical music pieces from Spain of the 19th and 20th centuries, as well as a selection of Baroque compositions, critically acclaimed Spanish composer and pianist Daniel Ligorio's performance marries piano, castanets and flamenco dance at Umm Al Emarat Park.

Other recitals include Noucentisme, a co-production featuring violin virtuoso Lina Tur Bonet joined by international piano soloist Alba Ventura for an exhilarating repertoire of masterworks by Toldra, Granados, Ravel, de Falla and Kreisler at Manarat Al Saadiyat Auditorium, Abu Dhabi, in February 2022.

Amongst the Festival's Arabic music events held abroad are Arab Music Days at Pierre Boulez Saal between 1-5 March 2022. The week-long celebration of diverse Arab music in Berlin's iconic, Frank Gehry-designed music hall features a line-up of influential Arab music artists.

The Naseer Shamma Trio, accompanied by a live calligraphy performance with Nja Al Mahdawi, will perform alongside Trio Abozokry, the Hany Elbadry Trio, the Anwar Abu Dragh Trio and the Bechir Gharbi Trio.

Rising Syrian-American musician and composer Faraj Abyad will perform Music for the Great Arab Poets in a concert highlighting the unique quarter tonal Arabic musical system and the beauty of Arabic poetry in song.

Translations of the Arabic songs will be provided to allow the audience to fully experience the emotions tied to the unique melodies. Co-produced and co-presented by Abu Dhabi Festival, the event will take place at Merkin Concert Hall, New York City, in February 2022.

Furthermore, Abu Dhabi Festival presents Chet's Time by the Paolo Fresu Trio, with Fresu on trumpet, flugelhorn and effects, joined by Dino Rubino on piano and Marco Bardoscia on contrabass for a refined three-part dialogue between musical masters. The Paolo Fresu Trio will perform under the stars on the outdoor stage in Umm Al Emarat Park, in a performance with great emotional impact and intimate cerebral connection.

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creation, innovation & joy

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editor's choice

