

Arabæscue

Classical music from the Arab world

- Piano Recital -
by Moroccan Pianist Marouan Benabdallah
- June 24th - Rome



ABOUT THE PROJECT

"Arabæsqe" is a musical project launched in September 2014 aiming to present classical music from the Arab world on the international concert stage.

After some deep research in private collections and different libraries, Marouan Benabdallah has – so far – discovered a little more than 100 classical composers from almost all Arab countries. They all have different backgrounds: some have completed their musical training in the US, in the UK, in France, in Austria, in Germany, in Ukraine, in Russia and now, they are based in America, in Europe, and some went back to their native country.

These composers compose in western style - which means forms and structures - but always with an oriental rhythmic and melodic "touch", in other words: they create an original and unique synthesis that makes this repertoire absolutely unique...

COMPOSERS FROM VARIOUS BACKGROUNDS

They are mostly unknown to the wider public and their works are seldom or never performed, moreover, many of these works have never been recorded nor published!

Just to give few examples, Anis Fuleihan, an American of Lebanese origins who died in 1970, composed 14 sonatas and 3 piano concertos, several of his works were premiered by the New York Philharmonic. Dia Succari, from Syria, composed more than 30 pieces for piano and more than 50 for chamber music.

There are also wonderful composers from Morocco like Ahmed Essyad or Nabil Benabdeljalil, from Egypt such Mohammed Fairouz or Gamal Abdel Rahim, from Jordan such as Saed Haddad, and the list is long...

Nonetheless, this project is not limited to Arab composers. It includes also oriental (turkish, iranian) and western composers who were influenced by Arab music such as Saygun, Albéniz, Bartók, Saint-Saëns – who traveled a lot in North Africa – and several others..

MUSICAL RARITIES AND DISCOVERIES

Arabæsqe's aim is to present through music a mostly unknown, much more pleasant facet of the Arab world because it is in our interest to foster better understanding between cultures and dialogue between people.

This project is about mutual discoveries. On one hand, it helps the Arab public to discover and appreciate the beauty of classical music through masterpieces composed by Arab authors... On the other hand, it helps the western public – used to Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Liszt, Rachmaninov, etc. – to discover a whole new and exciting repertoire...

A HUMANIST INITIATIVE CARRYING A MESSAGE BEYOND MUSIC

While exploring composers from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Egypt, Soudan, Irak, Koweït, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the United Arab Emirates, "Arabæsqe" invites the public to discover a unique repertoire, forging links between Arab and Western musical traditions while carrying the fundamental and eternal values of art: beauty, harmony, emotion, creation, peace.

Convergence through music and through arts in general, is a wonderful way for promoting tolerance and peace between the Arab and the Western world.

Biography



Not yet forty, acclaimed pianist Marouan Benabdallah is indisputably the leading representative of his native Morocco on the international concert stage. With a musical heritage deeply rooted in the Hungarian tradition, Marouan Benabdallah received his formal training at the Bela Bartok Conservatory and the Franz Liszt Academy in Budapest, Hungary.

He first attracted international attention in 2003, following his triumphs at the Hungarian Radio Piano Competition and the Andorra Grand Prize. More recently, he was a prizewinner at the Hilton Head Piano Competition (US) and the Arthur Rubinstein Master Competition in Tel Aviv where the local media proclaimed his playing “miraculous” (Maariv).

Marouan Benabdallah has been praised for his “stunning natural virtuosity” (Nice-Matin), “delicate stylish-ness” (Cleveland Plain Dealer), “compelling sense of momentum” (Washington Post) and “resourceful pianism, lyrical instincts and thoughtfulness” (New York Times). He has been invited as guest soloist by numerous orchestras in Europe, Asia, America and Africa, and has collaborated with conductors such as Lorin Maazel, Zoltan Kocsis, Iván Fischer, Renato Palumbo, Tan Lihua and others.

He has performed on stages such as the Great Hall of the Franz Liszt Music Academy and the Palace of Arts in Budapest, the Salle Cortot in Paris, the Laeiszhalle in Hamburg, the Forbidden City Concert Hall in Beijing, the Oriental Art Centre in Shanghai, the Teatro Comunale di Bologna, the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires, the Maison Symphonique in Montreal, the National Center for the Performing Arts in Bombay, the Cairo Opera House, Carnegie Hall in New York, the Kennedy Center in Washington, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw, the Queen Elizabeth Hall.

In 2014, he initiated the Arabæsqe Music Project researching and presenting classical composers from the Arab world on the international concert stage.

Marouan Benabdallah makes his home between Budapest, Rabat, Paris and Beijing. He is a doctoral student at the Liszt Academy of Budapest where he teaches as well.

Program

Salvador Arnita (Palestine, 1915-1985):
Introduction and Oriental Dance

Mohammed Fairouz (UAE-Egypt, 1985):
3 movements from “Al Male Rachamim”

Dia Succari (Syria, 1938-2010):
The Night of Destiny

Zad Moulaka (Lebanon, 1967):
Two Muwashahs

Salim Dada (Algeria, 1975):
Zaydan Dance

Nabil Benabdeljalil (Morocco, 1972):
Nocturne

Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921):
Africa, Fantasy op.89 (arr. M. Benabdallah)



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