



AGA KHAN TRUST FOR CULTURE

Music Initiative

Aga Khan announces new global prize for music

First Award Ceremony to be held in Lisbon in 2019 at Gulbenkian Foundation



Geneva, Switzerland, 21 March 2018 - His Highness the Aga Khan announced the establishment of the Aga Khan Music Awards today.

The Awards, which come with US\$ 500,000 in prizes, recognise exceptional creativity, promise, and enterprise in music performance, creation, education, preservation and revitalisation in societies across the world in which

Muslims have a significant presence.

The first Music Awards ceremony is scheduled to take place in Lisbon, Portugal from 29-31 March 2019 and will be co-hosted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Lisbon Municipality.

“The Aga Khan Music Awards will aspire to fill a unique cultural role,” said His Highness the Aga Khan. Among the world’s many music awards, none of the current awards or prizes focus on the constellation of devotional music and poetry, of indigenous classical music, traditional folk music, and tradition-inspired contemporary music that has flourished in cultures shaped by Islam.

These musical genres and styles embody music’s traditional role as a source of spiritual enlightenment, of moral inspiration, and of social cohesion. At a time when strengthening tolerance and pluralism seems to have become an acute worldwide priority, music offers an exciting medium for reaching and involving global audiences.

The Music Awards will be governed by a steering committee co-chaired by His Highness the Aga Khan and his brother Prince Ayn Aga Khan, and will be administered by the Aga Khan Music Initiative. Nominations for the Awards will be solicited from a group of some 100 music specialists around the world. The Master Jury that selects winners will be drawn from eminent musicians, festival directors, record producers, and arts education leaders, among others.

Award-winners will pursue professional development opportunities arranged in collaboration with the Music Awards during each triennial awards cycle. These opportunities will include commissions for the creation of new works, contracts for recordings and artist management,

support for pilot education initiatives, and technical or curatorial consultancies for music archiving, preservation, and dissemination projects.

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Information in brief:

2018-2019 Steering Committee members

Salim Bhatia, Director of Academies, Aga Khan Development Network
Farrokh Derakhshani (*ex officio*), Director, Aga Khan Award for Architecture
Ara Guzelimian, Dean and Provost, Juilliard School
Shamsh Kassim-Lakha, Chairman of the Board, University of Central Asia
Joseph Melillo, Executive Producer, Brooklyn Academy of Music
Sir Jonathan Mills, former Director and Chief Executive, Edinburgh International Festival
Luis Monreal (*ex officio*), General Manager, Aga Khan Trust for Culture
Azim Nanji, Member, Board of Directors, Global Centre for Pluralism
Risto Nieminen, Director of Music Service, Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation
Zeyba Rahman, Senior Program Officer, Doris Duke Foundation for Islamic Art
Catarina Vaz Pinto, Councillor for Culture, Lisbon Municipality

NOTE

The *Aga Khan Music Initiative* (AKMI) is an interregional music and arts education programme with worldwide performance, outreach, mentoring and artistic production activities. Launched to support talented musicians and music educators working to preserve, transmit, and further develop their musical heritage in contemporary forms, the Music Initiative began its work in Central Asia, subsequently expanding its cultural development activities to include artistic communities and audiences in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.

The Initiative promotes the revitalisation of cultural heritage both as a source of livelihood for musicians and as a means to strengthen pluralism in nations where it is challenged by social, political, and economic constraints. Its projects have included publication of a comprehensive textbook, *The Music of Central Asia* (Indiana University Press, 2016), a 10-volume CD-DVD anthology, *Music of Central Asia*, co-produced with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, a worldwide performance and outreach program that nurtures “East-East” as well as “East-West” musical collaborations, and a network of music schools and centers that develop innovative music curricula and curriculum materials in the Music Initiative’s regions of activity. (<http://akdn.org/akmi>)

Aga Khan Music Initiative (AKMI) management

Fairouz Nishanova, Director
Theodore Levin, Senior Consultant

<http://www.akdn.org/press-release/aga-khan-announces-new-global-prize-music>