London, 20 June 2018—London’s prestigious Royal Albert Hall is the setting for this evening’s sold-out concert presented in honour of the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness the Aga Khan and his 60-year-long commitment to supporting pluralism, civil society, and the arts. For six decades, His Highness has transformed the quality of life for millions of people around the world. In the areas of health, education, cultural revitalisation, and economic empowerment, he has worked to inspire excellence and improve opportunities in many parts of the world.

Culture and the arts, closely integrated with social and economic development, have played a prominent role in building bridges between diverse peoples and creating understanding and empathy. Tonight’s concert reflects this approach, bringing together carefully selected musicians from different cultures and parts of the world who have the ability and versatility to perform and collaborate, crossing from one artistic tradition to another.

*Jubilee: Contemporary Expressions of Musical Heritage from the Middle East, West Africa & Central Asia* features Master Musicians of the Aga Khan Music Initiative
with special guests Kronos Quartet and Bassekou Kouyaté, one of Mali’s best known and beloved musicians. In bringing together music, musicians and musical instruments from Afghanistan, China, Egypt, India, Italy, Mali, Syria, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and the United States, Jubilee exemplifies the way musical creativity has historically developed from the meeting of different cultures.

A special feature of the concert is a dialogue between music, visual imagery and animation in the form of miniature paintings and manuscript illuminations from the collection of His Highness the Aga Khan and his family. Projected on large screens above the stage, the mosaic of images, colours, and patterns offers a visual articulation of themes and textures in the musical sound. This melding of sonic and visual arts in the magnificent auditorium of the Royal Albert Hall symbolises the deep and abiding interconnectedness of expressive culture, decorative arts, and the built environment in Muslim cultural heritage.

A unique feature of Jubilee is the inclusion of young musicians from London’s Ismaili community in the concert’s finale performance of ‘Jama ko’, one of Kouyaté’s most popular songs, which celebrates cultural unity, pluralism, and tolerance.

Tonight’s concert is a chance to enjoy some of the world’s greatest musicians coming together to create something extraordinarily special.

For press information contact Sally Reeves sallyreeves@btinternet.com / 07790 518756

Info briefs:

His Highness the Aga Khan, the founder and chairman of the AKDN, is the 49th hereditary Imam (spiritual leader) of the Shia Ismaili Muslims. In Islam’s ethical tradition, religious leaders not only interpret the faith but also have a responsibility to help improve the quality of life in their communities and in the societies amongst which they live. For His Highness the Aga Khan, this has meant a deep engagement with development for almost 60 years through the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network. www.akdn.org

Ismaili Centre – The Ismaili Centre London supports the Aga Khan’s ethical vision of music and the arts as a vital way of building bridges across cultures and developing empathy between diverse peoples. Based in South Kensington and an active contributor to the Exhibition Road Cultural Group (of which the Royal Albert Hall is
also an active member), the Ismaili Centre incorporates spaces for social and cultural gatherings, intellectual engagement and reflection, and places for contemplation and the search for spiritual enlightenment. During the Diamond Jubilee of His Highness a variety of cultural initiatives, such as exhibitions, lectures and other public events, have taken place and continue to take place at the Centre. www.the.ismaili/ismailicentres/london

**Aga Khan Music Initiative** (AKMI) is an interregional music and arts education programme with worldwide performance, outreach, mentoring and artistic production activities. Launched by His Highness the Aga Khan 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, later expanding its cultural development activities to include artistic communities and audiences in the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia. [www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture](http://www.akdn.org/our-agencies/aga-khan-trust-culture)

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 programme that nurtures ‘East-East’ as well as ‘East-West’ musical collaborations and a network of music schools and centres that develop innovative music curricula and curriculum materials in the Music Initiative’s regions of activity ([http://akdn.org/akmi](http://akdn.org/akmi)).

The Music Initiative is a programme of the Aga Khan Trust for Culture. The Trust, in turn, serves as the cultural development agency of the [Aga Khan Development Network](http://www.akdn.org), one of the world’s largest private development networks, and the only one that prioritises cultural development on a par with economic and social development in all of its projects and commitments.

**Master Musicians of the Aga Khan Music Initiative** is a collective of artists who create new music inspired by their own deep roots in the cultural heritage of the Middle East and Mediterranean Basin, South Asia, Central Asia, West Africa and China. These masters are the Aga Khan Music Initiative’s leading artistic collaborators – venerated performers and composer-arrangers who appear on the world’s most prestigious stages while also serving as teachers, mentors and curators who enrich the Music Initiative’s interregional network of education programmes. Linking countries and continents and present and past through explorations of diverse forms of classical, folk, jazz and contemporary concert music, the ensemble contributes strongly to the Music Initiative’s mission to invigorate cultural and intellectual pluralism in the nations it serves. In forging this contribution Master Musicians of the Aga Khan Music Initiative bring to life a new body of artistic work that is at once seamless, surprising and exuberantly original.

**Kronos Quartet**: Founded 45 years ago, the San Francisco-based Kronos Quartet is one of the world’s preeminent string quartets, known for its singular devotion to
musical pluralism and diversity, and to performing works by living composers. Kronos have collaborated with the Aga Khan Music Initiative for more than a decade on recordings, new works commissioning, and concert performances featuring leading musicians from the Music Initiative’s regions of activity.

**Bassekou Kouyaté**: joined by wife Amy Sacko and daughter Oumou Kouyaté, performs music inspired by griots, the traditional hereditary bards of Mali and other West African nations.

**Serious** is one of the UK’s leading producers and curators of live jazz, international and new music. Serious produces events that range from major concerts, festivals and national and international tours through to learning and participation programmes, conferences and specially commissioned bespoke events. Alongside its core role as a live music events producer and programme consultant, Serious is committed to ensuring that music is accessible to all and that artists have opportunities needed to reach their full potential. Their charity Serious Trust is crucial in enabling this ambition through supporting their talent development, learning & participation and commissioning programmes.