



Palestine
Philharmonic
Society

Beyond the establishment of Palestine's first permanent professional orchestra

The Palestine Philharmonie

City of Culture and Civilizations

Acting together to shape the future



SOLOMON'S
POOLS

a project of Solomon's Pools Preservation & Development Center

Foreword

Proposing new models of cultural promotion is always exciting and often challenging. The Palestine Philharmonie initiative is, indeed, excited to take on the challenge.

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Drawing from the existing Palestinian cultural realities, the initiative aims to nourish the country's cultural sphere, to inject renewed energy into its cultural institutions and to offer unprecedented opportunities to Palestine's artists and audiences.

At the beginning of this adventure, I wish to thank the many interlocutors and partners, in Palestine and abroad, without whose interest, encouragement and support this initiative would not be possible.

Michele Cantoni

General Director

On the cover:
January 2017
Final concert of
the Palestine Philharmonie's
1st Winter Music Academy.
The Bethlehem Strings,
led by Amandine Beyer,
at the Bethlehem Convention
Palace, with the children's
choirs Amwaj and Sounds
of Palestine.



2012
Michele Cantoni and
cellist Sulafa Hammad,
from Nablus, reading a
welcome letter addressed
by Italian President Giorgio
Napolitano to the Palestine
Youth Orchestra members
ahead of their concert at
the Conservatorio di Santa
Cecilia in Rome, Italy

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January 2017,
Amandine Beyer,
the *Bethlehem Strings*
and the *Amwaj children's*
choir rehearsing on stage
at the Convention Palace,
Bethlehem



Introduction



(Left to right) Young Palestinian musicians from Jerusalem, Haifa, Ramallah, Nazareth and Nablus

The establishment of **The Palestine Philharmonie** is a national initiative involving a broad spectrum of Palestinian and foreign cultural institutions sharing common goals.

The initiative's aim is to establish and promote a prestigious and **innovative cultural and artistic entity** with a far-reaching local presence, a strategic national relevance and a strong international dimension.

The Project

This flagship project of the Solomon's Pools Preservation & Development Center – an independent non-profit company providing development and enhancement of the cultural and natural heritage, at Solomon's Pools (Bethlehem) and throughout Palestine – proposes to both establish the first permanent professional orchestra in residency in Palestine, and develop a major intercultural space around it:

The Palestine Philharmonie & The Bethlehem Philharmonic Orchestra

2016
The Sounds of Palestine
program's Al-Majdal
Orchestra at the Bethlehem
Peace Center



2016
Educational activities
Workshops with the
Amwaj children's choirs of
Hebron and Bethlehem
at the Convention Palace,
Bethlehem



The Location

The Palestine Philharmonie is located at the Bethlehem Convention Palace, a vast modern complex comprising numerous outdoors and indoors spaces and halls, and a **1600-seat state-of-the-art concert auditorium** conceived for symphonic and operatic performances. It constitutes the central axis of a **City of Culture and Civilizations** at Bethlehem's Solomon's Pools.



Top: the Convention Palace's main building and lobby



Above: Solomon's Pools are part of the Convention Palace



The auditorium



The auditorium



One of the spaces suitable for meetings and chamber music concerts



Bedouin tent at the Ottoman Murad Castle museum of the Convention Palace



A village of 84 modern spaces available for galleries and artist studios

The Mission

The Palestine Philharmonie is intended as source of a wide scope of cultural activities throughout Palestine, reaching out to the whole country and beyond.

It proposes **yearly concert seasons** (by the *Bethlehem Philharmonic Orchestra* as well as by guest ensembles from Palestine and abroad) alongside varied **interdisciplinary activities** revolving around the artistic ones (educational programs, workshops, lectures, exhibitions, film screenings, etc.).

The Palestine Philharmonie will, in that perspective, highlight heritage, contemporary music and art in an innovative way.



Announcing the Philharmonie project on 12 January 2017: French baroque violinist Amandine Beyer held workshops and performed with the Bethlehem Strings in an Open Day at the Convention Palace, Bethlehem



August 2016, Palestinian Soprano Dima Bawab in a workshop at the Convention Palace, Bethlehem, with the Amwaj children choirs of Hebron and Bethlehem



The Oslo Philharmonic Choir, partners in the establishment of the Palestine Philharmonie, performed alongside local choirs in Jerusalem and Bethlehem in December 2016



Convention Palace, Bethlehem: Making the Murad Castle museum alive, with Abu lyad presenting his vast collection to visiting children

Goals & Values

- Providing Palestine's public and visitors access to a **continuous, varied, multicultural, interdisciplinary, innovative artistic programming** (performing arts and visual arts)
- Reaching new audiences through targeted **educational programs** and **audience building actions**
- Supporting the development of **Palestinian artists** and **cultural institutions**, by identifying and fulfilling their needs and aspirations

*Sounds of Palestine:
Workshop of the
Baysamun Orchestra
at the Garden of Music,
Beit Sahour*



Goals & Values

(continued)

- Offering unprecedented **professional opportunities and professional training** to Palestinian musicians, bridging the gap between their educational and professional life and confronting an ongoing talent drain
- Preserving, developing and enhancing Palestine's cultural heritage in a unifying context with **an opening towards contemporary art**
- Expanding the Palestinian cultural sector's international ties – namely with the significant Palestinian Diaspora – and enhancing the visibility of Palestinian culture abroad via **international artistic programming, promotion of alternative tourism in Palestine** and the creation of an international dynamic for Palestinian artists to circulate



Main Components

- **A yearly artistic calendar** comprising events by Palestinian and guest artists (concert seasons, thematic festivals, exhibitions, cross-arts productions, lectures, etc.)
- **A permanent professional orchestra**, intended as a flexible ensemble comprising instrumentalists and singers from both the Arab and Western traditions
- **Professional training and intensive educational and audience building programs**, to be carried out by all intervening artists (educational concerts, workshops, masterclasses, etc.)

Poster of the 2012
PYO Italian tour



Initiators

- **Solomon's Pools Preservation & Development «SPPD»**

City of Culture and Civilizations
at Bethlehem Solomon's Pools

- **Bethlehem Convention Palace**

City of Culture and Civilizations
at Bethlehem Solomon's Pools

- **Mr Michele Cantoni**

Musician, former Academic Director of the Edward Said
National Conservatory of Music, former Artistic
Director of the Palestine National Orchestra
and Palestine Youth Orchestra

Solomon's Pools:
The central pool



Local partnerships

Amongst the local institutions consulted and invited:

- Al-Kamandjâti Association (*Ramallah, Jenin*)
- Amwaj Choir Schools (*Hebron, Bethlehem*)
- Bait Al-Musiqâ (*Shafu Amer*)
- Baladi Center (*Bethlehem*)
- Bethlehem Academy of Music
- Dalal (*Bethlehem*)
- Dar Al-Kalima (*Bethlehem*)
- Edward Said National Conservatory of Music
(*Jerusalem, Ramallah, Bethlehem, Nablus, Gaza*)
- El-Atlal (*Jericho*)
- Ghirass Cultural Center (*Bethlehem*)
- John Paul II Foundation
- Magnificat Institute (*Jerusalem*)
- Musicians without Borders
- Palestinian Circus School (*Birzeit*)
- Sakakini Cultural Center (*Ramallah*)
- Samer Jaradat Productions (*Ramallah*)
- Sounds of Palestine (*Bethlehem*)



International partnerships

Prestigious institutions involved, including:

- Philharmonie de Paris
- Aix-en-Provence Festival
- La Verdi (*Milan*)
- Centre Culturel de Rencontre
Les Dominicains de Haute- Alsace
- Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris
- BOZAR (*Brussels*)
- Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra and Choir
- Choir of London
- Miklagard Art Exchange ry (*Finland*)

*The Palestine Philharmonie is member of the
MEDINEA network* (Mediterranean Incubator of
Emerging Artists) coordinated by the Aix-en-Provence Festival*

* <http://festival-aix.com/en/academie/medinea>



Artistic Programming

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The Palestine Philharmonie features local artists whilst engaging a dialogue with musicians from throughout the world. It encourages creative, innovative and interdisciplinary productions.

1

Paris-based Palestinian clarinetist and composer
Mohamed Najem

2

Sweden-based Palestinian oud player and composer
Ahmed Al-Khatib

3

Les Petits Chanteurs de Lyon will perform in Palestine in June and July 2017



The Orchestra

15

The Bethlehem Philharmonic Orchestra

is Palestine's first permanent professional orchestra. It employs Palestinian musicians, or international musicians residing in Palestine, with the dual role of high-level performers and pedagogues. It regularly hosts guest musicians.

2010
The Palestine National Orchestra's opening concert in Ramallah, conducted by Baldur Brönnimann. Founded and managed by the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, this project-based orchestra meets once a year, gathering professionals living in Palestine and abroad



Audience Building

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The Philharmonie reaches out to multiple audiences and to their expectations. Its mediation activities offer a key to cultural discovery.

2016
Discovering the Tuba:
Educational Workshop
by members of the
Al-Raseef Band



Educational programs

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The educational programs of the Philharmonie

draw on the different programs conducted by local music education institutions, aiming to support them, complement them and allow them to broaden their actions.



2016
Discovering heritage
and music in the museum,
on stage or outdoors

Structure of the Palestine Philharmonie

Formally registered as the Palestine Philharmonic Society, the **Palestine Philharmonie** combines two non-profit institutions:

- **A Bethlehem-based non-profit organization** gathering prominent figures of Palestinian society and cultural institutions
- **An international Association**, comprising international institutions culturally involved in the project .



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Fundraising Strategies

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Because of the **non-competitive** and **supportive** nature of the **Palestine Philharmonie**, its fundraising strategies must ensure that current funding to other Palestinian programs is not deflected from them, so as not to undermine their work. Alternative, or additional, sources of **public** and **private** funding should therefore be found.



The Vision

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The Palestine Philharmonie and the **Bethlehem Philharmonic Orchestra** will see constant growth and development over three years, culminating in major celebrations for:

2020 - Bethlehem,
Capital of Arab Culture

The Nativity Church,
Bethlehem





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The Palestine Philharmonie

City of Culture and Civilizations
at Bethlehem Solomon's Pools,
Bethlehem Convention Palace

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Palestine Philharmonic Society

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