PRINTER NOTE
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ABU DHABI FESTIVAL 2015
A Photographic Journey
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The venerable Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation chose ‘Idea: The Seed of Invention’ as its theme for the 2015 Abu Dhabi Festival. Consistent with ADMAF’s historic success, the 2015 edition spread seeds, established roots that will germinate and contributed gloriously to Abu Dhabi’s cultural garden. HE Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo and her dedicated team cultivated that garden flawlessly just as they created an extraordinarily inspirational festival programme.

This publication preserves striking images of the 2015 Festival and reminds us of the global vision of the ADMAF gardener. Artists from 13 countries worldwide established the international significance of the Festival. Particularly inspirational to the many young people among the UAE audience was the performance of the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra of Italy, the Festival’s Country of Honour. Likewise, stimulating invention was provided by the exhibition of commissioned paintings by the Emirati artists Noor Al Suwaidi and Fatma Lootah. Their work, alongside that of internationally acclaimed artists such as Sérgio Mendes and Anne-Sophie Mutter, represented the blossoming of the 2015 Festival.

The Abu Dhabi Festival 2015 – In Review reminds us that traditional Emirati cultural bonds blend naturally with other cultures to create the global characteristics of Abu Dhabi and the United Arab Emirates. Music and the arts – whatever their origins – enable emotion, joy, intellectual engagement, and aesthetic satisfaction that unite men and women around the world. They provide a common ground for international understanding – a fertile ground for seeds of invention that may themselves create a garden of world peace.
Culture and heritage reflect the essence of a nation, giving life to its rich diversity of people, places, and offerings. As we pass tradition across generations, reinvent local architecture, and cultivate open-minded citizens, a nation's creativity flourishes.

Abu Dhabi Tourism & Culture Authority is committed to the preservation, promotion, and evolution of the emirate's heritage. As a catalyst nurturing the arts, fostering creativity, and attracting innovative and enquiring minds, Abu Dhabi is rapidly developing as a cosmopolitan cultural capital that transcends the past, present, and future.

Rich in visual and performing arts, Abu Dhabi hosts a dynamic programme of cultural, artistic and educational events to attract visitors from the UAE and abroad providing them with a unique cultural experience.

As the strategic partner of the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation Festival (ADMAF), we are proud to support and promote artistic excellence seated at the crossroads of heritage and innovation. Featuring a line-up that showcases world-class performances and exhibitions of unique artefacts and antiques, the Festival offers guests a profound view into our ever-evolving lifestyle as Emiratis and harnesses our collective imagination.

Visitors garner a unique understanding of who we are through the things we showcase and hold dear to our hearts. As we work together to preserve and nurture Abu Dhabi’s culture and heritage, we would like wish Abu Dhabi Festival continued success as we carry our momentum forward in celebrating and enriching the emirate’s inspired cultural vision.
سعادة
جورجيو ستاراتشة
HIS EXCELLENCY
GIORGIO STARACE

سفير جمهورية إيطاليا
ضيف شرف مهرجان أبوظبي 2015
Ambassador of the Republic of Italy
Abu Dhabi Festival 2015 Country of Honour
The 2015 Abu Dhabi Festival organised by the Abu Dhabi Music and Arts Foundation has left a substantial impression on me. The presence of my country Hungary, represented by our most successful orchestra and our best conductors, served as the ideal opportunity to visit the United Arab Emirates.

Over the last few years, I have had the possibility to participate in several festivals. Through them, I have learned that one always requires many ingredients to make a festival of arts and culture a truly unique experience. Above all, individuals are needed who possess a vision and a spirit of determination.

Integral to sustained success is a patron and ADMAF's legacy is assured by the presence of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahyan, whose patronage enables the Foundation to continue its contribution to the cultural development of Abu Dhabi.

Our world is growing smaller every day. Therefore, it is more important than ever that we know each other better in order to recognise what is happening around us. Culture and the arts are the perfect tools to help us in the process of understanding and building a solid foundation of mutual respect.

I wish that the Abu Dhabi Festival may continue to fulfill its important mission for many years to come – enabling the world's brightest and best artists to appear in the UAE and ensuring that the country's own cultural sector takes its rightful place on the international stage.
The theme of our 12th edition sits at the core of the Abu Dhabi Festival and can be found at the very heart of the Abu Dhabi Vision.

Ideas require extraordinary energy to become reality; they must be nurtured, developed, defended and protected. While their paths may be different, every journey is a story of remarkable discovery, determination and courage.

The notion of growing a seed, incubating an idea, is not to be taken lightly. It is an act of hope, an expression of the human spirit and a test of incredible endurance. Every plant that stems from such a seed bears witness to the powerful yet fragile process of life itself, encompassing its resilience and its creativity.

The UAE is a very special country. The name itself reminds us that unity and diversity work hand in hand. The leadership possess a clear vision; one of tolerance, respect and understanding. This in turn has created a unique ecosystem that nurtures new ideas, new seeds of invention.

The Abu Dhabi Festival seeks to uphold this vision. Every March, we open the doors to knowledge and inspiration in order for the people of the UAE and beyond to broaden their horizons and look beyond convention. Through the arts, we create the ideal conditions for every citizen and resident to imagine the impossible. Through the arts, we strive to support that first, simple, brilliant idea and allow the magic of creativity to happen.

By exploring new perspectives through the many mediums of artistic expression, the Abu Dhabi Festival is investing in the nation’s creativity, a natural resource that will fuel the nation’s future.

In the end, the ideas we generate and the seeds we plant are all a force for good; the promise of a prosperous future, not only for us, but also for our children.
ABOUT ABU DHABI FESTIVAL
Founded in 2004 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the then Minister of Information and Culture, Abu Dhabi Festival began as a modest platform for culture in the heart of the UAE capital. Between 2007 and 2011, the Festival was granted the Patronage of HH General Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces. In 2012, it received the patronage of HE Sheikh Nahyan Mabarak Al Nahyan, today’s Minister of Culture & Knowledge Development.

Reflecting the Abu Dhabi Vision
Reflecting the vision of the UAE as an international cultural crossroad, the Abu Dhabi Festival is rooted in the principles of the country’s founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan: tolerance, respect and enlightenment. As a thriving metropolis that places art, education and culture at the fore, the Festival plays an integral role by further expanding the boundaries of creativity and innovation through the arts. With its portfolio of not one but three programmes – Main, Education and Community – it permeates the farthest reaches of the UAE, engaging children, young people and adults while providing memorable and meaningful experiences that unite visitors, residents and citizens alike.

Engaging Audiences
Each year, artists from around the world converge on Abu Dhabi to perform, engage and inspire. Strengthened by a growing global network of 25 cultural partners, the Festival has increased its audience from 29,000 in just 12 years. With over 100 events in 35 venues across the seven Emirates, the 2015 edition maintained the Festival’s formidable reputation as a “Festival of Firsts”. Alongside commissioned works and international collaborations, audiences experienced national, regional and world partners that celebrated the creative genius of mankind.

Investing in the Future
Since its inception, the Abu Dhabi Festival has placed education at its core, building upon the vision of the Festival’s Founder and Artistic Director, Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo. By working with a range of academic partners, it presents a wealth of opportunities for children and young people aged 18 months and upward. By demonstrating just how effective arts-based learning can be, this thriving and motivational programme invests in the development of young minds. Shaping tomorrow’s leaders by sewing the seeds of creative innovation, the Abu Dhabi Festival is rooted in the principles of the UAE’s founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan: tolerance, respect and enlightenment. As a thriving metropolis that places art, education and culture at the fore, the Festival plays an integral role by further expanding the boundaries of creativity and innovation through the arts.

About Abu Dhabi Festival
The Abu Dhabi Festival is a yearly international arts festival held in Abu Dhabi, the capital city of the United Arab Emirates. Established in 2004 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Abdullah Bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the then Minister of Information and Culture, the Festival has since grown to become one of the largest arts festivals in the Middle East, attracting artists and audiences from around the world.

The Abu Dhabi Festival is committed to fostering creativity and innovation, and to providing a platform for artists from the UAE and around the globe. The Festival’s programmes include Main, Education and Community, and it is held annually under the patronage of HH Sheikh Nahyan Mabarak Al Nahyan, today’s Minister of Culture & Knowledge Development.

Each year, the Festival presents a diverse range of events, including concerts, plays, workshops, and exhibitions, highlighting the richness of cultural expression and promoting cross-cultural understanding. It aims to inspire and engage audiences of all ages, fostering a love for the arts and promoting the development of young minds.

The Abu Dhabi Festival is a celebration of diversity and inclusivity, providing opportunities for all to enjoy the arts. It works closely with local and international partners to present a varied programme that reflects the cultural tapestry of the UAE and its region. The Festival is a testament to the rich artistic heritage of the UAE, showcasing the creativity and talent of both established and emerging artists.

The Festival is not just a celebration of art, but a platform for educational development and community engagement. From educational programmes that invest in the development of young minds to initiatives that support local artists and creative projects, the Abu Dhabi Festival is committed to creating a vibrant cultural ecosystem in Abu Dhabi and beyond.

In its 12th year, the Abu Dhabi Festival has become a significant cultural beacon in the UAE, attracting audiences from across the emirates and beyond. It continues to expand its horizons, welcoming new partners and initiatives each year, ensuring that the Festival remains a dynamic and relevant cultural force in the region.

The Abu Dhabi Festival is a reflection of the vision of the UAE capital as an international cultural crossroad and a celebration of the creatively adventurous spirit of the nation. It is a testament to the commitment of the UAE Government to support the arts and culture, and to the ongoing efforts of the Festival’s founder’s vision to bring the world’s best art and culture to the people of Abu Dhabi.

The Abu Dhabi Festival is about more than just presenting art; it is about fostering a culture of creativity, innovation, and inclusivity. It is about creating a space where people from all backgrounds can come together to celebrate the power of art to bring us together and inspire change. It is about making art accessible to everyone and encouraging its role in shaping the future of the world. The Abu Dhabi Festival is a reflection of the UAE’s commitment to a future that values and celebrates diversity, creativity, and the power of the arts.
Each year the Abu Dhabi Festival commissions and supports the creation of new work by innovative visual artists, rooted in the culture of the United Arab Emirates. Previously commissioned artists include Mattar Bin Lahej (UAE), Jalal Luqman (UAE), Bill Fontana (USA) and Mohammed Kazem (UAE).

In 2015, the Festival commissioned three new works by emerging and established artists from the UAE and Syria.


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The fifth album by the talented Jordanian songstress, who performed at the 2011 Abu Dhabi Festival, revives long-forgotten songs from the region’s heritage in a subtle blend of styles from pop to jazz, while remaining faithful to maqamat and Arabic melodic structures.

Since the signing of a strategic partnership with ADMAF in 2014, AMAR has released three albums presenting digitally re-mastered recordings by some of the most renowned Arab singers and musicians of the late 19th and early 20th centuries as well as new arrangements of their work. Distributed across the world, these remarkable CDs are reviving an important yet forgotten chapter of the region’s music history.

Faisal Al Saari (UAE)

The 2010 album by the acclaimed Iraqi oud master was followed two years later by the album 'The Dream of the Oud: Naseer Shamma Compositions – Volume 1', Shamma’s first ever collection of scores.

Houda Naamani, Abdul Aziz Khoja, Nada El Hage and Raghida Mahfouz.

AMAR: the Foundation for Arab Music Archiving & Research (Lebanon/UAE)

In 2012, the Abu Dhabi Festival Composers’ Platform supported the premiere of the ‘Dream of the Oud: Naseer Shamma Compositions – Volume 1’, conducted by the Czech Philharmonic, with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra.

Naseer Shamma (Iraq)

The Dream of the Oud: Naseer Shamma Compositions – Volume 1

The album was performed by the Czech National Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Jiri Belohlavek.

Sawtiya Sama, a collection of songs featuring the poetry of Zahi Wehbe, Huda Al Numami, Abdul Aziz Khoja, Nada El Hage and Raghaia Mahfouz.

Bechara El Khoury (Lebanon/France)

Poème Oriental

The award-winning composer saw the world premiere of his commissioned piece at the 2013 Abu Dhabi Festival, performed by the Czech Philharmonic conducted by Jiri Belohlavek.

Faisal Al Saari (UAE)

Synthesis

In 2012, the Abu Dhabi Festival Composers’ Platform supported the release of the album ‘Synthesis’ by the gifted Emirati musician, Faisal Al Saari, who graduated from the Arab Music Academy of Abu Dhabi (Beit Al Oud) in 2011.

The Asil Ensemble — Burda

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Macadi Nahhas (Jordan)

'Noor'
The fifth album by the talented Jordanian songstress, who performed at the 2011 Abu Dhabi Festival, revives long-forgotten songs from the region’s heritage in a subtle blend of styles from pop to jazz, while remaining faithful to maqamat and Arabic melodic structures.

Hiba Al Kawas (Lebanon)

‘L’ami Al Ayah’

'Sawtiya Sama'

Following her debut performance at the 2008 Abu Dhabi Festival, the Festival has enabled the Lebanese opera singer and composer to release two seminal albums. Her first album ‘L’ami Al Ayah’ was followed by ‘Sawtiya Sama’, a collection of songs featuring the poetry of Zahi Wehbe, Huda Al Numami, Abdul Aziz Khoja, Nada El Hage and Raghaia Mahfouz.

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| **THE 2015 FESTIVAL FACTS & FIGURES** |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| **45** | 31 | 7 |
| ميل مسرحي | يوم | إمارات |
| productions | days | emirates |
| **30** | **14** | **6** |
| موفر | فعالية ضمن | دولة تمثل |
| venues | منogram | countries |
| **90%** | **11** | **28** |
| نسبة مبيع | فعالية ضمن | صحفي مشارك |
| ticketed performances | main programme events | journalists |
| **28,613** | **31** | **51m** |
| إجمالي عدد الجمهور | يوم | قيمة الأنشطة الإعلامية |
| total Abu Dhabi Festival audience | days | worth of media value |
| **115+** | **56** | **12th** |
| إماراتي مشارك | بيان صحفي | الدورة الثانية |
| participating Emirati practitioners | press releases | Festival edition |
| **20** | **20** | **23** |
| خمسة عشر البحا | 20 | مدارس وجامعات مشاركة |
| nationalities in the audience | from | participating schools & universities |
| **3** | **8** | **2** |
| جوائز المهرجان: ريكاردو موتي، إيفان فيشر، جان-بيير دو لاوين | موفر موسيقى | أعمال تكليف حصري |
| Festival Awards: Riccardo Muti, Iván Fischer, Jean-Pierre de Launoit | music commissions | visual art commissions |
| **AED 51m** | **92%** | **3** |
| قيمة الأنشطة الإعلامية التي غطّت المهرجان | من الفعاليات مجانًا | أعمال تكليف دولية مشتركة |
| worth of media value | free events | international co-commissions |
| **2015** | **Muharraq Abu Dhabi** | **حقائق وأرقام** |
| **FACtS & FiGURES** | **Mهرجان أبوظبي 2015** | **حداثة وأرقام** |
| **3** | **8** | **2** |
| فعاليات تعرض للمرة الأولى في منطقة الخليج العربي | موفر موسيقى بتكليف حصري | أعمال تكليف حصري دولية مشتركة |
| Gulf premieres | music commissions | co-commissions |
| **23** | **21** | **3** |
| مدارس وجامعات مشاركة | إماراتي مشارك | أعمال تكليف دولية مشتركة |
| participating schools & universities | Emirati-led initiatives | international co-commissions |
البرنامج الرئيسي

MAIN PROGRAMME
VIEW FROM INSIDE: CONTEMPORARY ARAB PHOTOGRAPHY, VIDEO AND MIXED MEDIA ART | EMIRATI INSIGHTS | THE 2015 ABU DHABI FESTIVAL VISUAL ARTS COMMISSIONS

نظرية من الداخل: الفن العربي المعاصر (تصوير، فيديو ووسائط متعددة) | رؤى إماراتية | أعمال التكليف الحصري من مهرجان أبوظبي 2015

20th March – 20th April 2015
The Gallery, Emirates Palace
The first of two exhibitions, ‘View From Inside’ was based on FotoFest’s anonymous portrait offered visitors an external view on an inner monologue that leads to the larger question of cultural identity in the Arab world. Themes for the “homeland”, gender, diaspora and displacement.

As the title of the Festival’s second exhibition suggests, ‘Emirati Insights’ are a showcase for art and ideas. It presented two landmark exhibitions created for FotoFest’s 15th International Biennial in Houston, Texas. The exhibition featured video animations and three-dimensional works along with vivid photojournalistic images of recent news events and personal reflections on contemporary Arab culture. Many of the works addressed issues related to the diverse and shifting identities of people and places in Arab life today. The artists examined societal and environmental changes in the Middle East, the speed at which they are occurring and how they affect traditional relationships to family, ‘homeland’, gender, diaspora and displacement.

Collectively, the artworks revealed the complexity and beauty of life in the Middle East and North Africa today. Reflective, critical and often humorous, the artists showed a deep engagement.

Founded in 1983, FotoFest International was established to promote international awareness of museum-quality, photo-based art from around the world. FotoFest is a non-profit, photographic arts and education organization based in Houston, Texas, USA. It delivers year-round art programming and a classroom-based education programme, FotoFest founded the first and longest running, photographic arts biennial in the United States, with the first FotoFest Biennial was held in 1986. The FotoFest Biennial takes place in March in Houston with audiences of 275,000 people from 35 countries and participation from the city’s leading art museums, art galleries, non-profit art spaces, universities and civic spaces. The FotoFest Biennial is considered as one of the leading international photography Biennials in the world. With its museum-quality, photographic arts exhibitions, FotoFest has become known as a platform for the discovery and presentation of important new work and talent from around the world. All FotoFest programmes are a showcase for art and ideas.

As the title of the Festival’s second exhibition suggests, ‘Emirati Insights’ offered an inside view of contemporary photography, video and mixed media art practitioners from United Arab Emirates. The lead image of this exhibition, a photograph by Reem Falaknaz from the series, ‘The Place of Perpetual Undulation’ (2014) taken in the mountainous emirate of Ras Al Khaimah, shows a young man covered in his traditional red headscarf. Through a play on the genre of portraiture, this work depicts a figure of a man but does not reveal who he actually is. This anonymous portrait offered visitors an external view on an inner monologue that leads to the larger question of cultural identity in general.
The rhythm of the sea is reflected in the waves of people habitually confronted and influenced by manifold visual languages. Saeed Harmoudi captures an altered understanding of time in two ways. Firstly, he portrays those anonymous dockworkers whose day begins at the dead of night and ends as the sun rises. Secondly, Al Harmoudi relishes the vibrations in the times of life; one that transports a glorious vessel once laden with pearls into a non-descript freight container and another in which time stands still, incarcerating sailors in floating capsules for years at a stretch.

Where once personal messages were expressed in a physical form through optical fibres and waves to an anonymous group of followers. He fills it with cut-outs from magazines, thus playing with the speed of digital communication against the spirit that once sustained the idea of the postal envelope. He transforms the relatively old technique of the pinhole camera to document spectacular architectural icons such as Burj Khalifa, for example, turns to images of Christian iconography whereas the relatively new use of the pinhole camera to record memories of childhood is illustrated in a photograph of a child playing with a Lego block.

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The rhythm of the sea is reflected in the waves of people habitually confronted and influenced by manifold visual languages. Saeed Harmoudi captures an altered understanding of time in two ways. Firstly, he portrays those anonymous dockworkers whose day begins at the dead of night and ends as the sun rises. Secondly, Al Harmoudi relishes the vibrations in the times of life; one that transports a glorious vessel once laden with pearls into a non-descript freight container and another in which time stands still, incarcerating sailors in floating capsules for years at a stretch.
the ‘Roznama’ (Book of Days), the installation consisted of suspended three-dimensional, printed sculptural pieces that resemble sheets of paper blowing away in a breeze. Each sheet carried by the wind depicts a frozen moment in time – a page from the ‘Roznama’ containing key dates and events from 1948 to the present day that collectively and chronologically symbolise the temporal and physical suspension of Palestinian refugee camps. Sawas Al Bahar is an architect, printmaker and artist. The American University of Sharjah graduate was shortlisted for The 2015 Christo & Jeanne-Claude Award with ‘Wra’a Il Zaman (Leaves of Time)’. So exceptional was her submission, that the Abu Dhabi Festival commissioned it as part of its main programme.

The second of the Abu Dhabi Festival commissions, ‘Perfume of the Earth’, by the Verona-based Emirati artist Fatma Lootah, consists of a digital painting of an Emirati grandfather, printed on wood and flanked by images of two young boys and divided by frames filled with UAE sand. In her review of the work, The National arts correspondent Anna Seaman described Lootah’s work as a “way of expressing the gulf between the youngest and oldest generations, and reminding us of the true wealth of her country – the desert.”

The final Abu Dhabi Festival commission for 2015 was by Noor Al Suwaidi, one of two paintings presented from her latest series ‘In Ode to the Bouquets’, which was inspired by an exhibition she saw at the Dallas Museum of Art on 19th-century floral still life. In an interview with The National, Al Suwaidi said of the works, “I want to bring beauty into people’s lives. With everything happening politically right now, me choosing not to reflect on that as an Arab artist is a statement in itself. This is a celebration of life, beauty and culture. My message is to stop and smell the roses.”

HE Sheikh Nahyan Mabarak Al Nahyan with ‘View From Inside’ featured artist Karima Al Shomely.
SÉRGIO MENDES: BEATS FROM BRAZIL

20th March 2015
Emirates Palace Auditorium
The 1960s saw the dawn of bossa nova. By this time, further 'magical encounters' were resulting in doors of opportunity opening for the young musician. On November 21, 1962, Mendes found himself onstage in the city of his birth, playing the grand piano, as described by the George Gershwin of Brazil, performing in the first-ever bossa nova concert at the landmark New York concert hall. The performance couldn’t have been more perfect as the USA was waking up to the infectious Brazilian beat and a wave of interest was gaining strength across the country. Mendes was joined by a nine-piece band, including three female vocalists and a back-up trumpet player, who backed him on the music of Charlie Parker and Thelonious Monk, among a host of other jazz pioneers.

Born and raised in Brazil, Mendes credits his parents for introducing him to music with the purchase of a piano. He received formal training at The Niterói Conservatory of Music, emerging as skilled pianist in the late 1950s. At the tender age of 13, Mendes heard ‘Take Five’, a jazz piece composed by the legendary Dave Brubeck, and it was love at first sight. ‘Take Five’ became a cornerstone of his repertoire, allowing him to explore the rhythms of his homeland, from bossa nova to samba.

‘Take Five’ was a staggering success for Mendes. In the summer of 1962, the song spent four weeks at number one on the Billboard Hot 100, earning Mendes his first hit in the United States. He followed this success with other chart-toppers, including ‘Garota de Ipanema’ and ‘Corcovado’, which earned him critical acclaim and a dedicated following across the globe. Mendes went on to sell over 300 million records worldwide, cementing his status as one of the most successful Latin artists of all time.

Mendes says much of his success has come through a lifetime of serendipitous meetings. “I call the magic of the encounter,” he said in an interview with NPR last year. “The magic of encountering people that helped me, support me. My life has been very much a succession of those moments. I feel very humble about that.”

With cultural exchange being one of the pillars of the festival, Mendes presented his gig as a “journey into Brazilian music.” He wrote, “For me, the specialness of those familiar with his ouvre, it was a well-rounded set filled with fresh and stunning new tracks from his latest Magic. Backed by a nine-piece band, including three female vocalists and a cajón player, Mendes opened the set with a medley of ‘Take Five’ and ‘Garota de Ipanema’, followed by the rousing ‘Pais Tropical’ and ‘Tristeza’.”

The concert ended with a rousing display of the crowd, with everyone on their feet, dancing and singing along to Mendes’ ethereal melodies. Mendes round off the night with the rousing ‘Pais Tropical’ and ‘Tristeza’. “The Brazilian legend enchanted the crowd with an effervescent set soaked in the tropical rhythms of his homeland.”

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Gracinha Leporace applaud as Sérgio Mendes receives a specially commissioned portrait from the series ‘A Question of Identity’ by Mohamed Abdul Latif Kanoo.

Sérgio Mendes and his wife Gracinha Leporace adorned in traditional bisht and abaya with Karin Adrian von Roques, Salem Brahimi, Frauke Herdbey, Mohamed Abdul Latif Kanoo, Bashir Al Haskouri, HE Mr Paulo Cesar Meira de Vasconcellos (Ambassador of Brazil), Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo, Mary Corrado, Wendy Watriss, and HRH Princess Wijdan Ali of Jordan.

Gracinha Leporace receives a specially commissioned portrait from the series ‘A Question of Identity’ by Mohamed Abdul Latif Kanoo.
A NIGHT AT THE OPERA: 
JUAN DIEGO FLÓREZ WITH THE 
BUDAPEST FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA, 
CONDUCTED BY GÁBOR TAKÁCS-NAGY

23rd March 2015
Emirates Palace Auditorium
In 2015, Juan Diego Flórez made his debut appearance in the Arabian Gulf at the Abu Dhabi Festival, presented in association with the embassies of Hungary and Peru.

Born in Lima, Peru, Juan Diego Flórez undertook music studies both in his native Lima and at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. In 1996, he made his official operatic debut in ‘Matilde di Shabran’ at the Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, where his expressive voice and astonishing agility immediately won him critical accolades. Flórez has enjoyed great success in all the major theatres.

In 2007, Flórez broke with a 75-year-old tradition at La Scala by performing an encore during Donizetti’s ‘La Fille du Régiment’, following the spectacular aria ‘Ah! Mes amis, quel jour de fête!’ with its nine high Cs. The same happened at the Metropolitan Opera House of New York in 2008. Future engagements for Flórez up to 2019 are scheduled for La Scala in Milan, the Metropolitan Opera House of New York, Covent Garden in London, Staatsoper in Vienna, Rossini Opera Festival in Pesaro, Real of Madrid, Liceu of Barcelona, Deutsche Oper Berlin and Opernhaus of Zurich.

Juan Diego Flórez has been an exclusive Decca artist since 2001, recording numerous solo albums and complete operas on CD and DVD. He has been recognised as one of the best tenors in history by the BBC and has received numerous accolades and awards including Peru’s highest distinction, the Gran Cruz de la Orden del Sol. In 2012 he was appointed Kammersänger by the Austrian government and UNESCO Goodwill Ambassador.

In 2011, Juan Diego Flórez founded Sinfonia por el Peru, an inclusive social project inspired in Venezuela's El Sistema, which runs orchestras and choirs throughout his native country to help the most vulnerable children and youth. In recognition of his foundation, he received the Crystal Award by the World Economic Forum in January 2014.

In The National newspaper review of ‘A Night at the Opera’, Saeed Saeed wrote, "The evening’s repertoire focused on Flórez’s strength as the leading purveyor of bel canto, the early-19 th century style of operatic singing that relies more on beauty than on technical brilliance. Flórez gave a mesmerizing performance that was all the more remarkable because of the support of his fellow singers."
Flórez delivered a standout show with perfectly incisive vocals backed by majestic musical accompaniment.
HRH Prince Georg von Habsburg-Lothringen and Juan Diego Flórez.
BEETHOVEN VIOLIN CONCERTO:
RICCARDO MUTI CONDUCTS
ANNE-SOPHIE MUTTER & THE LUIGI CHERUBINI YOUTH ORCHESTRA

25th March, 2015
Emirates Palace Auditorium
For Riccardo Muti and the Luigi Cherubini Youth Orchestra’s UAE debut presented in association with the Embassies of Italy and Germany, Anne-Sophie Mutter joined them for a celebration of 18th century music, a remarkable period of musical creativity, the legacy of which remains at the very heart of today’s classical repertoire.
Before the programme's main piece, Beethoven's Violin Concerto, Muti put the orchestra through their paces with the opener of Rossini's William Tell Overture. Despite Muti's hope to showcase the orchestra's technical prowess – which was never in any doubt – it was hard to take your eyes off the 73-year-old conductor. On the podium, he was a dictator in the best possible sense, as he coaxed the finest detail from his young charges.

In Schubert's agile Symphony No 4, the orchestra truly showed their worth, particularly during the second movement, in which the woodwinds lightened the sombre moods with some elegiac melodies.

The star of the show arrived after the intermission. Clad in black, Mutter was a picture of grace and fierce concentration as she tackled what she deems to be the 'crown of the violin repertoire'.

The 51-year-old cemented her reputation as being technically peerless, particularly in the Allegro ma non troppo, in which Mutter conjured dizzying spirals of melodies.

With all the acrobatics on display, Muti kept her from overreaching by providing a fluid yet clearly structured outline from the orchestra.

However, he also knew when to sit back and let Mutter soar, as she did in the last movement during which each thematic repetition was blaring and different – it was head-spinning stuff and deserving of the long standing ovation.

Mutter was a picture of grace and fierce concentration as she tackled what she deems to be the crown of the violin repertoire.
Bashir Al Haskouri, Riccardo Muti, Anne-Sophie Mutter, HE Giorgio Starace, Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo, Ian Stoutzker, Cristina Mazzavillani, Mohamed Abdul Latif Kanoo.
PIANO MASTERPIECES:
LEIF OVE ANDSNES & THE BUDAPEST FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA, CONDUCTED BY IVÁN FISCHER

26th March 2015
Emirates Palace Auditorium
The New York Times has called Leif Ove Andsnes “a pianist of magisterial elegance, power and insight.” With his commanding technique and searching interpretations, the celebrated Norwegian pianist has won acclaim worldwide. The Wall Street Journal named him “one of the most gifted musicians of his generation.”

The 30-year-old partnership between Fischer and the Budapest Festival Orchestra has become one of the greatest success stories of classical music. Intense international touring and a series of acclaimed recordings for Philips Classics, later for Channel Classics, have contributed to Iván Fischer’s reputation as one of the world’s most visionary and successful orchestra leaders.

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In The National newspaper review of Andsnes’ performance of Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No.5 (The Emperor), Rob Garratt wrote, “The piece began with a statement of intent – three huge, looming orchestral chords punctuated lengthy piano arpeggios and Andsnes utterly dazzled as his hands raced up and down the keys, summoning a cascading waterfall of notes. A conversation ensued, the orchestra setting a theme before falling silent, leaving the piano to answer in ever more staggeringly showy crescendos.

Throughout, the star presided over his instrument with mastery and aplomb, tilting his head back in ecstasy, leaning over the keys like a laboratory professor, gyrating madly as if it was his whole body, not just his hands, that were striking the keys.”

In one of three programmes performed during this year’s festival, the Budapest Festival Orchestra had their own chance to shine, with Brahms’ charming ‘Hungarian Dances’ in addition to his Symphony No 1 in C minor, which brought the evening to a triumphant close.

Andsnes utterly dazzled as his hands raced up and down the keys, summoning a cascading waterfall of notes.
Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo with HE Sten Anders Berge (Ambassador of Norway) with Leif Ove Andsnes and his specially commissioned portrait from the series ‘A Question of Identity’ by Mohamed Abdul Latif Kanoo.

هودا الخميس-كانو مع سعادة سفير النرويج ديرجار ستيين أنديرس بيرغه مع ليف أوفي أندسنس عند استلامه صورة شخصية رسمها الفنان محمد عبد اللطيف كانو

بعض الأعمال من مهرجان أبوظبي ضمن مجموعته "سؤال الهوية".

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MOZART’S THE MAGIC FLUTE
OPERA PRODUCTION DIRECTED AND CONDUCTED BY IVÁN FISCHER
THE BUDAPEST FESTIVAL ORCHESTRA
WITH AN INTERNATIONAL COMPANY OF SINGERS

28th & 30th March 2015
Emirates Palace Auditorium
The Budapest Festival Orchestra’s production of ‘The Magic Flute’ received a dazzling Arab World Premiere at this year’s Abu Dhabi Festival, presented in association with the Embassy of Hungary.

The premiere of ‘The Magic Flute’, which took place on 30th September 1791 (a little over two months before Mozart’s death) was a resounding success. Mozart wrote to his wife a week later, “I have this moment returned from the opera, which was as full as ever. What always gives me the most pleasure is the silent approval! You can see how this opera is becoming more and more esteemed.” Within a month it had been staged to full houses no less than 20 times and just 14 months later received its 100th performance. As the great music scholar H.C. Robbins Landon has written, “There was something in ‘The Magic Flute’ for everyone; for the connoisseur; for the man or woman in the street; for children, who loved the animal scenes. Its solemn message of ‘beauty and wisdom’ – the last lines of the text – touched men’s and women’s hearts. People roared with laughter over Papageno’s jokes.”

A celebration of true love conquering all, ‘The Magic Flute’ transported the audience into an enchanted world where good faces the forces of darkness. Featuring a stellar cast led by Andreas Bauer (Sarastro) and Mandy Fredrich (Queen of the Night).

The National newspaper’s Saeed Saeed wrote, “This Arab world premiere managed to maintain the charm throughout, despite the epic three-hour running time… Fischer presented the tale in an engaging manner, with Tamino, Papageno and Pamino played by two actors, one responsible for the dialogue while the other took over the singing. The production made full use of the auditorium’s space – in addition to the rather snug orchestra pit directly beneath the stage, some of the actors appeared from the aisles and freely walked around the floor chatting to each other – a nifty move as it made the auditorium feel like a nifty move as it made the auditorium feel like

A Night of Enchantment

ليلة ساحرة
an interactive performance space.

With The Magic Flute's variety of all-encompassing themes, Fischer kept his interpretation of the opera fairly straight. While there was none of the juvenile slapstick favoured by many other popular productions (and which has made it a favourite of high-school drama courses), the humour remained in plentiful supply.

Hanno Muller-Brachman was a marvel in the operatic role of Papageno. Through his deep baritone and gregarious presence he managed to channel his character's bittersweet nature.

... The star of the show, however, was Mandy Fredrich as the raging Queen of the Night. The German was an absolute powerhouse on stage, with her perfect phrasing and crystalline vocals that had you wishing the orchestra would extend her scenes.

This Arab world premiere managed to maintain the charm throughout.

"..."
Die you monster?
Victory! Victory!
He is free, thanks to our bravery.
Victory! You have overcome the danger!
The eyes of Isis are now yours!
Come, enter the Temple.

Hail to the initiates! You have penetrated the darkness!
Thanks be to Isis and Osiris!
Fortitude victoriously rewards
Beauty and Wisdom with an everlasting crown.

These are the doors to misery and death.

Wherever you go,
I shall be at your side.
Myself shall lead you.
Love is my guide.
The way will be strewn with roses.
WHEN MUSIC MATTERS
MAYSSA KARAA SPECIAL GUEST
MARCUS NAND & STARS OF MIDDLE EASTERN CONTEMPORARY MUSIC
WITH MULTI-GRAMMY® AWARD WINNING AMERICAN ROCK ICONS:
RAMI JAFFEE, KENNEY ARONOFF, LUIS CONTE, MICHAEL FISH HERRING, SHARLOTTE GIBSON, CURT SCHNEIDER AND ANGELA LATHAM

When MusiC Matters
Mayssa Karaa Special Guest
Marcus Nand & Stars of MIDDLE Eastern Contemporary Music
With Multi-Grammy® Award Winning American Rock Icons:
Ramí JafFée, kenney ArOnoff, Luis Conte, Michael fish HerrinG, ShArloTte Gibson, Curt sChneiDer and angela lAtham

2nd April 2015
Emirates Palace Auditorium

عندما تهمنا الموسيقى
ميسا قرعة ضيف المميز
ماركوس ناند ناند
نجوم الموسيقى العربية المعاصرة
يتعاونون مع أيقونات الروك الأمريكي
الحائزين على جوائز غرامي:
رامي جافي، كيني أرونوفر، لويس كونتي،
ميزشال فيش هيرنج، شارلوت غيبسون،
كورت شنайдير وانجيلا لاثام.

2 أبريل 2015
مسرح قصر الإمارات
Presented in association with the embassies of Lebanon, the United States of America and the United Kingdom, the world premiere of ‘When Music Matters’ united the pre-eminent jewels of today’s American rock and Middle Eastern music scenes.

“This is who I am,” says Mayssa Karaa, “not Middle Eastern all the way, not rock all the way. I am creating my own style.” Born in Beirut and educated at the prestigious Berklee College of Music in the USA, Mayssa took to the stage of the Emirates Palace for the finale of the 2015 Abu Dhabi Festival in a feast of music and colour that embodied the values of cross-cultural dialogue that sit at the very core of ADMAF’s work. Mayssa’s manager, Dawn Elder describes her, “Mayssa has the capability to cross over. The unique colours, tones, and grittiness in her voice, and her versatility in both English, Arabic, not to mention Persian, Italian and French, is unprecedented. Her passion for rock music and desire to bring an organic fusion with Middle Eastern music to her songs is both refreshing and exciting.”

In his review of the Festival finale, The National newspaper’s Saeed Saeed wrote, “Young Lebanese starlet Mayssa Karaa made all the right noises as she premiered her new concept show, ‘When Music Matters’. Split across seven sections, the concert went a long way in clearing up a few lingering preconceptions.

The first of these was the notion that ‘taking an audience on a journey’ is a groan-inducing prospect – this was indeed a journey of discovery wrapped up in an enjoyable, well-paced show.

It began with classic songs from the Levant before travelling to the western Mediterranean with some flamenco sounds. Finally both elements came together to receive a full-bodied rock-music treatment. Such combinations could have fallen prey to overreaching ambition, but they were held together thanks to Karaa’s eclectic vocal talents and an all-star band that included members of the New York Arabic Orchestra and musicians who have played with a who’s who of the music world, including Bruce Springsteen, Ray Charles and Stevie Wonder.
In Jefferson Airplane’s ‘White Rabbit’, the passion was strictly Karaa’s alone. Featured prominently on the soundtrack of the Academy Award-winning film ‘American Hustle’, the song was Karaa’s calling card to the world. Her smouldering Arabic delivery for the first half of the song, as it appeared in the film, recalled Nancy Sinatra’s ‘Bang Bang’, before she switched to the original English language in a raging delivery that the original singer Grace Slick would surely have approved of.

Bob Seger’s ‘Turn the Page’, also sung mostly in Arabic, sounded effortless, the chief reason being that the 1972 ballad was composed in minor keys that were well within the palette of Arab music. It’s a realisation that should provide welcome encouragement to other aspiring Arab artists in the audience, which is precisely the point of the whole affair.

The audience was also treated to the first live rendition of a couple of Karaa solo tracks from her upcoming album... ‘Stop Me Going in Circles’ was a skilful mash-up of Arabic melodies and a delicious blues riff. The track served as a welcome example of musical fusion, preconceptions about which Karaa successfully challenged in her show. Fusion has been long derided – in some cases rightly so – for being lazy, bland stuff best listened to in coffee shops; Karaa and her band gave the audience the welcome opportunity to hear it executed well.

When this is the case, as it was for most of the concert, the music often transcended the barriers, to prove good art can be appreciated by all.

With such a vision, Karaa’s future career looks bright. "A journey of discovery wrapped up in an enjoyable, well-paced show."

Kانت الأصلية في الواقع رحلة اكتشفت احتملت في بيئة متداخلة من المتعة والروعة.

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في ظل ظل الاحترام المتبادل، كاها العدد الماسي، كاها التعبير جزءًا من مشاركة تلاقي، ودوجها مكانة ماص أو ماضي، الشعور بالسعادة، لكنه أو ماضي، أهمية نشاط الأعمال، تلك الأغنية القوية، كانت الأملية، خلق الأغنية القوية، تتميز الأغنية القوية. كاها العدد الماسي، في هذا، كاها العدد الماسي، تنفق الأغنية القوية في وضع الأغنية القوية، وعندما يكون هذا على هذا، كما كان بالنسبة لبعض الأغنية، تحاول الأغنية القوية في الاتصال، الخواطر أن أنف الخشب يمكن أن يكون وجود الأغنية القوية مع تواجد هذه الحركة الحيوية البعيدة، كاها العدد الماسي، في الطريق الآتي."
THE FESTIVAL RECIITAL SERIES:
AH RUEM AHN
JULIEN LIBEER
AISHA SYED CASTRO
JULIEN LISIECKI

3rd – 24th March 2015
Emirates Palace Auditorium
Ah Ruem Ahn was born in Suwon, Korea in 1984. Ah Ruem Ahn graduated in Music at the Hochschule für Musik in Detmold, Germany, where she completed her Concert Diploma. She has received master classes from professors Andreas Schiff, Memenah Prissier, Bernd Goetzke, Ralf Guther and Arnulf von Ammon, among others. Ah Ruem’s orchestral appearances include the Madrid Symphony Orchestra, Real Filharmonía de Galicia, Dortmund Philharmoniker, NWO Philharmonia, Morocco Philharmonic, among others. She has also been awarded several prizes in international competitions. In 2011, Ah Ruem was third prize-winner at the Schubert International Piano Competition in Dortmund and received the second and audience prizes at the Morocco Philharmonic Competition in Rabat. In 2010, Ah Ruem was also winner of the grand prize at the International ANIMATO (Paris) where she completed her Concert Diploma. She has received master classes from András Schiff, Mischa Maisky, Zinaida Gilels, among others. Ah Ruem’s orchestral performances appear with major orchestras all over Europe and Asia, including Berlin Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, Bergamo Symphony Orchestra, Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra, NWO Philharmonia, Morocco Philharmonic, among others. She has also been awarded several prizes in international competitions. In 2011, Ah Ruem was third prize-winner at the Schubert International Piano Competition in Dortmund and received the second and audience prizes at the Morocco Philharmonic Competition in Rabat. In 2010, Ah Ruem was also winner of the grand prize at the International ANIMATO (Paris) where she additionally received special recognition for her Chopin and Schumann performances as well as the audience prize. That same year, she was awarded The Stefano Marizza International Piano Prize in Trieste. She was also first prize-winner at the Smetana International Piano Competition in Pilsen where she was additionally honoured with the special prize for the best performance of Bedrich Smetana. In 2009, she was first prize-winner in Berlin, in addition to two special prizes, at The Paul Hindemith Competition. Following receiving second prize and the silver medal at the 17th Paloma O’Shea Santander International Piano Competition in 2012, in January 2013 she made her successful debut in Carnegie Hall’s Zankel Hall, New York.

The Queen Sofia School of Music, the silver medallist of the 17th Paloma O’Shea Santander International Piano Competition performed Franz Joseph Haydn’s Piano Sonata No. 46 in E major, Franz Schubert’s 4 Impromptus op. 90, and Frédéric Chopin’s 24 Preludes.
Raymond Mouradze, Bashir Al Haskouri, Hoda Al Khamsi-Kanoo, Ab Ruan Ab, Sultan Al Hagi (Vice President & CSO, Total UAE), Mohamed Abdul Latif Kanoo.
Julien Libeer

Ever since he received the Juventus Prize from the hands of Alexandre Tharaud at the age of 20, Julien Libeer has been described by the French and international press as one of the most remarkable musical personalities of the young generation. Since then, he has been invited to appear in many major venues, from the Centre for Fine Arts in Brussels to the Kings Place concert hall in London, from the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris to the Menton Festival and the Radio France Montpellier Festival. This season sees his debut at the Barbican Centre in London and the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in the Master Pianists series. A chamber-music player much in demand, Julien trained with the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam in the Master Pianists series.

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Since 2011, he has been refining his talent at the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel in Belgium, first under the direction of Abdel Rahman El Bacha, then under that of Maria João Pires. The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel

The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel

The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel was inaugurated in 1939 as a public interest foundation. Under the Honorary Chairmanship of Her Majesty Queen Paola of Belgium, it provides high-level training and mentorship with Masters-in-Residence, such as José van Dam, Augustin Dumay, Maria João Pires, Miguel da Silva, Gary Hoffman and the Artemis Quartet. With its network of cultural partners in Belgium – from Bozar to Flagey, Monnaie and beyond – as well as partners based all over the world, the Music Chapel offers its students a springboard into a professional career, and supports them as they take their first steps. Together with a residency programme, the social project Equinox under the artistic direction of Maria João Pires, the Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel has created a unique laboratory of life and musical creativity in Europe, where Masters in Residence, teachers, young musical talents, soloists and ensembles who perform in concerts or residencies at the Chapel can enrich one another. Every year, the Chapel welcomes about 60 talented young people in residence, hailing from over 20 different countries.

Presented in association with the Embassy of Belgium to the UAE and in partnership with The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, Libeer performed Johann Sebastian Bach’s French Suite No.5 in G Major, Franz Liszt’s 6 Schubert lieder and Sebastian Bach’s French Suite No.5 in G Major, Franz Liszt’s 6 Schubert lieder. Presented in association with the Embassy of Belgium to the United Arab Emirates and in partnership with The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel, Libeer performed Johann Sebastian Bach’s French Suite No.5 in G Major, Franz Liszt’s 6 Schubert lieder and Sebastian Bach’s French Suite No.5 in G Major, Franz Liszt’s 6 Schubert lieder.
Mr & Mrs Bernard de Lanois, Hoda Al Khamezi-Kanoos, Julien Libeer and HE Dominique Minser (Ambassador of Belgium).
At the age of 11, Aisha made her debut with the Dominican National Symphony Orchestra performing Max Bruch’s Violin Concerto in G minor. Early successes paved the way to her acceptance in the prestigious Yehudi Menuhin School in 2003. Such accomplishment made her the first Latina to be admitted to the school since its establishment. Aisha has also performed as a soloist at many festivals including the Banstead Arts Festival, Leamington Hastings Festival, the Yehudi Menuhin International Music Festival in Gstaad, Switzerland, and the Gaida Contemporary Music Festival where she performed the world premiere of the Algirdas Martinaitys violin concerto (dedicated to her) with the Lithuanian Chamber Orchestra at the National Philharmonic Hall, Vilnius. She has also appeared at the CICA Music Festival by personal invitation of the Artistic Director Phillipe Entremont. She has performed in many venues as a soloist including the Kauffman Hall in New York, Palacio de Linares in Madrid, Palace of Luxembourg in Paris, Fontainebleu Palace, Broward Center for the Performing Arts in Florida, Wigmore Hall in London, the Organization of American States in Washington DC, and Saanen Church in Gstaad.

Last year, Aisha graduated from the Royal College of Music where she was a recipient of the Soirée d’Or Scholarship. She also presides the Music for Life Foundation, which seeks to bring classical music to the underprivileged. Aisha plays a 1690 Antonio Stradivarius and an 1690 Campanella, both kindly on loan from Florian Fine Violins.

The Embassy of The Dominican Republic

The relationship between the UAE and The Dominican Republic dates back to 2008 when HH Sheikh Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan met President Leonel Fernandez during a state visit to the capital. As a result of this visit, the UAE and The Dominican Republic established diplomatic relations.

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HE Clara Martínez Theddy de Safa, Ambassador of The Dominican Republic, with pianist Ira Churauchivi and Aisha Syed Castro.
Jan Lisiecki began studying piano at the age of five, making his orchestral debut at nine. He has since performed in many of the world's leading concert halls with many of its finest conductors and orchestras. At 15, he signed exclusively with Deutsche Grammophon, releasing two albums. In his review, The National newspaper's Rob Garratt wrote, "Jan Lisiecki performed two short, contrasting choral preludes, arranged for piano by Italian virtuoso Ferruccio Busoni. Tantalising the audience with his elegiac execution, Lisiecki's grasp of the great master truly inventively mined his instrument's dynamic potential to breathe fresh human-!ty into Bach's typically tight, mathematical melodies."

Lisiecki showcased Lisiecki's gift for welling deep into the score's emotional core. The appreciative audience was repaid with a spine-tingling encore. "The famous third (Triste) and closing 12th (Revolutionary) were performed by Lisiecki, Partita no. 2 in C minor; Ignacy Jan Paderewski's 3 humoresques de Concert, Felix Mendelssohn's Rondo Capriccioso, and Robert Schumann's nocturne in b-flat Major, op. 16 no. 4; Chopin's haunting Nocturne in C Sharp Minor (Posthumous). A magnificent end to the new Festival Recital Series."
Jan Lisiecki celebrates his 20th birthday with a post-concert cake!


A brazen display of technique and a roller-coaster ride through the depths of worldly emotion.”
البرنامج التعليمي والمجتمعي

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY
Abu Dhabi Schools & Centres – 3rd to 30th March 2015
Ah Ruem Ahn, Jan Lisiecki, Ayesha Syed Castro and members of the Budapest Festival Orchestra inspired students in schools and music centres across Abu Dhabi.
WHERE ARE THE NEIGHBOURS?

Students of Sharjah City for Humanitarian Services performed an adaptation of Mahmoud Diab’s novel ‘Strangers Don’t Drink Coffee’, featuring the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish.
As part of ADMAF’s partnership with New York City’s Carnegie Hall, Decoda – an affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall – delivered interactive concerts in Abu Dhabi’s schools as well as a residency for talented musicians, which culminated in the premiere of a new work inspired by the capital during the Young Musicians’ Concert.

Various Schools – 4th to 12th March 2015

In the framework of the partnership between ADMAF and Carnegie Hall’s Decoda, interactive concerts were held in Abu Dhabi’s schools, as well as a residency for talented musicians, which culminated in the premiere of a new work inspired by the capital during the Young Musicians’ Concert.

CARNegie hAll
MusiC resiDenCy V: DeCoDa
Abu Dhabi Corniche – 5th to 6th March 2015
The event brought together hundreds of people who showcased their innovative projects and inspiring prototypes. Visitors joined Emirati artist Jalal Luqman in the creation of a community sculpture inspired by the innovators of the world.
Abu Dhabi Theatre - 4th & 5th March 2015
Commissioned by Shakespeare’s Globe (UK), the Chicago hip-hop sensation Q Brothers arrived in Abu Dhabi fresh from an international tour. Inventive, intelligent and street smart, they turned the volume up on Shakespeare’s timeless rhymes and rhythms. Written, directed and music by GQ and JQ. Developed with Rick Boynton. Chicago Shakespeare Theater and Richard Jordan Productions present the Q Brothers’ ‘Othello: The Remix’. In partnership with Art for All.
Dubai – 7th March 2015
The elite group of Emirati pioneers and protégés explored the cultural and creative industries of the UAE during the 2015 Abu Dhabi Festival as part of this two-year professional development programme.

CULTURAL EXCELLENCE FELLOWSHIP

In association with

MUBADALA
Musicians from different cultures and musical genres joined forces to celebrate International Women’s Day: Hend Zouari (qanoun), Gwen (accordion), Amal (violin), Malika (percussion) and Meriem (oud).

DiWAn orientAl MusiC ConCert

The Galleria – 10th March to 10th April 2015
Artworks by the students of Abu Dhabi and Al Ain schools were unveiled in the capital – the result of Islamic geometrical design workshops by The Prince’s School of Traditional Arts.

Islamic Art exhibition

Presented by

Alfardan Bin Darwish

Novotel Al Bustan Abu Dhabi – 8th March 2015

Alfardan Bin Darwish

Arabic translation:
Zayed Higher Organisation Al Ain Centre for Care & Rehabilitation – 9th March 2015

The UK’s leading musician development and outreach organisation, Live Music Now, represented by The Spencer-Strachan Duo, engaged special needs children and young people during their 2015 residency, resulting in a fun-filled group performance. Earlier in February, they also worked with The Future Centre for Special Needs in ‘Pitch Pulse & Pizzazz’.
UAE University & The Space – twofour54
11th to 24th March 2015
Curated by UAE University’s Philosophy Department, the talks explored the meaning of creativity: ‘The Body, the Brain: Symbolic Expression & Its Experience’; ‘Ironic & Emotions in Fiction & Philosophy’; and ‘The Wonder of Art’.

Reclining on a bed of reeds and reclining on a bed of reeds.

The cave

THE CAVE
Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, Sharjah – 11th, 12th & 17th March 2015
Delivered by leading figures from ADMAF’s international partners, this year’s series featured ‘Music Transmission’ by Bernard de Launoit, Executive President of The Queen Elisabeth Music Chapel (Belgium) and ‘Arab Cultural Production in the Digital Age’ by Dr Dina Matar of The University of London’s School of Oriental & African Studies. In addition, the internationally renowned architect Rem Koolhaas delivered an engaging lecture at American University of Sharjah.

العين، أبوظبي، الشارقة – 11 و 12 و 17 مارس 2015
سلسلة جديدة من المحاضرات الابتكارية التي قدمت المعلومات المفيدة والمشتركة بين الأكاديميين والفنانيين من الناحية الثقافية والفنية اليابسة، و множество من المحاضرين والمتحدثين البارزين، بالإضافة إلى المهندس المعماري الشهير ريم كولاس. وقد شارك في هذه المحاضرات أيضاً المهندس المعماري الشهير ريم كولاس. وقد شارك في هذه المحاضرات أيضاً المهندس المعماري الشهير ريم كولاس.
After a tough selection process, students from ten lucky schools were invited to perform before a live audience in a daytime concert of music, movement and visual art.
Abu Dhabi Theatre – 14th March 2015

As part of ADMAF’s partnership with New York City’s Carnegie Hall, the evening concert presented a group of young musicians from Abu Dhabi performing an original composition written with Decoda, an affiliate ensemble of Carnegie Hall.

مسرح أبوظبي - 14 مارس 2015

في إطار تفعيل الشراكة بين مجموعة أبوظبي للثقافة والفنون وكارنيغي هول من نيويورك، قدمت المجموعة الموسيقية “ديكودا”، عرضاً تفاعلياً في مدارس أبوظبي ضمن برامج الإقامة الفنية للفرقة في الدولة، بمشاركة الطلبة أصحاب المواهب الموسيقية الشابة والتي أسفرت عن تأليف معزوفة موسيقية مستوحاة من أعمال الفرقة، تم تقديمه في حفل يوم المواهب الشابة.
THE 11TH EMIRATES INTERNATIONAL PEACE MUSIC FESTIVAL

Dubai, Ajman, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi –
15th to 19th March 2015

Young musicians from different countries demonstrated the magic of music on a nationwide tour. Featuring the Emirates Youth Symphony Orchestra, Premiere Music College of Prague Youth Symphony Orchestra and the Bielsko-Biala Music School Orchestra from Poland.
Al Mushrif Primary School – 16th March 2015
Dominick Farinacci (trumpet) and Richard D. Johnson (piano) showed schoolchildren how different cultures and people communicate through music in a series of interactive workshops. Additional schools were visited outside the Festival.

In association with

MELODY, HARMONY & RHYTHM

الواحة كابيتال
WAHA CAPITAL

MeloDy, hArMony & rhythM

بالشراكة مع

الواحة كابيتال
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MELODY, HARMONY & RHYTHM

بالشراكة مع

الواحة كابيتال
WAHA CAPITAL
New York University Abu Dhabi – 16th March to 2nd April 2015

Presented by New York University Abu Dhabi Institute, in partnership with ADMAF, this year’s award-winning piece ‘Keswa’ by American University of Sharjah students Nada Al Mulla and Salwa Al Khudairi was unveiled before a nationwide tour.

Patron: HH Sheikha Shamsa Bint Hamdan Al Nahyan

للطالتين ندى الما وسلوى الخضيري من الجامعة الأمريكية في الشارقة. وتمت إزاحة الستار عن العمل الفائز وعرضه للجمهور قبل انطاقه في جولة العرض عبر الإمارات.

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The Space, twofour54 – 18th to 19th March 2015

The series of screenings and director’s talks featured “Sundress” by Saeed Salmeen Al Murry; “Amal” by Nujoom Al Ghanem; “The Brain that Sings” by Amal Al Agroobi; and “Origins” by Mike Cahill, in partnership with EWS-WWF.

The Space, twofour54 – 18th to 25th March 2015

Testifying to the benefit of art therapy, the community artwork created by members of the Osturaa Support Alliance was the result of a series of workshops.

CINEMA EMIIRATI

معمـرض العـلاج بالفنـون

ART THERAPY EXHIBITION
FILMMAKERS’ ROUNDTABLES

New York Film Academy Abu Dhabi & University of Sharjah – 18th & 23rd March 2015


لقاءات حوارية مع صانعي الأفلام

أكاديمية نيويورك للأفلام في أبوظبي وجامعة الشارقة – 18 و 23 مارس 2015

 seriessi من اللقاءات الحوارية التي جمعت بين الطلاب وصناع الأفلام وكتب السيناريو، حيث تحدث سالم الإبراهيمي عن أعماله “الكولونيل” و“قاتل الأسماك الصغيرة” و“فليأتون” و“عبد القادر”. أمّا مانيش بانداي فقد تحدث عن أفامه “سينا” و“فيليو” و“الفراري” و“لا سكودريه”.
Abu Dhabi International Poetry Festival

Paris-Sorbonne University Abu Dhabi –
19th March 2015
The inaugural, family-friendly edition offered a range of poetry and spoken word performances, workshops and talks by leading Emirati, Arab and Western artists. Organised by Rooftop Rhythms.

جامعة باريس-السوربون أبوظبي –
2015 مارس
تضمنت هذه المناسبة عروضاً متنوعة ولقاءات ثقافية حافلة برؤى الشعر والعالق
ومجموعة من رواد العمل والحوار hubbyن دائماً عدد من الشعراء من الإمارات
و mieszkańców يشاركونهم من دول العالم الأخرى، يخطبانهم من روافدهم والشعر

Mehrigan Abu Dhabi al-Amil Al-Shair

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FESTIVAL IN FOCUS

Emirates Palace – 20th to 30th March 2015
Juan Diego Flórez faced some of his biggest critics after they watched a rehearsal of 'A Night at the Opera' at Emirates Palace.

WORD TO THE RHYTHM

Novo Cinema, World Trade Centre – 21st March 2015
A community celebration of the spoken word presented in Arabic and English saw performances by poets including Salem Shukri Atas, Ahmed Al Amiri, Khaled Bin Smeda, Eman Al Hashimi, Patricia Smith and Kane Smego, all introduced by Dorian Rogers.
Emirates Palace Gallery – 20th March 2015

HE Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Culture, Youth & Community Development, Patron of ADMAF and the Abu Dhabi Festival presented the first copy to Waha Capital. This major book presents an inspirational snapshot of today’s Emirati visual arts scene. ‘The Art of the Emirates’, which received the 2015 Sharjah International Book Fair Award for Emirati Foreign Translated Book, is the first ADMAF publication to be available in bookstores across the Gulf and Lebanon.

In association with

WAHA CAPITAL
Al Ain & Abu Dhabi – 21st to 23rd March 2015

The journey into science, engineering and invention gave students the chance to look at the types of energy, inventors and engineers that have shaped the modern world. In partnership with Art for All.

وزارة العلوم!
العلوم بحجم الجيب
MINISTRY OF SCIENCE LIVE!
POCKET Sized SCIENCE

In association with

بالشراكة مع

Mubadala

2015 مارس 21 إلى 23
العين وأبوظبي
الرحلة الشيقة بين عوالم العلوم والهندسة والإبتكار أتاحت الفرصة أمام الطلاب الإطلاع على روائع المبد thứcات العلماء والمخترعين والمهندسين الذين صاغوا شكل العلم في العصر الحديث، بالتعاون مع آرت فور أوف فن للتعليم.
Gulf Capital - ADMAF Creativity Award

Emirates Palace – 22nd to 31st March 2015

Established in 1996, this annual Award recognises the outstanding creativity of young arts practitioners. The 2015 Gulf Capital-ADMAF Creativity Award was presented by HE Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan, UAE Minister of Culture, Youth & Community Development, Patron of ADMAF and The Abu Dhabi Festival. Winner, Ayesha Jassim Albadi of Zayed University (Dubai) was joined by Dr. Karim El Solh, Co-Founder and Chief Executive Officer of Gulf Capital, and ADMAF Founder Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo. Ayesha’s portrait ‘M9108’ was unanimously chosen by the Award jury and joined the 2014 winner, ‘Katharina’ by Fatma Fairooz, on display in the Emirates Palace auditorium foyer.
MusiC in hosPitAls

Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Ras Al Khaimah – 23rd to 30th March 2015
Fatima Al Hashemi, Eman Al Hashimi, Mohammed Al Awadi and Mohammed Al Jahory performed for patients, their families and caregivers across the Emirates.

م.meta

بالشراكة مع MURADALA

Abu Dhabi, Al Ain, Ras Al Khaimah – 23rd to 30th March 2015
Fatima Al Hashemi, Eman Al Hashimi, Mohammed Al Awadi and Mohammed Al Jahory performed for patients, their families and caregivers across the Emirates.
Emirates Palace – 23rd March to 2nd April 2015

Prior to the major performances at Emirates Palace, key figures offered insight into the evening's artist and repertoire: Ernesto Palacio (A Night at the Opera); Antonio De Rosa & Carla Delfrate (Beethoven Violin Concerto); Leif Ove Andsnes (Piano Masterpieces); Stefan Engleit (The Magic Flute); Bassam Saba, Ram Jaffee and Dawn Elder (Music Matters).

†ABU DHABI FESTIVAL PRE-CONCERT TALKS
Sydney Opera House
BABIES PROMS: MEETING MOZART

Abu Dhabi & Al Ain – 24th to 26th March 2015
The Emirates Ensemble, Michelle Doake and Simon Tedeschi introduced the work of musical wunderkind Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart to young children. Produced by CDP Kids theatre producers. In partnership with Art for All.
Yas Marina – 27th & 28th March 2015
From traditional and classical to hip-hop, indie rock and pop, Yas Marina jumped to the beat of cool tunes and great grooves during two days of outdoor concerts.
EARTH HOUR: CHANGE CLIMATE CHANGE

Hill Fun City, Al Ain – 28th March 2015
For the fifth consecutive year, the Abu Dhabi Festival celebrated Earth Hour, the world's largest celebration for our planet, with a series of workshops for children by the Nutty Scientists.

In partnership with WWF
The Artists’ Studio is an online platform that inspires and informs young people about the value of creative thinking and artistic expression. At the 2015 Abu Dhabi Festival, ADMAF’s Young Media Leaders interviewed the Brazilian music legend Sérgio Mendes about his life and career. Watch this and other episodes of our intrepid young journalists in conversation with the stars of stage and screen online, including Vladimir Ashkenazy (conductor), Herbie Hancock (musician/composer), Bill Fontaine (artist), Al Jareau (musician/composer), Quincy Jones (musician/composer), Kevin Spacey (actor), Bryn Terfel (sopranos), Dussamaa Rahbani (musician/composer), Maxim Vengerov (musician), Naseer Shamma (musician/composer) and Nujoom Al Ghanem (filmmaker).
The Space, twofour54 – 31st March 2015

Emirates Palace Gallery – 1st April 2015

Reem Falaknaz and Ammar Al Attar, two of the UAE's most dynamic Emirati artists whose works are featured in the Festival exhibition 'Emirati Insights', discussed their practice with the 2015 Abu Dhabi Festival commissioned artist, Noor Al Suwaidi.

"معرض الإمارات – 1 أبريل 2015

رينام فلالكناز وأمير العطار، من بين أكثر منجمي تمثيل الفن التشكيلي الراقي لل💥 الإماراتيين، اجتمعوا في إطار معرض افتتاح مهرجان أبوظبي 2015 لآليات الإبداعية في مجال الفني، في إطار عرض أعمالهم التي توجها معرض الإمارات التشكيلي. وقد كان الهدف من المناقشة إبراز ما حققه هذا التوجه من مستوى جمعية الفنانين التشكيليين الإماراتيين و全长 الفنانين الزائرين من مختلف أنحاء العالم من خلال ثقافة الفن التشكيلي الإماراتي من خلال تحديتهم في الأعمال الفنية التشكيلية. 2015"
Emirates Palace – 16th April 2015
The introduction to photo-collage and montage was led by ‘View From Inside’ featured artist, Camille Zakharia. This day-long workshop gave a brief history of photo-collage alongside demonstrations, portfolio reviews and a visit to the ‘View From Inside’ exhibition for a discussion on technique.

Tammam Azzam, Ahmed Jadallah, Manal Al Dowayan, Hazem Harb, Camille Zakharia and Khalil Abdul Wahid, leading artists featured in the Festival exhibition 'View from Inside', discussed contemporary Arab photography, video and mixed media art. Moderated by Tarek Al Ghoussel and Shamoon Zamir of NYUAD.

In association with...
Throughout this year’s Festival, ADMAF’s trainee journalists published two editions of The ADMAF Tribune, featuring news, reviews and interviews.

The ADMAF Tribune

Each year, the Award recognises an Emirati student for their outstanding creativity in an original artwork inspired by the Abu Dhabi Festival exhibition. This year’s winner was Shamsa Al Dhaheri of New York University Abu Dhabi for a photographic series inspired by ‘View From Inside Contemporary Arab Photography, Video & Mixed Media Art’. It was presented in November by HE Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahyan, Patron of ADMAF and the Abu Dhabi Festival, President of TOTAL UAE Hatem Nusseibeh, HE Sheika Lubna Al Qassemi, Adnan Pachachi and ADMAF Founder Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo.

In association with
RIWAQ AL FIKR: NEW MEDIA, NEW OUTLOOK

Wael Attili, Creative Founder, Kharabeesh Network, Jordan

Haifa Al Mansour, Filmmaker, Saudi Arabia

Hatoon Zuhair Kadi, Writer & Presenter, Saudi Arabia

Dr. Salam Al Hatian, Founder & CEO, Hatian Media, UAE (moderator)

The debate shed light on the role of the Arab media and its impact upon society. It also discussed the importance of new media and its potential for increasing efficiency, offering material different from traditional media. Commenting on this, Haifaa Al Mansour insisted that people do not lack interest in lengthy content if it's well written: “People find it easier to absorb movies that require skills in writing, directing, filming and acting.”

Wael Attili stated that the past is a platform on which we build our present: “Since the age of three, I've had a wild imagination. I had a passion for fairy tales that stayed with me long beyond school. The truth behind the Kharabeesh network is to allow us to tell our stories our way, in our own dialect, in our language. Stories teach us very different from who we truly are. That is the reason why I wanted to make a movie that incarnated everything I stand for… Women don’t have to be perfect, they can make mistakes. We want to create something that she could relate to.”

Haifaa Al Mansour expressed how she was proud she was to be in the UAE, her second home, where she has watched young Emirati women take the lead and make a change, and has wished to create something that she aspires to: “Sometimes, we producers create something that resembles the kind she aspires to: “Sometimes, we producers create something that resembles the kind she aspires to.”

While he asked the panellists about creative projects that are in the works, Dr. Al Hattlan suggested that new media tends to reduce time wastage and increase efficiency, offering material different from traditional media. Commenting on this, Haifa Al Mansour insisted that people do not lack interest in lengthy content if it's well written: “People find it easier to absorb movies that require skills in writing, directing, filming and acting.”

Dr. Al Hatian opened the session with the essence of the debate: Where will the media we know today take us? When he asked the panelists about creative projects that are in the works, Dr. Al Hattlan suggested that new media tends to reduce time wastage and increase efficiency, offering material different from traditional media. Commenting on this, Haifa Al Mansour insisted that people do not lack interest in lengthy content if it's well written: “People find it easier to absorb movies that require skills in writing, directing, filming and acting.”

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and design, YouTube increases the popularity of a handful of clips circulated via Twitter and other channels. However, this does not affect the actual production. The Internet in general, and social media more specifically, have created a lazy generation – one that doesn’t have to make any effort or even consider developing traditional tools.”

Weal Attili believes the intellectual pool of cinema aficionados is not large enough in the Arab world, especially in the absence of a supervisory body that holds those who commit such violations accountable. “If you wish to work online, you should understand each other. ‘Kadi’s TV show is a progressive model that impacts on YouTube, the number of views is a benchmark. There’s an urgent need to raise awareness of intellectual property violation by shedding light on the methods used by perpetrators, and by directing the audience on how to handle media content.”

In conclusion Hoda Al Khamis-Kanoo, ADMAF Founder, spoke about the passion that drives success in all specialist fields, not only media. Creators must have the space for their freedom and imagination to further develop their creative potential.
The arts have an important role to play in the lives of refugee, displaced and underprivileged children and young people. The panel brought together humanitarian and cultural experts of different backgrounds to discuss how the arts can be used to empower residents while raising awareness about the on-going crisis to the outside world. In zones of current or recent conflict, micro-finance social enterprises – can be applied and the impact it can generate psychologically, socially and economically. Panellists drew upon their own experiences, elaborating upon the opportunities and challenges they have encountered in enabling access to the arts in areas of poverty, conflict, displacement and exploitation.

However, there is an unfortunate lack of hard evidence and official studies by humanitarian agencies on such creative initiatives. Professional visual artists, actors and musicians visit refugee camps and rehabilitation centres to motivate and empower residents while raising awareness about the ongoing crisis to the outside world. In zones of current or recent conflict, micro-finance social enterprises are using the sale of traditional handicrafts to generate income for underprivileged individuals while preserving traditional techniques. Among groups of women who have endured abuse at the hands of family members or other individuals, arts-based activity can contribute to the recovery process.

HE Sara Ibrahim Shuhail’s experience as a teacher, consultant and school director over the last 30 years stood her in good stead when establishing Ewa’a Shelters specifically for victims of human trafficking. As a member of the national committee to combat human trafficking, the UAE human rights periodic review committee and the Higher Committee for Child Protection at the UAE Ministry of the Interior, Sara Shuhail has a unique understanding of the political, legal, administrative, social and economic factors that affect this worldwide issue. Speaking with passion and commitment that has undoubtedly driven her tireless endeavours, she spoke about the work of Ewa’a and its collaboration with ADMAF through ‘Silent Voices’, the annual season of visual arts therapy workshops that culminates in a public exhibition.

The panel discussion explored the way that the arts – in all its varied forms – can be applied and the impact it can generate psychologically, socially, culturally and economically. Panellists drew upon their own experiences, elaborating upon the opportunities and challenges they have encountered in enabling access to the arts in areas of poverty, conflict, displacement and exploitation.

HE Sara Ibrahim Shuhail, Founder & Director General of Ewa’a Shelters
Maywand Jabarkhyl, Managing Director, Fatima Bint Mohammed Initiative (FBMI), UAE
Nicola Lee, Director, START, UAE
Lisa Ball-Lechgar, Strategic Consultant to the Founder, ADMAF, UAE (moderator)

The panel brought together humanitarian and cultural experts of UAE-based, non-profit organisations working in often challenging environments inside the UAE as well as across the Middle East.

Among groups of women who have endured abuse at the hands of family members or other individuals, arts-based activity can contribute to the recovery process. The debate centered on how the arts can be used to empower residents while raising awareness about the ongoing crisis to the outside world. In zones of current or recent conflict, micro-finance social enterprises can be applied and the impact it can generate psychologically, socially and economically. Panellists drew upon their own experiences, elaborating upon the opportunities and challenges they have encountered in enabling access to the arts in areas of poverty, conflict, displacement and exploitation.

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The panel praised the UAE leadership’s advocacy of volunteerism and its effectiveness for years to come.

After all, he remarked, HH Sheikha Fatima Bint Mohammed established and those working on the ground. FBMI, for example, is currently enhancing civil society for years to come. Volunteers are an important element of their active partnerships. "

In Afghanistan, Maywand Jabarkhyl explained that aid money that had poured into the country after 2001 was necessarily spent as well as it could be. As a result, it had failed to impact the people it was meant to target. When asked for recommendations to agencies and other entities responsible for humanitarian policy-making, he stressed that bridges need to be built between strategic organisations and those working on the ground. FBMI, for example, is currently working with local hospitals in Afghanistan as part of its mandate to provide healthcare to its employees.

Awareness-raising activities by non-profit entities are all important in keeping issues in the public eye. In a recent report published by UNHCR, the role of ambassadors is acknowledged. Maywand Jabarkhyl pointed to UNHCR Ambassadors, Khashoosseini and Angelina Jolie, who play an important role in generating media coverage for Afghanistan. From photo opportunities to human interest stories, one must master the media machine. FBMI has used it to help drive sales and improve the sustainability of the organisation.

In conclusion, the panel agreed that their organisations constantly strive to uphold the principles of sustainability, consistency and quality. By giving a voice to those who are most in need through the arts, they strive to uphold the principles of sustainability, consistency and quality. Nicola Lee concurred that arts-based activities certainly enhance an appetite for education – to concentrate, communicate, question and solve problems. In addition, skills learnt by one refugee child – as set down in an individual personal growth plan by START – is instilling in the women of Afghanistan. Having just expanded into Maywand Jabarkhyl spoke about the psychological changes FBMI is recognising that these "courageous women" are keen to learn – to read, to write and to weave. This, in turn, impacts on their children's school attendance and academic performance.

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Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC) recently launched an integrated creativity and innovation as drivers of technology, trade and industry. Other countries have gone further; from STEM to STEAM to STREAM (for involving eight STEM-related projects across Abu Dhabi.}

In today’s society, there is a renewed emphasis on the importance of creativity and innovation as drivers of technology, trade and industry. In light of the UAE’s aim to embed a STEM-based curriculum of science, technology, engineering and maths in its schools, the panel discussed the role, place and value of the arts in the 21st century syllabus. After all, when people speak about creativity and innovation they’ve even considered, let alone thought, the arts?

Moderator John Dennehy introduced the topic. If done properly, a successful STEM education can be applied in real life, enabling students to become problem solvers, critical thinkers, scientifically literate and even inventors. He went to address the notion that the STEM acronym seems to exclude the arts. This has led to discussions around STEAM rather than STEM. Adding the letter ‘A’ may reassure educators and artists, particularly if the other subjects are not being taught in creative, productive ways. However, if there is no authentic integration between science and the arts, then creative and innovative individuals cannot be produced. “The same creativity that inspires the most wonderful piece of music is the very same creativity that leads to the world’s greatest buildings. Whether we call it STEAM or STEM, it’s about integrating the arts,” he remarked.

Other countries have gone further; from STEM to STEAM to STREAM (for environment). Dennehy highlighted that the Abu Dhabi Educational Council (ADEC) recently launched an integrated STEM and Innovation system from kindergarten through to university, involving eight STEM-related projects across Abu Dhabi.

The Arts in STEM Education}

Lincoln Center Education’s Russell Granet began his career as a teaching artist, partnering with teachers to customise the curriculum, whether that be in physics or history. “We believe that the arts need to exist in all academic subjects and not be silent,” he stated. STEAM was originally established to encourage girls into science as well as non-technically minded students. “But by including the arts, we are not attracting new students into this field,” he said, reminding the audience of when Steve Jobs wanted to introduce the iPhone. Jobs told his engineering team that it would need to have one button and ‘be beautiful’. “So, the engineers turned to their colleagues in the arts community for advice. The arts is typically seen as a subject itself and is amongst the first subjects to be cut when budgets reduce,” explained Granet. “Adding the ‘A’ in STEM does give arts a place at the table, where it does not necessarily exist.”

He went on to point out that what makes innovation possible is that people are free to make mistakes. If innovation (which involves artists) as opposed to process innovation (which is exclusive to technical specialists). Application of the ‘A’ in STEM means that students can apply the arts to their learning, for example, coming up with unique solutions to problems, developing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Russell Granet is the co-author of a major report ‘Art for Art’s Sake? The Impact of Arts Education’ (OECD, 2013). This report examines the state of empirical knowledge about the impact of arts education on these kinds of outcomes. The kinds of arts education examined include: arts classes in school (music, visual arts and dance), arts-integrated classes (where the arts are taught as a support for an academic subject); and arts study undertaken outside of school (e.g., private music lessons, out-of-school classes in theatre, visual arts and dance). Vincent-Lancrin explained that if one thinks about innovation, arts graduates are the likely to work with engineers on solutions. One thinks of knowledge innovation which involves artists as opposed to process innovation (which is exclusive to technical specialists). Application of the ‘X’ in STEM can enhance a better application of social skills and personal development. After all, arts education involves many different pedagogical formats: teaching-artist, partnering with teachers to customise the curriculum, where it does not necessarily exist. “He went on to point out that what makes innovation possible is that people are free to make mistakes. If innovation (which involves artists) as opposed to process innovation (which is exclusive to technical specialists). Application of the ‘A’ in STEM means that students can apply the arts to their learning, for example, coming up with unique solutions to problems, developing their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

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The fascinating discussion opened up to a wide number of questions from the audience tacking social attitudes towards the arts among Arab and Asian communities, teacher training, and access to research.

One audience member remarked that the world of academia does not incorporate thinking relevant to the corporate sector. In many countries including those in the Arab world the subject one studies is still the profession one pursues; whereas in other nations, a philosophy student will not necessarily become a philosopher. The speakers spoke of how industry needs to be brought into classrooms so they can see the various ways solutions to sector challenges can be found by using the arts. On the flip side, Stanford School of Engineering (among other institutions from the US to India to Chile) has made it mandatory for students to take classes in arts and humanities.

Adding arts to a STEM curriculum at an early age can only be beneficial. As the discussion drew to a close, Russell Granet made one of the most poignant comments: “Young children need the arts to educate people that numbers are not everything. We are educating children for the future we cannot predict so the arts is the best way to teach,” said Bellotto. Another audience member observed how the arts requires understanding of the UAE. Lee Bellotto spoke about the International Symposium of Electronic Arts (ISEA), a platform that integrates arts, science and technology — which was hosted by Zayed University in 2015. The conference opened up many questions of teaching in K-12 schools. One of the ISEA keynote speakers she mentioned was Theo Jansen, an artist and physicist, who explained how these two disciplines can be merged to generate new insights. Bellotto explained how these two disciplines can be merged to generate new ideas. Innovation comes via fun through exploration; by curiosity and experimentation leads innovation.

So how can we attract new teachers? Bellotto highlighted the importance of teachers as leaders — helping to shape future society. After all, “If a student is tomorrow’s leader, today’s teacher must inspire leaders for tomorrow.” 

Education today is not simply about memorising; the challenge is about identifying new ways of teaching. However, Vincent Lancrin referring to a previous OECD report, mentioned how teachers globally feel that they are not respected or recognised. In the US, for example, 50% of teachers are out of the profession in five years. The main reason is that there is not enough support around how to work with children in trauma, poverty or those from different cultural backgrounds. This needs to addressed. Within Abu Dhabi, a particular challenge is in attracting more Emiratis into the field of teaching. What needs to be addressed is how these two disciplines can be merged to generate new insights. Innovation comes via fun through exploration; by curiosity and experimentation leads innovation.

On the other hand, how do we convince parents that it is essential for children to learn the arts? Often, the biggest fear is that they will not necessarily become a philosopher. The speakers spoke of how industry needs to be brought into classrooms so they can see the various ways solutions to sector challenges can be found by using the arts. On the flip side, Stanford School of Engineering (among other institutions from the US to India to Chile) has made it mandatory for students to take classes in arts and humanities.

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Cultural diplomacy is an aspect of cultural exchange where governments work in partnership with the creators of culture. Its purpose is to help foreigners understand a country and for the people of that country to understand foreign views. One needs cultural diplomacy and today, it is no longer sufficient to have political and military power to ensure security and success. The human interaction generated through the arts can break down boundaries culturally, socially and psychologically.

Each year, The Abu Dhabi Festival Debates include a session on cultural diplomacy to explore another aspect of this broad subject. In 2015 – in the midst of the UNESCO International Decade for Rapprochement of Cultures – a panel spanning the diplomatic, research and cultural sectors examined how the arts can be used to facilitate dialogue and integration between communities of multiple nationalities and identities.

In his opening note, Ambassador Starace quoted His Holiness Pope Francis, “we have to rediscover the beauty of neighbourliness.” He spoke about how world leaders are beginning to understand the importance of cultural diplomacy as a tool of co-existence and peace to counteract the evil of extremist groups.

Stephen Stapleton spoke on the necessity of creating safe spaces for dialogue to flourish and the importance of NGOs in preparing the ground for public discussion. “Back in 2003 (the year Edge of Arabia was founded), the arts were driven by government,” he recalled. “It was out of sink with the thoughts of young people. Edge of Arabia became extremely influential; a place where artists and audiences could have conversations. It opened up a line of important cultural communication between Saudi Arabia, the UK and Europe.”
Historically, there have been horizontal conflicts between groups or countries. Most of the debates today are vertical – "between millennials, middle classes and hipsters" as described by Michael Al Gergawi. In 2015, class is across borders and the rise of the global subculture is upon us. So, where does that lead the issue of assimilation? In the UAE (where 90% of the population are not citizens); the Turkish people of Germany, the Moroccans of France, for example. These communities are there to stay. So the question is how can cultural diplomacy help to prevent a global crisis when extremist groups are so effectively using media and messaging? HRH Prince Georg von Habsburg acknowledged the importance of new technology and the fresh possibilities it offers. “We need to rethink and to reinvent cultural diplomacy practically,” he remarked.

Stephan Stapleton spoke of Telfaz 11, an online group that negotiates Saudi social issues using humour. Operating anonymously, it now has seven million followers on YouTube. “Telfaz are among the most powerful groups in the Islamic world and are probably the best bet to reach the negotiating table.” Stapleton also described how the Saudi Arabian artists are connecting with Muslims in communities across the world – audiences typically difficult to engage. For example, practitioners like Ahmed Matar speak with authority to children of Bangladeshis and Pakistanis for he hail from the centre of the Islamic world. Ahmed can really change their opinion: “Art is a very powerful way of engaging communities, where young people have a choice – to go one way or the other.”

HRH Prince Georg acknowledged the importance of those promoting their own cultures as well as those of others living within their own borders (the result of refugee crises and economic migration). “We are going through an incredible change.” he said. “Today, rather than nations fighting each other, conflicts are regional, inter-ethnic and inter-religious and inter-cultural. Cultural diplomacy has become far more important. When people flee, they lose their cultural identity and their sense of belonging. Today, living in Saxony, there are migrants from more than 100 countries. We need to convey to Saxons what life there means for an immigrant.”

Ambassador Starace echoed the importance of cultural diplomacy not only as an export but rather, within the borders of nations. “It is important in our own countries to talk about a national identity and its history. If one does not know one’s history, how can one proceed? Let people not forget the legacy of their countries. In order to culture of others, one must accept one’s own.”

Inside the UAE for example, the panel spoke how artists today are creating works that tour internationally. Led by the new generation of Emirati, the majority of small and medium enterprises in the country are heading towards a reinvention of national identity that resonates worldwide. They have pride, are connected to their culture and want to share it with others. “Living in the UAE,” said Ambassador Starace, “gave me the perspective of living in one of the world’s most globalised societies. I would never expect to be in one place and to have meetings with so many cultures, nationalities and groups. The UAE is a fantastic treasure and stands as a fine example of cultural diplomacy and soft power to others.”

The ensuing discussion with the audience proved similarly fruitful. Questions arose from artists and representatives of the diplomatic community around the issues discussed.

In conclusion, it was agreed that society must detach itself from the current interpretation of cultural diplomacy and to think beyond conventional understanding. Artists and cultural events will help societies build new platforms, irrespective of borders. In the words of HRH Prince Georg von Habsburg, “The most important thing is to raise interest. Art gives us the inspiration to think about particular issues and better understand them.”
This discussion marked the launch of the Arabic edition of the 2013 United Nations Creative Economy Report, co-published by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and supported by ADMAF . Panellists and audience engaged in a lively discourse exploring the potential of the creative industries for society at large and the challenge of advocacy.

In her opening notes, Dr Anna Paolini acknowledged ADMAF's contribution in making this report available to stakeholders within the Arab region. She conveyed the UNESCO Director General's comments on the book, "Investing in creativity sparks lasting change in society."

"This report gives evidence on how culture contributes to the economic and social development of communities, societies and countries by presenting very concrete examples. "

"The Panel

Dr Anna Paolini, UNESCO Representative in the Arab States of the Gulf and Yemen
Oussama Rifahi, Executive Director, Arab Fund for Arts & Culture, Lebanon
Professor Yudhishthir Raj Isar, Principal Investigator & Writer, The Creative Economy Report 2013 Special Edition, France
Sumayyah Al Suwaidi, Artist, Entrepreneur, Fashion Designer, UAE
Matthew Sansom, Station Manager, Abu Dhabi Classic FM, UAE (moderator)

New York University Abu Dhabi – 27th March 2015

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Dr. Anna Paolini, UNESCO Representative in the Arab States of the Gulf and Yemen, opened the discussion, while the Executive Director, Arab Fund for Arts & Culture, Lebanon, Oussama Rifahi, provided an outline of the report's contents, with a focus on the potential of the creative industries for society at large and the challenge of advocacy.

"Investing in creativity sparks lasting change in society."

Sumayyah Al Suwaidi, the artist, entrepreneur, and fashion designer from the UAE, highlighted the potential of the creative industries for society at large and the challenge of advocacy.

Matthew Sansom, the station manager for Abu Dhabi Classic FM in the UAE (moderator), introduced the discussion, while the Executive Director, Arab Fund for Arts & Culture, Lebanon, Oussama Rifahi, provided an overview of the report's contents, with a focus on the potential of the creative industries for society at large and the challenge of advocacy.

In her opening notes, Dr. Anna Paolini acknowledged ADMAF's contribution in making this report available to stakeholders within the Arab region. She conveyed the UNESCO Director General's comments on the book, "Investing in creativity sparks lasting change in society."
Oussama Rifahi commented on the various funding models for culture around the world. Reality in the MENA region is that there is a lack of formal funding models (though there is a uniform one for many reasons—an issue that ATAC aims to address. Over the last 9 years, the Fund has been distributing grants to artists and emerging institutions across the region and is trying to create a layered model that the region could adopt, one that ranges from social enterprises to private sector investment.

Dr. Anna Paolini pointed out that there were many distorted perceptions of culture and its impact on the macro-environment. Quantification is ultimately the key to recognition. It is important to bridge the gap of understanding with statistics. Credible data would certainly help governments understand the size of the sector, appreciate its monetary value, impact and potential.

Professor Lai described the cultural and creative industries as “layered simultaneously” (i.e., public, private and NGO sectors working across a wide spectrum of multiple disciplines). The challenge lies in how we take lessons learnt in the West and apply them creatively in the rest of the world.

Oussama Rifahi spoke of the need to release a dependence on single funding streams. “We need to explore multiple mechanisms of financial investment,” he said and, at the same time, create an environment that enables creativity not only to survive but also to thrive. The fundamental importance of arts education as the bedrock of a vibrant industry is highlighted in the Report. “The notion has been around the world,“ said the Professor, “But it has not progressed beyond rhetorical pronouncements.”

Matthew Sansom addressed the issue of intellectual property rights. So much of copyright is held not by the creative originator but by companies. The knowledge infrastructure that ensures that rights are upheld and respected does exist, evident in international treaties. However, difficulties lie in how infringements are addressed and how legislation is enforced. As the industry continues to grow globally, effective systems need to be implemented. Sunayam Al Suwaidi spoke of her experience of copyright infringement as an artist, while Oussama Rifahi countered with, “If you come up with an idea that has a wide application, you have every right to make sure it is yours.”

The audience’s contribution addressed arts education, the generation of creative content and the language of advocating change.

Dr. Anna Paolini explained how the arts can be a catalyst for social change. In a world where arts education and production alongside the capital cultural projects in 2018. Panellists expect to see a changing digital landscape regarding the consumption of art through those online platforms on a global level. UNESCO would be happy to see the ICC progress in terms of arts education and production alongside the capital cultural projects opening in the fee two years.

It is hoped that the Report will be read by policymakers and those involved in the dissemination of culture. The next edition is expected in 2018. Panellists expect to see a changing digital landscape regarding the consumption of art through those online platforms on a global level. UNESCO would be happy to see the ICC progress in terms of arts education and production alongside the capital cultural projects opening in the fee two years.
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Every year, ADMAF's awards galvanises young, talented citizens and residents to sharpen their creative edge and develop life skills essential for later life. It is a sign of the times, a tribute to the young people, the public and artists. It enables artistic expression through a wide range of programmes and projects. By bringing together media mavens, artists and cultural entrepreneurs, ADMAF fosters the development of children and young people across the UAE since 1996.

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