



*For the Attention of the Culture / News Department  
Press Release  
For immediate release*

## **Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation Unveils Eclectic Line-Up of Internationally-Renowned Headline Acts for the Abu Dhabi Festival 2019**

*Month-long festival of arts and culture to be held in March 2019, celebrating the cultural wealth of Republic of Korea as 'Country of Honour'*

*Diverse programme of community and education events set to engage and inspire emerging talent through innovative youth platforms and community programmes*

**Abu Dhabi, UAE – 10 December 2018:** Under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mabarak Al Nahayan, UAE Minister of Tolerance, the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation (ADMAF) today announced a diverse headline programme as part of the Abu Dhabi Festival 2019 (ADF19). With more than 100 events, 18 productions, two co-productions and two commissions across 25 venues, the Festival returns for its 16th year with an illustrious mix of artists and genres across Opera, Ballet, Orchestra, Jazz and Flamenco. Underscoring its commitment to championing global cultural exchange, creativity and innovation in the arts and furthering its symphony of global cultures, ADF19 will celebrate the Republic of Korea as its 'Country of Honour'.

This year the Festival's central theme is the 'Culture of Determination', as it joins forces with the Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi that are also taking place in the UAE capital during the month of March, in celebration of everyone who battles against the odds to make a positive impact on society. This theme is one each of us can relate to, and the brave Olympians who will be competing here are inspirational human beings whose drive and determination, in the face of often great adversity, should bring joy and hope to everyone.

During the press conference, a Letter of Cooperation (LoC) was signed between Abu Dhabi Festival, by H.E. Huda I. Alkhamis-Kanoo, and Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi, represented by Mr. Peter Wheeler, Chief Executive Officer of the Games. The LoC underlines the importance of inclusion between the arts world and institutions that help and promote people of determination, opening up opportunities for them to show the world their many talents.



Presenting more than 500 international artists from 17 different countries, and featuring masterpieces by 18 different composers, Abu Dhabi Festival 2019's headline programme will include soulful performances by American mezzo-soprano, **Joyce DiDonato with Orchestra il pomo d'oro**, directed by Maxim Emelyanychev; Korea's first professional ballet company, the

**Korean National Ballet**; one of Korea's leading theatre orchestras, the **Korean Symphony Orchestra**; award-winning American jazz piano extraordinaire, composer, producer, educator and Quincy Jones Artist, **Justin Kauflin**; Welsh bass-baritone, **Sir Bryn Terfel**; **Sara Baras**, considered one of the best flamenco dancers and choreographers in the world; and, to conclude the Festival, a performance by the oldest national ballet company, **The Paris Opera Ballet**, by George Balanchine.

The Festival will also host a compelling exhibition entitled *Distant Prospects*, presenting the history of European landscape painting from the world-renowned LIECHTENSTEIN. The **Princely Collections**, including permanent loans from The Hohenbuchau Collection and other private collections. Exhibited for the first time in the Middle East, these artworks – some of the world's most important – survey the history of landscape painting over the course of several centuries and the exhibition will feature key figures in the Late Renaissance and Baroque artistic movements.

Parallel to the exhibition, an engaging educational programme will inspire visitors with panel discussions, guided tours and creative workshops. Extending the programme further afield, a specially designed residency will offer a unique experience for five practicing Emirati artists who will be given the opportunity to visit Vaduz and Vienna through a diverse itinerary of cultural engagements.

In line with its legacy to champion culture in all its forms, ADF19 will also recognise outstanding achievements in the music industry by prolific musical pioneers through the Abu Dhabi Festival Awards. This year's recipients will include mezzo-soprano **Joyce DiDonato**, in recognition of her life long contribution to music; **Aurélie Dupont**, for her outstanding devotion to the art of ballet; **Barenboim – Said Akademie**, for its commitment to building bridges through arts and culture; and the late **Ousha bint Khalifa Al Sweidi** in honour of her exceptional contributions to Emirati poetry.

Speaking at the press launch held at Emirates Palace, **H.E. Huda I. Alkhamis-Kanoo, Founder of ADMAF and Artistic Director of Abu Dhabi Festival**, said: "Today, the festival enters its 16th year and we are all proud of its status as one of the leading, most prominent culture and arts festivals in the region and the world beyond. And we are marking history at this point in time, coinciding with the country's continued celebrations of the Year of Zayed, in which the Festival has played an important role, with greater meaning, making contributions that have further



celebrated the legacy and values of our Founding Father, the late Sheikh Zayed. We have always been, and will continue to be, inspired by his vision of the future, and his determination that made the impossible possible and the unreal real.”

“We celebrate, Korea being the Country of Honour for the 2019 Abu Dhabi Festival, a country of immense heritage, steady in its modernisation and benefiting from its creative sources, its rich culture and the beauty of its arts.”

“Today, Abu Dhabi Festival 2019 celebrates the determined people – the champions of the Special Olympics World Games, those carrying the flame of determination and rising to seemingly insurmountable challenges, achieving victory through their will. From the determined people, we learn to exercise patience – how to face the hardship of the path, and we also learn endurance. We come to believe that success is not final, and failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts.”

**H.E. Kang-ho Park, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the UAE:** “Abu Dhabi Festival, as one of the biggest annual cultural events in the UAE, certainly has been contributing enormously to the region’s intercultural competence, so I am very happy that Korea could be a part of this wonderful celebration next year.”

**Peter Wheeler, CEO of Special Olympics World Games Abu Dhabi 2019,** said: “Music and arts transcend all boundaries, and provide fantastic opportunities for people of determination to express themselves, experience joy and increase their self-esteem. The World Games next year will focus not only on sport – we are planning a Cultural Olympiad for March 2019 celebrating the important role that people of determination play in all aspects of society. This year’s ADMAF event will be a powerful voice for celebrating differences and promoting inclusion, and we are delighted that musicians with intellectual disabilities will be able to showcase their extraordinary talents to audiences here in the UAE.”

Marking the culmination of ADMAF’s year-round commitment to arts education and community enrichment, ADF19 will return with a series of **Youth Platforms**, empowering young, aspiring talent in the arts and culture fields through the *ADF Visual Arts Education Programme; Young Filmmakers’ Circle; Riwaq Al Fikr; Riwaq Al Adab wal Kitab; The Gulf Capital – Abu Dhabi Festival Visual Arts Award; The Gulf Capital – ADMAF Creativity Award; The Christo & Jeanne-Claude Award, Tandem Al Emarat, UAE Theatre Circle, Young Media Leaders, Total Design Commission, ADMAF Design Fund, The Artists’ Studio and Ministry of Science.*



The Festival's **Community Programmes**, will include an engaging, innovative and inspiring calendar of events, exhibitions, performances and workshops for all ages, a highlight of which is the return of **Festival in the Park** – a two-night eclectic line-up of captivating stand-up comedy artists performing outdoors at one of the capital's finest venues, the spacious and vibrant Umm Al Emarat Park.

### **Headline Programme:**

**Joyce DiDonato with Orchestra il pomo d'oro, directed by Maxim Emelyanychev (24 January 2019):** A pre-festival performance by two-time Grammy Award-winner and world-renowned American mezzo-soprano opera singer, Joyce DiDonato. Making her Arab World debut, she will take to the stage to perform *In War & Peace: Harmony Through Music*, accompanied by Italian orchestra il pomo d'oro. Led by Russian chief conductor, Maxim Emelyanychev, DiDonato will perform a collection of Baroque opera arias by Handel, Purcell, Leo, De Cavalieri, Gesualdo and Arvo Pärt, that explore war and peace, both external and internal.

**Korean National Ballet – 'Giselle' (07 March 2019):** A timeless romantic ballet in two acts, about a peasant girl with a weak heart and a passion for dancing, specially choreographed for Korean National Ballet by Patrice Bart, famous French choreographer, danseur étoile, former ballet master and member of the Board of Ballet at the Opera National de Paris.

Korea National Ballet was founded in 1962 as the first professional ballet company in the Republic. Today, it features a superb and versatile troupe of 90 dancers capable of performing an extensive repertory. To date, Korean National Ballet has toured all over the world, earning notable accolades wherever it appears.

**Korean Symphony Orchestra (08 March 2019):** Elevating the standing of Korean symphonic music for the past 30 years, the Korean Symphony Orchestra is the only house orchestra in Korea to possess the know-how and performance experience to stage professional opera house performances such as ballet and opera music. Its Arab World Debut at ADF19 will be led by world-renowned modern music specialist and opera conductor, Maestro Chung Chi-Yong – the Orchestra's sixth Music Director and Chief Conductor joined by acclaimed pianist, Jae-Hyuck Cho. This highly anticipated evening will feature three works: Young Jo Lee's Arirang Festival for Orchestra, Franz List's Piano Concerto No.1 in E-flat Major, S.124 and Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No.8, Op.88.

**Justin Kauflin (11 March 2018):** Award-winning American jazz pianist extraordinaire, composer, producer, educator and Quincy Jones artist, Justin Kauflin is set to wow audiences with his



profound performances and help audiences explore the unique ways in which he encounters the world. He and his trio will be performing tracks from his new album, *Coming Home*.

**TOSCA (15 March 2019):** This carefully crafted concert production of Puccini's classic features a full cast of vocal soloists, orchestra and choir, thrillingly recreating the passion, drama and chilling atmospheric backdrop in which the opera takes place. Three of the world's pre-eminent opera stars will be singing: Kristine Opolais as Tosca, Vittorio Grigolo as Cavaradossi and Sir Bryn Terfel in the role of Scarpia, complemented by the rousing score brought to life by Sinfonia Cymru and the vocals of Côr choir. This promises to be a triumphant return for the enigmatic Welshman, who previously performed at the Festival in 2013.

**Stand Up for Inclusion Concert (16 March 2018):** Celebrating the Special Olympics World Games being held in UAE's capital, Abu Dhabi Festival is collaborating with Special Olympics Korea to put on a special, hour-long concert entitled Stand Up For Inclusion. Fully in line with the Festival's theme for 2019 – The Culture of Determination – it will deliver a message of hope to everyone and help people see what is normally unseen. Three individual performances, entitled *Togetherness*, *Passion* and *Inclusion*, will feature classical music, pop music and a mixture of the two – each one lasting 20 minutes. This will be a unique experience for the performers and audience alike.

**Sara Baras (21 March 2019):** Considered one of the best flamenco dancers and choreographers in the world, Sara Baras comes to the Abu Dhabi Festival for the first time to mark the 20th anniversary of her own ballet company, the Sara Baras Flamenco Ballet Company. The main theme running through the show is *La Farruca*, a dance that has accompanied Sara Baras throughout her 20-year career, amalgamating the virtuosity of her dance with dramatic choreographies, both traditional and modern, with the participation of guest artist, dancer Jose Serrano and a range of first-class technical resources.

**The Paris Opera Ballet (29 and 30 March 2019):** Concluding the Festival, the oldest national ballet company will bring a unique, full-length, three-act plotless ballet that uses the music of three very different and distinct composers, performed by the Padeloup Orchestra – the oldest symphony orchestra in France, conducted by Benjamin Schwartz. *Jewels* by George Balanchine was inspired by the artistry of jeweler Claude Arpels, and the music cleverly reveals the essence of each jewel. Each section of the ballet is distinct in both music and mood. *Emeralds* recalls the 19th century dances of the French Romantics, while *Rubies* is crisp and witty, and *Diamonds* recalls the order and grandeur of Imperial Russia and the Mariinsky Theater.

**Abu Dhabi Festival International:** Through collaborations with its international strategic cultural partners and other leading global cultural organisations, Abu Dhabi Festival enables the creation of cultural initiatives that bring countries together and help societies to understand



each other better. For 2019 our Arab Artists Abroad initiative will include performances in Berlin, where there will also be a co-production of Puccini's La Bohème directed by Barrie Kosky. Verdi's Aida is being performed in Madrid as a co-production between the Festival and Teatro Real where, in June, students from the Reina Sofia School of Music – one of ADMAF's strategic cultural partners – will perform a concert under the tutelage of composer, conductor and teacher, the Hungarian Peter Eötvös.

For further information on schedules, venues and performances please visit the Festival website [www.abudhabifestival.ae](http://www.abudhabifestival.ae). Abu Dhabi Festival can also be followed on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) and [Instagram](#).

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#### Abu Dhabi Festival 2019 Ticket Information

Tickets will be available to purchase at: <https://www.800tickets.com/abudhabifestival>

Early Bird Discount: All ticket prices are reduced by 25% until Thursday, 10 January 2019.

Students receive 50% discount by using the code STU50 (ID required).

TICKETED PERFORMANCES	TICKET PRICES
<b>Joyce DiDonato with Orchestra il pomo d'oro (24 January 2019)</b>	Diamond (AED 350); Gold (AED 250); Silver (AED 175)
<b>Korean National Ballet (07 March 2019)</b>	Diamond (AED 350); Gold (AED 250); Silver (AED 175)
<b>Korean Symphony Orchestra (08 March 2019)</b>	Diamond (AED 350); Gold (AED 250); Silver (AED 175)
<b>Justin Kauflin (11 March 2018) (at NYUAD Arts Centre)</b>	General Admission AED 100
<b>Tosca (15 March 2019)</b>	Diamond (AED 350); Gold (AED 250); Silver (AED 175)
<b>Sara Baras (21 March 2019)</b>	Diamond (AED 350); Gold (AED 250); Silver (AED 175)
<b>The Paris Opera Ballet (29, 30 March 2019)</b>	Diamond (AED 350); Gold (AED 250); Silver (AED 175)

#### About Abu Dhabi Festival

Patron: H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, UAE Minister for Tolerance



Founded in 2004, the Abu Dhabi Festival was held initially under the patronage of the then Minister of Information and Culture (and now Minister of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation) H.H. Sheikh Abdullah bin Zayed Al Nahyan. This was followed from 2007 to 2011 with the patronage of H.H. Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi and Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces. Today, the Festival is held under the patronage of H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, UAE Minister for Tolerance.

The Abu Dhabi Festival is now acknowledged to be among the world's best, successfully positioning Abu Dhabi as a cultural destination and the region's leading celebration of creativity and the arts. Reflecting the vision of the UAE capital as an international cultural crossroads, the Abu Dhabi Festival is rooted in the principles of the country's founding father, the late Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahayan: tolerance, respect and enlightenment. As a thriving metropolis that places art, education and culture to the fore, the Festival plays an intrinsic role by further expanding the boundaries of creativity and innovation through the arts. Through its Headline Programme as well as youth platforms and community initiatives, 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.

Strengthened by a growing network of 30 international partners, each year, the Festival brings audiences together to enjoy unique experiences that testify to our common humanity and the deep bonds we share. Always growing, always innovating, it brings the best of the world to Abu Dhabi and takes the very best of Abu Dhabi to the world.

For more information please visit our website at: [www.abudhabifestival.ae](http://www.abudhabifestival.ae)

#### **About the Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation**

*Patron: H.E. Sheikh Nahayan Mubarak Al Nahayan, UAE Minister for Tolerance*

Founded in 1996, ADMAF is one of the oldest, not-for-profit cultural organisations in the Arabian Gulf. Pioneering new artistic practices, it seeks to deepen global cross-cultural dialogue and inspire a renewed interest in the creativity of the UAE and Arab world. Often in partnership with leading national and international institutions, it delivers multidisciplinary initiatives for people of all ages, backgrounds and nationalities through the Abu Dhabi Festival, year-round youth platforms and community programmes.

For more information, please visit [www.admaf.org](http://www.admaf.org)