

The Palestine Youth Orchestra (PYO)



The *Palestine Youth Orchestra* (PYO) was established in 2004 by the *Edward Said National Conservatory of Music* (ESNCM), with the vision of bringing together young Palestinian musicians from around the world in a high-quality orchestral ensemble.

Over its first decade, the PYO has performed in Arab countries (Jordan – Amman, Jarash; Lebanon – *Beitiddine Festival*; Syria; Bahrein and Palestine) and Europe (Italy – *Ravello Festival*, *Teatro Carlo Felice* in Genoa, *Conservatorio Santa Cecilia* in Rome; Greece – *Athens Megaron Mousikis*; Germany – *Rundfunk Berlin-Brandenburg*).

The members of the PYO and the 2015 tour in France



Each year, up to eighty musicians aged 13 to 26 share, within the PYO, an experience which is enriching at both a musical and human level.

Participants range from young music students of Palestinian music institutions to advanced students studying outside Palestine, from high-level amateurs to young professional musicians residing in Palestine or elsewhere.

The exchange programs and partnerships which the ESNMCM has established with institutions in other countries, allow a number of young foreign musicians to join the tours of the Orchestra. Sharing their respective cultural richness often leads to long-lasting friendships amongst members of the orchestra. Such was the case in the 2012 PYO tour of Italy which saw the participation of 20 musicians from the conservatoires of Rome and Genoa.

The 2015 tour in France will see a close cooperation with conservatoires in Aix-en-Provence, Lyon, Aubervilliers - La Courneuve and Toulouse. During a one-week residency at the *Grand Théâtre de Provence*, the PYO will be in Aix-en-Provence alongside the *Orchestre Français des Jeunes* (OFJ – French Youth Orchestra).

Expert and diversified coaching

The PYO's orchestral sections are coached by musicians who perform and teach with leading ensembles and music conservatoires from across the world.

English conductor Sian Edwards, Head of Conducting at the *Royal Academy of Music* in London, has regularly conducted the PYO throughout its first decade.

In 2012 a partnership was established between the ESNM and the prestigious *Oslo Philharmonic*. For its 2015 tour in France, the PYO's sections' coaching will be entrusted to members of that orchestra whilst the baton will be handed to the young French conductor **Nicolas Simon**.

Unique programming

Throughout its first decade, the PYO has established its reputation as a leading promoter of Palestinian and Arabic orchestral music. The Orchestra has commissioned new music by leading composers from the Arab world and has recently worked with composers such as Marcel Khalife, Kinan Azmeh, Ahmad Al-Khatib, Maias Al-Yamani, Salim Dada, Issa Boulos, Roger Johansson, Rima Tarazi and John Bisharat.

Alongside Arabic music, the PYO programming comprises major works of the Western symphonic repertoire. Recent performances have presented music by Haydn, Beethoven, Verdi, Wagner, Dvorak, Rimsky-Korsakov, Brahms, Berlioz, Saint-Saens, Tchaikovsky, Shostakovich, Copland, Gershwin and Piazzolla.

The eclectic 2015 programme will have at its center Tchaikovsky's *2nd Symphony*, *Baalbeck* by Naji Hakim (French premiere; commissioned by the 2015 Baalbeck International Festival) and the participation of Palestinian-Japanese soprano Mariam Tamari singing arias by Gounod and Verdi.

Meet the orchestra:

Trailer (Anne Renardet – 2013): <https://vimeo.com/115788492>

PYO Athens (excerpts):

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/mlr65fdblmhxxg/Athens%202010.mpeg?n=112816923>

2015 PYO tour – France, 17 - 29 August

Dates and Locations

- 17-21 August, Aix-en-Provence: Rehearsals, residency at the CRR and *Grand Théâtre de Provence*
 - 21 August: **Chamber/Arabic ensembles open air concerts**
- 22-24 August, Paris/Aubervilliers: Rehearsals at the CRR 93
 - 23 August: **Chamber/Arabic ensembles concert** at *Notre-Dame des Vertus* (Aubervilliers)
- 25, 26 August, Paris: **PYO concerts 1 and 2**, *Auditorium Marcel Landowski*, rue de Madrid
- 28 August, Lyon: **PYO concert 3**, *Grand Amphithéâtre Romain de Fourvière* (18:30)
- 29 August, Aix-en-Provence: **PYO concert 4**, *Grand Théâtre de Provence* (20:30)

Artistic team

- Conductor – Nicolas Simon <http://simon-nicolas.blogspot.com/>
- Soprano – Mariam Tamari <http://mariamtamari.com/>
- Coaching: *Oslo Philharmonic* + Professors from French conservatoires partners of the *Edward Said National Conservatory of Music*

Repertoire

- H. Berlioz – *King Lear Overture*
- C. Gounod – « Je veux vivre », from *Roméo et Juliette* (Soprano: Mariam Tamari)
- G. Verdi – « È strano...Sempre libera », from *La Traviata* (Soprano: Mariam Tamari)
- Naji Hakim: *Baalbeck* (French premiere; commissioned by the 2015 Baalbeck International Festival)
- P.I. Tchaikovsky – *Symphony No. 2*

Around the concerts of the Orchestra, more cultural exchanges

Many PYO members, besides their practice of western orchestral instruments, are used to performing Arabic music, often on traditional instruments such as the Nay, Oud, Qanoun, Buzuq or Arabic percussions. The orchestra can therefore be divided into smaller ensembles to enhance the cultural exchange and offer practical music workshops of the young musicians' respective traditions. For the 2015 tour in France, a number of **pedagogical actions** are being studied in coordination with French partner institutions.

Furthermore, a **round table** centered on the role of Culture in the Palestinian socio-political context will be organized in Paris in coordination with UNESCO and the *Institut du Monde Arabe* with the participation of Ambassador Elias Sanbar (Permanent Delegate of Palestine to UNESCO), Mr Metin Ardit (Special Envoy for Intercultural Dialogue, UNESCO), Mr Costa Gavras (film director).

Budget: 200,000 USD

For more information, please visit the following pages:

Palestine Youth Orchestra web page: <http://ncm.birzeit.edu/en/palestine-youth-orchestra>

- Article by Tariq Shadid: <http://occupiedpalestine.wordpress.com/2013/03/22/palestine-youth-orchestra-a-bridge-to-the-world-by-docjazzmusic/>
- Article by Noam Ben Zeev (Haaretz): <http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/today-an-orchestra-tomorrow-a-palestinianstate-1.335299>
- *PYO* at Santa Cecilia (Rome, 2012):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tUIz1hxftqg>
- *PYO* at the Beitiddine Festival (Lebanon, 2009):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ACAPNUsP9I>
- *PYO* in Amman (Jordan, 2009):
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xvmQ-BX-hBw>

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