



THE DESERT ROSE SYMPHONY PREMIERS AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF QATAR

Commemorative symphony by Syrian American composer and pianist
Malek Jandali marks the 10-year anniversary of Years of Culture Initiative
Malek Jandali is named Qatar Museums' honorary Composer-in-Residence

Doha, Qatar, 30 October, 2022 — Tonight, the highly anticipated Desert Rose symphony, composed by Syrian-American composer Malek Jandali, premiered to the world at the National Museum of Qatar. The performance marked the 10-year anniversary of the Years of Culture initiative, a platform for exchange and collaboration connecting cultures and continents through annual bilateral exchanges. The symphony and anniversary celebrations were attended by Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani and Ambassadors of the many countries that partnered with the Years of Culture since its inception in 2012, including Japan (2012), UK (2013), Brazil (2014), Türkiye (2015), China (2016), Germany (2017), Russia (2018), India (2019), France (2020), USA (2021), the MENASA region this year, and other countries.

Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Chairperson of Qatar Museums, said: "When Qatar won the rights to host the FIFA World Cup, we mapped out a Years of Culture plan to bring the world to Qatar and Qatar to the world. Ever since, we have joined with another nation each year for a far-reaching program of bilateral cultural exchange. Strengthening relationships with the partner nations and fostering mutual understanding between the people of the two countries, the Years of Culture helped us show the best of ourselves, carrying us toward the goals of the Qatar National Vision. This year, we are at last welcoming everyone to the World Cup and celebrating a Year of Culture with all the nations of the MENASA region. I am truly thankful for their support and grateful to the Ambassadors and officials who have joined together to realize our vision."

The Desert Rose symphony was performed by the Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra with Grammy-nominated guest conductor Alastair Willis. The sold-out public performance of the symphony will take place on 31 October 2022. Although tickets are sold out, fans can listen to the symphony for free on AppleMusic and Spotify. Copies of the album are also available at all Qatar Museums gift shops.

Director of Cultural Diplomacy Aisha Al Attiya said: "The Years of Culture initiative is based on the idea that beautiful things happen when cultures connect. Malek Jandali was able to weave a beautiful musical tapestry with authentic Middle Eastern melodies that honors and preserves his own Syrian heritage and now the heritage of Qatar. We are honored by the support of all our international partners and eager to grow this powerful group for years to come, starting with Indonesia as our official Years of Culture partner country for 2023."

"Through this timely partnership with Years of Culture, I have the honor of presenting Qatar's musical traditions on the global stage," said Malek Jandali. "Together, we are contributing our rich Arab heritage to the lexicon of classical music and the progression of cultural modernity. We welcome orchestras around the world to join our symphony of peace, unity, and humanity."

For his support and contribution to the preservation of cultural heritage, Malek Jandali was named as Qatar Museums' new honorary Composer-in-Residence. The symphony is the

culmination of more than four years of research and exploration, during which Jandali entrenched himself in the sounds and landscapes of Qatar, to preserve and present Qatari cultural heritage and traditions on the global stage.

The Desert Rose is inspired by nature's desert rose, which form over millennia through the interaction of minerals, sand, and water in regions such as Qatar—a land of desert and sea. This wonder of nature is also the basis for Jean Nouvel's spectacular design of the National Museum of Qatar (NMoQ), a stunning structure of interlocking discs that tells the story of Qatar from the natural history of its origins through its cultural developments to the cutting-edge technologies and international allure of today. The Desert Rose symphony takes its inspiration from both "desert roses," transforming them into a consummate orchestral work that preserves and extends the rich heritage of the region. The symphony is also a reference to the flag of Qatar, with its nine-movements—each based on an iconic element of Qatari culture—evoking the nine-point serrated line on the flag.

Like its inspirations, The Desert Rose symphony harbors an elaborate interlocking structure. Bookmarked in A-flat major, in which key the first and last movements end, the Symphony comprises three interlaced musical forms. One is a Qatari symphonic suite based on traditional folk music and dances using the principal of contrast: Movements II, III, V and VII. Second is a traditional "old-fashioned" symphony of four Movements I, IV, VI and IX. The third combines the first two "symphonies" with Movement VIII, which brings about the grandiose conclusion of The Desert Rose.

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About Years of Culture

Culture is one of the most effective tools to bring people closer together, encourage dialogue, and deepen understanding between nations.

Under the leadership of its Chairperson Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, Qatar Museums (QM) developed the annual "Years of Culture" initiative — an international cultural exchange that deepens understanding between nations and their people. Though formal programming lasts only one year, the ties of friendship that are strengthened and formed are long-lasting.

In celebration of its 10th anniversary, the 2022 Year of Culture will offer programming from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia (MENASA).

The Qatar-MENASA Year of Culture 2022 will include countries and communities from: Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Bahrain, Bhutan, Egypt, India, Iraq, Iran, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Sri Lanka, Türkiye, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

Qatar-MENASA Year of Culture 2022 has been developed in collaboration with leading organizations in Qatar, including Doha Film Institute, Education Above All, Katara Cultural Village, Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Qatar Charity, Qatar Football Association, Qatar Foundation, Qatar Museums, Qatar National Library, Qatar National Tourism Council, Qatar Olympic Committee, Supreme Committee for Delivery & Legacy, with assistance from Doha-based embassies of participating countries.

Previous Years of Culture have included: Qatar-Japan 2012, Qatar-UK 2013, Qatar-Brazil 2014, Qatar-Turkey 2015, Qatar-China 2016, Qatar-Germany 2017, Qatar-Russia 2018,

Qatar-India 2019, Qatar-France 2020, and Qatar-USA 2021. Past sponsors include **Qatar Airways**, Vodafone, Qatar Gas, Shell, Ooredoo, Shangri-La Hotel and Resorts, Lulu Group International, Qatar Financial Centre, Qatar Petroleum, and ExxonMobil.

About Qatar Museums

Qatar Museums (QM), the nation's preeminent institution for art and culture, provides authentic and inspiring cultural experiences through a growing network of museums, heritage sites, festivals, public art installations, and programmes. QM preserves, restores, and expands the nation's cultural offerings and historical sites, sharing art and culture from Qatar, the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia (MENASA) region with the world and enriching the lives of citizens, residents, and visitors.

Under the patronage of His Highness the Amir, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and led by its Chairperson, Her Excellency Sheikha Al Mayassa bint Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, QM has made Qatar a vibrant centre for the arts, culture, and education in the Middle East and beyond. QM is integral to the goal of developing an innovative, diverse, and progressive nation, bringing people together to ignite new thinking, spark critical cultural conversations, educate and encourage environmental stewardship and sustainable practices, and amplify the voices of Qatar's people. Since its founding in 2005, QM has overseen the Museum of Islamic Art and MIA Park, Mathaf: Arab Museum of Modern Art, the National Museum of Qatar, QM Gallery Al Riwaq, QM Gallery Katara, 3-2-1 Qatar Olympic and Sports Museum, and Dadu, Children's Museum of Qatar.

Through its newly created Creative Hub, QM also initiates and supports projects—such as the Fire Station Artist in Residence, the Tasweer Qatar Photo Festival and the creative hub for innovation, fashion and design M7—that nurture artistic talent and create opportunities to build a strong and sustainable cultural infrastructure.

Animating everything that Qatar Museums does is an authentic connection to Qatar and its heritage, a steadfast commitment to inclusivity and accessibility, and a belief in creating value through invention.

About Qatar Creates

Qatar Creates curates, celebrates, and promotes cultural activities within Qatar. Working with partners in museums, film, fashion, hospitality, cultural heritage, performing arts, and the private sector in Qatar, the Qatar Creates platform amplifies the voice of Qatar's creative industries, directly connecting audiences to events.

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