



AGA KHAN MUSIC AWARDS

2019 Aga Khan Music Awards Laureates and Finalists announced

*Pioneering music prize recognises exceptional achievement
in the preservation and revitalisation of Muslim musical heritage*



Lisbon, Portugal, 21 March 2019 – The Master Jury of the Aga Khan Music Awards has announced laureates and finalists for the Awards’ inaugural cycle. The Music Awards were established by His Highness the Aga Khan to recognise exceptional creativity, promise, and enterprise in music performance, creation, education, preservation and revitalisation in societies across the world in which Muslims have a significant presence. Laureates are to share a USD 500,000 prize fund, and will also collaborate with the Music Awards to expand the impact of their work and develop their careers.

A three-day celebration of the Awards will be hosted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation in Lisbon, Portugal from 29-31 March. Finalists for the Award in Performance will perform for a live audience, including the Master Jury, following which the laureate in Performance will be announced at an Award ceremony on the evening of 31 March.

In addition to Performance, award domains include music Creation; Education; Preservation, Revitalisation and Dissemination; Social Inclusion, and Distinguished and Enduring Contributions to Music. A special Patron’s Award will also be conferred.

The 9 laureates and 14 finalists come from 13 countries across Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Europe, and North America and represent diverse forms of professional achievement:

- **Creation:** Azerbaijani composer and pianist [Franghiz AliZadeh](#), who has produced a prolific body of classical concert music that draws inspiration from Azerbaijan’s venerable musical and literary traditions.
- **Education:** [The Omnibus Ensemble](#), based in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, where they are working to create an artistic rapprochement between local classical *maqom* traditions and languages of contemporary music.
- **Social Inclusion:** [Badiaa Bouhrizi](#), also known by her stage name Neysatu, a singer-songwriter and composer from Tunisia who has used her musical talent to promote social justice and the values of pluralism and democracy.
- **Preservation, Revitalisation, Dissemination:** [Farhod Halimov](#), a singer, multi-instrumentalist, and composer from Samarkand, Uzbekistan who is preserving the traditional classical song repertoire of Samarkand; and [The Gurminj Museum of Musical Instruments](#), in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, which is preserving and revitalising the musical heritage of Central Asian peoples and cultures, and, in particular, the Pamiri Ismaili musical culture of Tajikistan.
- **Distinguished and Enduring Contributions to Music:** [Oumou Sangaré](#), a celebrated Malian singer-songwriter known for her commitment to the training and career development of young people in the music professions; [Ballake Sissoko](#), a Malian *kora* player and composer who has developed the art of the *kora* in ways that are creative and innovative while also firmly rooted in tradition; and [Dariush Talai](#), an Iranian *tar* and *setar* player, musicologist, composer, and educator, who is being recognised for his exceptional commitment to transmitting the classical performance tradition of the *tar* through his diverse activities as an artist, educator, and scholar.

A special **Patron’s Award** is to be conferred on [Mohammad Reza Shajarian](#) in recognition of his enduring contribution to the musical heritage of humanity, his peerless musical mastery, and his sustained social impact as a performer and teacher, both within Iran and beyond its borders.

Finalists for the Award in Performance are:

- [Ahmad Al Khatib](#), *oud* (Palestine)
- [Shahou Andalibi](#), Persian *ney* (Iran)
- [Nai Barghouti](#), vocal and flute (Palestine)
- [Huda Asfour](#), *oud* and *qanun* (Palestine)
- [Sougata Roy Chowdhury](#), *sarod* (India)
- [Burak Kaynarca](#), *oud* (Turkey)
- [Asin Khan Langa](#), vocal and *sarangi* (India)
- [Ejaz Sher Ali Khan](#), vocal and harmonium (Pakistan)
- [Arash Mohafez](#), *santur* (Iran)
- [Abeer Nehme](#), vocal (Lebanon)
- [Reza Parvizade](#), *kamancheh* (Iran)
- [Mohamad Osman](#), *oud* and *buzuq* (Syria)
- [Mustafa Said](#), *oud* (Egypt)
- [Nasim Siabishahrivar](#), vocal (Iran)

Full biographies of laureates and finalists are available in the [AKMA Brochure](#).

The Aga Khan Music Awards **Master Jury** includes:

- Jean During: Ethnomusicologist, Senior Research Fellow *emeritus*, Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique
- David Harrington: Founding member and first violinist, Kronos Quartet
- Salima Hashmi: Painter and curator, former principal, National College of Arts, Lahore
- Nouri Iskandar: Composer, musicologist, former director, Arab Institute of Music, Aleppo
- Akram Khan: Choreographer and artistic director, Akram Khan Company

Full biographies of Master Jury members are available in the [AKMA brochure](#)

To ensure impartiality in the Awards nomination and selection process, individuals and projects affiliated with His Highness the Aga Khan, the agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, or members of the Awards Steering Committee, Secretariat, and Master Jury, were deemed ineligible for consideration.

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NOTE

The *Aga Khan Music Awards* (AKMA) emerged from the Aga Khan Music Initiative (AKMI), an interregional music and arts education programme with worldwide performance, outreach, mentoring and artistic production activities. Launched to support talented musicians and music educators working to preserve, transmit, and further develop their musical heritage in contemporary forms, the Music Initiative began its work in Central Asia, subsequently expanding its cultural development activities to include artistic communities and audiences in the Middle East, North Africa, and South Asia.

The Initiative promotes the revitalisation of cultural heritage both as a source of livelihood for musicians and as a means to strengthen pluralism in nations where it is challenged by social, political, and economic constraints. Its projects have included publication of a comprehensive textbook, *The Music of Central Asia* (Indiana University Press, 2016), a 10-volume CD-DVD anthology, *Music of Central Asia*, co-produced with Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, a worldwide performance and outreach program that nurtures “East-East” as well as “East-West” musical collaborations, and a network of music schools and centres that develop innovative music curricula and curriculum materials in the Music Initiative’s regions of activity. (<https://www.akdn.org/akmi>).

Aga Khan Music Awards Secretariat and Aga Khan Music Initiative (AKMI) management

Fairouz Nishanova, Director

Theodore Levin, Senior Consultant

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/press-release/2019-aga-khan-music-awards-laureates-and-finalists-announced>