

**Remarks by Dr Isabel Mota, President of the Gulbenkian Foundation  
at the inaugural event of the Aga Khan Music Awards  
Lisbon, Portugal, 29 March 2019**

Your Highness Karim Aga Khan,  
Members of the Aga Khan Family,  
Mr President of the Administrative Supreme Court,  
Distinguished Members of the Government,  
Doutor Jorge Sampaio (former President of the  
Portuguese Republic),  
Dr Francisco Balsemão (former Prime Minister),  
Distinguished guests,  
Dear Colleague Teresa Gouveia,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,



On behalf of the Board of Calouste Gulbenkian it's my privilege to welcome Your Highness Karim Aga Khan and Family.

Let me begin by stating the great honour for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to co-host the first edition of the Aga Khan Music Awards, an initiative which I believe will be of paramount importance for the recognition of tradition-inspired contemporary music in cultures shaped by Islam but also for the intercultural dialogue.

This is a time of great pressure. Once again in the history of humanity, we see religious and cultural identities being manipulated in order to foment violence and intolerance towards others and their cultural heritage. We need a world in which different identities and cultures are respected and where we can share an idea of common good.

The Aga Khan Development Network, through the Aga Khan Foundation in Portugal, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation have been strategic partners for decades, in different domains, especially in the social arena, but also in the arts and its ability to foster more inclusive and tolerant societies.

Our institutions share a common agenda and common values.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is therefore thrilled to be a sponsor of such a relevant initiative, especially on the occasion of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our Founder, himself an offspring of different cultures. Calouste Gulbenkian was an Armenian born in Istanbul, educated in France and in London, who became a British citizen and ended his lifetime in Portugal. Calouste Gulbenkian's long path, from his childhood in Istanbul to the latter days of his life in Lisbon, shaped his personality and influenced the Foundation that he decided to create in Portugal as a Portuguese institution. Calouste Gulbenkian was a perfect example of the synthesis of the eastern culture of his birth and origins, and the western culture in which he was educated and lived. Naturally, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's activities reflect these characteristics of the Founder's personality and aim to support efforts that foster the universal values of the human condition, the respect for diversity and difference and a culture of tolerance.

To finish, let me say a special word to my Colleague Teresa Gouveia and her team headed by Risto Nieminen, for their vision and commitment in making “Music Gulbenkian” a reason for all of us to be proud of.

Music is a language of tolerance and I am sure that these three days will be a demonstration of tolerance as well as artistic brilliance, as our friend Prince Aryn will explain in a few moments.

I wish you all an unforgettable evening. Prince Aryn, the floor is yours. Thank you.

Read online: <https://www.akdn.org/speech/dr-isabel-mota/inaugural-event-aga-khan-music-awards>