Aga Khan Trust for Culture creates the Aga Khan Music Programme

Geneva, Switzerland, 27 October 2020 - The Aga Khan Trust for Culture, the cultural agency of the Aga Khan Development Network, has announced the creation of the Aga Khan Music Programme (AKMP). Effective immediately, all existing activities of the Aga Khan Music Initiative and Aga Khan Music Awards are consolidated under the new programme, whose headquarters will remain in Geneva.

The mission of the Aga Khan Music Programme is to foster the development of living musical heritage in societies across the world where Muslims have a significant presence, and disseminate this work internationally through collaborations with exceptionally creative musicians, artists, educators, and arts presenters.

AKMP will assume the former Music Initiative’s leadership role as an innovator in music and arts education; music commissioning, production and publication; and musical heritage documentation and revitalisation. Aligning the activities of the Music Initiative and Music Awards under a single umbrella programme will create synergies among projects and people. Laureates of the Music Awards will be incorporated into the music programme’s existing education network. A newly created music publishing arm will manage intellectual property rights for recordings, publications, educational materials, music compositions, and films developed by or featuring educators and artists across AKMP’s areas of activity.

Speaking at the inaugural ceremony of the Aga Khan Music Awards, in 2019, His Highness the Aga Khan noted that “Music can be a strong cultural anchor, deepening a sense of community, identity and heritage, while simultaneously reaching out in powerful ways to people of different backgrounds.” Echoing these sentiments, Prince Amyn Aga Khan added, “At a time when strengthening tolerance and pluralism has become an acute worldwide priority, music is one of the arts that offers a medium for reaching, involving and uniting global audiences by engendering emotions which we all share as human beings.” Fairouz Nishanova, director of the Aga Khan Music Programme, praised the talent of the programme’s global network of performing artists and educators: “It is an extraordinary privilege to work with the gifted musicians and teachers who, through a range of innovative musical languages, are striving to connect contemporary listeners to the power of tradition and cultural heritage.”
The Aga Khan Music Programme will comprise five interrelated programmatic domains:

- Aga Khan Music Awards
- Education and Mentoring
- Creation and Performance
- Production, Documentation, and Dissemination
- Online Projects and Digital Archive

**Aga Khan Music Awards**

The triennial Music Awards, established by His Highness the Aga Khan in 2018, 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. The inaugural Music Awards ceremony took place in Lisbon, Portugal from 29-31 March 2019, co-hosted by the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation and the Lisbon Municipality. Watch the short film about the creation of Music Awards and the inaugural Music Awards ceremony: [https://youtu.be/9B8Ol4i5nA0](https://youtu.be/9B8Ol4i5nA0).

**Education and Mentoring**

Music education was a core element of the Aga Khan Music Initiative and remains central to AKMP’s efforts to support the revitalisation, further development, and transmission of Muslim musical heritage in contemporary artistic languages inspired but not constrained by tradition.

**Creation and Performance**

From young school children to aspiring young professionals, venerated master musicians, and laureates of the Aga Khan Music Awards, individual artists, ensembles, and arts communities in the network of the Aga Khan Music Programme are offered opportunities to create and perform music that embodies contemporary perspectives on musical heritage. The music of AKMP’s own performing ensemble, the Aga Khan Master Musicians, is inspired by their deep roots in the cultures of the Middle East and Mediterranean Basin, South Asia, Central Asia, and China. These artists also serve as preeminent teachers, mentors, and curators.

**Production, Documentation, and Dissemination**

AKMP inherited the Aga Khan Music Initiative’s distinguished portfolio of audio and video recordings, publications, films, and educational materials representing two decades of work by a broad network of specialists. Supported by a new music publishing entity that manages the intellectual property rights of participating artists and educators, AKMP will continue to document, produce, and disseminate the work of outstanding musicians in its regions of activity.

**Online Projects and Digital Archive**

From the time of its establishment in 2000, the Music Initiative comprehensively documented its work through audio recording, film and video, photography, and print publications. Only a small percentage of this material has been published or made available online, while much of it remains unseen and unheard. A significant online education project and digital archive currently under development will include a fully searchable subscription-based database consisting of AKMP-owned audio and video assets and a collection of instructional tutorials. Online tutorials will feature a wide array of instructors, instruments, and themes suited to students of different ages and backgrounds, all using innovative lesson-delivery technology that
syncs audio, video and music notation into a single interface. Several educational institutions in North America, Europe and Central Asia will test this new educational collection. AKMP’s new music publishing entity will own the rights to the tutorials, allowing for an “open access” policy.

An initial archive of films and videos produced by the Aga Khan Music Initiative is available on the AKMP Vimeo and YouTube sites:
https://vimeo.com/akmp
https://www.youtube.com/user/agakhanmusic

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