



AGA KHAN MUSIC  
AWARDS

## 2022 Master Jury Bios

### **H.E. Shaikha Hala Bint Mohammed Al Khalifa**

A practising artist and Director General of the Culture and Arts Directorate at the Bahrain Authority for Culture and Antiquities, Hala Al Khalifa earned a BA in Fine Arts from Tufts University and The Museum School of Fine Arts (USA) and an MA in Fine Arts from the UCL Slade School (UK). In addition to teaching art at the university level and taking part in local, regional and international art exhibitions as both an organiser and participant, she has held various positions in the arts departments of cultural institutions that carried responsibilities related to exhibitions, publications, museum education and the advancement of the artistic landscape within communities. In 2020, Al Khalifa was awarded Italy's Ordine della Stella d'Italia in recognition of her efforts to enhance relations between Bahrain and Italy through the promotion of culture and art.

### **Frangiz Ali-Zadeh**

Azerbaijani composer and pianist Frangiz Ali-Zadeh has produced a prolific body of classical concert music that draws inspiration from Azerbaijan's venerable musical and literary traditions. A graduate of Baku Conservatory, Ali-Zadeh has long served as a bridge between Baku's musical establishment and leading composers, performers and musical institutions in Europe and North America. Her compositions continue to be performed regularly in Azerbaijan and internationally, including most recently the premiere performances of two large works, *NIZAMI Cosmology*, by the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, and *Summer Impression*, by the Mitteldeutsche Kammerphilharmonie. Ali-Zadeh is a 2019 winner of the Aga Khan Music Award for Music Creation. She has served as chairman of the Composers' Union of Azerbaijan since 2007, and currently serves as artistic director of the Silk Road International Music Festival in Sheki, Azerbaijan.

### **Divya Bhatia**

Divya Bhatia, based in Mumbai, is an independent festival programmer and producer, performing arts consultant and actor. Educated in India, the United Kingdom and Canada, he serves as Artistic Director and Co-Producer of Jodhpur RIFF (Rajasthan International Folk Festival), India's leading folk-jazz-roots music festival in Rajasthan; Artistic Consultant at ComplexCity, a festival in Mumbai produced by Youth for Unity and Voluntary Action (YUVA); visiting faculty for Applied Theatre at London's Royal Central School of Speech and Drama and India partner for their International Collaborative Outreach programme; and faculty at the South Asia Festivals Academy (British Council). He also regularly presents and produces international music and theatre projects worldwide. He has been a Hindustani classical *tabla* player and a film actor, including in the 2009 film *Paa* and the 2015 film *Talvar* (released internationally as *Guilty*).

### **Rachel Cooper**

Rachel Cooper is an arts producer, global arts advocate, performing arts curator, festival director and cultural diplomat. Since 1993, she has been affiliated with Asia Society/New York, where she has developed pioneering projects in global arts and culture with a special focus on Asia. Following

undergraduate and graduate studies at UCLA in Ethnic Arts and Dance Ethnology, Cooper lived in Indonesia for six years, where she pursued her interest in Balinese and Javanese *gamelan*, shadow puppetry and dance. At Asia Society, she has curated and presented music, performed poetry, theatre, film and intercultural projects representing all parts of Asia, and has been a strong and abiding advocate for international cooperation in facilitating the movement of performing artists across national borders.

### **Akram Khan**

Akram Khan is a celebrated British dancer and choreographer and serves as Artistic Director of the Akram Khan Company. Born in London in 1974, Khan's early training was in Bengali folk dance and the north Indian classical Kathak style. After a period with Anne Teresa de Keersmaeker's X-Group project for young choreographers in Brussels, Khan returned to London and founded his own dance company in 2000. In 2002, he created his first full-length work and began touring internationally, becoming known both for his solo work as well as his collaborations with world-class artists from other disciplines, including ballerina Sylvie Guillem, visual artist Anish Kapoor and writer Hanif Kureishi. He has worked closely with the English National Ballet and in recent years has moved into television documentaries, including the five-part series "Why Do We Dance?" (Sky Arts, 2019) and an episode for the Netflix docu-series *MOVE*. Akram Khan was awarded an MBE for services to dance in 2005.

### **Yurdal Tokcan**

Yurdal Tokcan is a Turkish oud player, guitarist and composer who bridges the worlds of classical Ottoman *makam*, Sufi music and contemporary cosmopolitan musical styles and genres. Born in 1966 and educated at Istanbul Technical University's Turkish Music State Conservatory (Türk Musikisi Devlet Konservatuvarı), he began his professional career as a member of the Istanbul State Turkish Music Ensemble, founded in 1987 by revered *tanbur* player Necdet Yaşar under the aegis of Turkey's Ministry of Culture and Tourism. In 2015, Yurdal Tokcan became the ensemble's artistic director. He is known not only for his mastery of the oud, but for his explorations of intercultural composition and performance in the domains of both "East-West" and "East-East" collaborations, in particular through his adaptation of oud technique to the fretless guitar. Of his many recordings released in Turkey, several have also been released internationally, most notably *Passion (Hisleniş)*, an album of solo oud improvisations.

### **Dhafer Youssef**

Dhafer Youssef is a Tunisian oud master, vocalist and composer known for his visionary explorations of jazz, avant-garde and world music. Youssef has lived in Europe since 1990 and collaborated extensively with notable musicians and artists across the world, including tabla player Zakir Hussain, multi-instrumentalist Marcus Miller, double bassist Dave Holland, Norwegian guitarist Eivind Aarset and jazz pianist Herbie Hancock. A steady stream of album releases has documented these collaborations as well as his interest in electro-acoustic music, amongst the best known of which are *Electric Sufi* (2001), *Digital Prophecy* (2003), *Divine Shadows* (2005), *Abu Nawas Rhapsody* (2010), *Birds Requiem* (2013), *Diwan of Beauty and Odd* (2016) and *Sounds of Mirrors* (2018). His contributions to building tolerance through music were recognised in 2006 by a BBC Radio 3 World Music Award and in 2017 by an Edison Music Award.