

**SCHEDULE OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE (Terra Santa Monastery – Beirut January 11, 2020)  
with SPEECH OF BR. RICCARDO, co-director of the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week**

FR. FIRAS LUTFI, Minister of St. Paul's Region (Lebanon, Syria, Jordan) in the Custody of the Holy Land, Superior of the Franciscan Monastery in Beirut Gemmmaize

PRESENTATION BY FR. KHALIL RAHME, director of the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week

BR. RICCARDO CERIANI, co-director of the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week – INTERVENTION 1

First of all I would like to inform that all information can be found on the festival **website** [www.solfestival.org](http://www.solfestival.org) and on the **Facebook page** "SOL Festival" and other social media. On the **You Tube channel** "SOL Semaine de l'Orgue au Liban" you can watch some videos of the concerts of past editions.

An important note: **free admission** to all concerts.

My name is Riccardo Ceriani and I am the Delegate for Music of the Custody of the Holy Land, the director of the Terra Sancta International Organ Festival and the co-director of the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week.

**The Terra Sancta Organ Festival** is the biggest international organ festival in the Middle East and the Levant and one of the biggest in the world, with more than 40 concerts, performed by some of the most renewed organists in the world.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week was born in 2015 from a collaboration between Notre Dame University – School of Music and the Terra Sancta Organ Festival, so that our festival has strong **local roots and at the same time an international dimension**.

In Lebanon most of festivals are limited to a specific territory: the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week is probably one of the few festivals which have the **vocation to extend throughout Lebanon**, the only festival that plans events both in Beirut and in Tripoli passing through Zouk Mosbeh, Harissa, Maayssra-Nahr Ibrahim, Ajaltoun and in the next future –we hope- Bekaa Valley and Tyr.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week has been presenting every year some of the **top organists** in the world, who usually perform in the most important international festivals, or serve as organists in the most important churches or teach in prestigious conservatories or universities. Unfortunately names of organists are not so popular like the ones of some conductors, pianists or tenors, but I could say that some of our organists represent for organ what Bocelli and Pavarotti represent for voice.

In this edition you can listen to:

the Italian organist **Fausto Caporali**, professor of organ of Turin conservatory and titular organist of Cremona cathedral (**playing January 25** in the church of the Notre Dame de Louaize monastery -Zouk Mosbeh- and **January 26** in the church of St. Anthony of Padua in Harissa);

the American organist **Russell J. Weismann**, Artistic Director of the concert series "Music @ the Monastery" in Washington D.C., director of the Capital Organ Studio and Director of Music and Organist at Georgetown University (playing **January 27** in the basilica of Notre Dame de la Medaille

Miraculose Beirut – Achrafieh and **January 28** in Tripoli El Mina at St. Francis monastery “Terra Santa”),

the French organist **Emmanuel Hocdé**, resident organist at the church of Saint Eloi in Paris (playing **January 31** in the St. Joseph church of Beirut – Monot with the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Harout Fazilian) and

last - but absolutely not least- the Austrian **Martin Haselböck**, who is considered to be one of the most distinguished representatives of Austria music and culture (**February 1** he will inaugurate the new organ in the church of Mar Zakhia in Ajaltoun and **February 2** in the National Evangelical Church of Beirut for the closing concert, which traditionally takes place here).

In the festival will perform other Lebanese musicians as Fady Jeanbart (baritone), and the soprano Mona Hallab.

In addition, is part of the festival the women vocal ensemble **La Noeva**, coming from Belgium with their organist Cindy Castillo (playing **January 30** in the Assembly Hall of the American University of Beirut) and the performance of the **Outstanding students** of the class of organ of NDU School of Music, supported by the Italian Institute of Culture of Beirut and the Custody of the Holy Land (**January 29** in the church of St. Elias monastery – Maayssra – Nahr Ibrahim).

This is a very important educational project and I will ask Fr. Khalil and doctor Monica Zecca, director of the Italian Institute of Culture, to present it.

(The pipe organ is not like a trumpet, which works even if nobody plays it in two hundred years: pipe organs need to be played and maintained, or they get out of order and lose their value, and their value is high, because they are very expensive. So, we need organists, not only for culture, not only to enjoy a specific music repertoire, not only to accompany our celebrations and solemn liturgies, but also to preserve our heritage. The joint venture between the Custody of the Holy Land and Notre Dame University School of Music in the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week and in the school of organ takes care of all these aspects).

SPEECH OF FR. KHALIL AND MONICA ZECCA

BR. RICCARDO – INTERVENTION 2

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week is a great cultural occasion that allows everyone to listen for free to a musical repertoire, to which people would not otherwise have access, since pipe organs are mainly used in churches for religious celebrations. The most prestigious, but also the rarest and most difficult to perform section of the repertoire, are the concerts for organ and orchestra. Also this year, thanks to the collaboration with the Lebanese Higher National Conservatory of Music that makes the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra available, we will have a concert for organ and orchestra.

I will ask maestro HAROUT FAZILIAN to speak to us about this collaboration and this repertoire, presenting himself the concert of Friday 31 January.

SPEECH OF MAESTRO HAROUT FAZILIAN

BR. RICCARDO – INTERVENTION 3

At the beginning of this press conference, Father Firas Lutfi mentioned a **special event** that the festival organized to commemorate the arrival of Saint Francis in the Middle East (it seems that he was also in Lebanon). This is the inaugural **concert on January 25**, which will be a **video-concert**. An Italian silent film from 1918 illustrating the life of St. Francis will be screened while the organist Fausto Caporali will provide a live commentary to the various episodes, as it was done at the beginning of cinematography. The film is titled “Brother Sun”, written by Mario Corsi and directed by Ugo Folena.

This video-concert was originally scheduled in the Catholic cathedral of St. Louis in Beirut for the inauguration of the new organ. But since there were delays in construction due to the Lebanese crisis, we moved it to Zouk Mosbeh in the church of the Notre Dame de Louaize monastery (which is also the headquarter of the school of organ). However, we will still have the **inauguration of a new organ: that of Ajaltoun**.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week plays an essential role in the organ instrument renaissance in Lebanon and it is an important incentive for organs restoration, as well as new organs installation. In particular thanks to the endorsement of Fr. Khalil Rahmeh and the Italian organ builder Saverio Anselmi Tamburini.

I will ask Fr. Khalil to speak about this situation.

FR. KHALIL – INTERVENTION 2

BR. RICCARDO – INTERVENTION 4

Time has come to begin **thanks and greetings**. First of all, we must thank the rectors of the churches, who have made churches and organs available. Every year the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week takes place after the week of prayer for Christian unity and the various churches where the festival takes place represent in small the plurality of the Church in Lebanon, both in the different expressions of the Catholic Church (Latin and Maronite churches and among the Latins we find several religious orders: Franciscans, Carmelites, Lazarists) and Churches of other Christian confessions like the National Evangelical Church of Beirut (in this regard, I want to thank like every year Father Habib Badr, who was the first to join the project of the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week).

So, the motto that I repeat every year is very true: where there is an organ there is a church and where there is a church there is a Christian community. This explains why in the Middle East organ music is perceived as Christian music even when it has nothing religious to play.

Last but not least our most due thanks go to institutional and private sponsors who continue to support our festival even in difficult times. But for these thanks and the conclusion I hand over to the festival director Fr. Khalil Rahme.

CONCLUSION OF THE PRESS CONFERENCE BY FR. KHALIL RAHME