

## LEBANESE PIPE ORGAN WEEK

(*SOL Festival — Semaine de l'Orgue au Liban*)

Edition 5: January 25 - February 2, 2020

**Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU)** and **Terra Sancta International Organ Festival** have the pleasure to present the fifth edition of the **Lebanese Pipe Organ Week** (*SOL Festival — Semaine de l'Orgue au Liban*) from **January 25** till **February 2, 2020**, featuring a selection of world top organists from Italy, USA, Belgium, France and Austria, with free admission to all concerts.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week is the sole Lebanese festival in Lebanon to highlight this monumental instrument, played by renowned international organists. The festival takes place in different churches and venues in Lebanon, giving the audience the opportunity to explore all these different textures during a one-week course.

Organ music can be considered a specific contribution of Christians to world culture, as organs are present almost exclusively in churches, especially in Lebanon and the Middle East. Lebanese Pipe Organ Week is an opportunity for everyone to listen to the greatest of musical instruments outside of its religious context.

On **Saturday January 25 at 8:00 pm**, the opening concert of the Festival takes place at the **Notre Dame de Louaize monastery** (Zouk Mosbeh) featuring the Italian organist **Fausto Caporali**, professor of organ of Turin conservatory and titular organist of Cremona cathedral. This concert will be a special commemoration of the Pilgrimage of Peace of St. Francis of Assisi to the Middle East, which took place in 1219, eight hundred years ago. An Italian silent film from 1918 illustrating the life of St. Francis will be screened while the music 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.

Caporali will also play the following day, **Sunday January 26 at 6:00 pm**, in the **church of St. Anthony of Padua** in Harissa, both with solo pieces, and accompanying the Lebanese baritone **Fady Jeanbart**.

From Washington D.C. comes the American organist **Russell J. Weismann** in order to play **Monday January 27 at 8:00 pm** in the **basilica of Notre Dame de la Medaille Miraculeuse** (Beirut – Achrafieh), next to **Viaceslav Bilia** on the trumpet. Russell is in his sixth year as Artistic Director of "Music @ the Monastery", a thriving musical series held at the Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in Washington D.C. He is also director of the Capital Organ Studio and Director of Music and Organist at Georgetown University.

The following day, **Tuesday January 28 at 7:00 pm, Russel J. Weismann** will play in Tripoli El Mina at **St. Francis monastery** "Terra Santa", accompanying the Lebanese soprano **Mona Hallab**.

Since 2015, the NDU – School of Music has been organizing a pipe organ class (the only one in Lebanon) with the support of the Italian Institute of Culture and the Custody of the Holy Land, under the guidance of the Italian organist and professor Cosimo Prontera. The **outstanding students** will perform in Maayssra (Nahr Ibrahim) **Wednesday January 29 at 8:00 pm at St. Elias monastery**.

**La Noeva Woman Vocal Ensemble** together with their organist **Cindy Castillo** comes from Belgium with an original repertoire of medieval, traditional and contemporary music. You can listen to them on **Thursday January 30 at 8:00 pm** in the **Assembly Hall** of the **American University of Beirut**.

The collaboration between the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week and the **Lebanese Higher National Conservatory of Music** allows also this year to present a great organ concert with the **Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra**, which will take place on **Friday January 31 at 8:30 pm** in the **St. Joseph church**, Beirut – Monnot. The orchestra will be conducted by **Harout Fazilian** with the French organist **Emmanuel Hocdé**, resident organist at the church of Saint Eloi in Paris.

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. This is the case of the organ of the **church of Mar Zakhia** in Ajaltoun, which will be inaugurated within the festival on **Saturday February 1 at 8:00 pm** by the great Austrian musician **Martin Haselböck**. Haselböck is considered to be one of the most distinguished representatives of Austria's music and culture. As an organist he has played in concerts under the direction of great conductors such as Claudio Abbado, Lorin Maazel, Wolfgang Sawallisch, Riccardo Muti. He is also guest conductor of leading international orchestras, appearing with the Vienna Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Deutsche Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Berlin Konzerthaus Orchestra, Weimar Staatskapelle, Dresden Philharmonic, Giuseppe Verdi Orchestra Milan, Los Angeles Philharmonic and many others. Haselböck has provided advice on the construction of numerous concert organs, such as the organ of the Golden Hall of the Vienna Music Association: it will then be very interesting to hear his opinion on the new organ of Ajaltoun.

Since the first edition, the closing concert of the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week takes place in the **National Evangelical Church of Beirut** (in front of Grand Serail), and so also this year, on **Sunday February 2 at 8:00 pm**. It was a natural choice to invite Martin Haselböck for this recital too, as the church organ (one of the best in Lebanon) is Austrian: Austrian organ with Austrian organist.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week is a co-production of **Notre Dame University** and **Terra Sancta International Organ Festival**. The festival is made possible thanks to the availability of the different venues, the collaboration with the **Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music**, the coverage of **Noursat**, the support of the **Italian Institute of Culture - Beirut**, the **Franciscan Monastery of the Holy Land in America**, **Wallonie-Bruxelles International**, **BEMO Bank**, **Marc-Henri Mainguy foundation**, the **Institut Français**, the **Embassy of Austria in Beirut**, the **Custody of the Holy Land**, the **Institut Culturel de Ajaltoun**, along with the technical sponsoring of **Tamburini organ builder**.

All information can be found on the festival website [www.solfestival.org](http://www.solfestival.org) and on the social platforms @Sol Festival.