



**Address of Fr. Khalil Rahmé
Founder of SOL Festival (Lebanese Pipe Organ Week)**

Dear honorable attendees!

Welcome to Notre Dame University, NDU.

Despite the unfavorable conditions and fate, and the intensified fears, music and its innovations shine, filling people's hearts with joy and hope in these dramatic days that our homeland is going through, when smile is fading away and joy is no longer possible, music is there to add a sense of optimism coming from Heaven, to compose for our country a melody of hope, and to spread its fragrance with invocations of faith.

Together, we launch the **eighth edition** of the only Organ week in Lebanon, which welcomes an elite group of musicians from around the world, and also with the large participation of musicians from Lebanon during seven concerts that will be held in several churches on the Lebanese territories where this instrument is available.

This festival was established in 2015 by the **TERRA SANCTA ORGAN FESTIVAL** and the School of Music at the Notre Dame University NDU, with the goal of reviving the musical legacy of the PIPE ORGAN and this is the only festival introducing this instrument.

Since 2014, several churches have begun to restore this instrument after the end of the war. Other churches inaugurated new instruments such as the Convent of Our Lady of Louaize, the Church of St. Elias Antelias, the Convent of the Carmelite Fathers in Maysarah, the Church of St. Elias El Kantari, the Evangelical School in Khirbet Kanfar, the Convent of the Franciscan Fathers in Harissa and in Tripoli El Mina, and last but not least St. Louis Church of the Capuchin Fathers (to be inaugurated in late November) in addition to St. Zakhia Church, Ajaltoun.

The Organ Festival in Lebanon is a dream and a reality: a dream because I always dreamed of holding it after returning from Italy and this came true after twenty years. With it, the school of teaching this instrument was achieved, the first in the Middle East where playing this instrument is taught. It has been attended so far by 12 students, and others traveled to continue their studies in Italy, I mean Miss Celine HJEILY at the Conservatore Potenza, through the professor COSIMO PRONTERA, with the support of the Italian Cultural Center and the Italian Embassy for the ninth consecutive year (thank you).

In the musical legacy of the Universal Church, there is a treasure of inestimable value and with the most sublime artistic expression. In the Church, the PIPE ORGAN is highly regarded as the traditional musical instrument adding splendor and fascination to the Church's festivities and attracting souls to God and Heaven. (Second Music Cultural Council).

Around 11 centuries ago until date, it is the unchallenged musical instrument for it accompanies the sound on one hand, and is considered as SOLISTE, a solo performance, because it is the greatest and

largest instrument among all musical instruments. "ORGUE", or "ORGANON" in Greek, means instrument, it was named first "ORGANA HYDRANLICA" and was then renamed "ORGANUM" .

It is an instrument that can be only found in big churches and grand theatres, indicating the Christian cultural and artistic presence of this type of music throughout the ages.

"ORGUE" has always been rightly considered the “ King of the instruments” because it recalls all the sounds of creation and resonates with the fullness of human sensations, starting with joy to sorrow, and with pride to lamentation.

The “Timbre” of the organ which differs from quiet to loud makes it an instrument superior to all others, giving a tone to all fields of human existence, thus these diverse abilities of the organ are somewhat reminiscent of the greatness and beauty of God.

1- It is an international festival for it welcomes international musicians from different countries who have excelled playing on this instrument.

2- It is a sign of ecumenical cooperation between Christian churches: “Where there is an organ there is a church, and where a church is found, there is a community of faith.”

3- Invitation is addressed to everyone to come and listen to this largest musical instrument and discover its beauty and greatness.

4- What is the purpose of this festival? To spread the organ culture in Lebanon and to provide the Lebanese musicians with the needed formation to perform on this artistic instrument.

Below, is available the program of the eighth edition of the festival, which will be held from Sunday March 19 until Sunday March 26, 2023 presenting a selection of musicians and singers, during seven concerts, in several churches and halls on the Lebanese territories.

Sunday, March 19: Opening of the festival with German musicians playing the Organ and Trumpet at the National Evangelical Church opposite the Grand Serail at 8.00 pm.

Organ: Axel Flierl

Trumpet: Georg Hiemer

Program: Handel-Bach-Purcell-Fredrak Lindberg-Gounod-Pasini-Couperin-Telemann.

Tuesday, March 21: Second concert with the Italian musician "Antonio Di Dedda"

Film “The King of Kings” 1927: A Silent Film on the Passion of the Christ

At the Carmelite Convent of the Infant Jesus of Prague in Maaysrah at 8.00 p.m.. This concert is special since the film will be accompanied by the improvisation of the Italian musician during the various events of the film, in cooperation with the Italian Cultural Center.

Wednesday, March 22: Another performance with the Italian musician “Antonio Di Dedda” at the Church of the Sacred Heart School–Freres Gemmayzeh, after the restoration of the organ damaged during the huge explosion of August 4.

Program for Composers:

J.S. Bach-L. Vierne-C. Franck-ME. Bossi-Heiller-

Improvisation on the theme B-A-C-H.

In collaboration with the Italian Cultural Centre.

Thursday, March 23: At St Zakhia Church Ajaltoun for students of the Organ School in the School of Music, in cooperation with the Italian Cultural Center.

Friday, March 24: At St Elias Church – Antelias: a special concert with the musician Victor Contreras from Mexico City and the Hymnos group led by Sister Marana Saad.

Included in the program for the first time Anton Dvorak – Ramon Noble – Jesus Lopez – Mozart (contemporary composers)

Saturday, March 25: At the American University of Beirut, Assembly Hall, under the patronage of the Minister of Culture on the occasion of the Annunciation Day, with the French musician Yves Lafargue and the group Les solistes de Beyrouth, who are participating for the first time in this festival led by Fernando Afara in a Marian program of French composers:
Poulenc-Faure-Saint-Saens-Delibes-Dubois-Bach-Gounod
Supported by the French Embassy and the French Cultural Center (thank you).

Sunday, March 26: Conclusion of the festival with the Spanish musician the Augustinian Father Pedro Alberto Sanchez at the Church of Our Lady of Louaize Convent, Zouk Mosbeh
Included in the program for the first time, Spanish composers, with the support of the Spanish Embassy. This evening will be distinguished by the participation of the Lebanese percussionist Christelle Njeim.
Program: Spanish dances- A. Cabezon- F. de Aranzo- A. Soler- Guy Bovet- Eugene Gigout

This festival would not have survived despite the circumstances that we have all endured without the absolute support of all the parties who are backing it, especially embassies, churches and halls:

- His Excellency Minister of Culture, Judge Mohammed Wissam Al-Mortada.
- The National Higher Conservatory of Music and Dr. Heba Al Qawas.
- Terra Sancta Organ Festival
- The Italian Embassy in Beirut and the Italian Cultural Center.
- The German Embassy in Beirut.
- The French Embassy in Beirut and the French Cultural Center.
- The Spanish Embassy in Beirut.
- The National Evangelical Church (Reverend Habib Bader Seddik)
- The Carmelite Order in Lebanon, especially the superior of the Infant Jesus of Prague Convent (The Carmelite Father Jean Abdo)
- Collège Sacré-Coeur, Frères, Gemmayzeh (Mr. Rodolphe Abboud)
- Church of Mar Zakhia - Ajaltoun and Ajaltoun Cultural Center. (Fr. Joseph Tohme)
- Church of St. Elias El Kantari (Monsignor Antoine Assaf).
- The American University of Beirut
- The Superior of Our Lady of Louaize Convent Father Walid Moussa.
- Marc-Henry Mainguy Foundation
- BEMO Bank
- Noursat for covering this festival since its inception until date.
- Lebanese participants for the first time: Hymnos vocal ensemble-Les solistes de Beyrouth
- Sister Marana Saad
- Lebanese musician Christelle Njeim
- Thanks to all the media and press.
- Last but not least, Students of the Organ School individually, headed by Professor Cosimo Prontera

- and Joe Daou for crafting the organ instrument.

The invitation is open to all, without exception, so that everyone can enjoy what is missing in Lebanon, and this is what we are working on consolidating in order to revive the culture in our society.