



SOL FESTIVAL 2024

Semaine de l'Orgue au Liban

Lebanese Pipe Organ Week

from 12 to 21 April 2024

9th edition

press release

(<https://solfestival.org/video-news/>)

Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) and Terra Sancta Organ Festival have the pleasure to present the ninth edition of the SOL Festival (Semaine de l'Orgue au Liban | Lebanese Pipe Organ Week) from 12 to 21 April 2024. Admission is free to all concerts. All information can be found on the festival website www.solfestival.org and on the Facebook page “@solorganfestival”.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week is the only festival in Lebanon to highlight this monumental instrument, played by renowned international organists and musicians. The festival takes place in different churches and venues in many areas of Lebanon (from Tripoli to Tyre, passing through Maysrah, Ajaltoun, Zouk Mosbeh, Beirut, up to the Beqaa valley) giving the audience the opportunity to explore different music repertoires, with free admission to all concerts. Thanks to the joint venture between Notre Dame University and Terra Sancta Organ Festival, the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week has strong local roots and, at the same time, an international dimension.

This year's program features:

- 10 concerts in nine days
- 1 concert with pipe organ & orchestra
- 1 concert with pipe organ & vocal ensemble
- 2 film-concerts with musical improvisation on the organ
- 1 cross-art concert with piano, pipe organ, live painting and poetry
- 3 concerts of chamber music (organ, violin and viola da gamba)
- 2 recitals for solo organ
- Inauguration of the new pipe organ in the Latin Cathedral of “Saint Louis des Capucins” in Beirut
- Organists, musicians and artists from Germany, Spain, Italy and Lebanon:

Vincent De Pol (Germany / Poland), pipe organ
Mathias Rehfeldt (Germany), pipe organ
Mario Mariani (Italy), piano and pipe organ
Rudy Rahme (Lebanon), live painting and poetry
Mario Rahi (Lebanon), violin
Paolo De Matthaëis (Italy), organ
Fabio Catania (Italy), viola da gamba
Aarón Ribas (Spain), pipe organ
Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra
Garo Avesian (Lebanon), conductor
Les Solistes de Beyrouth, vocal ensemble
Fernando Afara (Lebanon), conductor

- Locations:

AJALTOUN | Church of Mar Zakhia
KHIRBET QANAFAR (West Beqaa) | Johann-Ludwig-Schneller-Schule
BEIRUT | National Evangelical Church
MAYSSRAH (Nahr Ibrahim) | Church of St. Elie - Carmelite monastery
BEIRUT | American University of Beirut (AUB) Assembly Hall
BEIRUT (Gemmaizeh) | Church of St. Maroun
TRIPOLI (El Mina) | Latin Church of St. Francis – Custody of the Holy Land
BEIRUT (Downtown) | Saint Louis Latin Cathedral of the Capuchin Fathers
ZOUK MOSBEH | Church of Notre Dame de Louaizeh - OMM
TYRE | Latin Church of St. Anthony - – Custody of the Holy Land

- Thanks to:

Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music
Italian Cultural Institute
Embassy of Spain
Embassy of Germany
Custodia Terrae Sanctae - Tripoli
American University of Beirut
Ajaltoun Centre Culturel
Marc -Henri Mainguy Foundation
BEMO Bank
Comin Insurance
Charqouna
Jad Hamawi jewelry – Tripoli
Noursat/Telemumiere
Charity TV
Comin
Joe Daou with Tamburini Organ Factory
Eugenio Maria Fagiani, artistic advisor

- Founders and producers:

Notre Dame University / School of Music
Custodia Terrae Sanctae / Terra Sancta Organ Festival

ATTACHMENTS:
The program, The musicians

SOL – SEMAINE DE L'ORGUE AU LIBAN
LEBANESE PIPE ORGAN WEEK 2024
12 – 21 April – 9th edition

ADMISSION FREE TO ALL CONCERTS

Friday, 12 April, 8 pm

AJALTOUN | Church of Mar Zakhia
Vincent De Pol (Germany / Poland), pipe organ
In collaboration with the German Embassy in Lebanon

Saturday, 13 April, 6 pm

KHIRBET QANAFAR (West Beqaa) | Johann Ludwig Schneller School
Film-concert *Der Galiläer (The Galilean, 1921)* with organ improvisation
Mathias Rehfeldt (Germany), pipe organ and live musical commentary

Sunday, 14 April, 12 pm

BEIRUT | National Evangelical Church
Vincent De Pol (Germany / Poland), pipe organ
In collaboration with the German Embassy in Lebanon

Sunday, 14 April, 8 pm

MAYSSRAH (Nahr Ibrahim) | Church of St. Elie - Carmelite monastery
Film-concert *Der Galiläer (The Galilean, 1921)* with organ improvisation
Mathias Rehfeldt (Germany), pipe organ and live musical commentary

Tuesday, 16 April, 8 pm

BEIRUT | American University of Beirut (AUB) Assembly Hall
Cross-art concert with Mario Mariani (Italy), piano and pipe organ
Rudy Rahme (Lebanon), live painting and poetry
In collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute

Wednesday, 17 April, 8 pm

BEIRUT (Gemmaizeh) | Church of St. Maroun
Ensemble Recercare
Mario Rahi (Lebanon), violin
Paolo De Matthaëis (Italy), organ
Fabio Catania (Italy), viola da gamba
In collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute

Thursday, 18 April, 7 pm

TRIPOLI (El Mina) | Latin Church of St. Francis - Custody of the Holy Land
Ensemble Recercare
Mario Rahi (Lebanon), violin
Paolo De Matthaëis (Italy), organ
Fabio Catania (Italy), viola da gamba
In collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute

Friday, 19 April, 8 pm

BEIRUT (Downtown) | Saint Louis Latin Cathedral of the Capuchin Fathers

Inaugural concert for the new pipe organ

Aarón Ribas (Spain), pipe organ

Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra

Garo Avesian (Lebanon), conductor

In collaboration with the Embassy of Spain in Lebanon

Saturday, 20 April, 8 pm

ZOUK MOSBEH | Church of Notre Dame de Louaizeh

Les Solistes de Beyrouth, vocal ensemble

Fernando Afara (Lebanon), conductor

Paolo De Matthaëis (Italy), pipe organ

In collaboration with the Italian Cultural Institute

Sunday, 21 April, 11 am

TYRE | Latin Church of St. Anthony – Custody of the Holy Land

Ensemble Recercare

Mario Rahi (Lebanon), violin

Paolo De Matthaëis (Italy), pipe organ

Fabio Catania (Italy), viola da gamba

ORGANISTS, MUSICIANS & ARTISTS**Vincent De Pol (Germany / Poland), pipe organ**

Vincent de Pol ranks among the elite of Polish organ virtuosos. His musical education encompasses studies at the "Fryderyk Chopin"- University of Music in Warsaw, Poland, and at the Academy of Performing Arts and Theatre in Hamburg, Germany. 1986 final examination with a diploma in artistic organ playing. In 1989 Artist Diploma with honours followed by master classes with Prof. Gaston Litaize, Paris, Martin Haselböck, Vienna, Dr. Michael Schneider, Cologne, André Fleury, Paris and André Pagenel, Bourges, France. Vincent has also received a Performer Diploma from Indiana University School of Music, Bloomington, U.S.A. He participates in renowned international organ festivals in Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, Central and South Africa, New Zealand, Canada, and in the U.S.A. Vincent de Pol holds master classes worldwide and is a visiting professor at universities and conservatories in Australia, Brazil, Namibia, Nigeria, Singapore, and the U.S.A. His artistic work also includes CD recordings, and television and radio registrations. He has been the "Organist in Residence of St. Bernard's Church in Hamburg since 1987.

Mathias Rehfeldt (Germany), pipe organ

Mathias Rehfeldt is a composer and organist from Munich, known for his diverse musical contributions ranging from award-winning film soundtracks to classical compositions. His body of work includes a broad spectrum of choral, orchestral, organ, and chamber music, which has earned him national and international recognition. Rehfeldt has also made a name for himself as an organist, especially through his innovative silent film improvisations that have taken him to the USA, Canada, and across Central Europe. His "Dark Matter Project," which fuses the church organ with synthesizers, showcases his mission to transcend boundaries and explore unexpected musical realms. In his artistic endeavours, Rehfeldt draws inspiration

from Romanticism, yet he aims to transpose these influences into a contemporary context. He sees himself as a mediator between the musical past and present, with the goal of incorporating the emotional depth and sonic diversity of Romanticism into modern compositions.

Mario Mariani (Italy), piano and pipe organ

Strongly recognizable by the eclectic and exciting approach to the piano, Mario Mariani conceives the instrument as an orchestra with an unusual alchemy sound where the composer, performer, and performer merge in the present time. Pianist, organist, and composer, he collaborates with important institutions and clients including the Venice Biennale, (with the two music for Venice Film Festival), Theaters (Piccolo of Milan, FVG, Stabile Marche), Embassies and Italian Institutes of Cultural many others, with concerts across four continents. He wrote many soundtracks for cinema, theater and television receiving the "Oscar Marchigiano 2014" award for best musician. In 2011 he built a small wooden theatre in a forest, to create the Teatro libero del Monte Nerone, an environmental sustainability festival with over one month of events featuring international artists. Furthermore, he alternates between conferences, workshops, and special projects such as Francesco Povero, dedicated to Saint Francis (directed by Pietro Conversano with the Community of San Patrignano in 2015) and Fragments of Life Songs and Freedom (with the Opera Prison in 2017) both performed at the Theater Piccolo of Milan.

Rudy Rahme (Lebanon), live painting and poetry

Rudy Rahme is a Lebanese painter, sculptor, and poet. Born in Becharre, north Lebanon in 1967, he is the secretary of Gibran K. Gibran's committee for culture, a founder and the President of Azamilal Alwaan Association, a member of the Lebanese sculptors & painters syndicate, a Member of the Cedars Forest committee and member of Darajal fan association ADG. Rudy was a student at the "Académie Libanaise des Beaux-Arts – ALBA"; he pursued his specialization in fresco and sculpture at the "Accademia Spinelli-Florence" with the assistance of the Baraldi family, technique Fresques "Quatro-cento" and conducted lost wax casting sessions at the "Fonderie Coubertin" Paris. He invented a new technique for fixing the "Pencil on Canvas" paintings which was patented in his name in Florence – Italy and announced at the Gadarte Gallery - Florence. Rudy has so far conducted a list of personal and collective exhibitions in which he always performs live sculpturing, live painting, conferences, and poetry evenings.

Fabio Catania (Italy), viola da gamba

Born in Rome in 1973, while still a student he won several auditions and competitions. Subsequently he won auditions for the Malaysian Philharmonic Orchestra (1997), the Orchestra del Teatro San Carlo (1997) and the Orchestra Sinfonica dell' Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia (1999).

He was awarded a prize in Italy and abroad and he played for many musical societies and festivals, especially in South America. Between 1997 and 1999 he served as first solo violist with the Teatro San Carlo Orchestra of Naples and he also collaborated with the Orchestra Scarlatti of Naples and the Teatro Regio of Turin. From 2000 until now he is a member of the Orchestra Sinfonica dell' Accademia Nazionale di Santa Cecilia and a freelance chamber musician.

Paolo De Matthaéis (Italy), organ

Paolo De Matthaéis (1969), musician and music critic, currently serves as the Artistic Director of the Cappella Musicale Costantina. He specialized in organ and organ composition studies with renowned masters. As an organist, harpsichordist, and conductor, Paolo has solidified his artistic presence at the basilicas of San Pietro in Vincoli and Santa Agnese fuori le mura, along with the Mausoleum of Costanza, in Rome. Paolo has enriched his artistic journey by participating as a soloist and accompanist in international musical events in various countries, including Ukraine, Colombia, England, Egypt, and Romania. He has been part of prestigious festivals. Recognition of his talent and dedication to music criticism is underscored by winning the TIM (Torneo Internazionale di Musica) award for three consecutive editions in 2010, 2012, and 2014.

Mario Rahi (Lebanon), violin

Born in Lebanon in 1983, Mario Rahi pursued his diploma studies at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory of Rome. In 2011, Mario Rahi was awarded his master's degree, with the maximum vote from the Accademia Nazionale Santa Cecilia. He was appointed concert master at the World Youth Orchestra from 2001 until 2010. Later on, Mario was admitted to the Roma Sinfonietta Orchestra, established by the legendary film-music composer Ennio Morricone. Back to Lebanon at the age of 28, Mario has been part of the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra since 2011. He is currently a violin teacher at the Lebanese National Conservatory of Music. He is often invited to perform in many festivals in Lebanon and abroad especially in Italy. Mario reserves particular interest in promoting Lebanese classical music, some of the compositions were dedicated to him such as Iyad Kanaan's violin sonata and Naji Hakim's variations on a minuet by J.S Bach.

Aarón Ribas (Spain), pipe organ

Aarón Ribas was born in Barcelona in 1992. In 2013 he won the first prize in the organ competition in commemoration of Joseph Gabler, held in Ochsenhausen (Germany) and the first prize unanimously by the jury in the 82nd edition of the Permanent Competition of Jeunesses Musicales in Spain. In this contest he also won a special award from the EMCY (European Union of Competitions for Youth) for a European tour. For the 2016-2017 season he has undertaken a tour organized by the cultural office of the Spanish Embassy in the USA as part of their Spanish Young Music Talents (SYMT) program. As a solo organist he regularly offers concerts at major festivals and cathedrals in Europe, such as in Spain, Andorra, France, Germany, Lithuania and Italy. He has played as a soloist with many orchestras in Spain. Aarón Ribas is a performer committed to contemporary organ music. He serves as the curator of the organ at the Royal Academy of Fine Arts of San Fernando, Madrid.

Garó Avessian (Lebanon), conductor

Born in Beirut, Garó Avessian in 2018 won The First & Grand Prize Winner of 14th Danube International Conducting Masterclass and Competition in Budapest – Hungary. He is conductor and composer of mostly

chamber works that have been performed in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East. Since 2008 he was assigned to conduct the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra. In collaboration with the Australian Embassy in February 2013, Garo Avessian conducted the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra playing Myslivecek Flute Concerto in Beirut for the second time in the history after its premier in London. Besides his continuous concerts with Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra Avessian conducted the premiere of First Lebanese Arabic Oratorio from "Supper to Resurrection" in the April 2022. Subsequently he has also collaborated with other orchestras abroad.

Les Solistes de Beyrouth, vocal ensemble

"Les Solistes de Beyrouth" is a newly established vocal ensemble led by Mr. Fernando Afara. The ensemble brings together professionals and lyrical singing students from his class, possessing vibrant voices and promising talents, aiming to enhance their careers both in Lebanon and abroad. Les Solistes de Beyrouth" delivered three successful concerts in March 2023 for the Feast of the Annunciation at the National Museum in collaboration with the Lebanese National Conservatory, accompanied by the esteemed French organist "Yves Lafargue". Despite its youth, "Les Solistes de Beyrouth" has achieved remarkable success. Positive feedback and appreciation from audiences, classical music experts in Lebanon, France, and Switzerland.

Fernando Afara (Lebanon), conductor

Born in Lebanon, Fernando Afara began studying classical singing at the National Conservatory of Beirut while pursuing a bachelor's degree in music Pedagogy from Notre Dame University in Lebanon. Seeking to enhance his skills, he furthered his studies at the Conservatoire de Lyon and the Schola-Cantorum in Paris. Subsequently, he integrated the opera studio, and later continued his studies with a program focused on vocal teaching at the Haute Ecole de Musique de Genève. Fernando Afara won the 2nd prize unanimously at the 39th International Music Competition Lyceum in Switzerland in 2015, alongside pianist Chloé Servente. On the stage, Afara's talent portrayed Dancaïre and Zuniga in *Carmen*, Le Podestat in *Le Docteur Miracle* by Bizet, Papageno from *Die Zauberflöte* by Mozart. Noteworthy performances include his rendition of Fiorello in the Rossini's *Barbier de Seville* at the International Opera Festival in Avenches, Switzerland, and his portrayal of various roles in productions at Lausanne. As a soloist, Fernando Afara has participated in prestigious festivals. In 2021, Fernando Afara founded the vocal ensemble Les Solistes de Beyrouth.