



# Palestine's Musical Pulse

## THE EDWARD SAID NATIONAL CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC



*“Humanism is the only - I would go so far as saying  
the final - resistance we have against the inhuman  
practices and injustices that disfigure human history.”*  
Edward Said





# PALESTINE'S MUSICAL PULSE

## Table of Contents

<b>1. 1993-2013: Challenges, Development and Creativity</b>	4
<b>2. Timeline</b>	8
<b>3. Profile of an Institution</b>	10
<b>4. Structure and Branches</b>	12
<b>5. Orchestras and Ensembles</b>	18
<b>6. Voices of Support</b>	24
Advocates	24
Musicians	26
Teachers, Parents, Students, and Community	33
<b>7. Productions and Publications</b>	44
<b>8. Annexes</b>	
i ESNCM Circle of Support	46
ii ESNCM Board	48



# ليالي الطرب في قدس العرب



Turath Ensemble, Layali al-Tarab fi Quds al-Arab Festival 2013

of it. Before, there was a belief that you were either born with musical talent or not at all. We have spread the idea that there is a concrete path to becoming a musician.

Our goal has always been to achieve excellence. From the very outset in 1993, we knew that the music we promoted had to be of the highest standard. People often felt that "if it's good enough for us then it will do", but we fought against that. We wanted to measure ourselves against the yardstick of international music, and we won community credibility as a result. Our aim for excellence, though, has constantly posed a challenge in terms of resources. We had little to start off with.

We brought together all the skilled people we could find, including Palestinians who had been living abroad. By the time enough students had become teachers we had created a local scene, whereas before we were almost entirely dependent on teachers from abroad. We were always aiming to build a new community of teachers and musicians, and, simultaneously, ensure we were present in all possible areas of Palestine.

It has been a slow accumulation process, and not a hundred per cent guaranteed from the onset. In general, it takes about

eight years to establish a young musician at the Conservatory and then another three to four years for them to perfect their skills in higher education — in all about twelve years for a student to blossom into a professional musician. There was the logistical challenge of getting professional Palestinian musicians together to form one teaching corps. The realities of politics stood in our way. Some musicians were in Gaza, some in Jordan, some in Jerusalem, others in the West Bank and Galilee, and connecting them all together was dependent on the political climate. The history of the ESNCM over the last twenty years has been an ongoing process of unification in musical terms, bringing Palestinian talent together despite the obstacles.

Slowly, more students in Arabic music became teachers and ensembles were created and grew. We were being invited abroad to festivals. People could see our increasing professionalism. Our presence in Palestinian society and abroad was taking root. Then the second Intifada broke out. It was a moment of real turmoil. We clung on though and tried not to lose what we had achieved by functioning in new ways. We worked out of a different venue in Ramallah when our centre was unreachable due to curfew. We were one



مركز الدراسات الفلسطينية  
مركز الدراسات الفلسطينية  
مركز الدراسات الفلسطينية



## Challenges, Development and Creativity

A lot has happened since our foundation. We now seem to be on the verge of a new musical era in Palestine. The barrel we have been gradually filling over the years is starting to gently spill over. All our hard work is beginning to pay off and become visible. We still have much to do, but the structures and geographical spread of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM) are almost in place.

In 1993, rather than one block of experience, we had a few pockets of talent here and there, but we had to pull it all together to have a significant impact. Music has always been present in Palestine — folkloric music first and foremost, as well as Arabic art music, and classical Western music from the 20th

Century onwards — but despite all this, prior to the ESNCM, there was no central body making a difference. There were only a few private or individual initiatives to support musicians, and just one or two people per decade were becoming successful professional musicians. People were, of course, expressing themselves with music in an original way, but there were no real routes forward for new talent.

The ESNCM has developed a channelling process for aspiring musicians. It has managed to democratise music practice and training while making it more professional. Music is no longer the preserve of a select few. It is now open to all categories of society. There is an awakening to music, and a new awareness





It is almost twenty-five years since five of us first set out on a journey to fulfill the dream we had long been harbouring in our hearts. We could not have imagined, all those years ago, that the fulfillment of this dream would flower into one of the most important cultural institutions in Palestine. At that moment in history, the odds were great and heavily stacked against us. Music did not seem like a priority when our people were struggling for freedom and survival under the harsh conditions of the Israeli military occupation. However our fervent belief in the healing power of music — and its vital role in education, in resisting oppression and in asserting national identity — beat all the obstacles facing us. And we were fortunate to discover that our enthusiasm and beliefs were soon shared by a number of people who were more than happy to support and encourage our dream. As soon as the Conservatory was established in 1993, enthusiasm for it grew. Parents and educators soon realised the power of music in a child's education and its ability to open up new and beautiful worlds. It could lift children's spirits, giving them the strength to face oppressive living conditions, providing them with the opportunity to express themselves. It enhanced self-esteem and confidence. Musical talents began to blossom and orchestras and Oriental and Classical ensembles were formed. All this made children aware that together they could create beauty and provide joy for others. Moreover, young people, through the orchestras and the universal language of music, had the chance to meet other musicians from all corners of the world and to forge bonds of friendship and solidarity with them.

The dedication of the administrative and teaching staff at the Conservatory, ever since its establishment, has been a major factor in the ESNM's unparalleled success. The commitment of the successive board members has been instrumental, too. They gave considerable time, effort and expertise to help the ESNM accomplish its mission and achieve its ambitious goals. I am also deeply grateful to the Board of Trustees of Birzeit University who played a key role in taking the Conservatory under its wing and in offering it premises in Ramallah for all these years. In general, I would like to recognise and praise the invaluable part played by all those who supported the ESNM during its early stages and later on. It is thanks to them that the ESNM took off and has now become a beacon of culture in our land which is still brimming with untapped creative and artistic talent.



**Rima Nasir Tarazi**  
is a co-founder of the ESNM  
and chairperson of the ESNM Supervisory Board.

of the few institutions to continue operating. We clung on because we saw that our music was sorely needed, for children most of all. Music was a basic comfort. We lost almost all of our international teachers, but we strengthened our base in Palestinian society. We came out stronger. The turmoil made us realise how necessary the ESNCM enterprise was to Palestinian society.

Most crucially, over these last twenty years, we have also been working to build audiences. We knew that unless there were performing opportunities and audiences, our newly graduated musicians would leave Palestine. We wanted to avoid a musical brain-drain. There is now a whole musical movement in Palestine with concerts, festivals and more, and the ESNCM has been at the forefront of that renaissance. We have played a part in creating concert-goers alongside musicians, orchestras and ensembles. Palestinian society is changing: audiences that were primarily focused on political and popular music have become more versatile and discerning. We had a Bach piano concert in Ramallah a few years ago and we thought we would, at most, get a hundred people and instead we got five hundred. In Jerusalem we have seen scores of people turn up for a contemporary solo double bass concert. Concerts are packed even when musicians are breaking new ground and being innovative.

So, many things continue to grow. There is a lot of dry land in Palestine and the barrel of talent that is now overflowing still needs to continue irrigating the land. We need to get music into every Palestinian home.



**Suhail Khoury, General Director,  
and the ESNCM staff**



Jerusalem Branch (al-Shihabi building), end-of-year concert 2014

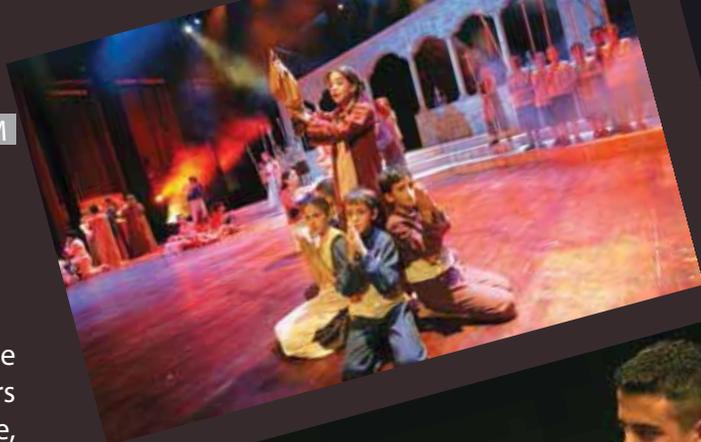
2008) becomes the fifth branch of the ESNCM in April 2012. The PYO tours Italy performing in Genoa, Florence, Rome, and Ravello

**2013:** The Palestine Strings perform with Nigel Kennedy at the Royal Albert Hall, London; the PNO performs in Indonesia; the ESNCM Orchestra together with the Choir of Le Collège St-Michel de Fribourg, Switzerland, perform extracts from *Carmen* at the Bethlehem Convention Palace

**2013:** The string instrument factory and repair workshop is inaugurated at the Bethlehem branch

**2014:** The ESNCM is awarded the 2013 Welfare Association Prize for Jerusalem (the late Ragheb al-Kalouti award) for social development in Jerusalem. The prize was for the ESNCM's clear impact on the spreading and teaching of music in Jerusalem to all sectors of society, and its youth in particular.

**2014:** The ESNCM celebrates the centennial anniversary of the Palestinian composer Salvador Arnita with a series of concerts; beginning in Ramallah, the celebration will continue throughout the year 2014-2015 with concerts in Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, and the UK



# Timeline

Palestine Strings



- 1993:** National Conservatory of Music established in Ramallah
- 1996:** Founding of the National Conservatory in Jerusalem; the branch moves to its new premises at al-Zahra Street in 2013
- 1996:** Launching of the Spring Concert Series, which becomes the Jasmine Festival in 2011, and of the Autumn Concert Series which becomes *Layali al-Tarab fi Quds al-Arab* in 2009
- 1997:** Founding of the Bethlehem Branch; the branch moves to its new premises in 2012
- 1999:** First student graduation of the ESNCM
- 2001:** Launching of the Marcel Khalife Music Competition, which becomes the Palestine National Music Competition in 2010
- 2003:** Launching of the summer camps
- 2004:** Production of the children's musical *al-Fawanees*
- 2004:** Launching of the Palestine Youth Orchestra (PYO). The Conservatory's name is changed to The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music (ESNCM)
- 2006:** The Palestine National Music Competition becomes a biennial national competition open to all Palestinians and is held for the first time in Jerusalem
- 2009:** The Palestine Strings ensemble is launched; the PYO performs at the Beiteddine Festival in Lebanon
- 2009:** Launching of the *al-Sununu* Choirs project at refugee camps in Gaza, the West Bank and Jerusalem
- 2010:** Founding of the Nablus Branch; the PYO performs at the Megaron Concert Hall in Athens, Greece
- 2010:** Launching of the 'Melodies of Hope' project in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon
- 2011:** Launching of the Palestine National Orchestra (PNO) in Jerusalem
- 2011:** The Palestine Strings ensemble tours the USA
- 2011:** Laying of the corner stone for the new building of the Ramallah Branch; inauguration planned for 2015
- 2012:** The Gaza Music School (founded by the A. M. Qattan Foundation in



Outreach camp, Birzeit Activity Centre 2012



# Profile of an Institution

The **National Conservatory of Music** was established in 1993. Initially under the wing of Birzeit University's board of trustees, the Conservatory set up its first branch in Ramallah. Forty students were enrolled alongside three part-time teachers, a secretary and a volunteer director. In 2004, as a symbolic tribute to the late intellectual Edward Said, the Conservatory changed its name. By 2014, the ESNCM had set up five branches in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Gaza, Nablus and Ramallah. Today, more than a thousand students are enrolled within all the different branches of the ESNCM and another three hundred are in children's choirs.

By providing quality musical education, and by nurturing music in all spheres, the Conservatory seeks to support and develop a thriving musical culture in Palestine. The ESNCM firmly believes in the power of a musical education for all Palestinians, regardless of their background or where they live. At the heart of the Conservatory's endeavours is the belief that musical education, underpinned by delivering quality music to as wide a range of audiences as possible, bolsters and invigorates Palestinian identity and culture.

The ESNCM's musical mission incorporates several elements. It teaches music to children on an academic and professional basis; instructs and nurtures music teachers; prepares music curricula for schools; trains instrumentalists for ensembles and orchestras; secures grants for students to pursue their education abroad; and supports and advises existing music groups. Upon completion of courses, students of the ESNCM sit exams and successful candidates obtain a diploma.

The Conservatory sustains itself financially through a number of means. Tuition fees are an important income source, as are donations, sponsorship and aid schemes with organisations and individuals. There are two main types of supporter of the ESNCM: those who offer assistance in kind and those who contribute financially to earmarked projects. For details see annex.

The Outreach Programme is free from any regular curriculum or requirement to sit exams. Interchange with the Regular Programme is dependent on teachers. When recommended, students from the Outreach Programme register for courses within the Regular Programme.

**Residential Camps** are an integral part of the Conservatory's activities. Each year, the ESNCM organises several camps at its activity centre in Birzeit, a few kilometres north of Ramallah. The camps are a way of bringing a wide spectrum of talent together under the guidance of local and international musicians. Camps are open to all students from the various ESNCM branches and the Outreach Programme. The summer residential workshops are usually divided into categories such as Chamber music, Oriental Music and Jazz, and involve participating students for up to eight hours a day, while winter camps focus on orchestra and wind band activities. Other recreational activities such as sport and art are laid on. The camps are rare opportunities for Palestinians living abroad to visit their country of origin and meet with their peers. In recent years the summer camps have expanded to include topics such as orchestration, computer notation programmes, historical analysis of music and sound technology

Opportunities are created for students to take part in **International Camps**, mostly in Europe and North America. Students are selected by teachers or directors of a particular branch. Some of these international opportunities in the past have included: the Arabic Music Retreat run by Simon Shaheen in Boston; the Luzerne Music Centre in the Adirondacks, New York; the Ingenium Music Academy summer programme in Winchester, UK; the Jazz Workshop at William Paterson University, New Jersey; the Choir of London's Bursary Scheme; and the Tutti Foundation, Trondheim, Norway.

**Cultural Exchange Programmes** also take place through official development cooperation agreements such as those set up by the British Council, the Geneva Conservatory, or the University of Gothenberg in Sweden, to name but a few. Exchange programmes are directly arranged between the ESNCM and sister music institutions, universities and associations. These cultural exchange programmes are at the heart of the ESNCM's vision for the professional development

---

Top: Summer Camp 2006

Middle: Summer Camp 2003

Bottom: ESNCM Wind Band 2010



# Structure and Branches

Any child aged five or over can apply to the ESNCM. The Conservatory has a scholarship programme to ensure that student admission is not dependent on financial means. Over fifty per cent of students benefit from scholarships.

The **Academic Programme** is split into two distinct elements: the Regular Programme and the Outreach Programme.

The **Regular Programme** is made up of three levels: preparatory, elementary and intermediate. Its aim is to give regular students a broad instrumental and theoretical music education. Once the three levels have been completed, students should be of a sufficient standard to allow them to enter competitive auditions for university programmes or higher academies.

The ESNCM **Outreach Programme** organises musical initiatives for children and young people in different locations around Palestine, in major urban areas as much as in remote towns and villages. A crucial component of the Outreach Programme is to raise awareness of the importance of music and musical education in communities. In the Conservatory's early days musicians used to go out and play in the streets, at Damascus Gate in Jerusalem, in Manger Square in Bethlehem, and in the city centre in Ramallah. By handing out leaflets, and by playing music, word about the ESNCM was spread. This was also a way of enrolling pupils. One violin teacher was particularly active and seemed to come back with more and more students each time he went out to play in the city.



recordings by Palestinian musicians from the ESNCM and beyond.

**The Palestine National Music Competition.**

This competition was set up by the Conservatory thanks to a generous donation from the well-known musician, Marcel Khalife, after he received an award from the Palestinian Authority. Initially held for students within the ESNCM and its different branches, the competition now takes place every two years and is open to all Palestinians. The contestants are divided into different age groups depending on their discipline. Over the years, new disciplines have been introduced. In 2006, an Arabic vocal section was included, and in 2010 a section for composition was added.

The competition is held in Jerusalem. Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip who are unable to physically attend participate by video conference links. An international jury oversees the competition.



---

ESNCM Orchestra with the choir of Le Collège St-Michel de Fribourg performing extracts from *Carmen*, Bethlehem Convention Palace 2013

of teachers and students. Amongst others, there have been partnerships with Berklee College of Music in the USA; ICTUS; *Fondation les Instruments de la Paix - Geneva*; the International Institute of Iberian Music (Spain); the Choir of London; the Music Academy of Florence (Italy); the Royal Academy of Music in Denmark; and William Paterson University in New Jersey, USA.

**Workshops** are regular features of the ESNM year and give student musicians from the various Conservatory branches the chance to interact with visiting musicians. Workshops include master classes and specific projects on certain instruments and ensembles. Visiting musicians often round off their workshops in Palestine by giving public performances.

**Music Kindergarten.** The ESNM introduced in Palestine the concept of learning music from an early age. This was quite unusual in the context of the early 1990s. Music is now taught to children from the age of five. At the end of 2011, the ESNM established a specific programme for young children. This kindergarten programme caters for two age groups: one for children aged five and another one for children aged six and over. They meet in groups twice weekly and receive an introduction to music, through singing, movement, rhythm, as well as an

introduction to solfège and to the different instruments.

**Repair workshop for instruments.** In 1997 the ESNM set up a workshop for repairing string instruments under the guidance of musician and teacher, Samer Totah, one of the very few professional oud makers in Palestine. Today, the Bethlehem branch centralises the repair and production workshop for string instruments thanks to support from the Swiss organisation, *Fondation les Instruments de la Paix-Geneva*. This workshop is managed by Aref al-Sayyed, a former student of the ESNM who specialised in Italy and Germany in the making of violins and the repairing of string instruments. He is now the luthier of the Conservatory.

**Production unit.** The ESNM strengthens the music scene in Palestine through the production of CDs. It is perhaps unusual for a conservatory to be involved in music production, but the situation in Palestine is such that the ESNM has to pursue this route until other possibilities take root. The Production Unit publishes high-quality



---

Top: Teacher Training Workshop with Charbel Rouhana, Jerash, Jordan 2012

Middle: String Camp, Birzeit Activity Centre 2012

Bottom: Instrument Workshop, Bethlehem Branch



Jerusalem Children's Orchestra Camp 2005

The **five branches of the ESNCM** play a vital role in expanding interest in music across the different communities in Palestine. A rich programme of activities and performances is designed to reach a range of audiences, both young and old. Recently, the ESNCM Board has invested much effort into improving the premises of its branches. The **Jerusalem Branch** has moved several times since its establishment. It is now housed in an historic and renovated building, a short walk from the Old City. The **Ramallah Branch**, the first to be established, is set to move in 2014, to a new purpose-designed building, complete with teaching and rehearsal rooms, a 250-seat concert hall, a music library and a recording studio. The **Bethlehem Branch** moved into its

new premises in 2012. It has a new music library as well as a repair workshop for instruments. The **Nablus Branch** opened in 2010 and enjoys a steady flow of enrollment and benefits from a strong group of local and international teachers. Like all ESNCM branches, the Nablus branch is closely involved in spreading music to the communities and schools around it. The **Gaza Music School** joined the ESNCM family in 2012. Founded by the A.M Qattan Foundation in 2008, the school was severely damaged by the bombardment of Gaza in the same year. The Gaza Branch is now housed in new quarters and student numbers are constantly increasing.

Each branch rounds off the academic year with graduation ceremonies and concerts. It is a testament to the education in the ESNCM's branches that several former students, having completed their music training abroad, have returned to join the teaching staff at the Conservatory.



*A society without music is unthinkable for me. All the more so if that society is in a state of conflict. It needs the beauty of art to face down the permanent fear. Music can have a healing effect. It can help forget fear.*  
**Elena Goutieva-Leddawi**

Top: Bethlehem Branch, opening ceremony of new premises 2012

Middle: Outreach Camp 2012

Bottom: Jerusalem Branch 2014

the guidance of leading conductors. They have performed in Bahrain, Germany, Greece, Jordan, Italy, Lebanon and Syria.

The **Palestine Strings** was launched in 2009 as a fifteen to twenty-member ensemble of young students of violin and viola. In 2011 it toured five US cities and, in 2013, it performed as a full string orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall (as part of the BBC Proms) alongside international virtuoso Nigel Kennedy.

The **ESNCM Orchestra** brings together students and teachers, and plays in different venues around Palestine. It was the first ever group to perform an orchestral concert in Hebron. The ESNCM Orchestra mixes classical repertoire with Arabic music arranged for orchestra. The **ESNCM Wind Band** and the **Jerusalem Children's Orchestra** are two other important musical groups which perform regularly and they both serve as important platforms for the development of student skills. The different ESNCM branches have initiated several student and teacher ensembles which frequently play at festivals and concerts.

The ESNCM plays a vital role in fostering excellence and expertise in Arabic music. The **Oriental Music Ensemble** was founded in 1997 by four teachers of the ESNCM. It performs in Palestine and abroad, mixing classical and contemporary Arabic music for





## Orchestras and Ensembles

The development and reputation of the ESNM's ensembles, concerts and productions reveal the extent of the Conservatory's efforts since its foundation. The establishment of orchestras and musical ensembles, coupled with frequent concerts, has had a major impact on community awareness and appreciation of music in Palestine and beyond.

The **Palestine National Orchestra** (PNO), launched in January 2011 in Jerusalem, consists of forty-five professional musicians from Palestine and the diaspora, most of whom are music teachers and/or members of orchestras. As many members of the orchestra live far apart from each other, the orchestra holds annual performances. It performed in Jordan in 2012, and in Indonesia in 2013.

The **Palestine Youth Orchestra** (PYO), created in 2004, is made up of around seventy-five students and young professionals, aged thirteen to twenty-six (two-thirds of the members come from Palestine and the other third from the diaspora in neighbouring countries and beyond). As one former member, Mohamed Najem, has said: "the PYO is a world where passports and nationalities disappear, a place where Palestinians who live in different countries can meet, where Palestinians and non-Palestinians can share." Members gather annually for intensive rehearsals and workshops. The PYO has carried out several international tours under

---

PNO, Jakarta, Indonesia, with soprano Mariam Tamari 2013



Arab and international musicians who compose and/or perform Arabic music are invited to participate. Musicians from Turkey and Morocco have recently taken part. Initially established in Jerusalem, the festival's concerts now move from one location to another.

In 2004, the ESNCM put on a groundbreaking children's musical called **al-Fawanees** at the Ramallah Cultural Palace with a hundred young actors on stage at one time. It was a first for Palestine and, indeed, for most of the Arab world. The music was composed by Suhail Khoury and set to lyrics by Wasim Kurdi. The plot comes from a children's story *The Little Lantern* by Ghassan Kanafani. The play's twenty-eight songs were sung by the ESNCM children's choir and accompanied by the Young Sound Forum of the Central Europe Orchestra conducted by Christoph Altstaedt.

Over the years, the ESNCM has been instrumental in providing and writing **educational music books** for students in Palestine, notably a piano methodology book — *Let's Play: Arabic Melodies for Piano Beginners* — and a series of eight books of Arabic music for beginners to advanced level: *Sharqiyat: Examination Pieces for Oriental Instruments*.



*Music has become part of the landscape. Playing in an orchestra teaches people to listen and harmonise. This is just as important as bread.*  
**Rima Nasir Tarazi**

PYO, Jordan 2004

Al-Sununu Choir, International Centre, Bethlehem 2013

the oud, nay, clarinet, qanoun and percussion. The importance the ESNCM gives to Arabic music is reflected in the fact that every ESNCM branch has its own advanced level Arabic music ensemble composed of teachers and students. The Jerusalem branch has the well-known **Maqamat al-Quds** ensemble, the Ramallah branch the **Turath** ensemble; and Bethlehem is home to the student and teacher **Arabic Music Ensemble**. Nablus and Gaza also have their own specialist ensembles.

**Choir projects** and choral music have become an essential part of the ESNCM's efforts to professionalise and expand music education in Palestine. The **al-Sununu** choirs, founded by the Association Rostropovich Vishneyskaya, were set up for children in Palestinian refugee camps across the Middle East (Jordan, Lebanon, Palestine and Syria). In Palestine the al-Sununu scheme is implemented in partnership with the ESNCM. Choirs are an effective and enduring way of reaching many people, and of maximising the impact of one teacher. The Ramallah branch now has its own children's choir, **Nisan**, which is already in demand for concerts and festivals. Arabic music is being developed for choirs by the ESNCM. A book of a hundred "must-have" songs has been published by the Conservatory under the title **Aghanina** or **Our Songs** and distributed to all schools in Palestine.

**Concerts and musical productions:** the ESNCM promotes a broad range of classical and Arabic music performances through its Autumn and Spring musical seasons. The Autumn season which was set up in 1998 evolved ten years later into the *Layali al-Tarab fi Quds al-Arab* festival. This is a yearly festival of Arabic music and is mainly for Palestinian musicians, but



---

PYO, Kingdom of Bahrain 2009

Maqamat Ensemble, Jerusalem Festival 2006 © Yabous Archive

*Through the different ensembles and orchestras, children are taught to listen to one another, respect one another: listening and being heard in unison. Together, they see that they can produce one strong, harmonious and clear message. As a Palestinian this obviously means a lot, all the more so when they see that their country is often split into categorisations of religion and political ideology.*

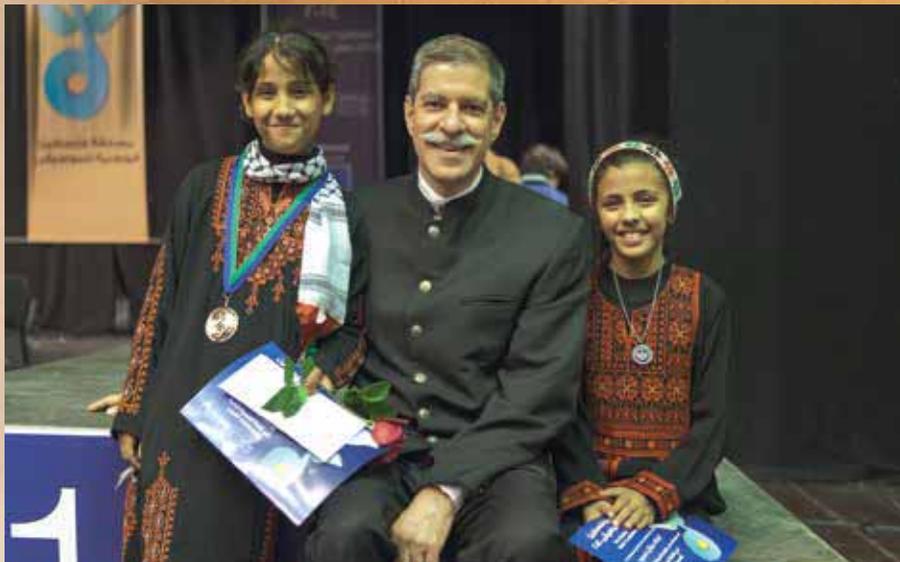
**Rania Baramki Tarazi**

*Through music, the Conservatory gives a cultural, human and artistic identity to the Palestinian people.*

**Lourdina Baboun**



Jerusalem Branch, The Palestine Girl's Choir singing at the opening of the new premises at al-Shihabi Building 2013



Palestine National Music Competition 2014, winners of vocal section Noura al-Bishawi and Nagla Hamid with General Director Suhail Khoury

*The ESNM has accompanied me throughout my quest to find meaning and it has turned out to be a major part of the journey to know myself.*

**Layan Nijem**

*New horizons have opened up for me, connecting me with people, breaking the isolation and confinement of village life and traditions. I am proud to be a student at the Nablus branch of the Conservatory and I hope that my experience will inspire others to join too.*

**Bara'a Assi**

*When I see these young musicians in full musical flow or talking about their music and their dream... suddenly I am reborn, lifted by them, able to trust in the future and in people again*

**Wissam Boustany**

*My friends are my biggest fans, they never miss a concert of mine, and some started learning music because of me. So music is a huge part of my life now. In fact, I could say that it is my life.*

**Naseem Halabi**



Palestine National Music Competition 2012



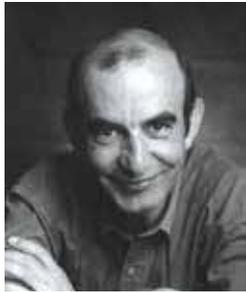
Jenna Barghouti, PYO, Germany 2007

*It has been an incredible and unique journey. I have learned how to be a real musician. Not only by learning the necessary musical skills, but by obtaining a musical soul.*

**Nai Barghouti**

*I have learned a lot at the Conservatory – a love of music, perseverance, the ability to give artistically, an appreciation of musical affiliation, as well as a love of working in a group.*

**Ashraf Afouri**



## Raja Shehadeh

In the 1960s, many people would come to our family home, including Rima Nasir Tarazi, and we would sing and play the piano, and my father would play records. Music records were not widely available in those days and every time a new one arrived it was a major event. Everyone would come and listen. Classical music, though, was something for the elite, and associated with a certain type of person.

Rima Nasir Tarazi had long dreamt of establishing a music conservatory in Palestine. And in 1993 she visited my law office and told me that she and a number of other music lovers and instructors believed the time had come to make the conservatory dream come true. I was asked to work on the structural and legal aspects of the project and its connection to Birzeit University.

Before the Conservatory was established there were very few opportunities for music students in Palestine to pursue their interest. The opportunities for listening to good musical performances were also very limited. On the rare occasions that good performers came to play they were often met with indifferent audiences who in most cases could not follow or appreciate the music they were listening to.

Now not only has the Conservatory helped in producing and developing the talents of large numbers of Palestinians — it has over a thousand students — it has also succeeded in producing appreciative audiences who enjoy and understand both Western and Oriental classical music. The old view of Western classical music being the preserve of the elites has disappeared. Classical music has penetrated all social classes and, not only that, it has penetrated new geographical locations around Palestine. And, of course, with the growth of the Conservatory has come a real encouragement of classical Arabic music too.

When I look back at the tremendous achievements of the Conservatory in the relatively short period of two decades, I remember its modest beginnings with great pride. And as more new talents continue to emerge and perform internationally, so more Palestinians will take pride. A society that produces

good musicians and which has the ability to listen to and appreciate good music, whether Western or Arabic, is surely a happier and more vibrant society. It is also one that is better able to withstand those restraints and oppressive measures to which Palestinian society under occupation is subject. Much of the credit for this should go to the Conservatory.

When you like and understand music you get the feeling of being empowered and you feel stronger. And this is helpful for us. People in times of war, under siege, and in the good times, have proven how important music is to empowerment. Sometimes Palestinians come with a string of stock images as victims or terrorists or whatever. The Conservatory definitely shocks and changes all this, but, much more than that, it overcomes ignorance about Palestine. It shows how much talent there is and how much perseverance and endurance is attached to that talent. All the conductors and performers who have worked with our young people at the Conservatory have noted how Palestinian musicians bring their challenging experiences of life to their music — and the richer your experience of life, the richer your music is.

**Raja Shehadeh is a Palestinian lawyer, writer and activist, and the founder of the human rights organisation, al-Haq. In 2008, he won the prestigious Orwell Prize in Britain.**

Outreach camp 2010



# Voices of Support

The ESNM is a story of determination. It is about people coming together, despite the odds, for a common goal. Every new development in the ESNM's history has been made possible thanks to the endeavours of many people, some well-known musicians and advocates, others committed community members in the cities and villages of Palestine. The following personal accounts and pieces highlight some of their vital contributions.

## Advocates



### Luisa Morgantini

What to say about this Palestinian miracle? The ESNM expresses creativity, determination, talent, passion and love for Palestine — for its stones, its children, its trees, its men and women, its future. I get moved and proud every time I hear of another Conservatory success story, even though I cannot say I am one of its main actors. My commitment started with the second Intifada when I stood at checkpoints, trying to help

people harvest their land, alongside popular committees for non-violent resistance in Bil'in, Nabi Saleh, in the Jordan Valley in the South Hebron Hills, in Hebron and so forth. I have always believed that culture is freedom and resistance. When I was a member of the EU Parliament I organised a visit, an exhibition and a concert to allow Europeans and EU institutions the chance to see the marvellous culture that was flourishing in Palestine despite the Nakba and the military occupation. I did it for love of culture, but also to help destroy persisting stereotypes about Palestinians as either "victims" or "terrorists".

I met Rima Nasir Tarazi in the summer of 1987, prior to the First Intifada, at the Inash El Usra centre in El Bireh. I found Rima playing the piano and singing one of her songs with the kindergarten children. I discovered she was a musician,

a composer not only of children's songs but of classical music. I was fascinated by her and the stories about her family and Palestine. I stayed in touch over the years. By the time I went back in 1994, taking instruments that had been given to me by Italian musicians, I discovered a whole different story. The Conservatory existed and when I finally got to hear their National Orchestra and then the Youth Orchestra perform, I have to admit, I cried. When the Youth Orchestra came to Italy in 2012, I was so proud. My help was very little, but my emotions were huge. And to see all these young Palestinians (many of them the sons and daughters of my friends), from all over the world playing together, and not in some small unimportant theatre but in the most famous places of Italy, with so many people applauding, it was a miracle.

Thank you to all the people who made this possible, but since I am Italian let me thank Michele Cantoni, the Academic Director, for his dedication. The Conservatory is not only about music and culture, it is also a way to self-determination. When the Youth Orchestra played in Italy I had a dream that one day the Palestine Youth Orchestra would have its own Palestinian conductor. I hope that comes true.

**Luisa Morgantini is a former Vice-President of the European Parliament and a leading light in the Italian and international peace movement.**



## Nigel Kennedy

On August 8<sup>th</sup> 2013, the seventeen members of the Palestine Strings performed at the London BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall alongside virtuoso Nigel Kennedy and his Orchestra of Life. The British violinist first met the Palestine Strings in East Jerusalem where he teamed up with the young musicians for the Yabous Festival in the summer of 2012. Nigel Kennedy was immediately touched by the versatility of the young Palestinians and the ease with which they bridged Arabic and Western musical traditions. This ability to cross genres wasn't the only thing that impressed the violinist. "I was struck by the down-to-earth, phenomenally positive attitude that the kids were displaying," Nigel Kennedy said. "And that is reflected in their music as well. It has such deep soul, a whole-hearted commitment, and a value attached to every moment of music-making and life itself."

The bond between Nigel Kennedy and the young members of the Palestine Strings, which had already proved strong in Jerusalem, was again palpable for the 5,500-strong audience at the Albert Hall. "They value life more than we do in many ways, and there is a vitality in their performance which stems from that," Kennedy said of the ESNCM youngsters. Despite the high stakes, there was a relaxed, even playful, atmosphere on stage thanks to Kennedy's evident generosity and caring trust in the young musicians. The performance was peppered with forays into both Western and Arabic music, with everything from birdsong to jazz. Between sections of Vivaldi, Kennedy gave prominence to individual members of his Orchestra of Life and musicians from the Palestine Strings, inviting them to join him in his improvisations and explorations.

The concert was sold out in less than twenty-four hours. It was, without doubt, a milestone in the ESNCM's history. The Conservatory, with Nigel Kennedy's vital support, had managed to bring its music and Palestine itself to the attention of a wide international audience and in one of the world's most prestigious music venues. As Layth, one of the musicians of the Palestine Strings, noted: "we are musicians first and foremost, but we are also performing as Palestine."

The event was important professionally for the ESNCM, extra proof of the quality of its training programme, the rigour of its selection processes and the talent of Palestine's young musicians.

"We felt like film stars, it was a moment that won't be forgotten," said Naseem, one young violinist. As if to support his claim, Kennedy played Vivaldi's *A minor Double Concerto* alongside one of the young Palestinian musicians, fifteen-year-old Mostafa Saad. The press reacted as positively as the audience. The Independent noted: "Based in the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, these players ... are now leading the cultural renaissance in Palestine ...". While The Times reported: "The Palestinians rose to their feet with individual soloists improvising (and in one case singing), haunting Arabic melodies. With three big Palestinian flags being waved in the Albert Hall, it was as if the music of 18th century Venice had been transported 1,500 miles east."

**Nigel Kennedy is one of the world's leading violin virtuosos. His landmark 1989 recording of Vivaldi's Four Seasons sold over two million copies.**



Nigel Kennedy and the Palestine Strings, London 2013. © BBC



PNO performing in Haifa 2011

## Musicians



### Wissam Boustany

Every day I scour the newspapers, TV and internet hoping and waiting for some respite from the constant barrage of horror, violence, corruption, disillusionment and scandal. Through the various media, we are almost organically connected to multiple wars, to the frustration, anger and disasters of so many people around the world – it really feels like the very structures of civilization across the globe are imploding – economically, educationally and morally... structures that we thought we could take for granted...

... And then I remember the light of idealism and passion that shines out of the eyes of young music students from the ESNCM whenever I have visited to give classes, concerts or adjudicated on their competitions. When I see these young musicians in full musical flow or talking about their music and their dream... suddenly I am reborn, lifted by them, able to trust in the future and in people again. Those students don't fit any stereotype, in spite of the many daily difficulties they are faced with. This is the wonderful healing power of music, surely one of the most potent forms of resistance? What life lessons these young musicians are able to teach us (if we are willing to learn and join them on their musical and human journey). What is the alternative? To become "extremists" and lose our inherent humanity? What does that achieve, except more pain and more violence?

I have found a new passion and hobby in supporting the development of the ESNCM. The ESNCM is now represented in London by the *Friends of ESNCM UK*, a UK-based charity which aims to create vital links and opportunities with musical institutions in the UK and Palestine, so that our students and teachers can develop and propagate their art and enhance their potential to the highest possible degree... and let the world see the true face of Palestinian youth and talent.

**Wissam Boustany is a flautist and founder of Towards Humanity. He is Professor of Flute at the Royal Northern College of Music, Manchester, UK, and a trustee of the Friends of ESNCM, UK.**

The Conservatory helps the world see a different side of the Middle East, and Palestine in particular. It helps correct any misconceptions. It helps reveal the beauty and potential in Palestinian culture, besides all the sad news. It shows what survives. I would love to return to the Conservatory soon.

**Gunnar Lindgren is a senior lecturer at the University of Gothenburg's Department of Music and an acclaimed jazz saxophone player.**



### **Torbjørn Ottersen**

Over the past few years I've had the pleasure and honour to tutor for several ESNCM orchestra projects, including the Palestine Youth Orchestra and the ESNCM orchestra. I also worked alongside a team of colleagues from the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, coaching the PYO in Italy. It is always a rewarding experience to work with young members of orchestras. In Palestine they are talented, motivated and positive representatives

of a next generation of musicians. Our collaboration has generated a lot of enthusiasm here in Norway, both among fellow musicians and other friends of Palestine, and we have recently received some funding from the Norwegian government to support further cooperation between the Oslo Philharmonic and the ESNCM. I sincerely hope this will continue to grow even further in the future.

I quickly discovered that the ESNCM has had many success stories over the last twenty years. And I came to witness, first-hand, how it plays a key role in Palestine's contemporary culture scene. Their achievements are of a high level, of an international standard. Furthermore, by putting emphasis on both Western and Oriental music traditions, I believe the ESNCM encourages a distinctive Palestinian musical identity – which in turn boosts Palestinian identity. Another success factor lies in the way the ESNCM manages to act simultaneously when engaging internationally and locally. Even when winning international acclaim for their performances, or when invited to cooperate with major European music institutions, they never lose focus on their commitments back home in the local Palestinian communities. A performance

at the Hebron Children's Centre is just as important as a performance in the Royal Albert Hall in London. The aim for excellence is similar when organising a chamber concert in a café in the old city of Birzeit, just as it is when preparing for a symphony concert in Italy.

All the young musicians I met in Palestine shared stories about how the ESNCM had enriched and changed their lives. Not only had they gained a



ESNCM Students, Ecole Biblique, Jerusalem 2014

musical skill that in itself generated many positive experiences, but they had developed other crucial life skills such as commitment, cooperation, discipline and confidence. I am convinced that Palestinian society — in many aspects — gains massively from the great young people trained by the ESNCM. Their enthusiasm, dedication and professionalism is not only very impressive, but it reminds me of how a powerful a force music can be. The Palestinians show us all how it can add meaning to people's lives, how it communicates, how it brings people together, how it both confronts and celebrates the essence of life.

**Torbjørn Ottersen is a timpanist and percussionist for the Oslo Philharmonic Orchestra, Norway. He is also percussion tutor at the Norwegian Academy of Music and Tromsø Conservatory of Music.**



© B. Cruveiller

## Dima Bawab

The very first time I heard the Palestine Youth Orchestra was back in 2004. They were performing in Jerash in Jordan to an amphitheatre filled with music enthusiasts from around the world. The moment the orchestra struck their first chord I found it hard to contain my tears. I then joined the orchestra members two years later singing Mozart in Amman's Roman amphitheatre and was lucky to join them again for the "*Jerusalem is my Song*" concert tour in Bahrain, Jordan, Palestine and Syria in 2008. I was also part of the concert tour in Italy in 2012.

My most memorable moments were those spent on the bus with the young musicians travelling from city to city. I got the chance to speak to those I had come to consider dear friends. I wanted to know how, in the midst of so much conflict and turmoil, they had managed to carry on expressing their talent and rising to the challenges they faced. One common feature of my conversations with the young musicians was how often they were asked to get off buses and cross checkpoints, carrying their instruments for miles, generally arriving late for their rehearsals or lessons.



## Gunnar Lindgren

I was involved with a Swedish government-sponsored initiative in South Africa and this led to an opportunity to visit Bethlehem with a choir. I was then lucky enough to visit the Conservatory and that was how my relationship with the ESNM started. The thing that struck me the most from the very start was how modern the Conservatory approach was and how open and considerate the young musicians and their families were. I have visited music schools in several

countries and to me the ESNM still remains one of the best I have seen. It is comparable with many of the top institutions in the West. In fact, I would say the students are very adult and mature when compared to their Swedish counterparts.

The Conservatory is not only a highly accomplished music institute, it is a home for young people who are trying, day in day out, to create one harmonious sound in the face of all the dissonance around them. The ESNM is educating ambassadors of peace who are carrying their lost identities into the world, for all to see. These musicians are showing that through our music we can one day prevail, and maybe even aspire to a peaceful future.

It is said that "a nation's treasure lies in its scholars." I would like to express my heartfelt gratitude to all those educators who have believed, pursued and succeeded in bringing out the best in all the young graduates of the Conservatory.

**Dima Bawab is a Palestinian soprano born in Jordan. She graduated from the Conservatoire National Supérieure de Musique et de Danse in France in 2007. She has worked with leading conductors such as Sir John Eliot Gardiner, Philipp von Steinaecker, Louis Langrée, and performed with the English National Orchestra and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra. Dima recently made her BBC Proms debut playing Yniold in Debussy's Pelléas and Mélisande.**

Classical Music, Arabic Music and Jazz are treated on an equal level, with the same importance given to each genre. I helped introduce Jazz early on. One mustn't forget that Jazz music itself has strong Arabic, African and Andalusian roots. And, to me, those roots were more alive in Palestine than in South Africa. It was a way of giving back Jazz to the Palestinians.

I was lucky enough to take some musicians from the Conservatory to South Africa. It was poignant to see the echoes they could see in each other's histories. The place of the Conservatory in an environment ravaged with all sorts of oppression and humiliation means that its work stands out like a flower in rubble. It gives real hope and sets standards. It channels potential. And its success is undeniable. It is lucky, too, to be run by really committed people. I was once at a board meeting for the Conservatory in Ramallah when a bombardment of a nearby government building began. We had to take cover in the cellar before leaving. Everyone kept their calm and even joked that it had been for my own benefit. These are amazing people.

Palestinians. We did concerts under the bombardments and still people came. In fact the concert venues were full. People need the Conservatory to carry on, all the more so at times of turmoil when life is so fragile, when all could collapse in next to no time. The Conservatory is a pillar of Palestinian society.

My desire is that ten years from now, as well as the obvious hopes for peace, the Conservatory will continue flourishing. The students I taught in the '90s are now teachers. I would love to see the infrastructure grow, to become even more a place where Palestinians can come together and play music rather than having to do so abroad as they do now. I would love to see the energy of Ramallah replicated everywhere, in Jenin, in Hebron. I would love to see



### **Mariam Tamari**

The ESNCM has played a vital role in my life. It has given me the rare opportunity to bring together my greatest passions to serve both as a Palestinian and as a musician. My greatest honour was singing as a soloist with the Palestine National Orchestra for its inaugural concert in 2011, and then on tour in 2013 in Indonesia.

I believe that it is essential that the PNO receive the international attention and support it deserves, first and foremost for the outstanding calibre of its music, but also to show the world the true face of Palestine: a people who are deeply committed to service, to peace, to the creation of beauty, truth, excellence, cooperation, and the affirmation of life. For children, in particular, it represents an example of hope in the future, pride in our identity, and faith that, hand in hand, we can make a difference. I have seen many people from different countries being immensely moved by the work of the PNO. It is clearly a source of pride not only for Palestinians, but all those who believe in justice and peace.

Through my work in the Conservatory's Outreach Programme in Bethlehem I have personally witnessed the power of music to create joy and transform lives. I have seen how the study of music can provide people with essential life skills: the capacity to find freedom and joy in simple tasks; the discipline of

Palestinian society open up even more to music. I would love to see more barriers come down. It would be great if, in years to come, being a musician was as valid a career choice as being a doctor in the eyes of society. This is the task of the ESNCM, to carry on promoting that vision. The Conservatory defines what music is in Palestine today. It gives music its value and shows its moral responsibility.

**Ahmad Al Khatib is a musician and lecturer at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. In the late 1990s he created the Karloma ensemble with other music teachers at the ESNCM. Karloma bridges Western and Arabic musical traditions.**

practice and problem-solving; the art of communication; improved physical and psychological health; meditative release from stress; the ability to shape dreams and the creation of harmony – not only in music, but within oneself and the world.

**Mariam Tamari is a Palestinian-Japanese soprano. She sang at the historic launch of the PNO in 2011 in Palestine. Mariam Tamari is based in Paris and has performed as soloist with major orchestras in Japan, Europe, the Middle East and the USA.**

Palestine National Music Competition 2014, winner of vocal section Noura al-Bishawi





## Sian Edwards

I am very proud to have been involved with the Palestine Youth Orchestra during these years of exponential development. My work on the summer orchestral courses, however, is entirely dependent on the careful, consistent teaching and preparation of the students that goes on throughout the year at the Conservatory. I would like to take this opportunity to salute the work of all the teachers and administrators who do so much, in often very difficult circumstances,

to train, encourage and inspire the young musicians to reach the highest levels of achievement. This is borne out by the hugely successful concerts given by the Palestine Youth Orchestra in recent years, a group which has become an emblem of international recognition for the Palestinian people.

For me, personally, it has been a wonderful experience sharing not only classical European repertoire with the orchestra, but also playing works by Palestinian composers. The excitement of fusing the rich musical traditions of Arabic music with the power and scope of a symphony orchestra has given the orchestra an unmistakable artistic profile. And the energy and enthusiasm of the young musicians gives all their performances a dynamism and optimism that is hard to ignore. Music can give everyone good experiences, but for the students at the Conservatory it can also show how much can be achieved through the disciplined application of their talents, providing an essential channel for their artistic aspirations. I congratulate everyone involved in the creation and continuing development of the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music.

**Sian Edwards is a celebrated British conductor. She was music director of the English National Opera in the 1990s and Head of Conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama. She is currently Head of Conducting at the Royal Academy of Music. Sian Edwards led the PYO in their workshops and performances in 2006, 2009, 2010, 2012 and 2013.**



## Ahmad Al Khatib

After 1993, the Palestinian Authority was trying to attract talent back to Palestine. In the same way, the ESNM appealed to the skills of a wide range of musicians from within Palestine and abroad. I offered my services, but although I am of Palestinian heritage, I was born in Jordan. This meant I had to wait over a year to get the right papers to travel to Palestine and join the ESNM. I was recruited to teach the cello, but my

tasks rapidly grew in all directions. I was transcribing music, writing books for the teaching syllabus, carrying out recordings, organising concerts, playing in recitals, fundraising. The challenge back then was the lack of resources, financial, technical and human. There weren't enough teachers or enough instruments. There weren't even enough books. There was very little in terms of structure. There also was a real lack of connection to other music conservatories in the

Arab world. It was easier, and it still is, in terms of logistics, to bring in Western teachers from Europe or the USA than to work with teachers and musicians from other Arab countries.

The Conservatory is much more than a music school. It is the guardian of Palestinian music and culture. It was obvious early on that the potential for music education was enormous. At the beginning, despite the obstacles, we felt that even the small steps we were taking were having a huge impact on the ground. Everything we did had a ripple effect. Unfortunately, I had to leave Palestine in 2002 and though I am no longer there physically I continue to strive for the ESNM and the Palestine Youth Orchestra as always. The ESNM is very much my story, too. Palestine was a like a birth in many ways for me. It is where I first performed as a solo artist. It is where I recorded my first album. It is where my first baby was born.

The Second Intifada was dramatic, but it reinforced in me the understanding of how valuable the Conservatory is and how important it is in the eyes of

## Teachers, Parents, Students and Community



### Ibrahim Atari

I have been connected with this institution for twenty-one years. I began my journey here in 1993, when I was one of the first students to enroll at the Conservatory. At that time it was just like practising a hobby, and I certainly never expected things to turn out the way they have. I am now in a position of responsibility in one of the most important music education institutions, and the director of its largest branch.

Today, when I look back over the last twenty or more years, I feel able to judge the influence of the Conservatory on the musical scene in Palestine. After 1948, and what followed in 1967, all doors to Palestine were closed. And one of the most important to close was the door of culture. Palestine had once been an important cultural and musical centre for artists from Arab countries and around the world, but after the occupation, most artistic activity went in the direction of resistance, and was limited to the activities of a few individuals or local ensembles.



### Janet Mikhail

When the Conservatory was first established, I had young relatives who were studying there, mainly piano. My niece is still involved in the PYO as a cello player. In those early days I used to attend the Conservatory's concerts at the Friends' School, the Baladna Cultural Centre and the Sakakini Centre, since the Conservatory had no concert hall of its own. So when I became Mayor of Ramallah, and there was a decision to grant the Conservatory a piece of land on which to build

I can now see that many doors have opened to the world again, and the Conservatory has helped open up music once more. It has played an important role in the growth of the musical scene through the development of an academic music programme, by hosting and employing music teachers from around the world, and by being the first academic institution concerned with professional music education in Palestine. The result is that there are now professional ensembles who compete internationally, and that we have musical publications designed specifically for our Palestinian context, and that we take pride in our students who have graduated from the ESNCM and who have completed their studies at universities around the world and returned as professors at the Conservatory with new experiences and skills.

The Conservatory began as an idea, and over twenty years has developed from its beginning in small premises in Ramallah into an important national institution, which has constantly contributed to the development of the Palestinian cultural landscape, locally and globally.

**Ibrahim Atari is a qanoun player and graduate of the ESNCM. He is director of the Ramallah branch of the Conservatory.**

new premises, I signed the agreement with all of my heart, because I knew it was going to be the address for music in Ramallah.

There are other music schools, of course, and they are also important, but the Conservatory is a pioneer in music and music education. The Conservatory has undergone huge expansion and development since its early days. I remember, in particular, the first wonderful concert of the PYO in Ramallah, in 2008. I am very happy that the Conservatory has now been built, in the heart of a cultural complex which includes the Ramallah Cultural Palace and the Mahmoud Darwish Museum. And soon an art gallery will be next to the Conservatory.

So I am very proud that I was the one to sign this agreement with the



## **Elena Goutieva-Leddawi**

I arrived in Gaza in 2000 and I was very surprised to discover that there were no music schools. In Russia, where I come from, there is music education everywhere and it is accessible to all. The opening of a music school by the Qattan Foundation became the first possibility for children to begin playing an instrument, and twenty-five children were enrolled in the first year for piano, violin and guitar lessons.

Sadly, a few months after the opening of the school, war broke out and the school had to close. It was reopened in 2009, and in 2010 it started to include trumpet, cello, qanoun and oud lessons. The school, now part of the ESNCM, has two hundred students and is increasingly successful.

Since being taken over by the ESNCM both the programme and the organisation of the school have improved considerably, though some things still need to evolve. The children particularly need more chance to practise before their

lessons, but many have to make do at home with very basic, small keyboards that are not up to the standard required for classical music. We also still need to fight prejudices about whether women should be involved in music. We organise concerts every year and more and more people come. In 2013, the concert we organised at Meshal Hall which mixed Oriental and Western classical music was a huge success. A society without music is unthinkable for me. All the more so if that society is in a state of conflict. It needs the beauty of art to face down the permanent fear. Music can have a healing effect. It can help forget fear.

As we are the only music school in Gaza we should be able to make a big deal of our presence. I am conscious of our great responsibility and my hope is that the school may grow, that there may be more teachers with more specialised skills for even more students. Requests for enrollment are growing, which proves the need for music here.

**Elena Goutieva-Leddawi is a Russian-born piano teacher living in Gaza. She started at the Music School in 2008.**

Maqamat al-Quds, Jerusalem Center for Near Eastern Studies 2011



Re: is my journey from the bus station to the checkpoint.

Mi: is when I check that I have my ID card to prove that I actually exist.

Fa: is when I realise that I have a very long wait ahead of me, the checkpoint is crowded and my destination seems further than ever.

Sol: is the time I have to wait in line. This can take anything from five minutes to two hours. So I have to hold on to that note for ages.

La: is when I finally cross the checkpoint, reach the other side and get to work.

Si: is when I take a break and drink a cup of tea.



### **Rania Baramki Tarazi**

The Conservatory gives Palestinian children and their parents the opportunity to appreciate and learn about music. It is a place where children can nurture their talents and journey towards becoming professionals. It enriches music education and preserves musical heritage, a heritage that might otherwise be appropriated by others and become like falafel and hummus.

The Conservatory allows children to learn from different musicians and tackle the history and theories of Oriental and Western classical music. Children do not only learn to play music, but also learn to become appreciative audiences. Students mix and mingle, exchange experiences. Borders are broken down. People from different geographical areas of Palestine meet each other and gain understanding from international experiences. I can see with my children that it's a great learning process: taking responsibility, being patient throughout the hours of practice. Children learn endurance and hard work. They work on their self esteem and self confidence. They understand how to be strong in the face of challenges, and, of course, how to be creative.

Through the different ensembles and orchestras, children are taught to listen to one another, respect one another: listening and being heard in unison.

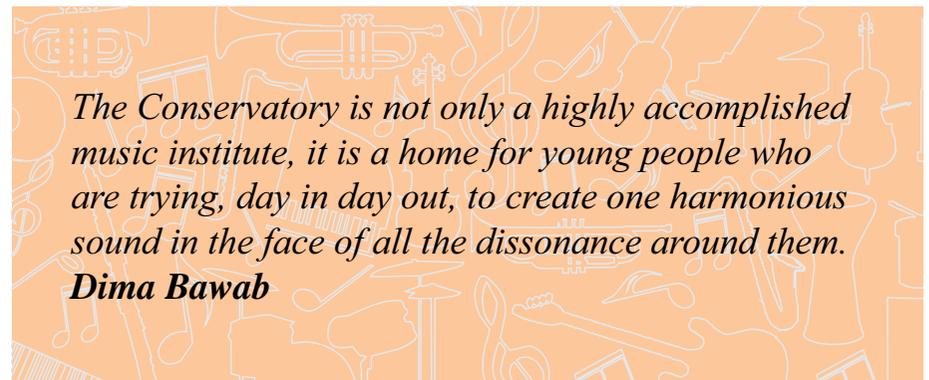
Do: is when I eventually get back home, having done the journey in reverse — with Re and Mi for when I checked that I had my ID card. And always the same fear that if I didn't I would become illegal, I wouldn't exist. Fa, Sol, La.

So, there you have it, my daily journey through an octave. Sometimes, it is more dramatic and it is a minor octave — minor scales have a sad, melancholic touch to them. This is what it takes to get to work, every day.

**Rasha Sansur is a flute graduate of the ESNCM, and worked for more than a year at the Conservatory as coordinator of the al-Sununu choir project.**

Together, they see that they can produce one strong, harmonious and clear message. As a Palestinian this obviously means a lot, all the more so when they see that their country is often split into categorisations of religion and political ideology. As a parent, I feel proud that my children have the chance to be part of the Conservatory. It gives my family real hope. It means that as Palestinians we have a lot to give and that we have come from a long and rich cultural heritage. And now it is time for our children to be heard.

**Rania is a parent of three students at the Conservatory and an active volunteer. She has accompanied the PYO on several tours.**



Conservatory, and to grant them permission for their building design. It is a beautifully designed space, and, in particular, the concert hall will be a venue for many music-making activities for the students, their families and the community. I wish them much success and progress, and I will always follow their activities and concerts.



## Heather Bursheh

I arrived in Palestine, and the ENSCM, in 1998, a fresh graduate looking for adventure. Fifteen years later, I can say that the ENSCM has given me not only adventure, but much more besides. I have had the opportunity to teach a huge variety of students, several of whom have gone on to make music their careers. As a teacher, it has been a great honour to witness a new generation of Palestinian musicians growing and maturing. I have

also had many other roles at the Conservatory, including being a part of the team running the Palestine Youth Orchestra and other orchestras for several years. As well as giving me invaluable experience, it has also been incredibly exciting to see projects come to fruition.

The logistics of gathering together Palestinian musicians who live all over the world are a nightmare, especially if the orchestra meets inside Palestine – Palestinian refugees resident in Syria, Jordan, Egypt or Lebanon have huge



## Rasha Sansur

### The Journey Through an Octave

As a Palestinian and as a musician I have always set my life to music. In the background, in my head, there is always some sort of melody. And that background melody can be happy, sad, passionate or melancholic. Whatever I'm doing, there is always music. Recently I have been going through a lot of checkpoints to get to

**Janet Mikhail was Mayor of Ramallah from 2005 to 2012. She remains active in the community as a board member of several education and development organisations.**

problems getting permission to enter from the Israeli occupation authorities, and we are usually left hanging on the edge of our seats waiting to discover if we will get all the musicians in time for the concert. Once some of the musicians actually received their permits to enter after the concert had taken place! But logistics aside, it is an amazing experience for Palestinians who have lived all their lives in places as far apart as Syria and Honduras to get together, to get to know each other and bond through music and their shared identity. The Conservatory has also been the source of my most rewarding musical collaborations. Karloma, the group I play with, was the result of teachers of the Arabic and Western music departments coming together and experimenting, and that pushed me out of my comfort zone, to improvise and compose. I look forward to the next fifteen years.

**Heather Bursheh is a British-born flautist and teacher at the ENSCM. She is a graduate of the Royal Northern College of Music, UK. She started teaching at the Conservatory in 1998. She is a member of the Karloma ensemble.**

work. This takes up a huge amount of time. I have begun to imagine, however, with every checkpoint, that I am going through the scales of one octave. I start with the simplest, Do major. It's my own mental version of "The Sound of Music".

Do: is my starting point. This is the sound of the first part of the day, waking up, preparing myself mentally, thinking about the traffic ahead, the checkpoint, the fear of the harassment and the delays, hoping that the soldiers have been told to go easy.



### **Naseem Halabi**

I started playing music when I was seven, after being inspired by my cousin, who also played the violin and was actually the only musician in the village of Beit Rima. I am sixteen now. So for the last nine years I have been going from Beit Rima to Ramallah every week for my violin class at the ESNCM. I have always experienced challenges: sometimes people on the bus see my violin case and disapprove of my music-making, because some of them think music is forbidden for

religious reasons; and then there are other challenges from the Israeli soldiers. Once I was arrested by the soldiers while going to a rehearsal. But I have had huge support from my parents — they love music and they should take all the credit for my involvement with music. My brother also plays, he's a trumpet player. And my friends are my biggest fans, they never miss a concert of mine, and some started learning music because of me. So music is a huge part of my life now. In fact, I could say that it is my life.

**Naseem is a violin student at the ESNCM, a member of the PYO, the ESNCM Orchestra and the Palestine Strings. He is studying for his eighth grade exam at the Conservatory and hopes to continue his musical education abroad.**



### **Nai Barghouti**

Music is the language of the soul and a methodology for life. The Conservatory has taught that to countless students. It has personally taught me how to use music to express my inner thoughts as a Palestinian teenager. It has been the musical childhood of many others seeking a future in music. It has led so many, including myself, to overcome the difficult circumstances that we, Palestinians, are compelled to live through almost every day.

in the curriculum at the International Institute of Iberian Music. It has been an incredible and unique journey. I have learned how to be a real musician. Not only by learning the necessary musical skills, but by obtaining a musical soul.

**Nai is a flautist, singer and composer who completed her studies in flute at the ESNCM at the age of fourteen. She has won prizes in the Palestinian National Music Competition in both flute and voice several times. She is a member of the PYO and has sung in Beirut, Cairo and Paris. Her flute compositions are taught at the International Institute of Iberian Music in Spain. Nai intends to pursue her music education abroad in the USA as of October 2014.**

I started my musical road in the Conservatory at the age of seven, back when I felt life was flawless, peaceful and innocent. I studied with one of the most inspirational and talented flute teachers, Heather Bursheh. I completed my classical music studies in the flute when I was fourteen. I participated in the Palestine National Music Competition, in both singing and flute, and I participated in the Palestine Youth Orchestra. Thanks to all the events, concerts, summer programmes and classes, I was able to develop my composition and singing skills. I got the chance to meet a couple of incredible Spanish composers who came to give master classes on composition, and who then decided to feature me in a live concert in Valencia, where I sang and played my own compositions. They then decided to include some of those compositions





## Naseem Atrash

I started studying at the Conservatory at the age of twelve when the second Intifada was at its peak. Music for me at that point was an escape from reality and a window onto a different world of beauty, imagination and creativity. The care and support the Conservatory gave me was tremendous. My teachers encouraged me to pursue a career in music from my early days. I was invited to take part at the first camp for the PYO in Jordan at a time when I had only been playing the cello for a short time. This took me out of my comfort zone and forced me to learn an orchestral repertoire that was beyond my level. And the Conservatory continued to push



## Ashraf Afouri

In 2000 I began my journey in music and discovered the nay. A friend of mine who now teaches at the Conservatory showed me the instrument. I was so enthusiastic to learn that I used to play everywhere - in the street, in the neighbourhood, in the alleyways, in the house. One day I was playing a folk tune, "*Ala dalouna*", in a juice bar when a man carrying an oud came in. He said, "can you play the *bayat* mode?" I said I didn't know what that was, so he said "play '*Ala dalouna*' again". I played it, and he said "that's the *bayat* mode!" He turned out to be a teacher from the Conservatory and he asked me to come along for an audition the following week. At that time, however, there was no nay teacher at the Conservatory, so I took up solfège and theory. I have learned a lot at the Conservatory — a love of music, perseverance, the ability to give artistically, an appreciation of musical affiliation, as well as a love of working in a group. I have seen some great things at the Conservatory. I have watched one teacher go up and down the alleyways of the refugee camps looking for talent, making sure that those students get places and scholarships at the ESNCM too, ensuring the continuity of music and culture in Palestine.

my development by organising student concerts and tours in Europe, Latin America and the Arab world. It helped me get an idea of what life as a musician might be like. It also opened my horizons to the possibilities of Arabic and Middle Eastern music on the cello. Ultimately, it is what allowed me to get into the Berklee College of Music.

**Naseem, from Beit Sahour, graduated in cello from the ESNCM in 2008. A member of the PYO and the PNO, he won the first prize for strings at the National Music Competition in 2006 and 2008. Naseem followed advanced courses at the Lübeck Conservatory of Music, Germany and attended workshops at the Royal Academy of Music, London. Naseem is currently completing his studies at Berklee College of Music, Boston. He envisages returning to Palestine to teach cello, play with orchestras and compose.**

In 2005 I started working at the Conservatory, so I was working and studying at the same time. I started playing with a lot of the ensembles, and they began depending on me and trusting me to do a good job. I have been able to travel to several different countries to represent Palestine. The Conservatory is helping me realise my musical dream.

**Ashraf is a student musician at the ESNCM and a member of the Turath ensemble. He accompanied the Trio Joubran for their tenth anniversary concert in Ramallah as well for their concert at the Olympia in Paris.**



Gaza Qanoun Trio, winners of the Salvador Arnita prize for Ensembles, Palestine National Competition 2014

excavations, and that's just the tip of the iceberg. I go to them every Saturday and teach them something new, or go over old things, but I feel like they look forward to singing in a group. And since the beginning of the year I have been teaching not only the students, but the trainers from the community centre as well. They ask me to sing to them for half-an-hour, and I have been doing that of my own initiative, and it's a really beautiful thing for me, because I feel like this experience is becoming almost like group therapy.



### **Layan Nijem**

What makes me who I am? The ESNCM has accompanied me throughout my quest to find meaning and it has turned out to be a major part of the journey to know myself. The Conservatory has been a part of my life for the last ten years. My story is not as typical as most of the talented musicians at the Conservatory. I was not the best student around, or the child on the posters and flyers. Nonetheless, over the past ten years many things have changed, including me.

I was introduced to the Conservatory when my sister started learning the guitar in 2003. Back then, I was too young to start taking lessons which, of course, broke my heart. The Conservatory, however, did not ignore my enthusiasm and the teachers allowed me to attend other students' lessons once or twice a month. I was also given a plastic recorder as a present which kept me excited and busy for a year trying to produce a tune.

I started the violin at the age of eight in 2004 at the Conservatory. I got the chance to perform with my friends in *al-Manara* Square in the city centre. Looking back, it took a lot of courage to perform there, especially as we were all beginners who only played open strings and a few notes. I still remember how we used to go to Jerusalem every other Friday to attend Jerusalem Children Orchestra rehearsals. For me, it just felt like a trip to see friends from

**Maya was born in Jerusalem. She is a graduate in vocal performance and Music Education from Berklee College of Music. She currently teaches choirs and theory at the ESNCM in Jerusalem and works with the music kindergarten. Maya sings with different groups in Palestine.**

other branches. What is amazing, when I think about it now, is how the Conservatory made learning music such a source of fun.

I never thought about music as more than an extracurricular activity. It was a thing that I did in my spare time. And sometimes I just wanted to stop taking music lessons and watch cartoons. In my third year, I was introduced to the idea of switching to the viola. I was very glad that I did. I immediately fell in love with its sound. I had never known the viola existed before — which is very typical in our society. I was very glad my teachers hadn't told me straight off that I was not such a brilliant violin player. They always encouraged me, and being a new violist, I felt very special amidst all those violin students.

I was just a seed, and with the help of the Conservatory I blossomed. The ESNCM has become more important than school to me. I did not just learn music, but I created long-lasting friendships. In fact, the Conservatory does not only teach music. It creates musicians. It helped me realise that I wanted to study the viola and not hide my passion for music behind academic studies. It showed me that musicians have a message and that message is about sharing with others. Music is not about me, it is about what I can do for others. And I have now had the chance to teach violin and viola in the Outreach Programme, working with children from the refugee camps. The conservatory really has helped me realise that music makes me, me!

**Layan is a graduate viola student from the ESNCM. She is hoping to take up undergraduate studies in the viola in the autumn of 2014 at the Royal Northern College of Music in the UK.**



## Lourдина Baboun

The ESNCM has succeeded in reaching out to different cultures of the world, both Western and Oriental. It has enabled a new generation of Palestinian youth to have a real voice, a voice that calls for justice, recognition and dignity. This voice is a form of cultural resistance in spite of the prejudice and the obstacles created by the occupation. Through music, the Conservatory gives a cultural, human and artistic identity to the Palestinian people.

The fact that the ESNCM is the founder of the first ever Palestinian orchestra is a clear sign of their increased professionalism in Palestine as well as their constant quest for excellence. It is a huge feat to turn a few youths with instruments into a disciplined musical project and, year after year, you can see the increase in quality in all the orchestras. My experience with the Palestine Strings held unique challenges for me and the other sixteen violinists. It was the first time we had to present a musical performance that included memorising



## Maya Khaldi

After graduation from Berklee college of Music, I had two internships arranged in the USA, but I came back to Palestine for a holiday just before the internships were due to start and I started to wonder if there was something I could do at home. And apparently there was! So I didn't return to the States, and instead I started with the Al Sununu choir before term even began. And then I took up a position as a full time theory instructor and choir conductor.

My experience at the Conservatory has been really special. As a fresh graduate I have been thrown into a full-time teaching job. And I have been given the space to teach in my own way, using my own methods, which I think is really

all the pieces and dancing on stage. And on our tour in USA we felt we were able to define our country in a whole new way. As Palestine Strings we were representing a country that supported creativity and talent, with musicians who love music and every bit of life.

My personal challenge was smiling while performing. I used to focus on my internal feelings while playing my violin, without caring about others around me. Through my performances with the Palestine Strings I had to start paying attention to those who came to watch us and eventually I was able to smile from my heart during concerts. The bonding that took place within our group has been exceptional. We supported and helped each other whenever needed, while travelling, during rehearsals, before concerts and during the concerts. We felt we were sending a message of culture and life to the people of the United States. It made every Palestinian living abroad proud to be Palestinian.

**Lourдина studied for nine years at the Bethlehem branch of the ESNCM. She is currently carrying on her studies in France. She first took part in the PYO in 2008. She was part of the Mediterranean Youth Orchestra in Aix-en-Provence, France, in 2013.**

important. It has been a challenge for me to work with the younger children because they are really new to music. I am teaching five to seven year olds, first in the *bustan al-musiqa*, the musical kindergarten, which is an introduction to music, and then in preparatory solfège. And it's not easy because you want to introduce these little people to music in the best and most fun way possible. There is no set curriculum, and I know what I want them to learn but there is room for a really open and creative approach. I also teach the young choir at the Conservatory, seven to eight year olds, but I think my favourite experiences are with the choirs on the Outreach Programme, the *Saraya* and *al-Sununu* choirs.

With the *Saraya* choir in the old city of Jerusalem, instead of bringing the students to the Conservatory, I go to them, and meet them where they are, which makes a big difference. All the students are from a pretty tough area — just across the road there are houses which have been damaged by the Israeli



## Laurence Mekhitarian

I taught at the Gaza music school for two months in early 2014, replacing Elena Goutieva-Leddawi, the piano teacher, who was on maternity leave. I was made to feel very welcome by the director, Ibrahim Najjar, and by the small team of teachers. I immediately felt like I would integrate easily. Despite my limited knowledge of Arabic, I was able to communicate in English and some pupils came accompanied by their parents to

facilitate dialogue. I soon realised how unique the music school in Gaza was in proposing music teaching in both classical and Oriental music for children. And it's hard not to see how vital this education is despite the ongoing need for further resources for the schools premises and to increase the number of teachers. There has been a growing demand for places since 2008.

The school is fortunate in getting valuable support from the Music Fund. The organisation also provides instruments, particularly violins and cellos. And it has also enabled someone to be trained in repairing instruments. A small workshop is now set aside for this. In my two months in Gaza I was able to give several concerts and suggest a teacher concert which was enthusiastically taken up by the staff. Thanks to Khamis Abu Shaban, and a French friend also living at Elena's, I met the director of the new French Institute who suggested that I play for the opening night of a modern art show. With Ibrahim Najjar's agreement, we transported the piano from the school for the event. It was a highly memorable occasion because several students took part, as well as the percussion teacher, Eyad. We played a piece by Donia Jarrar, a Palestinian composer. Another memorable time was when I played at the Ibn Sina Centre at Jabalia refugee camp, with the support of the music school who again let me transport and use their piano.

Each time I understood the uniqueness of these shared musical moments. They were not concerts where a performing soloist is detached from reality. On the contrary the performances were deeply anchored in the everyday reality of Gaza and that reality is communicated directly through the music. That is, for me, the most important service music can provide: to be a vehicle for communication, emotion, exchange and participation, a collective discipline where life catches the echoes of our inner world.

And the echoes I felt in Gaza were a necessity, like an urgent need for rebalancing, for concentration. We can all nurture inner strength by playing an instrument and listening to music. I was doing this on a daily basis when I was teaching and it came with a feeling of gratitude. Indeed, what I received in Gaza was as important as what I gave. Of course, the lack of space, and the insufficient number of pianos, pose a real challenge which hinders the students' ability to spend time on instruments. Yet I found I could give true meaning, in my relationship to music, to every moment I was in Gaza. And I was listening inwardly too and that provided strength and concentration thanks to those echoes that we build through music.

Thanks to everyone and to music I was given a gift for life, as well as trust and love. I would like to develop my collaboration with the school in Gaza further, but also to widen its contacts with the outside world which would be stimulating for the teachers and pupils. Music knows no frontiers and it can open up borders which are both real and imaginary. That is my most precious hope.

**Laurence Mekhitarian is a Belgian pianist. She spent two months teaching at the ESNCM school in Gaza substituting Elena Goutieva-Leddawi during her maternity leave.**

Summer camp 2006





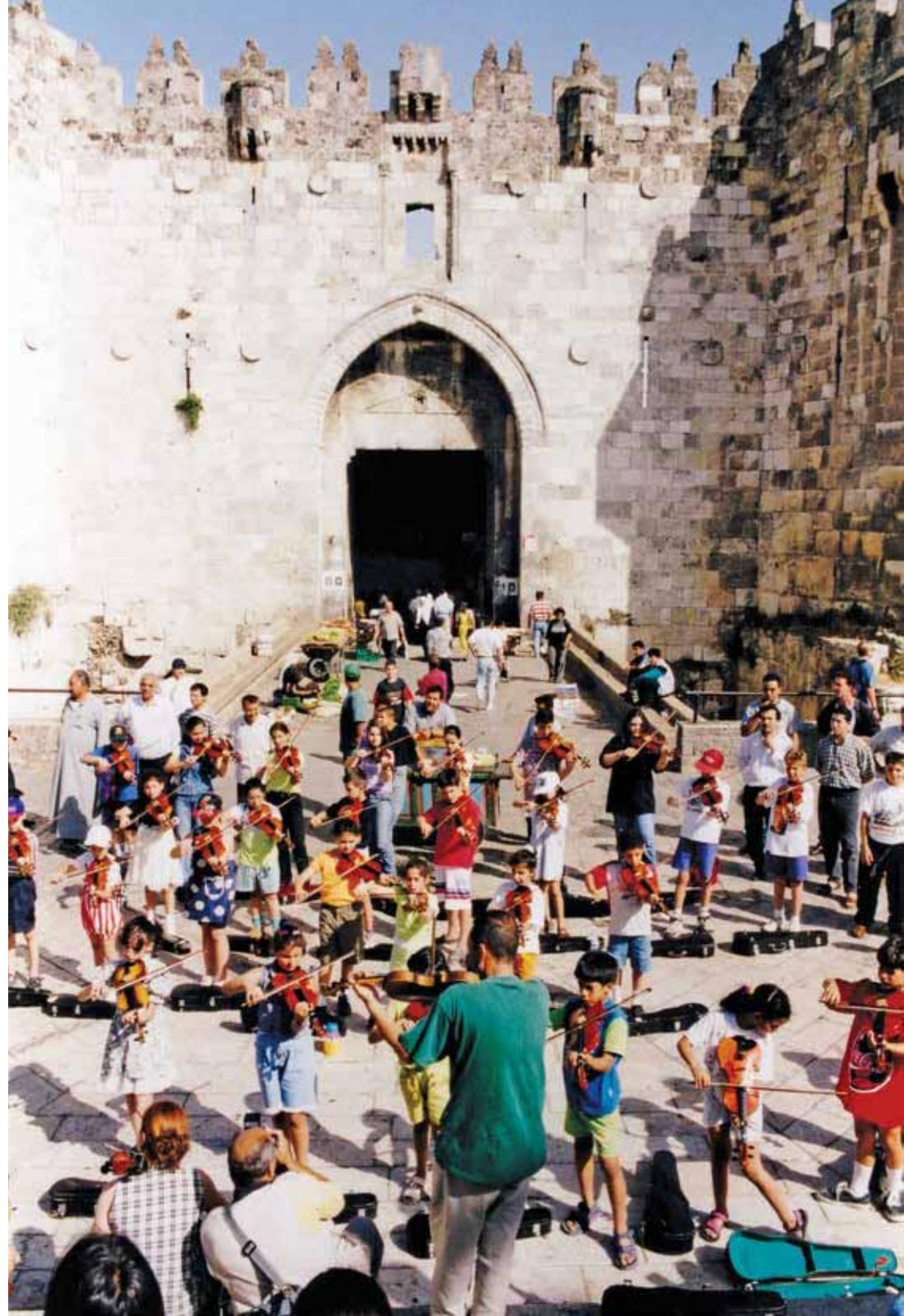
## Bara'a Assi

My story with the viola began when I was ten years old. Around that time I had joined an organisation called "Women for Life", and I was involved in their different activities: dance, singing and poetry. And when I discovered that a music teaching programme had started in the refugee camp near my village, I was the first to join. This changed my life. I was introduced to the different instruments, but the viola adopted me. Its shape, its sound moved me and my teacher, Mohammed Fadel, told me that I had made a good choice. And so with Mr Fadel's encouragement, my mother's support, and with my viola, I have made my way into the world of music. New horizons have opened up for me, connecting me with people, breaking the isolation and confinement of village life and traditions. I am proud to be a student at the Nablus branch of the Conservatory and I hope that my experience will inspire others to join too.

**Bara'a is from the village of Bani Hassan, in the district of Salfit. She plays the viola.**

*A society that produces good musicians and which has the ability to listen to and appreciate good music, whether Western or Arabic, is surely a happier and more vibrant society. It is also one that is better able to withstand those restraints and oppressive measures to which Palestinian society under occupation is subject.*  
**Raja Shehadeh**

String teacher Mohammad Fadel with ENSCM students at  
Damascus Gate, Jerusalem 1996





ESNCM Gaza Branch (previously Gaza Music School)



## Sara Aqel

When my parents first enrolled me, I didn't particularly want to play an instrument, but when war broke out, and the school was destroyed a few months after its opening, I was really sad and I realised that I wanted to play music. During the war I played on my little electric keyboard in my room and it helped shut out the noise of the bombardments two buildings away from us.

In 2009, a new chance came along with the reopening of the music school by the ESNCM. I couldn't wait to study. And since then it's what I want to do most in my spare time. Music helps me concentrate. I really

enjoy getting into the details of a piece of work, understanding its structure, analysing its harmonies. I find a deep kind of beauty which really touches me. A few years ago there was no interest in music in Gaza, but now I feel like it's different. More parents come to the school too. They want to push their children to play an instrument. I hope that the music situation in Gaza improves and that through music the image of Gaza itself improves. For that to happen parents and students are going to have to take on more responsibility, get more students into the school. The whole community in Gaza has to work together, as music can change people and people can change the world.

**Sara has been a student at the Gaza Music School since 2008. She joined at the age of nine.**



ESNCM Gaza Branch (previously Gaza Music School)

*All the young musicians I met in Palestine shared stories about how the ESNCM had enriched and changed their lives. Not only had they gained a musical skill that in itself generated many positive experiences, but they had developed other crucial life skills such as commitment, cooperation, discipline and confidence. I am convinced that Palestinian society — in many aspects — gains massively from the great young people trained by the ESNCM.*

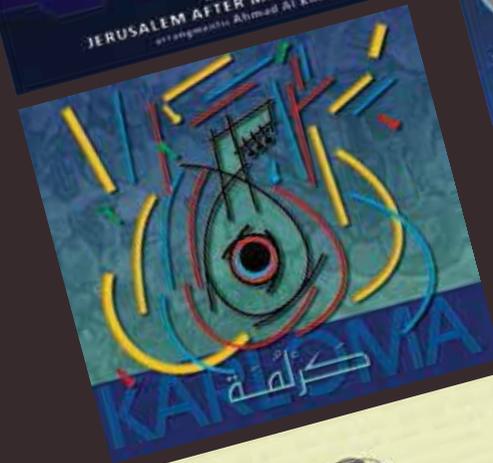
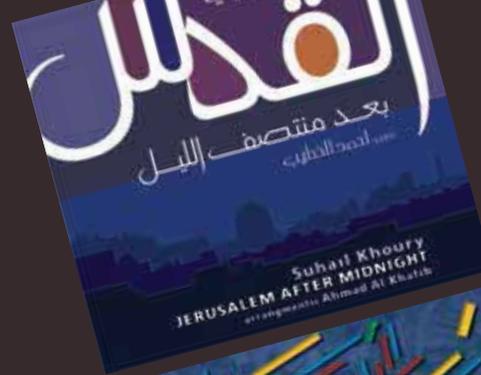
**Torbjørn Ottersen**

**Aghanina / Our Songs: One-Hundred Songs for Palestinian Schools** (book, 2009)

**Sounds Around Us** (2008, a series of five work books for teaching applied music theory and solfege, by Adriana Ponce and Habib Hanna)

**Let's Play: Arabic Melodies for Beginning Pianists** (book, 2002, arranged by Dia Rishmawi, edited by Adriana Ponce)

**Sharqiyat: Examination Pieces for Oriental Instruments** (2002, a series of four books covering the beginning to advanced levels; compiled, edited and transcribed by Ahmad Al-Khatib)





# Productions and Publications by the ESNCM

**Jerusalem After Midnight** (CD, 2009, a collection of compositions by Suhail Khoury)

**Until When** (CD, 2006, music, lyrics and piano accompaniment by composer Rima Nasir Tarazi, with soprano Tania Tamari Nasir)

**Al-Fawanees** (2006, a DVD and CD of the 2004 performance of the musical, composed by Suhail Khoury based on a story by Ghassan Kanafani with lyrics by Wasim Kurdi)

**Andante Meditativo** (sheet music, 20

**Sada** (CD, 2005, a compilation of nine pieces by Ahmad Al Khatib, solo oud recording)

**Bass Shwai** (CD, 2003, first children's CD released by the ESNCM)

**Palestinian Sounds** (CD, 2001, a snapshot of contemporary Palestinian music since 1980; includes 16 tracks from thirteen different artists; co-produced with Yabous Productions, Jerusalem)

**Karloma** (CD, 2001, music from an ensemble of teachers from the ESNCM's Western and Oriental music departments)

**Emm el Khilkhal** (CD, 2000, an album of classical Oriental and Arabic music produced by the Oriental Music Ensemble with teachers from the ESNCM's Oriental music department)

14, for string orchestra, by Salvador Arnita)

**Libera me, Domine** (sheet music, 2014, for soloists, choir, organ and string orchestra, by Salvador Arnita)

**Antiphony, and Allegretto Pastorale** (sheet music, 2014, for oboe and string orchestra, by Salvador Arnita)

**Doors and Keys for Oriental Rhythm** (2014, a method for Arabic percussion by Youssef Hbeisch), published jointly by ESNCM and Beit al-Musiq

**Al-Sununu Songs**, vols. 1 & 2 (books, 2013/14, published jointly by the ESNCM and the Elena Rostropovic Association)

**Songs of Freedom and Hope** (2013, a compilation of 8 volumes of books with songs by Rima Nasir Tarazi)

**Ramzi Rihan: Compositions for Piano** (sheet music, 2011)



## ESNCM circle of support

### Organizations

Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Abu Dhabi Music & Arts Foundation, Al Niser Al Arabi Insurance, A.M. Al-Qattan Foundation, American Near East Refugee Aid- ANERA, Arab Bank, The Arab Fund for Arts and Culture - AFAC, Association Elena Rostropovich-AER, Azure Restaurant, al-Zahra Restaurant, Bank of Palestine, Beit Sahour Municipality, British Consulate, Consolidated Contractors Company- CCC, Consulat De France, Cordaid, Dar al Hikma, Deloitte & Touche/ Saba, Diakonia, Drossos Foundation, European Union, Faisal Hussein Foundation, Freds Korpset – FK Norway, Ford Foundation, Friends of the Gaza Music School, Friends of the Orchestras, Government of Sharjah, Instruments of Peace Foundation, Jawwal Company, Jerusalem Hotel, Kempinsky Hotel, KFW Development Bank, Lannan Foundation, Madrasati Palestine, Ministry of Culture - Palestine, Ministry of Youth & Sports - Palestine, Muna & Basem Hishmeh Foundation, Munib Masri Foundation, National Beverage Company-Coca Cola, Netherlands Representative Office, NGOs Development Center- NDC, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation - Norad, One Child One Promise, PADICO, Palestine Investment Fund, Palestinian Authority, Paltel Group, Palestinian Economic Council for Development & Reconstruction- PECDAR, Pontifical Mission, Prince Claus Fund, PTA Agate Indonesia Selaras, Ramallah Municipality, Representative Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, Royal Danish Representative Office, Sahouri Insurance Services, Spanish Cooperation, Swedish International Development Agency-SIDA, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation- SDC, The Arab Fund for Arts & Culture, The Arab Fund for Economic & Social Development, The Arab Monetary Fund, The Belgian Technical Cooperation, The Housing Bank for Trade & Finance, The Islamic Bank, The Jerusalem Fund, The Jerusalem Forum- Amman, The OPEC Fund for International Development- OFID, The Representative Office of Norway, UAE friends of ESNCM, United Nations Development Programme-UNDP, United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization- UNESCO, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund-UNICEF, Wataniya Mobile, Welfare Association.

### Individuals

Abla Nasir, Adala Odeh Nakash, al-Shihabi Family, Bassim Khoury, Edward Karkar, Eyad Younis, Fahmi al-Ghussein, Family of Jose Saied, Family of Antone Tarazi, Fatima Abu Ghazaleh, Gabi and Haifa Baramki, Ghassan Mustaklem, Hanan Abu Ghazaleh, Hani Abu Dayyeh, Hani Baramki, Hanna Nasir, H.H. Prince Karim Aga Khan, Joseph Jacir, Latifa Costa, Lorraine LeBlanc, Maha Abu Ghazaleh, Maher Abu Ghazaleh, Mahira Abu Ghazaleh, Maissoun Farah al-Saraf, Majida Labadi, Mariam Al Jabcheh, Mario & Jenny Nazal, Marina Kun, Marwan Shehadeh, Mazin Dajani, Mohammed Abu Ghazaleh, Mounir Atalla, Munther Nabulsi, Munther & Salwa Farrah, Nadia Sukhtian, Nazik Rafiq Hariri, Omar Abdulhadi, Raja Haweit, Randa Kaddoura, Riad Kamal, Sabih Al Masri, Salwa Al Muhtadi, Sameer Abdulhadi, Samia Khoury, Samir Adel Aweidah, Simon Kouba, Suhail Saba, Sumaya Jabcheh Abu Ghazaleh, Tania Sfeir, Usama Abu Ghazaleh, Usama Amr, Usama Tuqan, Yacoub Al Yousef, Yousef Nader, Zaha Mango, Zahi Anabtawi, Zahi Khoury.

The Conservatory is very grateful to our local and international friends, too numerous to be mentioned individually here. Throughout the years they have been our solid and faithful supporters. Without them the Conservatory's success story would not have been possible.

PYO, Megaron Concert Hall, Athens, Greece 2010





The boards of the conservatory function under the umbrella of the Board of Trustees of Birzeit University

### **Supervisory Board**

Abla Nasir  
Bassim Khoury  
Ghassan Mustaklem  
Lena Saleh  
Nadia Mikhail Abboushi

Ramzi Rihan  
Rima Nasir Tarazi, Chairperson  
Simon Kouba  
Usama Amer  
Suhail Khoury, General Director

### **Honorary Board**

Basem Hishmeh  
Diana Takieddine  
Leila Chahid  
Mamdouh Aker  
Marcel Khalife  
Munther Nabulsi

Said Khoury  
Simon Shaheen  
Souha Bawab  
Tania Nasir  
Tania Sfeir  
Zahi Khoury

### **The Founders**

Salwa Tabri  
Rima Nasir Tarazi  
Amin Nasser  
Nadia Mikhail Abboushi  
Suhail Khoury

Al-Fawanees Musical 2004

Ali Amr, Jerusalem Festival 2009 © Yabous Archive

*Where should we go after the last frontiers?  
Where should the birds fly after the last sky?*  
**Mahmoud Darwish.**

