

Unveiling of the program for the 18th edition of the
Festival du Monde Arabe de Montréal
THE THREE' SEASONS
in quarter-tones

Montréal, Tuesday, September 26, 2017. Today, at the Espace culturel Georges-Émile-Lapalme in the Place des Arts, the Festival du Monde Arabe de Montréal, with many of its partners, artists and friends present, unveiled the program of its 18th edition, to be held **October 27 to November 12, 2017**, under the theme ***The Three' Seasons, in quarter-tones***. Performances by artists **Fairouz Oudjida, Ensemble Nazar (Amir Amiri and Nazih Borish), Didem Basar** and **Matias Ollivier** enlivened the news conference with poetry, music and song.

For its 18th edition, the Festival du Monde Arabe is lavishing its attention on the poets, dancers, musicians and acrobatic spirits who let themselves be guided by the unexpected. From East to West, fortuitous encounters, hidden pathways and unusual tributes to life kick off the 18th edition of the FMA, which is looking majestic with more than 50 unique gatherings, original products and major shows.

Several major development and partnership programs have been launched this year, in particular a **collaboration with the Orchestre Métropolitain**, a role in the preparation and **launch of the first edition of the Festival of Arabic Music and Arts** in Toronto, the FMA's first "little brother," and a **collaboration with the Opéra de Montréal** for a major project in 2018-2019.

"Following close cooperation with the Canadian Arabic Orchestra, founder of the Festival of Arabic Music and Arts (FAMA), the FMA has guided and supported, over the course of a long year, the birth of this first initiative, the only one of its kind in Ontario," stated Communications Director **Emily Awad**. "Taking as its model the FMA and its 18 years of experience, original productions and special moments, this young festival will be holding its first edition in Toronto from October 28 to November 12 and will feature a number of international artists from the program of the 18th FMA. This major initiative is both a **development approach by the FMA toward other provinces** and a platform for local and international artists, helping them consolidate their **artistic reach and to perform in various cities** across Canada."

"The Orchestre Métropolitain is looking forward to this first collaboration with the Festival du Monde Arabe de Montréal and delighted to be sharing the stage of the Maison Symphonique with master of the oud Naseer Shamma," noted **Jean R. Dupré**, President and CEO of the Orchestre Métropolitain. "This grand event demonstrates the power of music to bring people together. With the unifying force of passion and virtuosity, music knows no boundaries."

Free Performing Arts program, Salon de la Culture and Cinéma

Programming assistant **Maxime Garrigue** unveiled the key moments in the free Performing Arts program and aspects of the Salon de la Culture and Cinéma.

Salon de la Culture

“Each year, the FMA takes a questioning look at the world, shaking up the status quo, welcoming differences and reflecting on the issues our society faces,” Mr. Garrigue said. “The program being offered confirms the desire of our team to allow each and every one to express themselves and to interact.”

In a critical reading of the reality surrounding us, intellectuals, academic figures and artists will lead the FMA’s *Salon de la culture*, raising challenging themes. An exhibition, lectures, original screenings and workshops are at the core of the program: **women in religious institutions, Gibran, forerunner of an aborted renaissance, Jews in Tunisia, diversity and Québec memory**, Arab media in Canada, art as a conveyor of memory, artistic creation at the heart of civic combat, **Syria and sacrificed youth**, etc. are among the topics to be raised by our guests Wassyla Tamzali, Slimane Benaissa, Peter Leuprecht and Leila Toubel, as well as other speakers.

Cinema

The FMA is presenting the Canadian première of the much awaited second cult play by **Ziad Rahbani, *Film Ameriki Tawil*** (A long American film) converted into a feature film. A restoration of the original sequences of the play performed in 1980, filmed with Super 8 cameras, was released this year to the public. “The FMA is very proud to present this masterpiece of Lebanese theatre to the Montréal public,” Mr. Garrigue said.

The Film component is taking on a greater scope this year and is also presenting the Québec premières of a wide selection of feature films in partnership with the **Cinéma du Parc: *Malaria* by Parviz Shahbazi (Iran)**, nominated at the **Venice Film Festival** in the “Best film” category and the winner of awards at several European festivals, provides a modern picture of Teheran youth; ***Bravo Virtuose* by Levon Minasian (Armenia)**, an exciting thriller featuring an Armenian musical scene torn between oligarchy and mafia; ***Solitaire* by Sophie Boutros (Lebanon)** tackling with humour the tense relationships and climate of intolerance that prevails between Lebanese and Syrians; ***Single, Married, Divorced (Lebanon)***, an Oriental *Sex and the City* dealing with the amorous adventures of four young men in the heart of Beirut; ***L’Etoile d’Alger* by Rachid Benhadj (Algeria)**, revealing an Algerian musical scene that is prey to the precepts of religious extremism; and, finally ***Timgad***, a comedy by **Fabrice Benchaouche (Algeria)** dealing sensitively with the hopes of torn Algerian youth.

Free Performing Arts program

“This year, the free Performing Arts component features local artists in innovative projects and original groups,” Mr. Garrigue said. “This will provide an opportunity to attend a flash encounter between the gentle fervour of the *santour* and the warm breath of the double bass with ***Perséides***, formed by the duo of Amir Amiri and Jean-Félix Mailloux, and to discover an energetic travelling repertory with the **Tandem Nomade** duo of Chakib Kouidri and Elsa Corgié. We will also have the participation of **oud player Ali El Farouk**, in dialogue with the ***qanoun* of Naeem Shanwar**; the launch of an album by percussionist **Ziya Tabassian** in his first solo project, and the percussion-guitar duo of **Tacfarinas Kichou and Joey Mallat**. Not to be missed is an intimate show at the café Le Cagibi with

ney (Arab flute) virtuoso **Rachid Zeroual**, a concert in tribute to the great figures of raï by artiste **Chakib Kouidri** and his musicians and, finally, a master class given by internationally renowned singer **Fadia Tomb El-Hage.**”

Performing Arts

Communications Director **Emily Awad** then took the floor to **reveal the Performing Arts program.** “The FMA is proud to devise a **program that is looking majestic**, presenting international leading artists, outstanding encounters and unusual paths,” Ms. Awad noted.

Great “classics”

- ***Oud à l'Ouest:*** Bringing together **Nasser Shamma**, one of the world’s greatest oud players, and the prestigious **Orchestre Métropolitain** conducted by Airat Ichmouratov, a meeting of greats where you can hear pieces by Mozart, Rossini, Vivaldi and Rimsky-Korsakov in a whole different way.
- ***Les 7 cités de l’amour:*** A grand closing night in tribute to poet and writer **Kahlil Gibran**, carried by the sublime voices of the NDU Choir under the direction of Fr. Khalil Rahmé.
- ***Alep Ya-la-lal-li, la ville à mille temps:*** A true musical odyssey in tribute to a pluralistic city open to the world. Through the immense voice of **Syrian singer Ahmad Azrak** and Tunisian diva **Dorsaf Hamdani**, traditional chants from Aleppo are blended with Andalusian and flamenco musical styles, Sufi chant and its profane derivatives with Persian sounds.
- ***Cordes à l’Est:*** An exciting encounter where the strings of the **Violons du Roy** are paired with the Oriental sound of the *ney* of **virtuoso Rachid Zeroual** and with the velvety voice of **Leila Gouchi**, under the direction of Katia Makdissi-Warren.
- ***Charbel Rouhana & The Canadian Arabic Orchestra:*** For the third time at the FMA, the renowned oud player delivers a unique show accompanied by 14 musicians and 12 choristers from Canada.

The season’s revelations

- ***Faia Younan:*** A **poignant tribute to Syria** delivered by this rising star of Arab song, both diva and activist.
- ***L’âme du luth:*** A discovery concert featuring the captivating voice and deep timbre of singer **Waed Bouhassoun** and her oud.
- ***Baroug 08:*** An **opening night** with contagious energy blending traditional melodies and instruments with the sound of the synthesizer in a throbbing groove.
- ***Nabyla Maan:*** The rising star of Andalusian song, revisiting traditional songs under the wing of jazz.
- ***Sudan Blues - Rasha Seikheddine:*** A free and committed voice that exhales blues with warm colours from the Nubian Desert.

Learned music and bold fusions

- **Persian Flamenco:** An unusual encounter between the exalted emotions of flamenco and the refined ornamentation of Persian music.
- **Golan:** An unusual blend of traditional Oriental music and fusion jazz orchestrated by bass player Hubert Dupont and his musicians.
- **Les immortels:** Great classics from North Africa revisited by Henry Abittan and his orchestra.
- **Fairouz sings Fairouz:** A tribute to the illustrious singer Fairouz through the outstanding voice of soprano Fairouz Oudjida.
- **El M Quartet:** An opportunity to discover the oud in a different light, tinged with jazz sounds!
- **Sohbat – Ensemble Nazar:** An exquisite dialogue between the santour and the oud creating impromptu connections between the subtleties of Persian music and the poetry of Arab sounds.
- **Ensemble Dilan:** A journey to the heart of Iranian Kurdistan through the sound of the *kamancheh* and Persian percussions.

Theatre

- **Trois jours... avant l'heure by Slimane Benaïssa:** Back in Montréal, the great Algerian playwright takes us into the heart of the news by staging the material, “religious” and mental preparations of two kamikazes who are going to commit an attack.
- **Hourya by Leila Toubel:** A musical theatre show telling the story of an impossible love between a surviving journalist and a pianist amidst the rubble of a radio station destroyed in a terrorist attack.

Every year, the FMA presents forth a bold and powerful theme around which the various activities gravitate. The theme for this edition, *The Three' Seasons in quarter-tones*, inspired by the works of Kahlil Gibran, was interpreted by **Matias Ollivier**, a young artist and a member of the FMA team.

Finally, **Joseph Nakhlé**, General and Artistic Director of the FMA, spoke out on the FMA's identity and vision, its connection with the public and its current issues, particularly in terms of communication, urging Quebecers of all origins to turn out in large numbers.

In conclusion, Mr. Nakhlé unveiled the highlights of the 18th edition in images.



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www.festivalarabe.com

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