



National Arab Orchestra

Michael Ibrahim

Music Director and Conductor

Abeer Nehme / *Vocals*

UMS Choral Union

Scott Hanoian / Music Director and Conductor

Saturday Evening, March 19, 2022 at 8:00

Hill Auditorium

Ann Arbor

16th Performance of the 143rd Annual Season

UMS has been privileged to work with a team of artists, scholars, and community leaders from our region to help co-curate a portfolio of performances by artists and ensembles from the Arab world and its diaspora. Their insight and expertise have contributed immeasurably to the programming of our Winter 2022 season. Special thanks to each of the **UMS Arab Advisory Council** members:

Su'ad Abdul Khabeer	Sally Howell
Wadad Abed	Ibrahim Jarjoura
Maan Abou Khzam	Charlotte Karem Albrecht
Ghassan Abou-Zeineddine	Mike Khoury
Diana Abouali	Tammy Lakkis
Nour Ballout	Manal Saab
Hassan Bazzi	Alexander Sahouri
Roula David	Leyya Mona Tawil
Kathryn Grabowski-Khairullah	

The NAO is committed to providing a platform for cultural expression and education by preserving and integrating Arab music within the Arab American community and beyond. Tonight, we invite you to join us on a journey where we explore stories of migration, love, and cultural exchange together.

This evening's performance is funded in part by the Community Foundation for Southeast Michigan, the State of Michigan Commission on Middle Eastern American Affairs, and the National Endowment for the Arts.

Media partnership provided by WEMU 89.1 FM and WDET 101.9 FM.

In consideration of the artists and the audience, please refrain from the use of electronic devices during the performance.

The photography, sound recording, or videotaping of this performance is prohibited.

PROGRAM

Zaki Nassif

Frashay w Zahra

Rahbani Brothers,

Arr. Michael Ibrahim

Ana La Habibi

Rahbani Brothers,

Arr. Ibrahim

Watani

Old Traditional

Prashti Mennakh

Mohamed il-Qasabji,

Lyrics by Ma'moun al-Shinawwi, Arr. Ibrahim

Imta Ha Ta'raf

Riyad al-Sunbati,

Lyrics by Ahmed Rami

Ifrah Ya Albi

Traditional Andalusian,

Arr. Ibrahim

Lamma Bada

UMS Choral Union

Ibrahim

The Wretched Refuse*

UMS Choral Union

Scott Hanoian, conductor

Intermission

Ibrahim
Hilim (Dream)

Charbel Rouhana,
Lyrics by Jad il-Haj
Qahwah

Marwan Khoury,
Lyrics by Germanos Germanos, Arr. Ibrahim
Waynak

Abeer Nehme,
Lyrics by Lucas Sakr, Arr. Ibrahim
Ya Tara

Rahbani Brothers
Ya Tayr

Philemone Wehbi,
Lyrics by Rahbani Brothers
Min 'Iz il-Nawm

Mohamed il-Qasabji,
Lyrics by Abu al-Saud al-Ibyari
Ana Albi Dalili

**World Premiere*

CELEBRATING THE NAO IN ANN ARBOR

After nearly 13 years since the National Arab Orchestra (NAO) held its first concert on campus at the University of Michigan, it is so exciting to be back in Ann Arbor! The NAO had its start as a small student group in 2009; to be here performing on campus again is a true homecoming for me. I want to express my sincere gratitude to UMS for making this night possible: I am especially grateful for the opportunity to share a piece of my culture, community, and life with all of you tonight.

The Arab world is a diverse collection of 22 nations, with each country offering its unique thread to the rich tapestry of its people's art, heritage, and tradition of storytelling. This evening's program takes us on a voyage through the Arab world, showcasing select repertoire that spans across land and time. From the sounds of Andalusian Spain to the unique sounds of the Levant and North Africa, we are excited to share this journey with you in collaboration with the UMS Choral Union and our featured guest artist, the incomparable Abeer Nehme.

If you are new to Arab music, welcome! In addition to the different instrumentation you see on stage, you may notice that this music diverges from your auditory norm with its emphasis on melody, utilization of rhythmic cycles that can accompany a melody, additional notes that are not normally used in Western music, and the use of improvisation. Perhaps one of the starkest differences you will observe is the communal relationship between the performers on stage and the audience. This relationship,

which has been observed in studies by renowned ethnomusicologist Dr. Ali Jihad Racy, can be experienced through the audience's varied responses to hearing phrases, solos, improvisations, or melodies they enjoy during the performance. Among the familiar reaction of clapping after solos, audience members have been known to sing along if they know the lyrics, clap in rhythm during a particularly upbeat part of a song, or exclaiming their approval with a variety of phrases in Arabic. This unique trait of Arab music gives way to another shared experience, also studied and written about by Dr. Racy, the concept of *tarab*, which is best described as a state of musical ecstasy or joy brought on by a combination of the musical performance and audience reaction. All you must do is sit back, listen, and enjoy!

If you grew up on this music, welcome home. It is our sincere hope this performance inspires you to know more about your own heritage — and we are confident that you will still hear something new. Among the variety of classical and popular repertoire on the program, we are particularly excited to be premiering a new composition that shares the experiences of children who immigrated to America.

Thank you for coming and sharing this special moment with us and please, enjoy the performance!

— *Michael Ibrahim*

ARTISTS

The **National Arab Orchestra** (NAO) is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that preserves and integrates Arab culture through music education, outreach, and performance. Founded in 2009, the Orchestra was originally a small chamber music group comprised of *oud* (Arab lute), *qanun* (Arab harp), violin, *nay* (Arab reed flute), and *riqq* (Arab tambourine). Today, the Orchestra is made up of 25 stellar musicians from across the country and is comprised of musicians from both Arab and non-Arab backgrounds. The NAO works with communities across the country providing a platform of cultural expression and exchange for the Arab American community while providing opportunities that will bridge social and cultural barriers through music.

Michael Ibrahim (*music director and conductor*) is a Detroit native and was born into a Syrian immigrant family of humble origins. He began his musical studies on the oud, and later studied the bassoon and nay as his musical training progressed. Ibrahim studied under renowned musicians Simon Shaheen, Johnny Sarweh, Nadeem Dlaikan, Douglas Bianchi, Anthony Iannaccone, Dr. David Pierce, Robert Williams, and Victoria King. He earned a bachelor's degree in music from Eastern Michigan University, and a master's degree in conducting from Wayne State University. Ibrahim's background and unique approach to composition and improvisation fusing Western and Arab music idioms has led to performances in concert halls and venues throughout the world, features on a number of recordings and film scores, and opportunities to share the stage with some of the most influential figures in Western and Arab music. His role as an educator, providing instrumental

and ensemble instruction, lectures and demonstrations on Arab music, and at university and grade school levels privately and in the classroom ultimately brought him to founding the National Arab Orchestra, where he currently serves as music director. Ibrahim hopes that he can instill a wider appreciation for Arab music and its heritage through his performances and educational efforts.

Abeer Nehme (*vocals*) is a Lebanese established international crossover singer and songwriter possessing one of the most influential voices in the Arab world with exceptional vocal talents. She is known for her ability to perform a diversity of music genres and dialogues. She is considered to be the first Arabic singer and one of the few worldwide to perform in more than 29 languages, making her the emissary of cultural and musical dialogue in the region. These languages are Afghani/Tadjiki, Amazighi, Arabic, Aramaic, Armenian, Azeri, Bengali, Chinese, Coptic, English, Farsi, French, German, Greek, Gujarati, Hindi, Hungarian, Italian, Kurdish, Latin, Nubian, Portuguese, Romani, Russian, Sardinian, Spanish, Sudani, Swedish, and Turkish.

Nehme is the first Lebanese artist to sign an international record deal with Universal Music MENA. To date, she has recorded two studio albums produced by Universal Music and is in the process of recording her third album. Universal Music MENA distributed her double album composed by the renowned Marcel Khalife in 2018.

Over the past few years, she has performed at the most prestigious music venues worldwide and at the most prominent international festivals around the globe. She is also the creator, researcher, television presenter, and producer of music documentaries, such as

Ethnophilia Mousiqā-l-Shou'oub, a series of 40 documentaries featuring her unique capacity to sing in various languages and styles. She traveled for six years around the globe looking for the roots of folk and ethnic music. Through this journey, she observed and participated in the cultural traditions of diverse ethnicities, making her a messenger of civilizational, cultural, and artistic dialogues that transcend all boundaries.

Nehme was the television personality and main musical host of the weekly live musical and cultural television show *One Thousand and One Nights* broadcasted on the National Turkish Television (TRT). The show was filmed in Istanbul where she was accompanied by the Turkish Orchestra from 2009–11.

Nehme is a professional music composer with a rich portfolio of achievements. She composed and sang the album *Al Mutanabbi... Mousafirān Abadan* showcasing Al Mutanabbi's most popular poems, produced by the Abu Dhabi Tourism and Culture Authority, for the Abu Dhabi International Book Fair. She also composed the Sheikh Zayed Book Award music, produced by the Sheikh Zayed Book Award committee. She also excelled in musicals, performing the leading roles in prominent productions in Lebanon and abroad, including *Conférence des oiseaux* for Farid-al-Din 'Attār, directed by Thierry Poquet and produced by the Fes World Sacred Music Festival in Morocco. In 2018, Nehme played the leading role in the international musical *Black and White*, produced by 59 Productions UK at the Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Cultural Center in Kuwait.

Scott Hanoian (*conductor*) is the music director and conductor of the UMS Choral Union where he conducts and prepares the Grammy Award-winning chorus in

performances with the world's finest orchestras and conductors. Choruses prepared by Mr. Hanoian have sung under the batons of Leonard Slatkin, Iván Fischer, Osmo Vänskä, Peter Oundjian, Fabien Gabel, and Arie Lipsky.

Mr. Hanoian is active as an organist, accompanist, continuo artist, conductor, choral adjudicator, and guest clinician. He is the director of music and organist at Christ Church Grosse Pointe, where he directs the church's four choirs and oversees the yearly concert series. Mr. Hanoian has served on the faculty of Wayne State University and Oakland University and was the artistic director and conductor of the Oakland Choral Society from 2013–15.

As an organist and conductor, Mr. Hanoian has performed concerts throughout the US and has led choirs on trips to Great Britain, Ireland, Italy, France, and Spain. In the summer of 2017, Mr. Hanoian led the Christ Church Schola during their weeklong residency at Westminster Abbey. Before moving to Grosse Pointe, Mr. Hanoian was the assistant organist and assistant director of music at Washington National Cathedral where he played the organ for many services including the funerals for Presidents Ronald Reagan and Gerald Ford. Mr. Hanoian has recorded the complete organ works of Johannes Brahms for the JAV label.

Formed in 1879 by a group of local university and townspeople who gathered together for the study of Handel's *Messiah*, the **UMS Choral Union** has performed with many of the world's distinguished orchestras and conductors in its 143-year history. First led by Professor Henry Simmons Frieze and then conducted by Professor Calvin Cady, the group has performed Handel's *Messiah* in Ann Arbor annually since its first *Messiah* performance in December 1879. Based in

Ann Arbor under the aegis of UMS and led by Scott Hanoian, the 175-voice Choral Union is known for its definitive performances of large-scale works for chorus and orchestra. In addition to the resumption of its annual performances of Handel's *Messiah*, the UMS Choral Union's 2021–22 season included a performance of Schumann's *Adventlied* with the Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra.

The UMS Choral Union was a participant chorus in a rare performance and Grammy Award-winning recording of William Bolcom's *Songs of Innocence and of Experience* under the baton of Leonard Slatkin. Other recent highlights include a Grammy-nominated recording project of the rarely heard *Oresteian Trilogy* by Darius Milhaud conducted by Kenneth Kiesler and collaborations with the San Francisco Symphony, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Minnesota Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and New York Philharmonic. The ensemble received The American Prize in Choral Performance (community division) for its 2017 performance of Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*.

The UMS Choral Union strives to create an environment that is accessible, diverse, equitable, and inclusive of all. Participation in the Choral Union remains open to all students and adults by audition. For more information on how to audition, please visit www.ums.org/choralunion.

NATIONAL ARAB ORCHESTRA

Violin

Imad Al Taha*
Bengisu Gokce
Megan Gould
Jumanah Hassan
Insia Malik
Daniel Moltke
Mohammad Tahboub
Christopher Witulski
Sachiyo Yoshimoto

Viola

Marandi Hostetter
Roberto Riggio
Andrea Vercoe

Cello

Mohannad Al Zahabi
George Crotty
Khaled Khalifa

Bass

Jonathan Hammonds

Nay

Michael Ibrahim †

Qanun

Firas Zreik

Oud

Nashwan Fadel

Electric Guitar

Edward Gedeon

Piano

Scott Van Ornum

Harp

Celia van den Bogert

Percussion

Edy Fadel
Gilbert Mansour
Dr. Gursharan Singh Sandhu
Zafir Tawil

† *Conductor/Director*

* *Concertmaster*

The National Arab Orchestra thanks its donors and sponsors:

Amerapex
Center for Arab Philanthropy (CAAP)
Dr. Khaldoun Tarabin – Alpine Dental
Ghassan and Manal Saab Foundation
Healthspective, Inc.
Ibrahim Mardam-Bey
Louis, Lauren & Lana Foundation

Michael and Hoda Kardoush
Michigan Council for the Arts
National Endowment for the Arts
National Performance Network
Odessa Dental Solutions
Pharmascript
Troy and Raghad Farah

UMS CHORAL UNION

Scott Hanoian / *Conductor and Music Director*

Maggie Burk / *Assistant Conductor*

Jean Schneider / *Pianist*

Kathleen Operhall / *Chorus Manager*

Johanna Grum / *Librarian*

Soprano

Katie Alltop

Elizabeth Baldner

Debra Joy Brabenc

Maggie Burk

Ann Burke

Anne Busch

Jenny Calahan

Carol Callan

Susan F. Campbell

Mary Jane Chase

Cheryl D. Clarkson

Barbara Clayton

Corynn Coscia

Carrie Deierlein

Madeline Dickens

Briana Dusling

Chikodi Etike

Marjorie Fera

Keiko Goto

Meredith Hanoian

– **SC**

Shelly Hawkins

Sarah Herwick

Jasmine Jagers

Elle Jorling

Amy Knight

Kallan Larsen

Tamina Lock

Kathleen E. Marinan

Stephanie Miller-
Allen

Armaity Minwalla

Margaret Dearden

Petersen

Sara J. Peth

Lily Robinson

Renee Roederer

Rachael L. Rose

Mary Schieve

Virginia Thorne-
Herrmann

Margie Warrick

Maureen White-
Goeman

Mary Wigton – **SL**

Lauren E. Wilson

Alto

Paula Allison-
England

Carol Barnhart

Margy Boshoven

Lauren Boyles-

Brewitt

Lora Perry

Campredon

Jean Cares

Ashley Carman

Cheong-Hee Chang

Melissa Doyle

Jane Forman

Karyn L. Goff

Judi Lempert Green

Johanna Grum

Kat Hagedorn

Sook Han

Carol Kraemer

Hohnke
Katherine Klykylo

Johanna Liao

Cynthia Lunan

Beth McNally – **SC**

Marilyn Meeker – **SL**

Carol Milstein

Richa Mukerjee

Kathryn Murphy

Kathleen Operhall

Judith Pennywell

Alexa Piotrowski

Rachel Piper

Ruth Senter

Cindy Shindlecker

Susan Sinta

Hanna Song

Katherine Spindler

Ruth A. Theobald

Cheryl Utiger

Alice VanWambeke

Mary Beth Westin

Karen Woollams

Tenor

Stephen Amori

Michael Ansara Jr.

Gary Banks – **SC**

Wade Baughman

Steven Fudge – **SL**

Carl Gies

Arthur Gulick

Peter C. Henninger-
Osgood

Benjamin Johnson

Marius Jooste

Corwin Kerr

Bob Klaffke

Rich Marsh

Michael McCarren

Ben Rorem

Thomas Shaw

Ray Shuster

Robert J. Stevenson

Peter Toogood

Trevor Young

Bass

Sam Baetzel – **SL**

Joel Beam

William Boggs – **SC**

Charles A. Burch

Kyle Cozad

Sean Dey

John Dryden

Robert Edgar

Jeffrey Ellison

Daniel Enos

Allen Finkel

Robert R. Florka

John Heilig

Jorge Iñiguez-Lluhi

Sunho Lee

Rick J. Litow

Roderick J. Little

Aidan Meador-

Woodruff

Thomas Postema

Thomas Sommerfeld

Jeff Spindler

David Townsend

James Watz

SL – Section Leader

SC – Section Coach

UMS ARCHIVES

UMS welcomes the **National Arab Orchestra, Michael Ibrahim, and Abeer Nehme** as they make their UMS debuts tonight. This evening's performance marks the **UMS Choral Union's** 448th appearance under UMS auspices, following its most recent UMS performances of Handel's *Messiah* in December 2021 in Hill Auditorium with **Scott Hanoian**. Scott Hanoian makes his 19th UMS appearance this evening, following his UMS debut in December 2015 in performances of Handel's *Messiah*.

**THANK YOU TO SUPPORTERS OF THIS EVENING'S
PERFORMANCE**

Funded in part by

**Community Foundation
for Southeast Michigan**

**State of Michigan
Commission on Middle
Eastern American Affairs**

**National Endowment
for the Arts**