



# EQUAL IN MUSIC

## WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ENSEMBLE

*UN GLOBAL ADVOCATE FOR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING*

organized by  
the **United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)** and  
the **UN Department for Global Communications (UNDGC)**

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**THURSDAY, 23 FEBRUARY, 1:15 PM EST**  
**UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS IN NEW YORK**  
**TRUSTEESHIP COUNCIL CHAMBER**



# EQUAL IN MUSIC

The **United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)** and the **United Nations Department of Global Communications (UNDGC)** are honored to introduce to the UN community the West-Eastern Divan Ensemble.

The eight-member ensemble led by the orchestra's concertmaster Michael Barenboim draws upon players of the world famous West-Eastern Divan Orchestra founded in 1999 by renowned Israeli pianist/conductor Daniel Barenboim and Palestinian scholar/author Edward Said. The United Nations Secretary-General designated the orchestra in 2016 as **United Nations Global Advocate for Cultural Understanding**.

The encounter at the UNHQ will provide an opportunity to introduce the idea behind the orchestra which is composed of young musicians from Israel, Palestine and other Arab countries. For over twenty-four years, the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra continues to demonstrate that when people listen to each other, both musically and in all other ways, great results can be achieved.

## ABOUT THE WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ENSEMBLE

### *UN GLOBAL ADVOCATE FOR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING*

The **West-Eastern Divan Ensemble**, led by the orchestra's concertmaster Michael Barenboim, draws upon players of the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra.

Founded in 1999, the orchestra's origins lie in the conversations between its creators, Edward W. Said and Daniel Barenboim. Over the course of their friendship, the Palestinian author-scholar and Israeli conductor-pianist discussed ideas on music, culture, and humanity. In their exchanges, they realized the urgent need for an alternative way to address the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The opportunity to do so came when Barenboim and Said initiated a workshop for young musicians using their experience as a model. This evolved into the WestEastern Divan Orchestra that global audiences know today. The group is comprised of Arab and Israeli members, defying fierce political divides in the Middle East and globally. Through its work and existence, the orchestra demonstrates that bridges can be built to encourage people to listen to the narrative of the other.

The West-Eastern Divan Ensemble is the most recent imprint of this project and brings the highly praised artistry of the orchestra into an intimate chamber-music format. Founded by Michael Barenboim to mark the orchestra's 20th anniversary, the ensemble gives audiences an opportunity to experience the musicians' unique artistry and personality up close. The group embarked on its first tour in early 2020, appearing at venues across the U.S. In October and November 2022, the musicians were heard in Berlin, Munich, Brussels, Paris, Vienna, and Budapest performing a program of works by Schubert, Mendelssohn, and Pierre Boulez, as well as a commission by French-Lebanese composer Benjamin Attahir.



## PROGRAMME

*Welcome Remarks*

**Under-Secretary-General H.E. Mr. Miguel Ángel Moratinos,**  
High Representative for the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC)

**Mr. Maher Nasser, Director of Outreach Program,**  
United Nations Department for Global Communications (UNDGC)

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*Introducing the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra*

**Mrs. Mariam C. Said,**  
Vice President of the Barenboim-Said Foundation USA

**Mr. Michael Barenboim,**  
Concertmaster of West-Eastern Divan Orchestra

*Short Video*

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*Musical Performance*

**Felix Mendelssohn String Octet in E-flat major, Op. 20.**

I. Allegro moderato ma con fuoco

II. Andante

III. Scherzo. Allegro leggierissimo

IV. Presto





# THE WEST-EASTERN DIVAN ENSEMBLE

## UN GLOBAL ADVOCATE FOR CULTURAL UNDERSTANDING

- Michael Barenboim, *violin*
- Mohamed Hiber, *violin*
- David Strongin, *violin*
- Samir Obaïdo, *violin*
- Miriam Manasherov, *viola*
- Sindy Mohamed, *viola*
- Astrig Siranossian, *violoncello*
- Assif Binness, *violoncello*

### ABOUT MICHAEL BARENBOIM

Michael Barenboim's 2011 performance of Schoenberg's Violin Concerto with Pierre Boulez in the Cologne Philharmonie was the beginning of a remarkable career. Following this celebrated debut, he has since performed the Schoenberg concerto with the Vienna Philharmonic under Daniel Barenboim, the Chicago Symphony under Asher Fisch, the Israel Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, and the Berlin Philharmonic under Vasily Petrenko.

Michael is a professor for violin and chamber music at the Barenboim-Said Akademie in Berlin, and has since 2020 been the academy's Dean. In addition, he has founded the West-Eastern Divan Ensemble, a group derived from the world renowned Orchestra and spreading its message of dialogue and understanding in a more intimate setting.

The 2022/2023 season has Michael touring South Korea with WKO, as well as performances all across Europe. Soloist and chamber music partners include Anne-Sophie Mutter, Pinchas Zukerman and Daniel Hope.

Michael's first solo album featured compositions by Bach, Bartók and Boulez, followed by a second solo CD with works by Tartini, Berio, Paganini, and Sciarrino. For Deutsche Grammophon, Michael has recorded the Mozart piano quartets and trios as well as the complete Beethoven piano trios – together with Kian Soltani and Daniel Barenboim.

### ABOUT MARIAM C. SAID

Together with Daniel Barenboim, Mariam C. Said is a major force behind the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra that was co-founded in 1999 by her late husband, public intellectual Edward W. Said, and the pianist and conductor Daniel Barenboim.

Mariam Said is a board member of every Barenboim-Said associated organization within the Barenboim-Said network of entities. Currently, she is the VP of the Barenboim-Said Foundation (USA) and Barenboim-Said for Music, Ramallah.

In 2009, Mrs. Said published the critically acclaimed memoir *A World I Loved: A Story of an Arab Woman*, by her mother Wadad Makdisi Cortas. Mariam Said holds an undergraduate degree from the American University of Beirut (AUB) in Lebanon and two graduate degrees from Columbia University. She worked for more than 20 years in the financial services industry in New York.