

ABUNUYA

Aeham Ahmad, an international pianist with a Syrian-Palestinian background, film music composer André Buttler and the Junge Vielharmonie, the youth symphony orchestra of the Music School of the City of Marl overcome all boundaries in the full-length composition ABUNUYA.

On 19 November, you can forget a lot of what you thought about a classical symphony orchestra until now: The composition **ABUNUYA** is indeed a concerto for piano and an orchestra of about 50 musicians. But the soloist Aeham Ahmad improvises freely from the moment in the seven (!) movements of the work. Jazz and classical symphonies come together, as do Orient and Occident. Arabic scales and the old tonal systems of Western music have the same origin anyway. And in the history of Western music, the great virtuosos also improvised on the concert podium.

Exploring such interfaces is the common artistic belief of **Aeham Ahmad** and **André Buttler**. **ABUNUYA** formulates directly understandable messages with the musical means of the present: At one point, for example, a quotation from Beethoven's Ode to Joy is transposed into "Arabic" diction. **ABUNUYA** responds with powerful musical appeals that need no words to current circumstances determined by war.

Since Aeham Ahmad and André Buttler received the commission to compose **ABUNUYA**, an intercultural dialogue between the two professional musicians has been alive: Aeham Ahmad played melodies from his jazz pieces on the piano, but also many new ideas. André Buttler listened in and transferred the material to the tonal palette of a symphony orchestra. A good asset here is the horizon of experience André Buttler already has with this orchestra. One thing can be relied upon on 19 November in the Marler Theatre: a fireworks display of musical and sonic surprises.

Aeham Ahmad

These television pictures from the Syrian war went around the world: in the middle of the bombed refugee camps of Yarmouk near Damascus, Aeham Ahmad plays on a mobile piano that he transports on a small handcart. Without sheet music or prior planning, simply following his own feelings to reach the souls of many uprooted people. In 2015, people from IS destroyed his instrument. Aeham Ahmad's life was acutely threatened. He fled to Germany, where he has since built a career and recorded 12 (!) albums. But Aeham Ahmad's artistic range is far too rich to reduce him to the cliché image of the "pianist in ruins". He is a gifted jazz improviser, an excellently trained classical pianist, a sensitive singer - and also a prolific author. His autobiographical novel "And the Birds Will Fly" became a bestseller. His latest book, *Taxi Damascus*, chronicles the reality of everyday life in today's post-war Syria.

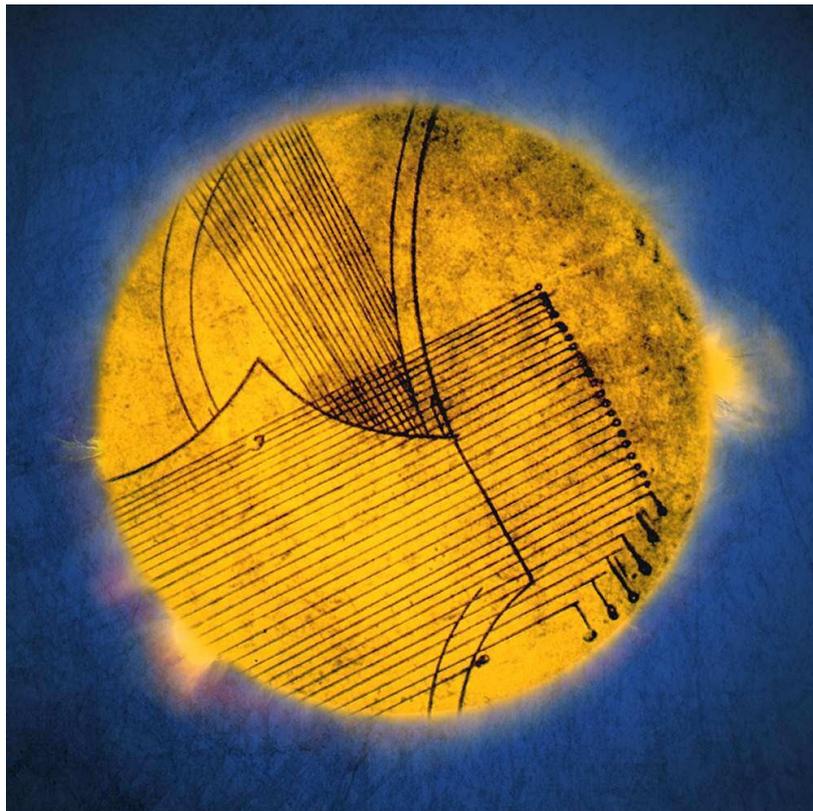
André Buttler and the Junge Vielharmonie

The composer and conductor André Buttler is concerned with the power of images in music. After extensive studies in Germany and the Netherlands, the native of Gelsenkirchen is in demand internationally in the film music business. Many of his productions have been awarded renowned prizes. Since 2016, André Buttler has led the Junge Vielharmonie, the youth symphony orchestra of the music school of the city of Marl. The young musicians are constantly growing with new musical challenges. The rehearsal of Karl Jenkins' peace oratorio "The Armed Man" in 2018 marked a major highlight and was not least the initial spark for the ABUNUYA project.

Abrahamsfest and the CIJAG

ABUNUYA is a commissioned composition by the Christian-Islamic-Jewish Working Group Marl, District of Recklinghausen (CIJAG) for this year's Feast of Abraham. Since 2001, this event has been the highlight of CIJAG's intercultural activities. Since 1984, people from Christianity, Judaism and Islam have been working voluntarily and civically for peace and humanity. CIJAG's creative networks feed on religious traditions and advocate respect in diversity and good neighbourliness. This includes advisory work on local political issues and the promotion of intercultural learning as well as encounters between mosque and church and synagogue communities. CIJAG has received numerous awards and honours for its commitment.

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