

National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations



**The National Council Cordially Invites
You, Your family, and Guests to Attend**

**An Evening of 100 Years of Arabic Classics
By Renowned Ensemble Torath**

**Tuesday, November 18, 2025
7:00 P.M. - 8:30 P.M. ET**

Join the National Council after our conference proceedings for an unforgettable evening of classical Arab melodies, poetry, and storytelling.

The concert admission is included with your conference registration,
or you may purchase a separate ticket to attend the concert only.

[**Click Here for Conference and Concert Tickets**](#)



100 YEARS OF CLASSICAL ARABIC MUSIC AN EVENING WITH TORATH

١٠٠ عام من الموسيقى العربية الكلاسيكية
أمسية مع تراث

Tuesday, November 18 | 7:00 PM

**In partnership with the National Council on U.S.-
Arab Relations, Torath Ensemble presents**

An unforgettable evening where melodies, poetry, and storytelling converge as Torath bridges cultures and generations; celebrating timeless compositions that echo the soul and history of the Arab world, right here in Washington, D.C.



Amphitheater- Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center
1300 Pennsylvania Ave NW, Washington, DC 20004



Musician Biographies

Gabriel Dahrieh

Is a Syrian-Venezuelan violinist who performs classical, Arabic, Venezuelan, Latin American, jazz, European and North American music. He began studying the violin with his father at 3 years of age, and continued his studies at the Conservatory of Aleppo, Syria. He later emigrated to Venezuela where he was a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Venezuela, performing and teaching violin. Later, he took the chair of First Violin in the Philharmonic Orchestra of Caracas. Additionally, he served as a professor of violin at the Maracay Conservatory in the state of

Aragua in Venezuela. He was the founder and director of Venezuela-based Arabic music ensemble, Alépo Diamantino, which toured nationally and internationally. Gabriel Dahrieh now resides in New Jersey, where he performs and teaches Arabic and classical music regularly.



Johnny Farraj

Has been playing riqq for over 25 years and is an expert percussionist performer of the traditional muwashahat vocal genre which uses complex and odd-metered rhythmic cycles and has created YouTube videos dedicated to teaching these rhythms.

Johnny is the creator of the website MaqamWorld.com, the leading internet reference on Arabic music and Arabic rhythms, as well as the co-author of Inside Arabic Music (2019, Oxford University Press), the very popular introductory book. Johnny also frequently lectures about Arabic music and Arabic rhythms at universities and online events, and is currently teaching riqq.



Zafer Tawil

An accomplished Palestinian musician based in New York City, Zafer is a virtuoso on oud, violin, and qanoun, and is a master of Arabic percussion. He has performed with numerous musicians, ranging from the pop star Sting to avant-garde composer/performer Elliot Sharpe to masters of Arabic music such as Simon Shaheen, Chab Mami, Bassam Saba, and George Ziadeh, among many others. Zafer

has composed music for a number of film soundtracks, most recently Jonathan Demme's My Favorite American (not yet released), Rachel Getting Married, and the documentary Until When. He has held workshops on Arabic music at numerous universities throughout the United States.



Nezih Antakli

Since graduating from the University for the Arts in Rotterdam, Netherlands (CODARTS) in 2004, Nezih Antakli has established himself as an accomplished percussionist and educator. After relocating to the United States in 2007, he became an active member of the world music scene in the wider New York City area, with a focus on Arabic, Turkish, and Balkan music traditions. Throughout his musical journey, Nezih has performed and taught at renowned venues such as Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, and the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, as well as in the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *The Band's Visit*. Additionally, he has been fortunate to participate in numerous festivals worldwide, reflecting his passion for percussion and his dedication to sharing it with audiences from all walks of life.



Marsil Sobhy

Is a versatile musician who plays the nay, piano, and a wide range of other instruments. A graduate of the Higher Institute of Arabic Music in Cairo, she grew up in an artistic household, inspired by her father, a cinematographer. From a young age, she immersed herself in music, a passion she nurtured through formal training at the Institute. Her career has included performances with the Egyptian Opera House and collaborations with numerous Arabic music ensembles. She has participated in concerts for Arab embassies in the United States, sharing the beauty of Arabic musical heritage with diverse audiences. For her, music is more than a profession — it is a way of life.



Bashar Farran

Is a Lebanese born and raised bassist, composer, improviser and music educator who's been based in NYC since 2021. He is a founding member of Alif ensemble, Maurice Louca Trio, Taktouka and other bands in the Arab world. He has recorded and toured with many different artists around the world including Tarek Yamani, Majida Roumi, Faya Younan, and Hanine El Alam. Bashar started his music education in 1997. By 2004, he had established himself as a prominent full time musician and session player in Beirut. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Musicology with honors from Notre Dame University in Beirut and a Master's degree in jazz pedagogy with honors from Capital University.



Emad Botros

He received his early music education at the Academy of Music in Alexandria, Egypt, where he trained in guitar and vocals. During that time, he also pursued private studies on the oud, developing a deep connection with the instrument that eventually became his primary focus. Over the years, he has dedicated his work to the study and performance of classical Arabic music, with particular emphasis on the rich traditions of Egyptian musical heritage. His repertoire reflects a deep appreciation for the evolution of Arabic melodies, modal systems (maqamat), and the interplay between instrumental and vocal expression in Egyptian music history



Yousef Alkhaldi

Is a genuine Arab voice, blending the power of performance with refined artistic sensitivity. Following a distinguished career in media, he draws on his mastery of narration to tell the story of every song in a captivating and emotionally resonant way. Guided by his belief that authentic art carries a noble message, Yousef views music as a force that can transcend media—where words and melody unite to create emotions that touch hearts beyond the boundaries of language.

He masters singing in diverse Arabic dialects, he moves seamlessly between classical Arabic Tarab, Andalusian Muwashahat, folkloric traditions, and contemporary styles, bringing each to life with authenticity and depth.



Aya Aljamili

Is the Founder and curator of the Torath Ensemble. With over 14 years of experience in international affairs, and project management, she brings a unique combination of cultural insight, organizational leadership, and artistic vision to the ensemble's work. Her passion for classical Arabic music and poetry since her early years in Aleppo, Syria, led her to establish Torath as a platform to preserve and present this rich artistic heritage to diverse audiences in the United States. In addition to curating musical programs, Aya also contributes through translation, narration, and poetry recitation. This evening, she presents a program honoring the legacy of iconic artists, thinkers and poets through a selection of songs and poems.





[Click Here for Conference and Concert Registration](#)

[Click Here for the Ensemble's Website](#)



About the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations

Founded in 1983, the National Council on U.S.-Arab Relations is an American non-profit, non-governmental, educational organization dedicated to improving American awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the Arab countries, the Mideast, and the Islamic world.

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