

AGA KHAN MUSIC AWARDS 2019

FUNDAÇÃO CALOUSTE GULBENKIAN, 29.MARCH 2019

Your Highness Karim Aga Khan

Distinguished members of the Aga Khan Family

Doutor Jorge Sampaio (former President of the Portuguese Republic)

President of the Administrative Supreme Court

Distinguished Members of the Government

Dr Francisco Balsemão (former Prime Minister)

Excellencies

Distinguished guests

Dear Colleague Teresa Gouveia

Ladies and Gentlemen

On behalf of the Board of Trustees of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation it is my privilege to welcome Your Highness Karim Aga Khan and Family.

It is a great honour for the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation to co-host **the first edition of the Aga Khan Music Awards**, an initiative which I believe will be of paramount importance for the recognition of tradition-inspired contemporary music in cultures shaped by Islam but also for the much needed intercultural dialogue.

This is a time of great pressure. Once again in the history of humanity, we see **religious** and **cultural identities** being manipulated in order to foment violence and intolerance towards others and their cultural heritage.

We need a world in which different **identities and cultures** are respected and where we can share an idea of **common good**.

The Aga Khan Development Network, through the Aga Khan Foundation in Portugal, and the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation have been strategic partners for decades, in different domains, especially in the social arena, but also in the **arts** and its **ability** to foster more inclusive and tolerant societies.

Our institutions **share a common agenda** and **common values**.

The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation is therefore thrilled to be a sponsor of such a relevant initiative, especially on the occasion of the hundred and fiftieth anniversary of our Founder, himself an offspring of different cultures.

Calouste Sarkis Gulbenkian was an Armenian born in Istanbul, educated in France and in London, who became a British citizen and ended his lifetime in Portugal.

Calouste Gulbenkian's long path, from his childhood in Istanbul to the latter years of his life in Lisbon, **shaped his personality and influenced the Foundation that he decided to create in Portugal as a Portuguese institution**.

Calouste Gulbenkian was a perfect example of the synthesis of the eastern culture of his birth and origins, and the western culture in which he was educated and lived.

Naturally, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's activities reflect these characteristics of the Founder's personality and aim to support efforts that foster the **universal values of the human condition, the respect for diversity and difference** and a **culture of tolerance**.

A special word to my Colleague Teresa Gouveia and her team headed by Risto Nieminen, for their vision and commitment in making "Music Gulbenkian" a reason for all of us to be proud of.

Music is a language of tolerance and I am sure that these three days will be a demonstration of tolerance as well as artistic brilliance, as our dear friend Prince Aryn will explain in a few seconds.

I wish you all an enjoyable (unforgettable) evening. Prince Aryn, the floor is yours.

Isabel Mota