



RUDOLSTADT-FESTIVAL

PRESS RELEASE

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FROM ICELAND TO EASTER ISLAND VIA IRAN: PROGRAMME FINALIZED FOR THE RUDOLSTADT FESTIVAL

At this year's Rudolstadt Festival, the Iranian music scene and a new European partnership will be in the spotlight in particular. Artists from almost 40 countries have been invited to appear at Germany's biggest festival of roots, folk and world music. As usual, it will be hosting a mix of unusual, challenging sounds alongside international stars and other well-known names. Those appearing between 4 and 7 July 2019 include Angelique Kidjo, Herbert Pixner, Ólafur Arnalds, the Cowboy Junkies, Alice Phoebe Lou, Hamid Motebassem, Shahin Najafi, Luedji Luna and Die Höchste Eisenbahn. As far as dance is concerned, this year the Rudolstadt Festival will focus on the French bourrée while its new partner the European Broadcasting Union will be arriving with a large roster of selected musicians. The full programme of the 2019 Rudolstadt Festival will be published on 1 May.

MUSIC FROM ICELAND TO EASTER ISLAND

The opening concert on 4 July will be a tribute concert dedicated to magnificent female artists from the worlds of jazz, folk and blues. *Sing The Truth* is a project by three women who are themselves acclaimed for their extraordinary voices – **Lizz Wright**, **Angelique Kidjo** and **Cecile McLoren Salvant** – with drummer and producer **Terri Lyne Carrington** acting as musical director. Three days later, the closing concert will feature those pioneers of alternative country, the **Cowboy Junkies** from Canada, who've raised the bar with their slow motion blues and folk sounds.



Angelique Kidjo

The extensive line-up at this year's festival comprises some 300 concerts, workshops and discussions. One of the stand-out acts is the **Herbert Pixner Projekt** from South Tyrol. This quartet from the Alps transcends all sorts of musical frontiers with their mastery of flamenco, tango, gypsy jazz and rock riffs, and is in high demand in the German-speaking world. Currently one of the most sought-after Icelandic musicians is **Ólafur Arnalds** with his sound collages made up of art, music and technology. A new figurehead of Afro-Brazilian women is **Luedji Luna**, who frequently serves up her songs addressing social problems with laidback tunes enhanced with elements of both jazz and R&B. Singer-songwriter poetry with a touch of jazz sums up the music of South African **Alice Phoebe Lou**, who launched her career by busking in Berlin. **Die Höchste Eisenbahn**, who'll be releasing their third album this summer, also began their successful journey in Berlin by pairing catchy melodies with zeitgeisty humour. Then there's the unique project Small Island Big Song, whose members come from island nations in the Pacific and Indian Oceans which are literally threatened with extinction by climate change.



Small Island Big Song

MUSICAL CONTRASTS FROM IRAN

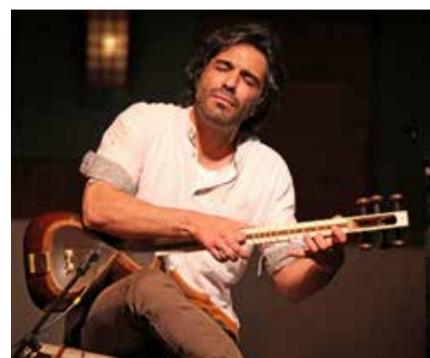


Hamnava Ensemble

To represent Iran, this year's special guest country, the Rudolstadt Festival has selected nine ensembles and devised a richly contrasting programme. It ranges from performances based on centuries-old traditions to music driven by current political protests. "The festival intends to convey that there's a vibrant cultural scene in Iran striving to find its own way and make itself known internationally," declared programme director Bernhard Hanneken. In Rudolstadt, Iranian artists will also be given a forum to talk about their lives, their circumstances, and their opportunities for artistic expression.

On the opening night, the band **Damahi** will be performing a pop-oriented fusion of Iranian and world music genres. One of Iran's most prominent musicians is tar and setar player **Hamid Motebassem**, who is also a noted composer. At Rudolstadt, he'll be presenting compositions such as his orchestral work *Pardis* accompanied by the Thuringian Symphony Orchestra from Saalfeld-Rudolstadt. What's more, they'll be joined by one of Iran's best-known women's voices, **Mahdieh Mohammadkhani**. There's another expressive female singer in the **Hamnava Ensemble**, which hails from Bushehr in southwest Iran on the Persian Gulf. Baran Mozafari is one of the few women endeavouring to take the female vocal styles from the region into the 21st century.

Tar virtuoso **Ali Ghamsari** from Tehran represents a subtle, innovative variety of classical Persian music. By contrast, **Shahin Najafi**'s current programme is a powerful contemporary blend of jazz, blues, rock and Persian folk songs. This singer and guitarist, who recently moved from Germany to London, made a name for himself in Europe mainly through his book *When God Sleeps*, which was later made into an eponymous documentary. In 2012, he was forced underground by death threats at a time when his angry rap songs made him the voice of Iranian youth. He still uses music to fight against political terror, religious oppression and violence.



Ali Ghamsari

Apart from the performances by the nine Iranian ensembles, there will be discussions with the artists during the festival and also a wide-ranging symposium with topics including the status of women in Iran, the social aspect of Iranian music, Persian poetry, record production and marketing.

NEW PARTNERSHIP: THE EBU FOLK FESTIVAL IN RUDOLSTADT

With the Rudolstadt Festival being held for the 29th time in 2019, this year marks the start of a new partnership with the European Broadcasting Union. The EBU will be celebrating the 40th anniversary of its own Euroradio Folk Festival by presenting selected musicians in Rudolstadt. This partnership has been initially set to run for three years, meaning the Euroradio Folk Festival will also provide a forum for various facets of the European scene at the Rudolstadt Festival in 2020 and 2021. Both sides hope for lasting collaboration with Graham Dixon, the EBU's Head of Radio, even talking of a new chapter in the European Broadcasting Union's history: "Despite the wide participation and high quality of performance, until now, the EBU Folk Festival has never enjoyed a long-term home. From now, working together with the well-established festival in Rudolstadt provides an opportunity to pool our resources."

This summer, editorial teams from 16 EBU member states will be taking part together with artists from their respective countries. They represent a wide variety in every respect ranging from the 23-strong Finnish **SibA Folk Big Band** to solo accordion performances by **Yegor Zabelov** from Belarus and **Otto Lechner** from Austria, both of whom perform in their own idiosyncratic manner. Nineteenth-century dance music will be fronted by **Husistein-Musik** from Switzerland while at the opposite end of the spectrum, avant-garde Polish group **Polmuz** will be taking the concept of folk music in an experimental direction.



Otto Lechner

As usual, if you'd like to receive more information or press photos, just let us know!

RUDOLSTADT-FESTIVAL // MIRIAM ROSSIIUS // PRESS AND PR

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