

Morgenland Festival Osnabrück presents programme for anniversary year Ticket sales started!

Osnabrück, 8 May 2024: The Morgenland Festival Osnabrück celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Established in 2005, the festival quickly became a prominent fixture on the international festival scene. This anniversary edition of the festival will feature over 20 concerts, workshops, and exhibitions in Osnabrück (known as the 'City of Peace') from **2 to 17 August**. The programme offers up to three concerts a day, almost all of which will be premiered at the festival; furthermore, most ensembles and projects are developed during the festival itself. Morgenland Festival Osnabrück is a festival of original productions.

"How do you celebrate 20 years of Morgenland? We do so by looking forward, towards the young generation of wonderful, confident, and adventurous musicians, some younger than the festival itself. But you won't miss out on old companions either. As with every year, I am looking forward to every concert of this anniversary edition and wish for all of us that Morgenland may once again be a utopia – a celebration of music, humanity, and beauty!" says festival director Michael Dreyer.

The focus of this year's musical programme is on the younger generation. The Young Morgenland series presents ensembles from Damascus, Yerevan, Baku, Istanbul, and Nazareth. Also as part of this series, young creatives from the MENA region, the Caucasus, and Central Asia were invited to actively contribute to the festival's aesthetics: graphic designer Reyhan Cengiz from Turkey won the competition. Her work now shapes the official design of this year's edition. Out of the numerous submissions from eight different countries, 11 selected works will be presented from **1 to 17 August** in the foyer of the Lagerhalle cultural centre.

The festival begins with a **prologue** a day before the official opening: On **Thursday, 1 August**, an exhibition of previously unreleased sketches by the Syrian painter **Fateh al-Moudarres** opens at the Sievert Foundation for Science and Culture. Al-Moudarres is regarded as a pioneer of Syrian contemporary painting. Kinan Azmeh (clarinet) and Florian Weber (piano) have created music specifically for this exhibition, based on motifs by the artist, who was also a passionate pianist.

On **Friday, 2 August**, the festival kicks off its anniversary edition with musicians from two ensembles that have emerged throughout its history – the **Morgenland All Star Band** and the **Morgenland Chamber Orchestra** – performing alongside long-time festival companions such as **Dima Orsho, Kinan Azmeh, Rony Barrak, Moslem Rahal, Frederik Köster, and Naci Özgüc**. This celebratory opening ceremony will take place at St. Marien.

The Young Morgenland series begins with an ensemble from the Armenian capital, **Yerevan**, and a few days later, musicians from the **Takht Sharqi Ensemble** from **Nazareth** will present classical Arabic music together with their own compositions. A particular focus of the festival is the performance of emerging stars from the Syrian capital, **Damascus** – an exciting programme thread that has been preceded by months of preparation and legal wrangling.

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On 17 August, the **Morgenland Youngsters**, together with young talents from Baku and Istanbul, will conclude the series. The Morgenland Youngsters have been formed from alumni of the **Morgenland Academy**. They have already rehearsed and performed together with peers in Baku and Istanbul in March.

Armenian pianist **Tigran Hamasyan** performs for the first time at the Morgenland Festival Osnabrück. **Milad Khawam** presents his *Funeral on the Moon*. Iranian singer and pianist **Golnar Shahyar** collaborates with cellist **Atena Eshtiagh**. Oud virtuoso **Yasamin Shahhosseini** performs alongside singer **Mehdi Emami**. DJ **Hello Psychaleppo** and light artist **Philipp Geist** transform the Lagerhalle into an experimental sound and visual space. Ney virtuoso **Moslem Rahal**, saxophonist **Luigi Grasso**, and Armenian jazz legend **Vahagn Hayrapetian** will perform together as a trio for the first time. Brothers **Hasan** and **Rami Nakhleh**, originally from the Golan Heights, join Syrian singer **Lynn Adib**. And the **Mohannad Nasser Ensemble** explores intersections of Arabic music, jazz, and flamenco in the *Al-Hamra* programme with singer **Basma Jabr**.

“What does Greek music and culture have to offer the world?” asked double bassist **Petros Klampanis**. The answer is a fantastic fusion of traditional Greek music and jazz. **Shabnam Parvaresh** comes with her **Sheen Trio**, bringing Greek kanun player **Sofia Labropoulou** as a guest. Pianist **Salman Gambarov**, tuba and serpent specialist **Michel Godard**, and drummer **Bodek Janke** have been playing together for years in the **Morgenland All Star Band**; this year they have invited the fantastic double bassist **Chris Jennings** to join them. **Florian Weber** has shaped many memorable moments of the Morgenland Festival Osnabrück and was given carte blanche for the anniversary edition: he has composed new works for his trio with **Michel Benito** (bass) and **Jeff Ballard** (drums).

The Belgian music ensemble **Zefiro Torna** will present a new edition of their project *Unity in Diversity* together with the outstanding young countertenor **Doron Schleifer**. Schleifer, who studied in Jerusalem and Basel, is considered one of the outstanding countertenors of his generation.

In a taster course, DJ **Ipek** provides insights into beat mixing, digital and smartphone DJing. Exceptional percussionist **Rony Barrak** invites rhythm enthusiasts aged 12 and above to a percussion and rhythm workshop. The documentary *Intensely Soulful* by Dutch filmmaker **Frank Scheffer** follows Syrian clarinettist **Kinan Azmeh** and many other protagonists of the festival over several years. It was filmed in Damascus, Osnabrück, and New York.

Kolektif Istanbul and DJ **Ipek** promise a legendary closing party. The Berlin-based DJ **Ipek**, producer, curator, and queer activist guarantees euphoria on the dancefloor with her special sound mix of Anatolian remixes, edits, and electro-acoustic productions.

Morgenland Festival Osnabrück collaborates with major theatres worldwide, and its productions have been showcased internationally. For instance, the production *FLOW*, featuring Syrian clarinettist Kinan Azmeh and the NDR Big Band, will be performed in New York City, Philadelphia, and Chicago from 8 to 13 May. Over the past two decades, the festival has cultivated a unique network of musicians spanning from the Levant to northwest China, and has organised concerts and festivals in Iran, Iraq, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, and Turkey. To date, the festival’s concert recordings have been viewed by over 30 million people online.

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Tickets and detailed information about the programme are available at www.morgenland-festival.com, at the **Osnabrück Tourist Information**, at www.adticket.de, and at other **box offices**.

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