

Music for a New Day

Artist bio

Fariba Davody:

Fariba Davody is a musician, vocalist, and teacher who first captured public eye performing classical Persian songs in Iran, and donating her proceeds from her show. She performed a lot of concerts and festivals such as the concert in Agha Khan museum in 2016 in Toronto , concerts with Kiya Tabassian in Halifax and Montreal, and Tirgan festival in 2017, 2018, 2019, and 2021 in Toronto. Fariba opened a Canadian branch of Avaye Mehr music and art school where she continues to teach.



Raphael Weinroth-Browne:



Canadian cellist and composer Raphael Weinroth-Browne has forged a unique career and international reputation as a result of his musical creativity and versatility. Not confined to a single genre or project, his musical activities encompass a multitude of styles and combine influences from contemporary classical, Middle Eastern, and progressive metal music.

His groundbreaking duo, The Visit, has played major festivals such as Wave Gotik Treffen (Germany), 21C (Canada), and the Cello Biennale Amsterdam (Netherlands). As one half of East-meets-West ensemble Kamancello, he composed “Convergence Suite,” a double concerto which the duo performed with the Windsor Symphony Orchestra to a sold out audience. Raphael's cello is featured prominently on the latest two albums from Norwegian progressive metal band Leprous; he has played over 150 shows with them in Europe, North America, and the Middle East.

Raphael has played on over 100 studio albums including the Juno Award-winning Woods 5: Grey Skies & Electric Light (Woods of Ypres) and Juno-nominated UpfRONt (Ron Davis’ SymphRONica) - both of which feature his own compositions/arrangements - as well as the Juno-nominated Ayre

Live (Miriam Khalil & Against The Grain Ensemble). His work as a collaborator and session musician is extensive, ranging from performances with Pauline Oliveros and Ernst Reijseger to studio recordings with Lawrence Gowan (Styx) and Leprous.

Raphael has also developed a considerable following on YouTube. His inventive cello renditions of metal/progressive rock songs have been praised and reposted by the likes of Opeth, Steven Wilson (Porcupine Tree), and Chris Adler (Lamb of God).

Raphael's debut solo album "Worlds Within" was released in 2020 to great critical acclaim.

Darlene Gijuminag:



Darlene Gijuminag Mi'gmaq First Nation from Gesgapegiag, Quebec. Mi'gmaq singer, song writer. a Mother of four beautiful children, and four beautiful Grandchildren.

Justin Gray:

Justin Gray is a producer, bassist, composer, and educator based in Toronto, Canada. As an upright bassist, electric bassist, and *Bass Veena* player, Justin performs in a variety of traditional and contemporary musical ensembles from around the world. Justin is currently on faculty at Humber College, Sheridan College and Centennial College. In 2010, Justin invented the *Bass Veena*, an instrument designed for Indian classical and



contemporary world music performance. The instrument was built by renowned Canadian luthier, Les Godfrey. Justin now performs *Bass Veena* with artists from across the globe. Justin leads his own contemporary world music ensemble *Justin Gray & Synthesis*, which released their debut album *New Horizons*, in 2017.

As a producer, recording, mix and mastering engineer, Justin has worked with artists in a wide range of musical styles (synthesissound.com).

Over the course of his career, Justin has received a number of awards and distinctions, including: Nomination for World Music Album of the Year (Aviva Chernick CFMA 2020), Nomination for *Best Solo Artist* (CFMA 2018), Recipient of *Emerging Jazz Artist Award* (Toronto Arts Foundation 2015), Recipient of *Shanti Chakravarty Award For Excellence in Indian Classical Performance* (2015).

Justin is endorsed by *Godfrey Guitars*, *Markbass*, *D'Addario Canada*, *Radial Engineering*, *Lava Cable* and *Source Audio*.

Hamin Honari:

Hamin Honari is a Iranian-Canadian hand drummer who has specialized on the Iranian hand drums Tombak & Daf. He has focused on adapting his drumming style and technique to accommodate many different genres of music. He has many years of experience as a performer and teacher. He has taught at schools such as the Vancouver Symphony School of Music, the Nava Art Centre, in North Vancouver and the Persian Cultural and Art Institute of British Columbia. He has performed with groups such as the Dastan Ensemble, one of Iran's most well-known Persian classical music ensembles and has accompanied many amazing musicians and singers such as Salar Aghili, Parissa, Hossein Omoumi, Hossein Behroozinia, Saeed Farajpour, and Itamar Erez. Hamin has been teaching for over 10 years and is working on creating his own courses for Tombak and Daf.



Kiya Tabassian:



Setar virtuoso and acclaimed composer, Kiya Tabassian has carved out a privileged place on the international music scene with his ensemble Constantinople and also as a soloist. Past master in cross-cultural musical encounters, he travels across the five continents for presenting his creations and his music on stages from all over the world.

At 14 years old, Kiya Tabassian emigrates with his family to Quebec, bringing with him a few years of training in Persian scholarly music and his budding career on the Iranian musical scene. Determined to become a musician, composer and, more broadly, a carrier of memory, he pursues his training in Persian music as an autodidact and through his recurrent meetings with Reza Gassemi and Kayhan Kalhor. In parallel, he studies musical composition at the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal with Gilles Tremblay.

In 2001, he cofounds Constantinople with the idea of developing an ensemble of musical creations at the crossroads of multiple encounters; drawing from the heritage of the Middle-Ages and the Renaissance, from Europe to the Mediterranean and to the Middle-East. Since then, he has assumed artistic direction and has developed more than fifty programs with his ensemble.

As seasoned migrant, he never ceases to explore different trails: from medieval manuscripts to contemporary aesthetics, from Mediterranean Europe to the East or passing through the open spaces of the Baroque New World. Through the lens of research and creation, he collaborates with leading artists of the international scene such as singers Marco Beasley, Françoise Atlan, Savina Yannatou and Suzie Leblanc; the Mandigo griot Ablaye Cissoko; the Greek ensemble En Chordais, the Belgian duo Belem and the American group The Klezmatics; sarangi virtuoso Dhruva Ghosh, Syrian clarinetist Kinan Azmeh and kamancheh grand master Kayhan Kalhor.

Regularly hosted in some of the most prestigious concert halls and festivals in the world such as the Salle Pleyel in Paris, the Berlin Philharmonic, the Festival of Sacred Music of Fez in Morocco, the Festival d'Aix in France, the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto, the Cervantino Festival in Mexico, the Carthage Festival in Tunisia, the Onassis Cultural Center in Athens and BOZAR in Brussels; Tabassian's music is appreciated and recognized by the public as well as professionals and critics. So far, he has recorded more than 25 albums, including 20 with Constantinople, and has presented nearly 1,000 concerts in more than 240 cities across 54 countries.

He has contributed to many eclectic projects as a composer, performer and improviser. To cite a few, he regularly collaborated with the Société Radio-Canada since 1996 and actively participated in the international project MediMuses from 2002 to 2005. He was a member of a research group

on the history and the repertoire of Mediterranean music and acted as contributor to several publishing and recording projects. He also intervened in the Atlas ensemble (Netherlands) since 2009 and contributed to the Atlas Academy as a tutor, a double project aimed at conjoining contemporary music and oral traditions together.

Numerous musical groups and institutions have called on his talents as a composer, including the Montreal Symphonic Orchestra, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, Bradyworks and the European Union from Radio-Télévision. He has also composed the music of several documentary and fiction films such as Jabaroot and Voices of the Unheard. In 2017, as part of the 375th anniversary of Montreal, he composed the anthem “Mémoires d’Ahuntsic”, offered as a legacy to the city of Montreal. In 2020, he co-signs with poet Hélène Dorion, the musical and poetic suite “Le temps des forêts”, a poignant artistic work based on memories and lived stories collected from Montreal’s CHSLD residents.

In 2015, he establishes and directs the very first world music residency program at the Banff Center for Arts and Creativity. Ever since, he is regular collaborator and has made several trips to participate in various programs as a mentor.

Since the summer of 2017, he acts as Associate Artist of the prestigious Rencontres musicales de Conques (formerly Festival de musique Conques, la Lumière du Roman), where he participates at the annual program of the festival and also presents recent creations from Constantinople.

Kiya was a member of the Conseil des arts de Montréal for seven years; including as active chairman of musical decision-making committee for three years. He is currently a member of the Board of Directors of the Conseils des arts et des lettres du Québec. He was also mandated by the Conseil Québécois de la musique to assemble a study committee on the role of world music in the field of concert music.

His desire to establish a space for creation, meetings, exchanges and the transmission of knowledge between professional musicians and the Quebecois public, led him to cofound the Centre des musiciens du monde. Founded in Montreal 2017, he also acts as artistic director of the Centre. Since then, the Centre has granted more than 50 musicians to benefit from the residency programs and to create more than 20 concerts. Tabassian also directs the record collection with the ANALEKTA label, of which the latest releases have won several awards.

Since many years, the ensemble of his work is supported by the Conseil des arts de Montréal, the Conseil des arts et des lettres du Québec and the Canada Council for the Arts.

Majd Sekkar:



Majd Sekkar (Majd Sukar) is a Syrian Canadian Clarinetist whose name has been distinguished in Toronto's music scene for his fusion music and unique sound. His style blends Middle Eastern folk and classical music with Jazz music in unparalleled practice.

Sekkar brings his music to the Canadian music scene as a soloist and improviser. He performed with big Canadian name musicians like Robi Botos, Drew Jurecka, Andrew Downing and the Indian indigenous singer Laura Grizzlypaws. What made his music noticeable in a short time is his hard work and passion which pushed him to join many Torontonians bands like

Romani Jazz, Fethi Nadjem North African ensemble, Moneka Arabic Jazz, Moskitto bar and Spiral Modes. Moreover, Majd has appeared as a master improviser with Canadian Arabic Orchestra since 2016. He toured over 30 Canadian cities with them carrying his unique sound from his roots to the new world. He shared the stage with veteran Middle Eastern Artists like Naseer Shamma, Charbel Rouhana, Elham Madfai, Fouad Zabbadi, Marwa Nagy, Ismael Fadel, Alset Faridah and Iranian Legend Aref Arefkia. He also participates with many Middle Eastern pop stars like Assi El Hallani, Hamza Namira, Adam, Faia Younan, Simor Jalal, Adham Nabulsi and Sonia Odisho.

Academically speaking Majd holds a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in addition to his Graduate Certificate in Jazz Music from Humber College (2018). On top of that, Majd was invited to give masterclasses and workshops at the University of Toronto and York University about Middle Eastern music theories and extended techniques of using the clarinet microtones skills in improvising. After his graduation from Humber College, Majd joined the fusion jazz club by starting a band called "14 Hours". This jazz-influenced fusion and folk music band left a serious fingerprint in rearranging middle eastern music on jazz harmony and pop rhythms. In 2020, Sekkar was chosen to receive the RBC newcomer Arts Award which presented by the RBC Foundation and Toronto Arts Foundation and administrated by the neighbourhood arts network.

Majd is a member of the Toronto Musician Association (TMA) and the Canadian Independent Music Association (CIMA). He is considered one of the inspirational Clarinet Player in the Middle East and that is what makes Jabrin Musical Services name their professional model of Jabrin Clarinets after him (MS) as appreciation for his efforts to spread the sound of Middle Eastern clarinet in the Canadian Music scene.

Imran Babur:

A successful and celebrated documentary filmmaker, photographer, and teacher in Pakistan, and an emerging multidisciplinary artist in Canada - I am a witness to and the teller of so many remarkable stories of this world. From the last mile remote areas of Pakistan to the urban metros of Canada, I have found stories that are universal in their relevance and have presented them from unique perspectives, in multiple formats.

As much as I love to learn, I love to teach - on the job and in the class. My style of teaching is unconventional and effective and I have trained and mentored many motivated (and now accomplished) professionals over the course of my career.

In my professional journey, I have learnt that people - no matter where in the world - are deeply interconnected. In a highly polarized world, there remains a dearth of diversity of perspectives, and an abundance of narratives that feed the fear of 'the other'. Thus my focus as a multidisciplinary storyteller is to present ideas that focus on similarities rather than differences – in an attempt to replace ignorance with information, fear with empathy, and divisiveness with interconnectedness. I am an(other) storyteller.



Reza Moghaddas:



Reza Moghaddas is a Toronto-based record producer, sound engineer and musician who started to play piano at age 8 before picking up the bass guitar. Through his teenage years, he was involved with Western classical and Persian traditional music but by age 18 turned his efforts to jazz, fusion, and world music. When Reza moved to Canada in 2005, he brought his renowned Tehran-based Bamahang Studios with him and has since been a key member of Toronto's vibrant music scene. He's worked as the front-of-house technician at many of Toronto's major events and venues, including Tirgan Festival, Harbourfront Centre, the Aga Khan Museum, and many more, and with internationally-renowned artists including Zakir Hussain, Mohammad Reza Shajarian, Angelique Kidjo, Tory Lanez,

Kayhan Kalhor, Wally Bardou and more. In addition to writing scores and designing sound for over 50 film and theatre projects, he worked with directors such as Bahram Beizaei, Helena Waldmann and Soheil Parsa and nominated for Dora Mavor Moore Awards for outstanding sound design and composition for "Homeland" directed by Setareh Delzendeh. Over the last nearly

three decades, he has produced, recorded and mixed over 1200 albums and singles. He is currently Technical Director at the Small World Centre, a cultural hub, venue, and studio space.