** Gianluca Marcianò calls for talented string musicians to join the Al Bustan Festival Orchestra Academy for the 2017 festival in Beirut, Lebanon**

**[www.facebook.com/AlBustanFestivalOrchestraAcademy](http://www.facebook.com/AlBustanFestivalOrchestraAcademy%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)**

**www.albustanfestival.com**

Enterprising conductor and Artistic Director **Gianluca Marcianò** announces the creation of the **Al Bustan Festival Orchestra Academy** in Lebanonwith co-founder **Maxim Novikov.** The objective of the **Orchestra Academy** is to select players of the violin, viola, cello and double bass and prepare them for the demands of a professional career, with an opportunity to perform at the 2017 Festival with world-renowned musicians. The full programme for the **2017 Al Bustan Festival** will be announced on 15 December.

Gianluca Marcianò, who in addition to being the Artistic Director of the Middle East’s premiere classical music festival, is also **Principal Guest Conductor of the Armenian State Opera** in Yerevan and **Artistic Advisor of the Tokyo New City Orchestra,** explains:

“*We want to show these talented young string players how to prepare for an audition, how to behave during the rehearsals and survive the orchestra life, how to be a leader or to assist a leader or to be a tutti player, sharing experiences with colleagues and being in contact 24/7 with the mentors, meeting great soloists and chat with them about their experience, playing chamber music together.”*

Marcianò has initiated the **Al Bustan Festival Orchestra Academy** in order to provide musicians with the opportunity to participate in masterclasses provided by a distinguished panel of professors. These include **Maxim Novikov**, **Karen Shahgaldyan** (violin, concertmaster of the Al Bustan Festival Orchestra), **Karen Kocharyan** (cello, associate concertmaster of the Al Bustan Festival Orchestra), **Giulio Plotino** (violin, Professor of the Cherubini Conservatory, Florence and Nicolini Conservatory, Piacenza) and **Enrico Fagone** (double bass, Artistic Director of Giovanni Bottesini International Double Bass Competition). Following the masterclasses, a jury will evaluate and select the musicians who will join the Al Bustan Festival Orchestra in six concerts during the 2017 Festival.

Located at the **Al Bustan Hotel** in the tranquil hills above Beirut, the Festival was founded 22 years ago to introduce Lebanese audiences to classical music through the world’s leading artists. The Festival has hosted the Middle Eastern premieres of several operas and other works, including the first Wagner opera production and last year a moving performance of Bellini’s *Norma* conducted by Marcianò.

Following the cancellation of several international orchestras who were meant to travel to Lebanon for the festival in 2016, Marcianò decided to create his own orchestra. He put out a call on Facebook to his colleagues all across the globe and within 48 hours he had formed an orchestra of 70 professional musicians, the Al Bustan Festival Orchestra. The orchestra was made up of musicians from all over the world, including Egypt, Tunisia, Armenia, Moscow, New Zealand, Spain, Lebanon and Mexico. Marcianò was inspired by the 24/04 orchestra which was formed of musicians from 43 countries on the occasion of the memorial concert to mark 100 years since the Armenian Genocide.

Maya Jaggi wrote in The Guardian:

*“His conviction that music has a role in the aftermath of war gained credence from a powerfully cathartic performance of Norma.* As Gianluca Marcianò explained: *’I have worked in many countries which have been blighted by conflict and in these places music can be a unifying force especially when there are difficult relations with neighbours and different religions living together – and normal people respect that.’ ”*

**How to apply**

*Application and participation is free of charge*

1) [Fill in the online application form (click here)](https://goo.gl/forms/q5t7OS0xThN8lkCG3)

2) Record a video of yourself playing one of the set pieces for your instrument. Information on set pieces can be found on our [facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/AlBustanFestivalOrchestraAcademy/)

3) Send the video to orchestralbustan@gmail.com

Application schedule:

**15 November 2016 -** deadline for applications

**1 December** **2016** - successful candidates announced

**6 - 13 February** **2017** – Academy masterclasses

**15 February – 4 March 2017 -** Al Bustan Festival Orchestra

Further enquiries about the application process can be sent to orchestralbustan@gmail.com or via our [facebook page.](https://www.facebook.com/AlBustanFestivalOrchestraAcademy/)

**The Al Bustan Festival**



Set in a quiet suburb on a picturesque hillside overlooking Lebanon’s vibrant capital, the Al Bustan Festival presents an annual programme of world-class music, dance and theatre – the most innovative and high-profile music festival in the Levant.

****

**Myrna Bustani,** Lebanon’s first female Member of Parliament, founded the Festival in February 1994 as the Middle East’s most high-profile platform for international classical virtuosi, symphony orchestras and opera companies. Bustani received an IAMA Award in 2014 for her valuable work and dedication to promoting music in the Middle East through the Al Bustan Festival for the last two decades. The festival takes place in the Emile Bustani Auditorium and the Crystal Garden conservatory at the Al Bustan Hotel in Beyt Meri, with some events also held at Lebanon’s historic churches. A few minutes walk from the hotel, there is an ancient archaeological site with Roman ruins, thermal baths and Byzantine mosaics.

The **Al Bustan Festival** has enjoyed 22 years of the highest quality music making. Over the years, the Festival has invited artists such as **Maria Ewing, Angelika Kirschlager, Evelyn Glennie, Helikon Opera, the Jacques Loussier Trio, Irek Mukhamedov, June Anderson, the Labeque sisters, Sumi Jo, Gautier Capuçon, Emmanuel Pahud, Anna Tifu, Boris Berezovsky, Antonio Meneses, Vadim Repin, Gidon Kremer, Antoni Wit and the Choir of Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford.** The Festival has a history of commissioning contemporary composers such as **John Taverner, Naji Hakim and Roxanna Panufnik**.

Presenting around 30 performances each year spanning opera, dance, orchestral and chamber music over five weeks, with additional workshops and educational programmes for the Lebanese National Conservatoire, it provides a further draw to visit Lebanon’s capital in a country already brimming with historic sites from the Assyrians to the glories of Baalbek.

***“In spite of decades of unrest, Beirut remains a fascinating city to visit and the Al Bustan Festival has presented itself as a beacon of hope and a sign of cultural continuity”***

**Opera Now**

***“Al Bustal remains an accessible classical music event for Lebanese and visitors alike”***

**Royal Wings Beirut**

**Gianluca Marciano – Artistic Director**

Marcianò is a conductor of great agility and astuteness with a particular interest in bringing the Italian operatic repertoire to the most varied corners of the world. He is Artistic Director at the Al Bustan Festival in Beirut, Artistic Advisor of the Tokyo New City Orchestra and in October 2016 he takes up the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the Armenian State Opera in Yerevan.

As Artistic Director of the five-week long Al Bustan Festival in Beirut, Marcianò hosted and conducted the first performance of the Bellini’s *Norma* in the Middle East in 2015. Bursting with energy and committed to nurture young talent, he created the Al Bustan Festival Orchestra in spring 2015, aiming to set up an apprentice scheme for next year’s festival.

Previous posts have included the Croatian National Theatre in Zagreb and the Tbilisi State Opera & Ballet Theatre in Georgia where he conducted *La Forza del Destino, Cavalleria Rusticana, Nabucco, Attila, Il Trovatore, Mitridate, Re di Ponto*and*Aida*, as well as the New Year's Concert with Andrea Bocelli in Batumi. Marcianò also has strong ties with the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet in Vilnius.

Much of Marcianò’s operatic work in the UK has centred around ENO, Grange Park Opera and Longborough Festival. He has returned to Grange Park annually for the past 6 years, conducting *Eugene Onegin, Samson et Dalila, Madama Butterfly, Tosca, I Puritani*and*La traviata* as well as a gala concert with Simon Keenlyside and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. At ENO, Marcianò has conducted revivals of Jonathan Miller’s production of *La bohème* and Anthony Minghella’s *Madame Butterfly*. He has also conducted at Longborough Festival Opera on several occasions and at the Chelsea Opera Group

Recent highlights within the 2015/16 season included a successful run of a new production of Verdi’s *Don Carlo* at Grange Park Opera and the return to Opera de Oviedo to conduct a new production of *Nabucco* by director Emilio Sagi, also touring to Gijon and Pamplona. Marcianò conducted Verdi’s *Ernani* and *La Traviata* at the Lithuanian National Opera and Ballet Theatre in Vilnius, and made his debut appearance with the Tokyo New City Orchestra for their New Year’s concert.

On the concert stage, Marcianò has welcomed collaborations with top soloists such as Gautier Capuçon, Steven Isserlis, Khatia Buniatishvili, Sergei Krylov, Nina Kotova and Denis Kozhukin, and conducted many notable orchestras including the Moscow City Russian Philharmonic, English Chamber Orchestra, BBC Concert Orchestra, Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, English National Opera, Oviedo Filarmonia, Sarajevo Philarmonic Orchestra, Orchestra di Padova e del Veneto, State Youth Orchestra of Armenia, The World Orchestra, Macau Orchestra and Beijing Symphony Orchestra.

Born in Lerici in Italy’s Liguria, Marcianò was a piano prodigy and graduated in politics before being trained as a conductor by Loris Voltolini.

[**http://www.gianlucamarciano.com**](http://www.gianlucamarciano.com)

For more information on any of the above, please contact:

**Nicky Thomas Media**

**+44 (0)20 3714 7594 | +44 (0)20 7258 0909**

info@nickythomasmedia.com

[www.nickythomasmedia.com](http://www.nickythomasmedia.com/)

