



## PRESS CONFERENCE FOR THE PRESENTATION OF THE **LEBANESE PIPE ORGAN WEEK 2017**

Embassy of Switzerland in Beirut, January 12, 2017

*-press release-*

The **Notre Dame University - Louaize** and the **Terra Sancta Organ Festival** have the pleasure to present the second season of the

### **SOL FESTIVAL Semaine de l'Orgue au Liban Lebanese Pipe Organ Week**

**from January 29 to February 5, 2017. All concerts take place at 8:00 pm. Admission is free.**

For some years now Lebanon has witnessed a renewed interest in the pipe organ: many churches have restored their pipe organs or have acquired new ones while others are planning to install one: the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week acts as an incentive for this renaissance.

Organ music is a superior artistic contribution perceived as specifically Christian, the pipe organ being found almost exclusively inside churches. The concerts take place in churches, but all are welcome, regardless of their religious affiliation: the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week represents in fact one of the rare occasions in the Middle East in which one can listen to the sound of a pipe organ outside of its normal liturgical context. The festival is also an opportunity to promote the maintenance of organs and the study of this instrument, necessary for the liturgy. In this respect, a special thanks is made to the Italian organ builder **Saverio Anselmi Tamburini**, the technical sponsor of the festival, who takes care of the maintenance of many pipe organs in Lebanon.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week is also a sign of the collaboration and the willingness to work together that animate the relations among Churches of different traditions.

The Lebanese Pipe Organ Week will open on January 29 at the **Basilica of the Miraculous Medal** in **Beirut-Achrafieh** with a recital by **Jean-Christophe Geiser** (Switzerland), and it will continue on January 31 in **Zouk Mosbeh** at the **Maronite Church of Notre Dame de Louaize**, with **Cosimo Prontera** (Italy), on February 2 on the organ of the **American University of Beirut** with **Crista Miller** (USA), on February 4 in the **chapel of the college of the Brothers of the Christian Schools in Beirut-Gemmaizeh** with **Marie-Bernadette Dufourcet Bocinos** (France), ending on February 5 at the **National Evangelical Church of Beirut** with **Bernard Gfrerer** (Austria).

Thanks to the joint venture between the Notre Dame University and the Terra Sancta Organ Festival of the Custody of the Holy Land, the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week has strong local roots and, at the same time, an international dimension. **The organists scheduled to perform in the Lebanese Pipe Organ Week are all internationally known** and the audience will have the pleasure to listen to all of them during the course of one week only.

## INTERNATIONAL ORGANISTS AT SOL FESTIVAL 2017

**Jean-Christophe Geiser** is one of the leading musicians of Switzerland. He has performed in four continents as well as in forty countries. Geiser is the Titular Organist of Lausanne's Cathedral, the home of one of the most interesting new organs in Europe, the Fisk organ of 2003. Artistic director of the Cathedral's Concert Society, Geiser is also the organ professor of the Lausanne University of Music.

The Italian **Cosimo Prontera** is professor of organ and organ composition at the Conservatory "Gesualdo da Venosa" in Potenza (Italy). At the same conservatory, he teaches the practice of basso continuo and ancient organ within the two-year specialist course in Early Music. He collaborates, giving master classes in organ, with the Notre Dame University of Beirut. He is the founder and the director of the baroque orchestra "La Confraternita de' musici." The ensemble performs in concerts in Italy and overseas.

**Crista Miller** (USA) is the Director of Music and Cathedral Organist at Houston's Co-Cathedral of the Sacred Heart and she has a very special link with Lebanon. In fact Dr. Miller's research on Lebanese musical elements in the organ works of Naji Hakim was published in December 2015's *ORGAN: Journal für die Orgel* (Okzident und Orient: Libanesische Einflüsse in Naji Hakims „französischen“ Orgelwerken). An award-winning organist in international and national playing competitions (Odense, Denmark; Fort Wayne; San Antonio; and a semi-finalist in the AGO National Young Artists' Competition in Organ Playing), she is very active as a concert player in the USA as well in Europe and Canada.

**Marie-Bernadette Dufourcet Bocinos** (France) participates as concert player and teacher in several European and American festivals and she is juror in international competitions. She teaches also at the Pôle d'Enseignement Supérieur Musique et Danse-Bordeaux/Aquitaine (PESMD) and she is visiting professor at the Universidad Autónoma of Madrid (Music Department). She was awarded first prizes at the International organ and improvisation competitions of Rennes, St. Albans, Beauvais, as well as the second Grand Prix d'Interprétation in Chartres. She is honorary titular of the Cavaillé-Coll organ at Notre-Dame-des-Champs church in Paris. For her academic accomplishments, she received the medal of "Chevalier des Palmes Académiques" in 2010 and the medal of "Chevalier de l'Ordre National du Mérite" in 2012.

Among the most important representatives of Austrian organists, **Bernhard Gfrerer** is active in all the main fields of the organ world. He is the Director of Music of the Franciscan Church in Salzburg, Professor for Organ and Improvisation at Salzburg's Conservatory, Juror in international organ competitions as well as a highly demanded concert organist. He has also released many recordings both for recording companies as well national broadcast networks. His extensive concert tours have taken him to the most prominent music centers in Europe: Paris, Berlin, Rome, Budapest, Vienna, Madrid, Milan, Zürich, Barcelona, Hamburg, Brussels, Amsterdam, Prague, Leipzig, Dresden as well as in South America (Bogota, Rio de Janeiro, Sao Paulo), Japan (Tokyo, Osaka), Russia, China and the USA.

WHEN	WHERE	WHO
Sunday, 29 January, 2017	Église de la Medaille Miraculeuse - Achrafieh – Beirut	Jean-Christophe Geiser (CH)
Tuesday, 31 January, 2017	Notre Dame de Louaizé – Zouk Mosbeh	Cosimo Prontera (ITA)
Thursday, 2 February, 2017	American University of Beirut	Crista Miller (USA)
Saturday, 4 February, 2017	Collège du Sacré-Coeur – Gemmayzé – Beirut	Marie-Bernadette Dufourcet Bocinos (FRA)
Sunday, 5 February, 2017	The National Evangelical Church of Beirut	Bernard Gfrerer (AUT)

All the information about the Lebanese can be found on the **website** [www.solfestival.org](http://www.solfestival.org) , as well as on the **Facebook page** and on the **You Tube Channel** of the festival.

The festival is made possible thanks to the organizational resources of the **Notre Dame University-Louaize** and of the **Terra Sancta Organ Festival of the Custody of the Holy Land** and thanks to:

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**Couvent Notre Dame de Louaizé**, O.M.M.

**American University of Beirut**

**Prof. Naji Hakim**, organist and composer.

SEMAINE DE L'ORGUE AU LIBAN

LEBANESE PIPE ORGAN WEEK

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