

Talal Abu-Ghazaleh Opening Speech at the Felsenreitschule Concert in Salzburg

Friday - September 1 - 2000

"The Best Way to Predict the Future Is To Shape It"

Gruß Gott,
Herr Gerard Mortier, Vielen Dank,
Premier Minister und Frau Taher Al-Massry,
Exzellenz,
Meine Freunde,

Dank das Sie den Abend mit uns verbringen. Willkommen im Orientalismus.

Please excuse my German. And excuse our faults in organization.
L'exactitude est la politesse des Rois.

Mark Twain once said: "Wagner's music is better than it sounds." I hope that is also true of me.

As Dr. Mortier said, my family loves Salzburg and Austria. That is one reason why we are here to celebrate AGIP's rise to the top ten rank of global intellectual property firms.

AGIP will invite you to our next music competition in three years, when hopefully we can celebrate another milestone. The best way to predict the future is to shape it.

I now wish to ask Dr. Mortier to honor our prize winners:

Third prize, John René Combes-Domien, from France. Ms. Marianne Lyon will receive his shield.

Second prize, Nurulla Khadiga Farangs, from Tajikstan, for her composition Replica.

First prize, Alberto Colla, whose composition will be premiered tonight.

Thank you Alberto for dedicating your "Le Rovine de Palmyra" to me. You made me enter the musical repertoire. I am honored.

In the third century, the Romans destroyed Palmyra (the Biblical Tadmur) in Syria in response to the revolt of its queen Zanubia.

Seventeen centuries later, our Roman composer rebuilds Tadmur in his beautiful composition.

Event Director Maya, (spouse) Gerard, and finally Dr. Mortier, in recognition of your invaluable support. Danke.

Special thanks are also due to:

- Prof. Erwin Niese, Director of the Mozarteum Orchestra.
- Dr. Frederich Gemacher, President of the International Stiftung Mozarteum.
- Mme. Marianne Lyon, of CDMC, our competition organizers.
- My family for supporting and putting up with me.
- The TAGI family who made us the best that can be. I am proud to have recruited better people than myself.
- The distinguished speakers of our most successful seminar today at the Mozarteum on "Music Copyright in the Digital Age".

Frederich Willhelm Nietzsche said: "Without music life would be a mistake."

Arabs take pride in their contribution to the science and art of music, as indeed to other arts and sciences. Al-Munajjim, Al-Farabi, and Al-Kindi, to mention only a few, invented musical instruments, and contributed to the definition of melodic modes, to the science of sound and intervals, to the notation and determination of pitch, and to systematic notation, as early as the nineteenth century.

In the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries, Arabs and western musical cultures interacted. I hope this event is yet another small step in that direction.

Less is more as Robert Browning said. My apologies for speaking more not less in Strauß's opera...

Meine Damen und Herren,

Let us enjoy music at its best by our great artists tonight. This concert is being recorded on CD for you. The great thing about music is that it asks of us nothing in return but that we listen.

Danke schön.

Ich begrüße daß Salzburger Publikum.