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VISUAL ARTS CULINARY ARTS DANCE CONFERENCE MUSIC NEW MEDIAS LITERATURE



PRESS RELEASE

For immediate release

**GOLESTAN** | Montreal, March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018

**An unprecedented encounter  
between Iranian and Syrian  
music**

Friday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
20h

**Sala Rossa**  
4848 Saint-Laurent Blvd.

Laurier Metro

\$20

Tickets : [bit.ly/2FJR1gT](http://bit.ly/2FJR1gT)



acesasie.com  
514-298-0757

To celebrate the 5<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Golestan* project, Festival Accès Asie welcomes the percussionist, Ziya Tabassian, along with the great Syrian musicians, Omar Abou Afach on the viola, Nazih Borish on the oud and renowned gypsy accordionist of Moldavian origin, Sergiu Popa, to perform. As a special guest for the evening, Marina Salonga – multidisciplinary dancer – will improvise to several songs in a gypsy fusion style, on Friday May 18<sup>th</sup> at Sala Rossa.

The Romani are known to have crossed into Asia from India. Their travels and migrations, encounters and exchanges were a common part of their lives. To highlight their encounters and cultural wealth, the musicians will pay tribute to the Romani borrowing musical influences from Indian, Persian, Syrian and Moldavian origin, and even some jazz.

The *Golestan* project, created by Festival Accès Asie, aims to create a musical meeting place for different Asian cultures to perform together in *Golestan*, which means “garden of flowers” in Persian. Don't miss this exciting celebration by these brilliant musicians.



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### **Ziya Tabassian – Percussion**

Ziya Tabassian has been a tombak player (Iranian drum) since the age of six. In Montreal, he studied classical oriental percussion and has been active in the ancient and world music milieus. Ziya has collaborated with various ensembles and soloists, and has performed in prestigious venues and festivals in over forty countries. Ziya has numerous discs in his repertoire and launched his first solo CD *Tombak* in 2007 with the label Ambiances Magnétiques. He performs with several music groups including the Âstân ensemble (founded by Bashir Faramarzi in 2013), Constantinople, Ensemble Caprice, the Kronos Quartet, Mercan Dede, En Chordais, Lo'Jo. *Le Cercle des cycles*, his latest album, came out in November 2017. ([www.ziyatabassian.com](http://www.ziyatabassian.com))

### **Omar Abou Afach – Alto**

Omar Abou Afach was already a renowned violist in Syria, his country of origin, before arriving in Canada in 2015. After graduating from Damas Higher Institute of Music, he studied at the Conservatoire de musique of Boulogne-Billancourt in France. Since 1995, he has played and toured with various symphonic orchestras from Syria and Algeria. Between 2008 and 2015, he collaborated with Ziad Rahbani in numerous concerts and played on the album *Eh Fi Amal* (2010) by the great singer Fairuz. Since 2016, Omar has been a member of the ensemble Âstân, and the Canadian Arabic Orchestra. He has performed with the Ensemble Sinfonia de Montréal, the Musicians of the World Symphony Orchestra, the Grand Choeur de Montréal, the Choeur de LaPrairie, and the Cantabile Chorale.

### **Nazih Borish – Oud**

A native of Latakia (Syria), Nazih Borish started learning oud with his father at the age of five. He became a child prodigy and gave his first concerts in his native city when he was only thirteen. A self-taught musician, he mastered oud techniques and different styles of music such as Arabic, Turkish, and Flamenco among others. He has played alongside great Middle-Eastern artists and performed in cities throughout the Middle-East as well as Russia, Ukraine, Venezuela, Canada, and the United-States. In 2005, Nazih founded his own music school in Latakia teaching oud and improvisation to more than 100 students. Since his arrival in Montreal in 2016, Nazih has collaborated with numerous local artists and is very active in the Montreal music scene.



©Roberta Gal (2006)



© Jesse Herbert

### **Sergiu Popa – Accordion**

Born in Moldavia, Sergiu Popa studied Roma and traditional folklore music with his father, Ion Popa, himself a well-known Moldavian accordionist. In the years he played at weddings with his father, he became familiar with Jewish, Turkish, Russian, Serbian and Bulgarian styles. He arrived in Canada in 2002 and co-founded the Ensemble Sergiu Popa with his wife, violinist Jessica Gal. The ensemble has performed in numerous festivals and concerts throughout Quebec and won the Radio Canada Prix Étoiles Galaxie in 2007. In 2008/09, Sergiu was artist-in-residence at Circuit 514, a collaboration between CBC Radio 2, Place des Arts, the Conseil des Arts de Montréal, the MAI (Montréal, arts interculturels), Musique Multi-Montréal, and Vision Diversité to promote cultural diversity in the arts. ([www.sergiuropa.com](http://www.sergiuropa.com))

### **Marina Salonga – Multidisciplinary dancer**

Marina is a multidisciplinary dancer and circus artist who was born in the Philippines and grew up in California. First training with the internationally known oriental dancer Alexandra King in 2001, Marina recognized that out of all the dance forms she had studied, belly dance came most naturally to her. With Alexandra, Marina studied many types of folkloric dances from throughout the Middle East, as well as modern Middle Eastern dances and cabaret style belly dance, all of which she performed with a the 50-piece Middle East Music Ensemble of the University of California, Santa Barbara. Marina went on to study with other teachers in California and continued to refine her unique style as a soloist. Marina has since become a veteran belly dancer and an instructor. ([www.marinadance.com](http://www.marinadance.com))