

More than 700 Classical Musicians Demand Action To Stop Israel's Genocide in Gaza

by *EIR* Staff

Sept. 18—More than [700 international classical musicians](#) issued a joint petition statement this month, condemning “the support of Western powers for the genocidal policy of the State of Israel, which flouts international law and its institutions with complete impunity.” Titled, “Classical Music for Palestine,” their “collective statement” was posted Sept. 6 by *Le Club Mediapart*, a French independent, investigative newspaper. In circulating their petition, the initiators say that they seek collaboration from musicians of all genres of music, and of their associated institutions, in order to “ensure they do not become complicit through silence or inaction.”

In this rare initiative, the petitioners take a strong international stand. The statement says the artists and their institutions “have the responsibility to make their stance unequivocally heard in the face of deadly Western imperialist policies, the consequences of which weigh heavily on the peoples of the Global Majority, and in particular on the Palestinian people.”

The list of signers is posted and growing. Among them are: Jordi Savall, Adam Laloum, Lucile Boulanger, Lucile Richardot, and Michael Barenboim, the famous German violinist and teacher of the Barenboim-Said Academy, founded by his father, Daniel Barenboim, and famous American-Palestinian intellectual Edward Saïd. Michael Barenboim also plays in the Western-Eastern Divan Orchestra, composed of Israeli, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Jordanian, and Palestinian musicians.

Demands

Among their demands: 1) immediate ceasefire in Gaza and throughout the region, with the lifting of all humanitarian blockades; 2) recognition of the State of Palestine by all European Union member states, and the implementation of a solution based on a binational state; 3) immediate end to the EU's complicity in the actions of Israel; 4) suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement; 5) immediate halt to EU arms sales and deliveries; 6) establishment of economic sanctions against Israel; 7) enforcement of the International Criminal Court arrest warrants against Benjamin Netanyahu and Yoav Gallant for war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The “Classical Music for Palestine” text explains that, “Classical music, in its entirety, maintains an undeniable link with the history of European states. It seems essential to us that this tradition not be confused with a certain form of conservatism that would manifest in the appropriation

and instrumentalization of these musicians of the past by a political camp aligned with domination—whether geopolitical, social, or societal. It is equally important that the actors of this milieu be able to assert their political convictions without taboo, and above all without feeling pressure to remain silent, for fear of being boycotted by dominant institutions or of endangering an already precarious status, particularly for young musicians.”

The petition is getting significant coverage in



Courtesy of Sebastian Merrick

Israeli conductor Ilan Volkov.

key music journals and websites, from The Violin Channel, to Newsbreak and others. The Schiller Institute [issued a call](#) in a kindred spirit in September 2023, written by Renée Sigerson (1952-2024), a 'cellist and founding member of the Schiller Institute. It is titled, "Revive Classical Principles Based on Friedrich Schiller's 'The Artists,'" which she [further elaborated](#) in *EIR*.

Israeli Conductor Volkov Calls for the World To Stop Israel

At the conclusion of a concert he conducted on Sept. 11 at the BBC Proms in Britain, Israeli conductor Ilan Volkov made [a short, impassioned address](#) to the audience, calling on people "to do whatever is in your power to stop this madness" that Israel is doing in Gaza. His full remarks are presented below.

In [an interview](#) after the concert, Volkov announced that at the present time, he will not work in Israel, his homeland. "The phrase 'not in my name' is not always helpful," he said. "But this war *is* happening in my name, and I'm going to fight against it. We have to make a stand. We have to think creatively about what we can do. I believe that now all non-violent ways of trying to influence the situation are crucial."

Peace will not come from inside Israel, he said. "We Israelis alone—Palestinians and the small minority of Jews standing against it all—won't be able to stop Netanyahu's government. We need the support of the whole world to make this massacre end."

Ilan Volkov's Statement at the Proms

Following the BBC Proms concert, Conductor Volkov made a statement from the podium at the Royal Albert Hall. The BBC broadcast unfortunately ended just before Volkov's remarks, as BBC said that they had not been notified that he would make a speech. But the video is now circulating widely.

"Thank you all for sharing this amazing music together. It's a real privilege to be here every year with my friends, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra.

"In my heart there is great pain now, every day for months. I come from Israel and live there. I love it, it's my home, but what's happening is atrocious and horrific on a scale that's unimaginable. I know that many of us feel completely helpless in front of it. Innocent Palestinians being killed in thousands, displaced again and again, without hospitals and schools, not knowing when's the next meal. Israeli hostages are kept in terrible conditions for almost two years, and political prisoners are languishing in Israeli jails.

"Israelis—Jews and Palestinians—won't be able to stop this alone. I ask you all to do whatever is in your power to stop this madness. Every little action counts while governments hesitate and wait. We cannot let this go on any longer; every moment that passes puts the safety of millions at risk.

"Thank you."