



Divan Duo

Regards Croisés



The cross-cultural piano duo of Layla Ramezan and Nazanin Piri, are both from Iran and share a passion for piano music for four hands, from the present and past, well-known and less well-known. Layla and Nazanin have lived and studied in France and Germany. Both have settled in Switzerland for different reasons, and this is where their paths then crossed. Together, they are in harmony with cultures from East and West and live out this cross-cultural harmony in music.



« Regards Croisés » is the name of their new joint project, which creates a unique sound experience with works from across borders: Contemporary works from the Middle East, such as Iran and Turkey, sound together with music from Europe under one concert roof. Works by Schumann and Stravinsky complete the program.

Stravinsky lived on three continents – in three different cultures that influenced significantly his music. Schumann worked with Arabic and Persian poetry throughout his life. He was particularly impressed by Goethe's "West-Eastern Divan" as well as by Ali alHariri's "Makamen", which ultimately inspired him to the "Pictures from the East".

Dvorak's melodies, which were created between homeland and "New World", are together with the works of Schubert and Brahms' the heart of the romantic part of their program. The steadily growing repertoire of the piano duo also includes four-hand pieces that were composed after 1945. In the time of upheaval, Kurtág, Bartók and Ligeti in particular occupy an important place for the duo. With "Night" by Fazıl Say and "Asir" by Nazanin Piri, works from the present are included that which provide a socio-critical view of the political conditions in Turkey as well as the inequality between man and woman in Iran. The audience will gain insights into the contemporary music scene in Azerbaijan with the internationally acclaimed composer Franghiz Ali-Zadeh.

Bernese composers such as Jean-Luc Darbellay, Hans Eugen Frischknecht and Mark Hofer have composed three four-hand works especially for the piano duo, some of which develop colorful soundscapes with inside piano effects and percussive passages. Works by other Swiss composers such as Daniel Glaus, Gabrielle Brunner and Dieter Ammann are on the Divan Duo's to-do list."

Teaser of the show



Layla Ramezan

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As a concert pianist, Layla performs regularly in France and Switzerland, as well as in many places further afield. She has recently appeared in recitals at the Collège des Bernadins in Paris, Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Victoria Hall in Geneva, Royal Irish Academy in Dublin, Aga Kahn Museum in Toronto, Roodaki Hall in Tehran, Hafez Hall in Shiraz, and at major festivals such as the *Athénéennes* in Geneva, the *Schubertiade* in Sion and the *Alba Music Festival* in Italy. Her concerts have been broadcast on Radio France, RFI, Radio Suisse Romande, NPO Radio Netherlands and CBC Radio Canada, WDR and Deutschlandfunk.

Along with her solo projects, Layla has had the privilege to work with many prominent musicians such as William Blank, Helmut Deutsch, Jean-Claude Penner and Philippe Albera and has performed with Jean-Marc Luisada, Eliane Reyes, Christophe Beau, Brigitte Balleys and Trio Chemirani. She has also worked closely with composers such as Tristan Murail, Luis Naon, Nicolas Bolens and Michael Jarrell.

As the pianist in the contemporary music ensemble “Matka” which is based in Geneva, she is the driving force behind several intercultural musical projects, bringing together Iranian, French, Swiss and American composers for global conferences, residencies and concerts. Layla was a member of the jury for the tenth edition of the *National Festival of Music for Young People* in Tehran. She is a founder and the Artistic Director of the *Barbad Piano Prize* in Shiraz. As well as her interest in promoting her own cultural heritage, she has played for the United Nations in Geneva for a special event to raise awareness of violence against women alongside ten African ambassadors.

Layla is currently preparing a four-part CD series on the label *Paraty Records/Hamonia Mundi* for her project, *100 years of Iranian Piano Music*, to be distributed by Harmonia

Mundi. These are: *The Fathers of Iranian Music for Piano*; *Iranian Composers from the 1950s*; *Shahrzâd* by Alireza Mashâyekhi; and *The New Generation of Iranian Composers*. The first CD of this quartet, *Iranian Composers from 1950*, was released in January 2017.

Layla commenced her piano studies in Tehran before moving to Paris in 2000 to study at the École Normale de Musique de Paris “Alfred Cortot” with Jean Micault and Devi Erlih with a scholarship. She also studied with Jacqueline Bourgès-Maunoury and Christophe Bukudjian at the Conservatoire National de Saint-Maur des Fossés, where she obtained a diploma of Music Studies with high distinction. She then moved to Lausanne where she currently lives, obtaining two Master’s degrees in Interpretation and Collaborative Piano from the Haute École de Musique with Christian Favre and Marc Pantillon.

She is a Laureate of the Engelberts Foundation for Art and Culture in Switzerland and the Albert Roussel Foundation in France.

Her recently released Album „Sheherezade by Alireza Mashayekhi“ was recorded together with Keyvan and Djamshid Chemirani. This disc is Layla’s second volume of her exploration of 100 years of Iranian piano music on *Paraty Records/Harmonia Mundi*

Nazanin Piri

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Nazanin Piri, born in Tehran, studied piano at the Lübeck University of Music in the class of Prof. M. Fock. 2010 she completed her Master studies at International College of Music in Hamburg and in musicology at Free University Berlin. She was student of many renown pianists like Maxim Philipov, Konstanze Eickhorst, Heidrun Holtmann, Peter Feuchtwanger, Ludwig Pflanz, Anthony Spiri and Herbert Wiedemann. Currently she continues studying in the class of Prof. Marisa Somma.

The collaboration with composer Friedhelm Döhl influenced her musical life, to whom she still feels a connection since the studies of his "Three Ballads of Paul Celan". She regularly performs his works, recently for the Förderkreis für Neue Musik in „Pyramid Hall“ in Heilbronn. She is a multiple winner of "Jugend musiziert" at national level.

As a soloist and chamber musician, she has given numerous concerts as a duo with violinist Fiona Rholffs in Germany and France. Her special commitment is given to contemporary music. She was last involved as a pianist for the SARGO ensemble in 8 world premieres of the composer collective Archebole at the theater de Lausanne and Yverdon-Les-Bains. In collaboration with the choreographer Modjgan Hashemian, she was the musical director for an improvised dance piece during the Emil-Nolde exhibition opening in 2010. In 2011 she played with the Iranian pianist Neda Navaee in a Pianoduo and guested with her at Festivals in Austria and Germany. In 2013 shortly after her piano

recital at Chilehaus in Hamburg, her first CD recording was published on Veraphone. Currently she is flutist and pianist for the Elias Nardi Ensemble and performs regularly at concerts in Italy, Germany, Romania, Belgium and Switzerland. In 2015, her second album "Flowers of Fragility" produced by Analogy Records, came out. Concert series "Naked Jazz" (Milan) "Jazz Nouveau" (Bukarest) and Ambria Jazz Festival she shared the stage with prominent musicians like Max de Aloe, Daniele di Bonaventura, Ares Tivolazzi, Franco Baggiani, Ermanno Librasi, Emanuele Le Pera, Max Pizio and Claudio Farinone and Max Pizio. In November 2017, the Elias Nardi Group toured with the legendary Italian jazz bassist Ares Tivolazzi in Germany, where her own arrangements and works were played.

Since 2018 she teaches piano at the conservatory in Bern. With her class, she has recently worked on contemporary works by the Bernese composers l'art pour l'art. Since 2019 she has been studying composition in the class of Prof. Daniel Glaus.