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Tafelmusik
Baroque Orchestra and Chamber Choir
MEDIA RELEASE



**May 21 performance added to sold-out multi-media concerts:
Tales of Two Cities: The Leipzig-Damascus Coffee House
with special guests Trio Arabica and Alon Nashman
May 19 to 22 at Koerner Hall | May 24 at TCA**

Toronto, May 3, 2016 ... Tafelmusik's 2015/16 concert season wraps up **May 19 to 24, 2016** with *Tales of Two Cities: The Leipzig-Damascus Coffee House*, a stunning new multimedia creation from Tafelmusik's **Alison Mackay**, who conceived and programmed the phenomenally successful *The Galileo Project* and *House of Dreams*. Mackay and her creative team employ theatrical sets, lighting design, scripted text, and spectacular projected images to create the kind of immersive concert experience for which Tafelmusik is world-renowned. Thanks to overwhelming audience demand, a fourth Koerner Hall performance has been added on **Saturday May 21 at 8 PM**. Tickets are also available for the performance at George Weston Recital Hall on **Tuesday, May 24, 2016 at 8 PM**. The world premiere of *Tales of Two Cities* takes place on May 17 at Queen's University's Isabel Bader Centre for the Performing Arts in Kingston, Ontario. A seventh Ontario performance of *Tales of Two Cities* takes place at Melrose United Church in Hamilton on May 25.

Tales of Two Cities is inspired by the colourful, opulent world of eighteenth-century Saxon and Syrian coffee houses, and is performed entirely from memory by **Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra**, guest ensemble **Trio Arabica** — **Maryem Tollar**, voice and qanun; **Demetri Petsalakis**, oud; and **Naghmeh Farahmand**, percussion — and narrator **Alon Nashman**. *Tales of Two Cities* is "an immensely engaging premise — taking two cities, thousands of miles apart — and viewing them through the musical lens of the same moment of historical and cultural time." (*The Wholenote*).

The year is 1740, and coffee houses are the cultural and social hubs in both the famous trading centre of Leipzig, and in one of the oldest cities in the world, Damascus. As far back as the era of J.S. Bach, Leipzig was already established as an important centre of Arabic scholarship, and to this day, the city remains a repository for Syrian culture.

"Current world events have brought the citizens of Damascus, Leipzig, and Toronto together in challenging but exciting ways, and Tafelmusik wanted to make contact with Syrians living in Leipzig today," said Mackay, who has been visiting the German city since 2014 to research aspects of *Tales of Two Cities*. "We've been collaborating with Leipzig-based Syrian poets, language scholars, activists, and

musicians for the past several months, and the experience has been incredibly profound and enriching. We look forward to sharing aspects of this rich cultural collaboration with our audiences in Toronto, Kingston, and Hamilton” she said.

In addition to music by European baroque composers such as Telemann, Handel, and Bach, audiences will hear classical Arabic music performed by guest ensemble **Trio Arabica** — music that may well have been heard in the coffee houses of Damascus. To mark the occasion, Trio Arabica will release ***Al-Qahwa*** (“coffee house” in Arabic), a recording of classical music from Syria, Egypt, and Iraq, some of which will be heard performed live in *Tales of Two Cities*.

Stage direction for *Tales of Two Cities* is by **Marshall Pynkoski**, co-artistic director of Opera Atelier. Production design is by **Glenn Davidson**, and projections are designed by **Raha Javanfar**.

Listing Information: Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra presents
Tales of Two Cities: The Leipzig-Damascus Coffee House with guest ensemble **Trio Arabica** and narrator **Alon Nashman**

Alison Mackay | Programme Creator

Jeanne Lamon | Music Direction

Marshall Pynkoski | Stage Direction

Glenn Davidson | Production Designer

Raha Javanfar | Projections Designer

Dates + Times: **Koerner Hall (KH), TELUS Centre for Performance and Learning**
Thu May 19, Fri May 20, Sat May 21 at 8pm
Sun May 22 at 3:30pm
Free with admission: lecture by Alison Mackay and Dr. Anke Sharrahs one hour before every concert

George Weston Recital Hall (TCA), Toronto Centre for the Arts
Tue May 24 at 8pm
Free with admission: lecture by Alison Mackay one hour before the concert

Ticket Prices: **KH: Regular:** Start at \$49 | **65+:** Start at \$40 | **35 & Under:** \$26 - \$93
TCA: Regular: Start at \$37 | **65+:** Start at \$33 | **35 & Under:** \$15 - \$70

Venues: Koerner Hall, 273 Bloor St. West, Toronto
Toronto Centre for the Arts, George Weston Recital Hall, 5040 Yonge St

Box Office: Koerner Hall, Weston Family Box Office: 416.408.0208 www.tafelmusik.org
George Weston Recital Hall Box Office: 1.855.985.2787

Website/Social Media: www.tafelmusik.org



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Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra, founded in 1979, is one of the world's leading period performance ensembles. The Tafelmusik Chamber Choir, under the direction of Ivars Taurins, was formed in 1981 to complement the Orchestra. The orchestra performs more than 50 concerts each year at home in Toronto, and travels extensively around the world. The choir and orchestra's multi-platform recording label Tafelmusik Media was launched in January 2012, along with the Watch and Listen site. Tafelmusik's discography of 80-plus CDs has been recorded on the Sony Classical, CBC Records, Analekta and Tafelmusik Media labels. Since 1991, Tafelmusik has received nine JUNO Awards and a Grammy Award nomination. Tafelmusik is the Baroque Orchestra-in-Residence at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto and operates annual artist training programmes, Tafelmusik Baroque Summer Institute and Tafelmusik Winter Institute. Tafelmusik has been led by Jeanne Lamon since 1981. In June 2014, Ms. Lamon stepped down as Music Director, and is continuing as Tafelmusik's Chief Artistic Advisor until her successor is appointed.

Season Presenting Sponsor:



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