

Full Length Biography

MALEK JANDALI

Composer & Pianist

Malek Jandali is “**a uniquely gifted composer**” (The Washington Post) and his music has been hailed as “**a major new addition to the 21st century’s symphonic literature**” by (*Fanfare* magazine). Critically acclaimed for his unique musical voice that has been described as “**deeply enigmatic**” (*Gramophone*) and rich with “**heart-rending melodies, lush orchestration, and creative textures**” (*American Record Guide*), his prolific work includes eight symphonies, seven concertos, four string quartets, other orchestral and chamber music works, as well as an upcoming premiere of his full opera, *The Square*.

A dedicated peace activist, Malek Jandali describes himself as a musician on a mission. He is the recipient of the 2014 Global Music Humanitarian Award, and in 2015 the Carnegie Corporation of New York honored him as a Great Immigrant, a Pride of America. As an artist involved with major social issues, he seeks to promote cultural communication and understanding. His large-scale orchestral works engage major philosophical themes and integrate Arabic maqams (modes) with persuasive craft and a marked seriousness of purpose that echo UNESCO’s call to preserve and protect the rich cultural heritage of his homeland Syria.

Prominent advocates of Jandali’s instrumental music include distinguished conductors Marin Alsop, Sergey Kondrashev, David Firman, Christopher Zimmerman, Alastair Willis, Pavle Dešpalj, Robert Franz, Delta David Gier, and Lina González-Granados. His music consistently makes a profound impact on listeners throughout the world. Maestro Alsop states, “**Jandali belongs among the superb composer poets of our time—a meaningful voice of quite astonishing, almost unearthly beauty.**”

Malek Jandali’s most recent premieres include his Viola Concerto for Roberto Diaz, his Clarinet Concerto for Grammy-nominated clarinetist Anthony McGill, and his Violin Concerto with Rachel Barton Pine. His 2023 album *Concertos* on the Cedille Records label received four stars from the *BBC Music Magazine*.

Jandali’s compositions have been commissioned, performed, and recorded by leading orchestras including the Royal Philharmonic, ORF Vienna Radio Symphony, Russian Philharmonic, Baltimore Symphony, Zagreb Philharmonic, Stockholm Solister,

Norrlandsoperan Symphony Orchestra, Cairo Symphony, and Qatar Philharmonic Orchestra. His music has been performed at major venues around the world including Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, the Wiener Konzerthaus, Madrid's National Auditorium with the Queen of Spain in attendance, Cadogan Hall, Konserthuset Stockholm, Cairo Opera House, Nidaros Cathedral, Sydney Opera House, United Nations Headquarters, the National Museum of Qatar, and the Museum of the Future in Dubai.

Jandali has produced ten albums of lauded performances of more than forty of his compositions. He is the first Arab musician to have arranged the oldest music notation in the world, which was featured on his 2008 album *Echoes from Ugarit*. His albums *Syrian Symphony*, *SoHo*, *Hiraeth*, and *The Jasmine Tree* were released at Carnegie Hall in 2015, 2016, 2017, and 2018 respectively. The *Huffington Post* described his work as “**inspiring**,” and Bob Stevenson of NPR declared his music both “**moving and thought provoking**.”

Released in 2022, Jandali's album *The Desert Rose* features his Symphony No. 4 for string orchestra and Symphony No. 6, “The Desert Rose.” It was recorded with the ORF Vienna Radio Symphony Orchestra led by Marin Alsop, who commented, “**I don't know of another composer who so successfully weaves in the Arabic, particularly the folk elements . . . and by bringing that into the symphonic structure and integrating them, opens up a whole new form.**” Jandali's 2021 album contains his Piano Concerto No. 1, recorded in Moscow with the composer at the piano and the Russian Philharmonic Orchestra led by Sergey Kondrashev; and *Elegy*, recorded in London with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Maestro David Firman described Jandali's music as “gorgeous, haunting, yearning and full of hope, with a pain more personal than that of Tchaikovsky or Rachmaninoff.”

Jandali's symphonic poem *Silent Ocean* (2017), commissioned by Marin Alsop and the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, “found a rapt audience at its world premiere” (*The Washington Post*), eliciting an impassioned standing ovation. The plight of Syrian children was the inspiration for Jandali's second symphony, *Luminosity*, commissioned and premiered by the Zagreb Philharmonic Orchestra (ZPO) at Carnegie Hall. The ZPO also recorded *Luminosity* at the American Academy of Arts and Letters in New York City and premiered his third symphony, *Hiraeth*, at Lisinski Hall under the baton of Pavle Dešpalj.

Recent chamber music commissions include his String Quartet No. 1 and String Quintet *Aleppo* for the Apollo Chamber Players, String Quartet No. 2 for members of the Nashville Symphony, and the saxophone quartet *Home* for Wright State University and

the Amstel Quartet, who featured the work on their 2024 European tour. Also an acclaimed pianist noted for his combination of passion, imagination, and authenticity (BBC WorldNews), Jandali enjoys a remarkable performance career throughout the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Austria, Germany, Norway, Qatar, and Australia.

Jandali has been recognized by and has spoken at academic institutions such as Harvard University, Columbia, Rice, Duke, UCLA, Notre Dame, Fordham, Rutgers, Queens, Skoll World Forum at Oxford, Aspen Ideas Festival, United Nations headquarters in New York City, Doha Debates at Georgetown University in Qatar, TEDx Talks at Georgia Tech, Sydney Ideas at the University of Sydney, and the World Innovation Summit for Education (WISE). Since January 2021 Jandali has served as composer-in-residence at Queens University of Charlotte, where he once studied with Paul Nitsch, himself a student of Leon Fleisher. Mr. Jandali is serving simultaneously in the same capacity at Qatar Museums, which commissioned his Symphony No. 4 for string orchestra and Symphony No. 6, "The Desert Rose."

Malek Jandali is passionate about making the arts accessible to all. He is the founder and CEO of Pianos for Peace, a nonprofit organization dedicated to building peace through music and education. He embraces young talent from all over the world through the annual Malek Jandali International Youth Piano Competition. Jandali enjoys a worldwide career as an acclaimed pianist noted for his combination of passion, imagination and authenticity (BBC WorldNews).

A powerful communicator renowned for his musical scope and versatility, the polyglot composer has been seen and heard on the BBC World Service, NPR *All Things Considered*, AFP, CNN International, and on the *Worldview* show with Jerome McDonnell. Jandali has been reviewed by the *Washington Post*, *Agence France-Presse*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Symphony* magazine, *Strings* magazine, *Musical America*, and the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, the *Baltimore Sun*, and the *Charlotte Observer*. He has also been regularly featured on New York's WQXR, Atlanta's WABE, and NPR Music nationwide.

Malek Jandali was born in Germany and raised in Syria. He now makes his home in both Atlanta and New York City. His recordings are available on Cedille Records, Naxos, Apple Music, Spotify, and Virgin Megastores worldwide.