



CUSTODIA TERRÆ SANCTÆ

PRESS RELEASE

The Terra Sancta Organ Festival 2018/19
STARTS IN JORDAN IN THE MEMORY OF THE FRANCISCAN
ARCHAEOLOGIST
FR. MICHELE PICCIRILLO (1944 – 2008)
Mount Nebo (Jordan), September 20, 2018

The Terra Sancta Organ Festival will honor the memory of the archaeologist of the Custody of the Holy Land **Fr. Michele Piccirillo (1944 - 2008)** on the tenth anniversary of his death, dedicating him the inaugural concert of the 2018/2019 season. The concert is scheduled to take place at the Basilica of the Memorial of Moses on Mount Nebo in Jordan, on Thursday, September 20, 2018 at 7:00 p.m. Admission free. The day before, at 6 p.m., the conference “Thirty Years of Mosaic Restoration & Beyond” will be held at the headquarters of Amman’s American Center of Oriental Research (ACOR). Both the Terra Sancta Organ Festival and ACOR wanted to remember—each in their respective field—Fr. Piccirillo, the friend, the brother and the colleague. The Italian Embassy in Amman, which in the years of its activity has always supported Fr. Piccirillo, has generously collaborated in the organization of the concert, together with the Franciscan fraternities of the Custody of the Holy Land of Mount Nebo and Amman.

Fr. Michele Piccirillo, a friar of the Custody of the Holy Land, was one of the greatest archaeologists of Jordan and the Middle East; the archaeological complex of Mount Nebo—visited by hundreds of thousands of tourists and pilgrims—represents the peak of his work, certainly the most visible and known.

The event of September 20 will be a concert-commemoration: each musical piece will be followed by a short commemorative speech given by **Costanza Farina**, UNESCO Representative to Jordan, **Federico Vidic**, Embassy of Italy in Amman, **Barbara A. Porter**, Director of ACOR (American Center of Oriental Research), **Franco Sciorilli**, mosaicist and **Győző Vörös**, Hungarian Academy of Arts and Jordanian Department of Antiquities. At the end of the concert, all participants will be invited to enter the convent garden and visit the grave of the Franciscan archaeologist, who expressed the desire to be buried there. After a short prayer, Professor Győző Vörös will present the restoration of a stucco discovered by Fr. Piccirillo in Machaerus, inside the palace of Herod.

The musical protagonist of the evening will be **Alessandro Licata**, professor of organ at the Conservatory of Santa Cecilia in Rome, assisted by Nicola Puccini, the builder of the organ that was donated by an anonymous benefactor to the Memorial on Mount Nebo. In the introduction to the program, Prof. Licata writes:
«This program presents the Canons of the Goldberg Variations by Johann Sebastian Bach as a way to underline the union of scientific and artistic knowledge. I like to think that this union has always been present in the work of the archaeologist Fr. Michele Piccirillo, who made possible the recovery of this site and its appreciation, combining scientific research and the contemplation of beauty and its sacredness».

After the event on Mount Nebo, the concerts of the Terra Sancta Organ Festival will continue in **Rhodes** from September 28 to October 6, in **Lebanon** on October 20, in **Israel and Palestine** from October 23 to November 2, in **Syria** in Damascus from November 18 to 25, again in **Lebanon** from February 2 to 10, 2019 and finally in **Cyprus** (dates to be defined). The updated program can be viewed on the official website of the festival: www.tsorganfestival.org. Many concerts from the last editions are available on the YouTube channel of the Terra Sancta Organ Festival.

Production: Custody of the Holy Land / Terra Sancta Organ Festival

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