

Naseem Alatrash



Palestinian cellist Naseem Alatrash was born on October 4, 1991. His performance on cello is creative, untraditional, and unique. Alatrash is an accomplished classically trained musician who is also deeply rooted in the Arabic musical tradition and yet influenced by jazz and other contemporary styles. He has earned a reputation for fearlessly broadening the horizons of the cello on the world stage by using it in untraditional settings. After studying at The Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Palestine, he completed a college preparation program in Germany. Alatrash later was the first Arab ever to be awarded a full presidential merit-based scholarship to attend the prestigious Berklee College of Music, in Boston, Massachusetts, where he went on to achieve the highest honors in cello performance. Later he received a master's degree in cello performance at the Global Jazz Institute at Berklee College of Music as well as a post-master's fellowship degree.

A soloist, recording musician, chamber musician, composer, and teacher, Alatrash continues his global performance career. As an educator, Alatrash has been a teaching artist at the Boston-based Josiah Quincy El Sistema-inspired Orchestra Program since 2014. He has taught cello improvisation workshops/Arabic music around the world, at such institutions as the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan and the Fedu Jazz Institute in the Dominican Republic.

As a performer, Alatrash has appeared at numerous international festivals, including the Newport Jazz Festival, the Dominican Republic Jazz Festival, Abu Dhabi Music Festival, Lebanon's Zouk Mikael

International Festival, the Nancy Jazz Festival, Lebanon's Beit Aldeen Festival, Aix-en-Provence Festival, and Jerash Festival. He has performed at such notable venues as the Kennedy Center, the Lincoln Center, the Lincoln Theater, Wigmore Hall, Koerner Hall, UCLA's Schoenberg Hall, University of Michigan Ann Arbor Music Series, NYU Abu Dhabi Arts Center, the Royal Opera of Oman, The Royal Albert Hall, and Amsterdam's Concertgebouw. He has performed alongside world-renowned musicians, including Ron Carter, Roger Waters, Terri Lyne Carrington, Eugene Friesen, Kenny Aronoff, Rami Jaffee, Luis Conte, Javier Limon, Jorge Drexler, Alejandro Sanz, Scott Page of Pink Floyd, Carmine Rojas of David Bowie, Mike Garson of David Bowie, and many others.

Alatrash has received international acclaim from media around the world, including *The National* and *Al Arabiya*, for his musical arrangement of the Beatles song "Drive My Car." As a collaboration with Public Radio International's radio show *The World* and the Berklee College of Music, he arranged/adapted the Beatles song with an Arabic twist. PRI's *The World* released the song on the day that the driving ban on Saudi women ended, as a way to celebrate the occasion.

Alatrash continues to be a voice for Palestinian culture and an advocate of its music. He tours internationally with Amir ElSaffar's Rivers of Sound Large Ensemble, and he recently joined The Global Messengers, a project with renowned Panamanian pianist Danilo Pérez that aims to recover the function of the artist as a tool to redirect humanity in a positive direction. In addition, he performs with Palestinian-American virtuoso oudist/violinist Simon Shaheen, with the National Arab Orchestra, and with his string Duo Qawsaan and Trio Ayn.

