



75

# HEALING ARTS CONCERT

CELEBRATING  
WHO'S 75TH  
ANNIVERSARY  
& World Health Day

A Musical 'Merci' to the  
people of Geneva

Saturday 8 April, 2023

Victoria Hall, Geneva

AVEC · LE · SOUTIEN  
· · · · · DE · LA  
VILLE · DE · GENÈVE



SCÈNE  
CULTURELLE  
DE LA VILLE  
DE GENÈVE

Victoria Hall

## Welcome to the Healing Arts WHO 75 Concert at Victoria Hall.

Seventy-five years ago, the Constitution of the World Health Organization came into force: a treaty between the nations of the world, who recognized that health was not only a fundamental human right, but also fundamental to peace and security.

The opening sentence of the Constitution is that “Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity.” In writing those words, WHO’s founders recognized that health, in its fullest sense, was something that physicians, medicines and hospitals, as vitally important as they were and are, could not alone deliver.

Three quarters of a century later, evidence and experience have demonstrated the incredible power of the arts for both physical and mental health, as well as for building vibrant communities and societies. Music, dance, and all forms of creative expression help us express what words cannot, help us cope when times are difficult, and help us celebrate what is best in each of us.

For that reason, we are proud to present this concert of dance, spoken word, and music, as an expression of the joy of being alive, and as a heartfelt thank you to the people of Geneva and Switzerland, who have been our generous hosts for 75 years.

WHO’s founding vision was and remains “the highest attainable standard of health” for all people. There is no doubt that we face significant challenges in realizing that right: vast inequities around the world in access to essential health services; the damage caused by health-harming products marketed aggressively by large corporations; the ever-present threat of epidemics, pandemics and other health emergencies; and the existential threat of climate change.

But today we celebrate the joy of being alive and facing those challenges together. I offer my deep thanks to Christopher Bailey for conceiving and leading WHO’s Arts and Health Programme, and all the artists who have contributed their time and talents to this evening’s concert, which is a reminder that the arts can deliver one of the most potent medicines of all: hope.

Enjoy the concert.



**Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**  
Director-General  
World Health Organization





**On 7 April 2023 – World Health Day – the World Health Organization observed its 75th anniversary.**

In 1948, countries of the world came together and founded WHO to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable – so everyone, everywhere can attain the highest level of health and well-being.

WHO's 75th anniversary year is an opportunity to look back at public health successes that have improved quality of life during the last seven decades. It is also an opportunity to motivate action to tackle the health challenges of today – and tomorrow.

**Join WHO on a journey to achieve Health For All.**



# Programme

## Part 1

Welcome:

Marie Barbey-Chappuis, Mayor of Geneva

Ruth Dreifuss

Former President of Switzerland

Opening Remarks:

Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus,  
Director-General, WHO

*La Chaconne, from Partita No. 2, Part 1, JS Bach*

Charlie Siem, Violin

World Premier of *Stages*

Scottish Ballet Engagement

Choreographer: Sara Kemal

Dancers: Aidan Jolliffe-Byrne, Eve McGlashan, June Miller

*Clair de Lune, C Debussy*

Pretty Yende, Soprano with Anastasia Voltchok, Piano

*An American in Paris, G Gershwin*

Anastasia Voltchok & Monique Mot, Duo Piano

*Bridge Over Troubled Water, P Simon*

Global Scrub Choir

**Intermission (20 Min)**



# Programme

## Part 2



Excerpt from *The Vanishing Point*  
Christopher Bailey, Arts & Health Lead, WHO

*Pavane*, G Fauré  
L'Orchestre des Nations

*Song to the Moon* from *Rusalka*, A Dvořák  
Pretty Yende, Soprano with L'Orchestre des Nations

*Mandoline*, 5 *Mélodies de Venise*, Op. 58, No. 1, G Fauré  
*L'heure exquise*, *Chansons Grises*, No. 5, R Hahn (arr. C Goldschmitz)  
Renée Fleming, Soprano with L'Orchestre des Nations

*En Bateau et Le Cortège*, Deux extraits de *la Petite Suite*,  
C Debussy (orch. H Büsser) L'Orchestre des Nations

*Sull'aria* from *Le Nozze di Figaro*, WA Mozart  
Renée Fleming & Pretty Yende, Sopranos with  
L'Orchestre des Nations

**Happy Birthday to WHO**

Presenters: Dr Nisha Sajnani & Rana Sidani



# Participants

[Click here for full bios](#)



**Marie Barbey-Chappuis**  
Mayor of Geneva



**Ruth Dreifuss**  
Former President of Switzerland



**Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus**  
Director-General, WHO



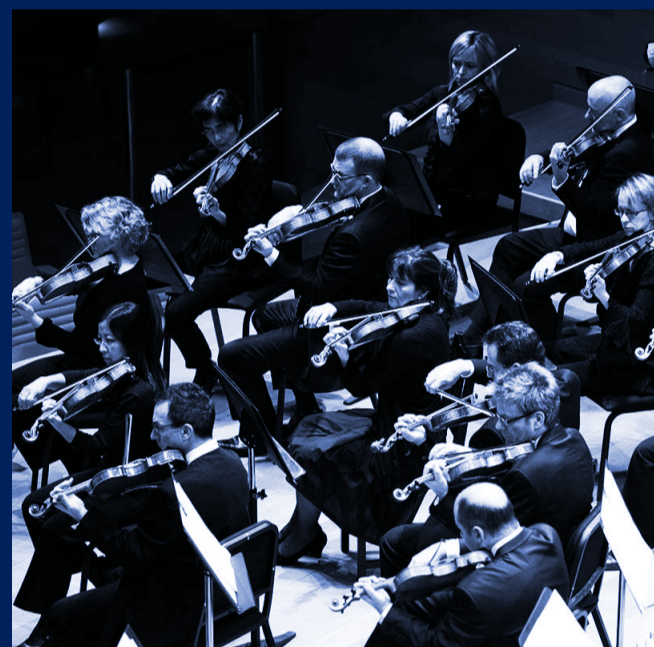
**Renée Fleming**  
Soprano



**Pretty Yende**  
Soprano



**Charlie Siem**  
Violinist



**L'Orchestre des Nations**



**Antoine Manguier**  
Conductor, Orchestra des Nations



**Anastasia Voltchok**  
Pianist



**Scottish Ballet Engagement**



**Sara Kemal**  
Choreographer



**Aidan Jolliffe-Byrne**  
Dancer, Scottish Ballet Engagement



**Eve McGlashan**  
Dancer, Scottish Ballet Engagement



**June Miller**  
Dancer, Scottish Ballet Engagement



**Christopher Bailey**  
Arts & Health Lead,  
WHO; Co-Director, Jameel Arts  
& Health Lab



**Global Scrub Choir**



**Monique Mot**  
Pianist



**Dr. Nisha Sajjani**  
Founder of Arts + Health@ NYU;  
Co-Director, Jameel Arts  
& Health Lab



**Rana Sidani**  
Lead, WHO75 Campaign

## “How have the arts affected your health?” a conversation with this evening’s performers and **Christopher Bailey**, Arts & Health Lead at the World Health Organization

In Public Health, we don’t often directly associate the worlds of the arts and the health sciences together, except for health promotion campaigns, which have always been part of WHO’s use of the arts from our inception. It may be that as an evidence-based organization, we tend to shy away from anecdote and subjectivity, which of course form the basis of creative expression.

And yet, arts have been used in health care settings as far back as the first totemic statuettes from around the world imbued with their communities’ belief in their healing properties, through the great early civilizations of ancient Egypt, China, Central America and Greece, to Renaissance hospitals with murals from the masters, to the 19th century writings of Florence Nightingale and her discussion of how a pleasing aesthetic environment can aid the healing and recovery process. And surely we all have experienced how music and other forms of creative expression can help us cope, find meaning when words fail, escape when we are overwhelmed, reaffirm community and common purpose, and celebrate our sense of joy in life. For those interested in the evidence for how the arts may improve health, we invite you to read the WHO [report](#) on the subject.

But of course artists don’t need a report to validate their lived experience. As one health clown put it when I asked what his measures of impact were, he said “I count smiles.”

Here’s what tonight’s artists had to say on the subject.

We begin with a conversation with **Emma O’Brien**, a clinician and music therapist who developed the Global Scrub Choir, a group of healthcare workers who use music to help their patients and for their own selfcare.





“Music has been my constant companion in life - in good times and in bad times. Singing transports me to place of wellness, song writing takes me to a safe refuge where I can truly be myself. I have the privilege of using music together with people in times of severe crisis in their lives and have seen it comfort them, rejuvenate them, and fill them with joy.”

Who among us does not have a doctor in the family?  
For **Charlie Siem**, our violinist this evening, it was that personal connection that made him proud to be here.

“The WHO is one of the great initiatives of the 20th century. The global vision for healthcare is inspiring and profoundly meaningful for our development as a civilisation. My uncle was a senior doctor with the WHO which meant it played a significant role in my consciousness growing up and I have great pride in taking part in the 75th anniversary.”

Our dancers this evening not only talked of dance as a form of expression, but as something so natural that they can't imagine themselves without it. Dance for them is not about improving health, but rather, creative expression is an integral part of being a whole and healthy human. In fact, the piece they created for this program has connection as it's theme, taking the audience on a journey exploring individuality and community. The dancers move with fluidity and grace, expressing connection not only with each other but with the audience too, inviting us to join them and experience the power of human community.



## **June Miller**

“Looking back, it was seeing Margot Fonteyn dance Odette/Odile in the local cinema. Her partnership with Nureyev was at its peak at the time. She was so beautiful, and the music so moving, that I only ever wanted to be a ballet dancer. Moving through my RAD grades I felt great satisfaction knowing that I was one step nearer becoming a professional: my commitment and energy never left me. Now I am lucky enough to be passing on my experience and enthusiasm to others, and I love to see the enjoyment that it brings to them.”

## **Aidan Jollifee-Byrne**

“Dance to me is to be free. Through dance I can explore and create new ways to move my body and show my emotions. Most importantly it brings me joy and happiness.”

## **Eve McGlashan**

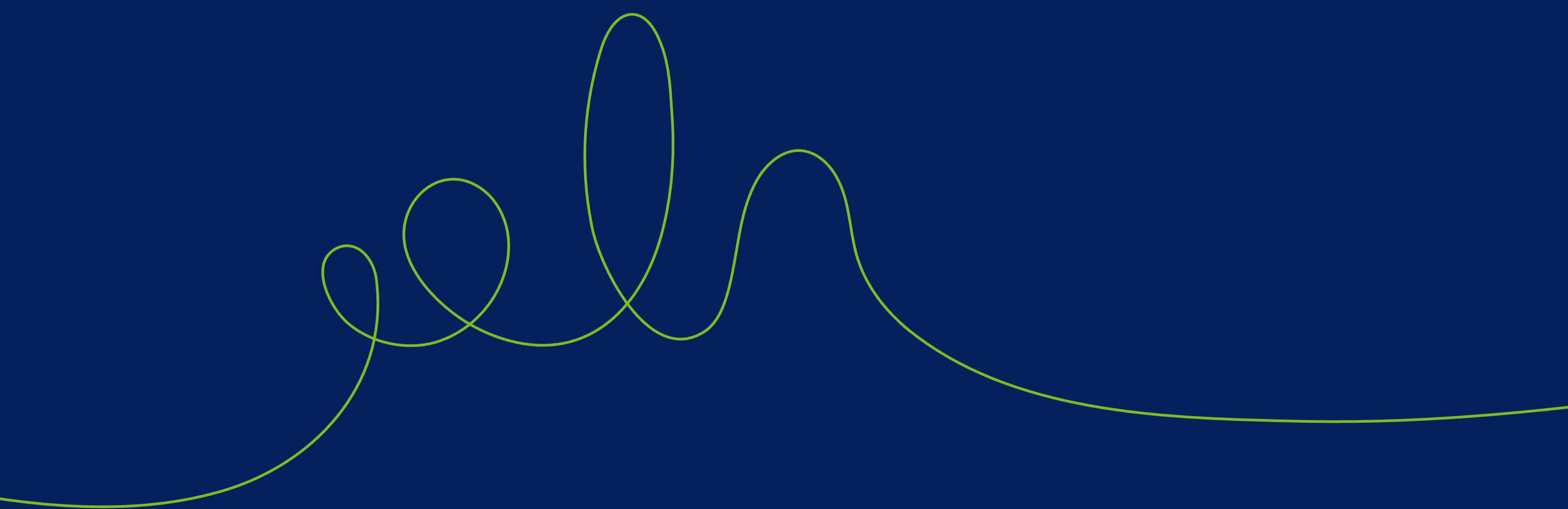
“Dance is natural to me. I find it impossible not to dance if there is music. It allows me to be my own person and have my own individuality. It allows me to push myself, develop myself and see what I can do with movement.”



**Pretty Yende**, one of our brilliant solo soprano artists, agrees. She sees music as not just entertainment or a pathway to health, but as elemental as the food we eat.

“Music is healing, food for the soul and nourishment for optimal well being for human beings.”

Our pianists express a love of sensory experience of sound, light, guiding us to a deep connection to each other.



## **Anastasia Voltchok**

“Music and all of the arts have a healing effect on me. It is a refuge, a place, where I can collect my thoughts and get new energy. I hope that I can transmit the same feeling to my audiences. Like many artists I am also a synesthete, I see colours and shapes when I listen to music and sometimes “paint music” on canvas in a live performance on stage or at home while preparing for an art exhibition. I am happy to be a musician. Music is a universal language that helps people come closer and understand each other better.”

## **Monique Mot**

“Music for me has always been a wonderful escape from daily life and at the same time a precious link to the essence of life itself.”



Of course **Renée Fleming** is a special example. Since 2016, she has spearheaded an entire movement with the Sound Health initiative she helped launch with the US National Institutes for Health, the Kennedy Center and the National Endowment for the Arts. This program, along with the Sound Health Network at the University of California, San Francisco, and the NeuroArts Blueprint at Johns Hopkins (both of which she advises) are catalyzing new research into how music and arts can contribute to physical, mental and social wellbeing. In her own Music and the Mind presentations, Renée brings this information to audiences around the world. As Ms. Fleming puts it:

“Who hasn’t felt their heart quicken, had goosebumps, or even been moved to tears, by a powerful musical performance? Throughout human history, shared musical and artistic experiences have been one of the crucial forces for social cohesion. Now, science is demonstrating the health benefits of the arts for many disorders, as well as for supporting childhood development and creative aging. This work at the intersection of the arts and health has become my passion.”

Geneva also holds a special place in her heart. Some of her earliest successes were at the Geneva Opera before she went to Paris and then New York. Even so, this concert marks her Victoria Hall debut.

Like our definition of health, the WHO definition of mental health is not merely about the absence of mental illness and their symptoms. We ask the questions, can you cope with the everyday stresses of life? Can you develop your abilities to their highest potential? Are you productive? Do you contribute to community? Looking at Mental Health from this perspective it is easy to see how creative expression can contribute to our Mental Health.



We intentionally asked the **Orchestre des Nations** to participate in our concert not only for their quality but because traditionally a good number of their musicians have been drawn from the ranks of Geneva based UN staff and their spouses. For the same reason we asked the Global Scrub Choir, representing healthcare workers around the world as health professionals increasingly use the arts not only to support their patients care, but their own selfcare under sometimes extremely stressful situations. We wanted to have an evening which included some of the world's most talented artists, but also to show that the arts are part of everyone's life, as is health itself. Creative expression is something all of us practice everyday to help us navigate and celebrate the world.

The arts may not cure medical conditions. But they certainly can help us heal.

# Acknowledgements



**With thanks...**

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Healing Arts 2023 Production Partner

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**Innocent Mugabe**



WHO

