

MATANEL FOUNDATION

ACTIVITY REPORT

Program: Jerusalem Orchestra East & West Summer Program – North Youth Ensemble

Year: 2025

Location: Akko, Western Galilee

Estimated number of impacted participants:

Direct impact: 30 youth musicians from Jewish, Muslim, Druze, and Christian communities across the Western Galilee.

Indirect impact: An estimated **200–250 additional individuals**, reflecting the program's *ripple effect* within the community. This includes family members, peers, educators, and local residents reached through shared residency activities, public rehearsals, the final community concert in Akko, and performances at the Arabesque Festival.

Total estimated reach: 230–280 individuals, demonstrating the program's community-based impact beyond direct participants and its contribution to strengthening social cohesion through music.

Total Program Budget: ₪272,190

Matanel Foundation Support: ₪90,000

Website: <https://tjo.co.il/> [Facebook page](#)

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Program Overview

In August 2025, **Jerusalem Orchestra East & West** held the North Youth Ensemble Summer Seminar in Akko as its flagship educational initiative in Israel's north. Supported by the **Matanel Foundation**, the four-day residential seminar brought together 30 outstanding young musicians from across the Western Galilee for an intensive musical and social experience grounded in excellence, coexistence, and shared society.

Led by **Tom Cohen**, Artistic Director and Chief Conductor of the orchestra, together with professional orchestra musicians and faculty from the **Akko Municipal Conservatory**, the program combined daily rehearsals, sectional work, masterclasses, and full-ensemble workshops. Participants deepened their engagement with the orchestra's distinctive East–West musical language while building meaningful interpersonal connections across cultural and religious lines.

A Celebration of Harmony

The seminar concluded with a festive public concert attended by families, local residents, and community leaders, offering a moving expression of artistic collaboration and unity. In addition,

the youth ensemble performed as part of the **Arabesque Festival**, one of the region's most prominent international music festivals, providing participants with a high-profile performance platform.

The 2025 seminar was dedicated to the memory of Dr. Albert Ben Shloosh (z"l), the orchestra's visionary CEO, who conceived and led the initiative shortly before his passing. His belief in music as a bridge between communities continues to shape the orchestra's educational mission.

Impact and Outcomes

The North Youth Ensemble Summer Seminar delivered meaningful educational and social impact:

- **Strengthened Musical Excellence:** Participants advanced technically and artistically, particularly in integrating Eastern and Western musical traditions.
- **Deepened Social Cohesion:** Sustained shared living, rehearsing, and performing fostered trust, teamwork, and lasting relationships across identities.
- **Youth Leadership & Confidence:** Public performances empowered participants as cultural ambassadors within their communities.
- **Regional Continuity:** The seminar reinforced the orchestra's long-term youth infrastructure in the Western Galilee, supporting continued engagement throughout the year.

Held in the aftermath of a period of national trauma, the program reaffirmed music's role as a source of resilience, healing, and hope for Israel's younger generation.

Provisional guidelines for the advancement of the program in the next year:

Building on the success of the 2025 Summer Seminar, the Jerusalem Orchestra East & West will continue to strengthen the North Youth Ensemble as a year-round educational and social framework. Key directions include expanding ongoing rehearsals and workshops in the Western Galilee, deepening professional mentorship by orchestra musicians, and increasing performance opportunities in community and regional cultural events. The program will further invest in leadership development among returning participants, encouraging peer mentorship and continuity within the ensemble. Partnerships with local music institutions and municipalities will be reinforced to ensure sustainability, broaden community engagement, and gradually increase the number of participating youth while maintaining artistic excellence and a strong emphasis on coexistence and shared society.

With Gratitude

The Jerusalem Orchestra East & West extends its sincere thanks to the Matanel Foundation for its partnership, trust, and investment in nurturing young leadership, artistic excellence, and shared society in Israel's north.

We invite you to share a small taste of the program:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvaxfttVHs>