

Dr. Lisa Urkevich Reflects on Decades of Research into Saudi Arabia's Music and Culture

Dr. Lisa Urkevich spotlights Saudi music heritage and strategy in a new SaudiTimes interview, sharing insights from 30+ years of fieldwork and leadership.

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, June 24, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Dr. Lisa Urkevich, the renowned musicologist-ethnomusicologist, academic leader, cultural strategist, and founding director of the Tariq Abdulhakim Center, shares compelling insights into Saudi Arabia's musical and cultural legacy in a new interview featured in SaudiTimes.org (<https://urkevich.com/media>).

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Quality heritage research is vital to national identity, education, credibility in global intellectual communities, and cultural tourism — where authenticity is key to success and sustainability.”

Dr. Lisa Urkevich

The article entitled, “The Scholar Reviving Saudi Arabia’s Musical Tradition,” chronicles Dr. Urkevich’s decades-long journey documenting regional music, guiding cultural and educational strategy, and inspiring a new generation of professionals and heritage advocates. Recognized as the foremost global expert on traditional music of Saudi Arabia

and the Gulf States, Dr. Urkevich has spent more than 30 years immersed in the region, conducting extensive fieldwork and building deep community ties.

“When I first arrived in Saudi Arabia in the 1990s, I knew that no one with my kind of background had ever attempted this kind of work. It took years to gain access, return, reassess information, and distill the Kingdom’s vast and diverse music traditions,” said Dr. Urkevich.

Her leadership extends beyond research and national boundaries. She has served as a university head, professor at Boston University and the American University of Kuwait, directed two regional heritage centers, and is currently a Visiting Scholar at Georgetown University.

She brings rare cross-sector expertise in higher education, cultural policy, performing arts, and heritage preservation. Her accomplishments include four music degrees, two Senior Fulbright awards, a Harvard fellowship, and recognition as University of Maryland Alumna of the Year.

The interview underscores that a sustainable cultural revival under Saudi Vision 2030 requires not only investment, but also academic rigor, cultural sensitivity, and strategic leadership.

"We need to preserve and research heritage through collaborative, innovative approaches—always with expert oversight—because it is vital to national identity, education, credibility in global intellectual communities, and cultural tourism, where authenticity is key to success and sustainability," Dr. Urkevich notes (<https://urkevich.com/media>).

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Dr. Lisa Urkevich leading a tour of a Saudi cultural initiative, 2024.

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