

Two Ottawa Kids Team Up on New Classical Music Album to Triumph Over Darkness

International Collaboration Including GRAMMY®-Winning and GRAMMY®-Nominated Artists Unites in a Musical Declaration for Human Rights and Freedoms

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL, UNITED STATES, August 25, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [AZADI Songs of Freedom](#) brings together an international collaboration including GRAMMY®-winning and GRAMMY®-nominated musicians, artists, producers, engineers, and human rights advocates and activists around a simple principle: Freedom is an unalienable human right, and no government should have the power to silence the human voice.

Artists from Canada, the United States, Iran, Chile, Portugal, and India join in solidarity with oppressed people around the world who are still fighting for their most basic human rights and freedoms. Some contributors on the album are themselves victims and survivors of extreme government repression and torture, sexual brutality, and extreme domestic and systemic violence.

“

I am fearless, and therefore powerful.”

Mary Shelley

THE OTTAWA CONNECTION

GRAMMY®-nominated pianist-composer [Mary Dawood Catlin](#) -- the first Canadian woman pianist nominated in the Classical Instrumental Solo category -- and 2026 Los

Angeles Tribune Lifetime Achievement Award laureate Maestro [Nadeem Majdalany](#), a conductor and feature-film composer, both grew up in Ottawa, Ontario, without knowing one another at the time.



Four years apart in age and both of Greek-Middle Eastern descent, they frequented many of the same landmarks and shared familiar surroundings throughout their years in Ottawa. Decades later, they connected through the Recording Academy®, which ultimately led to their first meeting in Los Angeles in January 2026. They quickly became friends through their shared love of music and their philosophical conversations about life and the beyond.

What began as a friendship evolved into a musical collaboration. Together with Iranian human rights activist and composer Mehdi Rajabian, they joined forces on AZADI Songs of Freedom -- an artistic endeavor rooted in their shared commitment to advocating for liberty as a fundamental pillar of human dignity through music and the arts.

ABOUT AZADI SONGS OF FREEDOM

Azadi means “freedom” in Farsi. That idea unites five works combining contemporary classical composition with Persian musical influences through piano, strings, soprano, percussion, prepared piano, programming, and sound design.

The album features piano performances and compositions by Mary Dawood Catlin, and compositions by Iranian human rights activist and victim of extreme authoritarian repression -- Mehdi Rajabian. Catlin composed “Free Cypress, Bird of Dawn” and “An Elegy for Yesterday”; Rajabian composed “Winds, Wounds & Silent Names” and “Where Sorrow Dances.” Together they composed “The Horizon Bore Witness” with co-composing by Nadeem Majdalany and by Portugal-based artist -- Lazuli -- throughout the five works. On AZADI, Majdalany uses a collection of antique munitions from every war of the 20th century as percussive instruments, stating “I turned instruments of death into instruments of beauty.”

Primary artists Mary Dawood Catlin (pianist, composer, producer), Nadeem Majdalany (conductor, percussionist, prepared piano, co-composer, producer), and Mehdi Rajabian (originator, composer, producer) are joined by featured artists: touring musician and Violectric band leader Michelle Wade Jones (violin), GRAMMY®-winner Peter Jacobson (cello), Michael T. Geib (double bass), Toronto-based Mezzo-Soprano Diana Di Mauro, Lazuli (programming, sound design, co-composer, arranger), and Fierro Ex Machina (percussionist).

The album was produced by Mary Dawood Catlin, Todd Catlin, Nadeem Majdalany, and Mehdi Rajabian, with recording engineering by Todd Catlin, Nadeem Majdalany, Gemma Castro, and Gerald Jones; editing engineering by Cristóbal “Tibo” Gajardo and Bryard Huggins; mixing engineering by “Tibo” Gajardo, Ashish Manchanda, and Bryard Huggins; mastering by Gajardo; and assistant engineering by Blake Dimas, Emily Palman, Nathan Wolfe, Ignacio Yañez, and Ekaa Sood. Cover art illustration is by L.A. based artist VaiBionic; cover art graphic design is by VaiBionic and Mary Dawood Catlin; booklet/liner notes graphic design was done by Mary Dawood Catlin; liner notes were written by the four producers, with poems “Their Souls Whispered Freedom” and “We Shall Rise” authored by Mary Dawood Catlin. The album artwork was directed by VaiBionic, Mary Dawood Catlin, Nadeem Majdalany, Todd Catlin, and Mehdi

Rajabian. The Bösendorfer piano on which Mary performed was tuned by Taylor Swift (RED tour, 2013) touring musician and band leader Jared Morvant.

Every person who contributed to AZADI Songs of Freedom understands what that association represents. The album stands with those who continue to create despite repression and with all who believe the freedom to live, speak, create, and determine the course of one's own life is inseparable from human dignity. For everyone who created the album, it is a declaration:

Freedom always triumphs.

AZADI Songs of Freedom is now available on streaming platforms worldwide.

Mary Dawood Catlin

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