

# Press Release

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London, UK, 10th May 2017



Faith  
Centre



BARENBOIM-SAID  
AKADEMIE



## Leading scholars, religious leaders and diplomats to gather in London for major interfaith conference

*The LSE Faith Centre and Gingko, in association with the British Foreign & Commonwealth Office and Barenboim-Said Akademie, are holding a major conference in London focused on interfaith dialogue. The conference, 'Religious Imagination and Global Transitions: How narratives of faith are shaping today's world' will bring together scholars from 10 countries, in addition to representatives from international institutions, interfaith centres and religious schools. The conference will be held at Clement House at the London School of Economics over the 14th and 15th June 2017.*

Director of the LSE Faith Centre, Dr James Walters, outlined the importance of the themes to be explored over the two-day event:

"We are all increasingly aware that religion is a crucial element in many of the challenges facing the world today. But the way in which narratives of faith can shape the individual and the collective imagination is often not well understood, particularly in parts of the world that had assumed religion was in inexorable decline. We hope this conference will contribute to a richer understanding of the imaginative capacities of religion, both as a cause of conflict but equally as the driver of a peaceful shared future."

Confirmed keynote speakers include **His Grace Bishop Anba Angaelos**, the General Bishop of the Coptic Orthodox Church in the UK, **Karen Armstrong OBE**, well known writer and commentator on comparative religion, **Rabbi Naftali Brawer**, CEO of the Spiritual Capital Foundation, **Craig Calhoun**, President of the Berggruen Institute, Global Distinguished Professor at NYU and Centennial Professor at the LSE, **Mona Siddiqui OBE**, Professor of Islamic and Interreligious Studies, Assistant Principal for Religion and Society, Dean International, Middle East, University of Edinburgh and **HMA John Casson**, British Ambassador to Egypt.

On the evening of the 14th June, a concert curated by Professor Mena Mark Hanna, Dean of the Barenboim Said Akademie, will be held at Holy Trinity Sloane Square. The concert will feature works by Pärt, Ravel, and Hanna himself, each exploring religious imaginations in music with an emphasis on the shared liturgical and musical traditions of the Abrahamic faiths. As the concert falls during the Islamic holy month of Ramadan, the evening will conclude with an *iftar* in the church to celebrate the breaking of the fast.

Speaking ahead of the event, Gingko Trustee Dr Barbara Schwepcke, stressed the concert's importance: 'We have an opportunity to listen to music from the Eastern and Western tradition as an expression of religious imagination. We, at Gingko, believe that in order to achieve better understanding we have to learn to listen to each other'.

For more information and press passes please email: [faithcentre@lse.ac.uk](mailto:faithcentre@lse.ac.uk)  
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**Gingko** is committed to creating a better understanding between the West and the Middle East, North Africa and West Asia through an annual conference, lectures, academic publications and inter-cultural projects and events. [www.gingkolibrary.com](http://www.gingkolibrary.com)

The **LSE Faith Centre** promotes religious literacy, interfaith understanding and leadership formation among LSE's diverse student body and the wider public.

The **Barenboim-Said Akademie** offers a conservatory education for talented, young musicians from the Middle East, North Africa, and around the world, uniting music performance studies with a grounding in the humanities.