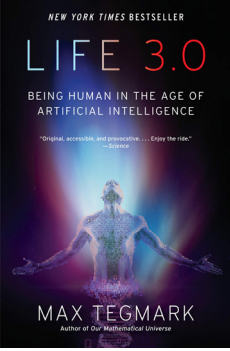


ARTS & CULTURE

Coming to terms with an AI-centred world

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It was a clear and brisk Thursday night in Flat Rock, Michigan, when Robert Williams, a 25-year-old lineworker, made his way to the Ford Motor Company's assembly plant to begin his night shift. Williams was tasked with overseeing a robot that was built to retrieve parts from a nearby storage facility, and it so happened that on that night, the entire system shut down. Williams decided to take matters into his own hands, and to perform the task manually. However, the robot slowly began to operate, and proceeded to smash the back of Williams' head for thirty consecutive minutes. By the time his co-workers found him, it was already too late. Williams' death marked the first time in history where a robot was held responsible for the murder of a human being, but it certainly was not the last. A 22-year old contractor who worked at one

of Volkswagen's plants near Frankfurt endured a similar fate, when a stationary robot violently crushed him against a sharp metal board. While those incidents have fortunately remained few and far between, I could not help but reflect on them as I read through Max Tegmark's Life 3.0, which explores the meaning of being human in the age of artificial intelligence. Many thought leaders have attempted to explore the nuances that shape the public debate surrounding the future of artificial intelligence, but Tegmark takes on the task of addressing quite an existential question in his book: what will happen when humans are no longer the smartest species on the planet? In recent years, thought leaders have generally grouped themselves into one of three camps in regard to their positions on this topic: the digital utopians, who believe that transitioning minds to

a fully digital realm is in fact the next step in the cosmic revolution, the technosceptics, who agree with digital utopians but believe that a shift to a fully machine-run universe will not happen for at least a few more centuries, and the beneficial AI movement, which advocates for dramatically increasing AI-safety research long before the scientific community entertains any form of existential future outcome. Tegmark makes it clear that the emergence of an AI-centred world is no longer a hypothetical scenario. It is a matter of when, not if, it will become a reality, and the journey towards that world will neither be straight, nor binary. We have plenty of literature on how our collective future will look like if the machines fully take over, but we have little analysis in comparison on how the individual decisions we

make today will shape that outcome. This is an area that remains inadequately debated and discussed, but also increasingly harder for us to ignore going forward. Tegmark's thought-provoking book concludes on a positive note, but I believe that Yuval Harari's ending in Sapiens more accurately describes what's truly at stake in the coming few years and decades. Harari explains that – in light of the direction scientists are now taking – the hardest question that we will face with emergence of technology and artificial intelligence will not be 'What do we want to become?', but 'What do we want to want?'. He goes on to say that those who are not spooked by this question probably haven't given it enough thought. I fully agree.

International Menuhin Music Academy brings the magic of melody to Dubai



DUBAI: The International Menuhin Music Academy is hosting Between Two Worlds, Between Two Centuries, a string quartet concert, on May 18 at The Theatre, Mall of Emirates, Dubai. The musical magic aims to take audiences on an auditory journey across musical periods, with an array of musical pieces from soloists of the Academy, comprising harmonies ranging from the classical to the contemporary, from the wizardry of Vivaldi to more. Violinist Oleg Kaskiv, the Academy's Musical Director, will perform with three Virtuosos: Yosuke Kaneko, cellist; Asako Ilmori, violinist and Jana Stojanovic, violinist. The first pieces played are Mendelssohn and Schubert, composed in the first half of the 19th century, symbols of the romantic European age. Then, for the New World, comes Dvořák, while he was in New York, and its cheerful string American Quartet. The same maestro composed Symphony of the New World around 1893, his 9th Symphony. The end of the concert offers two Piazzola famous pieces (1974) transporting connoisseurs to Latin America. Antonio Lucio Vivaldi was an Italian Baroque composer, virtuoso violinist, teacher and impresario. He is regarded as one of the greatest Baroque composers, and his influence during his lifetime was widespread across Europe. Felix Mendelssohn was a German composer, pianist, organist and conductor and his compositions include symphonies, concertos, piano, organ and chamber music. Franz Peter Schubert was an Austrian composer, who, despite a short lifetime, left behind a vast oeuvre, including seven complete symphonies, operas and a large body of piano and chamber music. Antonín Leopold Dvořák was a Czech composer, one of the first to achieve worldwide recognition. His style has

been described as "the fullest recreation of a national idiom with that of the symphonic tradition, absorbing folk influences and finding effective ways of using them." The originality of the International Menuhin Music Academy is to train virtuosos of the violin, viola and cello, who at the same time, learn to play together in renowned halls in Switzerland and abroad. In training the chamber orchestra, they constitute a renowned Camerata: The

Soloists of the Menuhin Academy. The Academy's aim is to allow the virtuosos to appear in the biggest international competitions and later obtain coveted positions in established orchestras or to pursue a careers as soloists. Due to its international nature, the Academy recruits students from all over the world. Its philosophy is exemplified by University of Geneva Professor Charles Mela's words: "Music brings us back to the source of our emotions, despite

Top: Music under the lights.

Ready to make music at the International Menuhin Music Academy.

Inset: Lord Yehudi Menuhin.

all our differences.

"To lead exceptional young talents from all over the world to fulfill themselves through music and to exemplify the humanist heritage of the founder of the Academy, Lord Menuhin." By creating the International Menuhin Music Academy in Gstaad in 1977, Lord Yehudi Menuhin (1916-1999) wanted to bring together young musicians from different cultures, offering them professional-level musical education and the possibility of performing together regularly on stage. He is still remembered as a world famous violin child prodigy, conductor and humanist. "Music creates order out of chaos: for rhythm imposes unanimity upon the divergent, melody imposes continuity upon the disjointed, and harmony imposes compatibility upon the incongruous," he has said.

A thinker who believed in peace and harmony, he had an influence far beyond the world of classical music. He was convinced that the humanist ideal of Europe found its best expression in the works of the great composers of classical music, and he put all his efforts into creating an unbroken link between creators, masters and performers. This resulted in the creation of, in 1977, the International Menuhin Music Academy in Switzerland, which was his last place of residence. Since 2015, the prestigious Institut Le Rosey has hosted the International Menuhin Music Academy on its campus in Rolle,

Switzerland, as the resident orchestra of the Rosey Concert Hall, where the best orchestras and musical ensembles from around the world perform for the students and public.

The Academy also performs in Saanen and Gstaad, the winter campus of Le Rosey. Institut Le Rosey, commonly referred to as Le Rosey or simply Rosey, is a boarding school in Rolle. It was founded by Paul-Émile Carnal in 1880 on the site of the 14th-century Château du Rosey in the town of Rolle and is one of the oldest boarding schools in Switzerland. It is also one of the most expensive schools in the world. Le Rosey owns a campus in the ski resort village of Gstaad, to where the student body, faculty, and staff move during the months of January through March. Le Rosey's main campus, near Rolle, is situated on 28 hectares of land adjacent to Lake Geneva. It is divided into two campuses, one for boys situated on the main campus, and one for girls called La Combe.

The school's winter campus, at the ski resort of Gstaad, is composed of several traditional chalets within the town. In 2004, Institut Le Rosey's Charity Committee undertook a humanitarian programme to construct and maintain a private school, the Rosey-Abantara School, in the suburbs of Bamako, the capital of Mali, in Saharan Africa. Rosey-Abantara is considered the most important charity project in Le Rosey's history. It opened its doors in 2010 and through the support of Le Rosey, over 1,400 young Malians are educated here. Le Rosey students and teachers also undertake humanitarian missions throughout the year to the Rosey-Abantara project, to teach Malian students.

Muhammad Yusuf, Features Writer