



Berklee

ESSAOUIRA  
**Gnaoua**  
& World Music Festival

# BERKLEE AT THE GNAOUA & WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL



From 24 to 29, June 2024 - Essaouira, Morocco

## PRESS RELEASE

### **Berklee College of Music, A3 Communication and the Gnaoua and World Music Festival Launch a New Berklee on the Road Program.**

The program will take place June 24 to June 29, in Essaouira.

**Casablanca, Tuesday, March 26<sup>th</sup> 2024** - Berklee College of Music, A3 Communication, and the Gnaoua and World Music Festival are proud to announce a new Berklee on the Road program taking place from Monday, June 24 to Saturday, June 29, 2024 in Essaouira.

The Berklee at the Gnaoua and World Music Festival program has been created for actively performing musicians seeking to advance their skills as improvisors, and welcomes students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, from classical to traditional Gnaoua to pop, rock, and jazz. Eligible candidates will need to be 18 years or older at the start of the program and will have at least two years of performance experience on their principal instrument.

*“The Essaouira Gnaoua and World Music Festival is a unique event, a musical laboratory which welcomes artists from all over the world who come to merge their rhythms with those of Gnaoua Master musicians,”* says Neila Tazi, CEO of A3 Communication, and producer and organizer of the festival. *“This 25<sup>th</sup> edition marks the beginning of a strong partnership with Berklee to offer a very special experience through this training program in the heart of Africa, the cradle of world music”*

Berklee Professor Leo Blanco will serve as the academic director and Jason Camelio as administrative director. Classes will be taught by a select group of Berklee faculty and artists including Ron Savage, vice president and executive director at Berklee; Viktorija Pilatovic, an accomplished jazz singer and composer as well as an assistant professor; and Javier Vercher, an associate professor at the Valencia, Spain campus; among other faculty.

*"I look forward to establishing this newest edition of the Berklee on the Road program at the Gnaoua World Music Festival," says Ron Savage, vice president and executive director, Berklee College of Music. "I am thrilled as always to meet talented young musical artists from across the globe. Being part of a festival that celebrates Gnaoua and world musicians makes this program a very special experience."*

The Berklee at Gnaoua and World Music Festival program will take place daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. "Participants will be guided on how to intertwine their own musical language with others, beginning with learning to actively listen and comprehend the musical concepts of their peers," adds Leo Blanco, the program's academic director. Instruction will be conducted in English, complemented by Arabic translation, ensuring a broad and inclusive educational experience.

Program highlights include workshops on several topics including, "The Improviser As Composer," "Building Your Creative Vocabulary," and "Styles, Grooves, and Accompaniment Labs." There will also be a series of special lectures covering the intersection of Gnaoua music with contemporary genres, music technology, and the business of music. Moreover, participants will be able to learn about the Berklee Abu Dhabi Fellowship fund which provides Berklee scholarships to students from across the Middle East and North Africa. Additionally, all students will receive free passes to the main stage at the 2024 Gnaoua and World Music Festival concerts.

Interested candidates are urged to submit an online application to secure their spot in the program. Tuition for the program is \$420.00 USD. The deadline to submit the application is May 24, 2024. To apply, please visit here:

<https://www.berklee.edu/berkleeontheroad>

## **ABOUT BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC**

Berklee College of Music is the preeminent institute of contemporary music and the performing arts, offering undergraduate and graduate degree programs at its campuses in Boston, Massachusetts and Valencia, Spain, and through its award-winning distance-learning program, Berklee Online. Dedicated to nurturing the creative and career potential of the world's most inspired artists, Berklee's commitment to arts education is reflected in the work of its students, faculty, and alumni-hundreds of whom have been recognized with Grammy, Tony, Oscar, and Emmy Awards.



## INSTRUCTORS BIOGRAPHIES

### « BERKLEE AT THE GNAOUA AND WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL »



## LEO BLANCO

*PROFESSOR OF AFRICANA STUDIES AND ACADEMIC DIRECTOR FOR BERKLEE AT THE GNAOUA AND WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL*

Multi-talented artist and intellectual Leo Blanco is a pianist, composer, and musicologist. By the age of 11, he was already a violinist with his hometown Mérida Youth Symphony Orchestra. His interest in world music and Jazz brought him to Boston's Berklee College of Music, and he later earned a master's in Composition at New England Conservatory. In 1997, Blanco became the first Latino to receive the prestigious Boston Jazz Society Award. He is currently Associate Professor of Africana Studies at Berklee College of Music. Blanco shared the stage with major international Jazz artists such as Terence Blanchard, Pat Metheny, Chucho Valdez (Irakere) and Joao Bosco, among others.



## RON SAVAGE

*VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BERKLEE COLLEGE OF MUSIC*

Ron Savage has led a distinguished career at Berklee College of Music, earning his own degree in 1984 before becoming Vice-President and Executive Director. He is currently responsible for all academic programme orientation, operations, faculty and staff of the Berklee College of Music's academic divisions. He is also co-president and co-founder of the Black Scholars Initiative (BSI). To his credit, Savage has initiated several innovative actions such as the introduction of gypsy Jazz, acoustic blues, neo-soul, heavy metal and dub reggae. As an eminent and accomplished drummer, Savage has performed in 46 countries alongside artists such as James Moody, Clark Terry, Curtis Fuller, Mulgrew Miller, and Nnenna Freelon.



## VICTORIJA PILATOVIC

*ASSISTANT PROFESSOR*

Viktorija Pilatovic is one of the most remarkable voices of Spanish and European Jazz. Singer, conductor, composer and professor, she shares her love of Jazz through her original music: poetic lyrics and exceptional vocal performances. As a composer, she has released three albums with New York label Inner Circle Music (founded by American saxophonist Greg Osby). Viktorija Pilatovic has also collaborated with Gilberto Gil, Victor Wooten, Michael League (Snarky Puppy), Banda Magda, and Petros Klampanis, who produced her fourth album, *Skybridges* (2023), featuring acclaimed Spanish flautist and saxophonist Jorge Pardo.



## JAVIER VERCHER

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Born in Madrid in 1978, Javier Vercher studied musical theory, piano and clarinet under his father's direction. After completing conservatory studies in classical clarinet, he turned to Jazz, and in 1997 he received a scholarship from Berklee College of Music and A.I.E. (Association of Performers and Executives) to study in Boston, where he earned a degree in 2000. He studied with great masters of improvisation and contemporary harmony such as George Garzone, Frank Tiberi and Andy McGhee. In 2001, he moved to New York and began to perform and record with various musicians on the local Jazz scene. In 2009, he returned to Spain and took up his solo career, playing and recording in Europe and the US. Javier is also a professor of saxophone/clarinet/flute at Berklee College of Music - Valencia since early 2016.



## JASON CAMELIO

ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT, BERKLEE GLOBAL

Jason Camelio has held multiple roles at Berklee since 1997, notably in the field of international programs. As Director of Global Initiatives since 2008, he has implemented a highly-qualified and efficient team that focuses on the exploration, development and management of Berklee partnerships with over 50 countries. Camelio holds a music degree from the Great American Jazz Studies programme at the University of North Florida and a master's in music from the Boston Conservatory/Berklee College of Music cooperative music programme. As a trombonist, he has played and recorded with artists such as Dweezil Zappa (Via Zammata'), Danilo Pérez (Panama Suite) and Aretha Franklin, among others. He is the cofounder, guitarist, and author-composer of the band DÚBH.

### Press Contact

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