

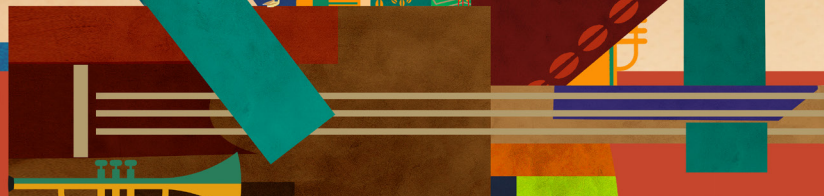
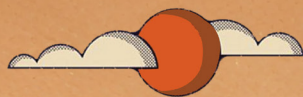


ESSAOUIRA
Gnaoua
& World Music Festival

26th EDITION
19th TO 21st
JUNE 2025
ESSAOUIRA - MOROCCO



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33 GNAOUA MASTERS (MAÂLEMS) **WELCOME THE VOICES OF THE WORLD** **FOR A FESTIVAL WITHOUT BORDERS**

The Gnaoua and World Music Festival unveils exceptional new musical happenings, June 19-21, 2025.

Since its creation in 1998, the Gnaoua and World Music Festival in Essaouira has established itself as a unique musical event, founded upon a single, essential tradition: every year, the Gnaoua Maâlems—undisputed masters of trance and guardians of an ancestral heritage—open the doors of their art to musicians from all over the world

At the heart of this alchemy are new and spellbinding fusions, where Morocco resonates with the music of the world—from sub-Saharan Africa to the Americas, from Europe to Asia, via the shores of the Mediterranean.

These moments of shared creation are the very soul of the festival. They embody a rare spirit of openness, where differences meet and mingle, giving rise to works that are intense, generous, and unexpected.

After revealing a first glimpse of the lineup, the Festival now announces a new series of unique fusions that will mark this 26th edition. Stay tuned for more concerts and highlights, to be revealed in the coming weeks.



Sacred groove, funk without borders

Maâlem Khalid Sansi x Cimagfunk

A native of Casablanca and rising figure on the Gnaoua scene, **Maâlem Khalid Sansi** embodies the revival of an ancestral art that he brings into dialogue with the rhythms of the world. Born into a Gnaoua family and trained by his father from an early age, he has forged an aesthetic at the crossroads of spirituality, dance, and

contemporary performance. From collaborations with **Jacques Schwarz-Bart** to creations with African dancers and jazzmen, he has built many bridges between tradition and modernity.

This year, he returns to the Gnaoua Festival stage for a high-voltage encounter with **Cimagfunk**, the Cuban Afro-Latin funk phenomenon. A true musical jolt, **Cimagfunk** reinvents Cuban music with unstoppable energy. This spiritual heir to **James Brown** blends incandescent funk, Afro-Cuban rhythms and Afro-descendant consciousness in an explosive cocktail. An incandescent collision of Caribbean groove and Gnaoua trance, brought to life by two artists in search of sonic liberation.



Mystical dialogue between two sacred heritages

Maâlem Morad ElMarjan x Dhafer Youssef

One of the leading figures of the new Gnaoui generation, **Morad ElMarjan** cultivates a deep connection with the musical and spiritual heritage of his elders, while opening himself up to new sounds from other musical worlds. Born in Rabat and trained on stage at festivals across the kingdom, he has made a name for himself with his expressive play, humility, and desire to carry his music forward.

His performance with **Dhafer Youssef**—master of the oud and alchemist of spiritual jazz—promises to be a suspended moment: a conversation between two heights of form, in which guembri lines converse with the mystical flights of the oud. Tunisia-born **Dhafer Youssef** is considered one of the most respected artists on the international music scene. Defying category, he combines oud, jazz, Sufi chant, and electronic textures with rare virtuosity. A collaborator of giants such as **Herbie Hancock** and **Marcus Miller**, he embodies a free and luminous vision of world music. This fusion promises to be subtle, introspective, and vibrant.



Powerful women, living memories

Asmaa Hamzaoui & Bnat Timbouktou x Rokia Koné

The daughter of Maâlem Rachid Hamzaoui, Asmaa Hamzaoui has used her talent and determination to open up a feminine space in a tradition that has long been masculine. With her group Bnat Timbouktou, she has reinvented Tagnaouite music for women, tackling profound themes such as exile, roots, and memory. Her deep voice, stage presence, and confident mastery of the guembri have made her a major figure of the Gnaoua revival.

For this 26th edition, she will share the stage with Rokia Koné, a Malian singer whose voice resonates with force and conviction. Originally from Ségou and known as «the Rose of Bamako», Rokia Koné embodies the power of great African voices. She is a member of **Les Amazones d'Afrique (Amazons of Africa)**, and made her world debut with Bamanan, blending her Mandingo roots with modern influences: profound, moving, intense.

Since its inception, the Gnaoua Festival has always honoured the great female voices of Africa, fusing them with the Maâlems—figures such as Oumou Sangaré and Fatoumata Diawara come to mind. This new duo continues in this contemporary tradition, between transmission, musical sisterhood, and the fusion of heritage.

Beyond fusion: three exceptional solo concerts

In addition to their fusions, CimaFunk, Rokia Koné, and Dhafer Youssef will also be performing solo concerts on the **Moulay Hassan Stage**, the emblematic venue of the Gnaoua Festival. Each will offer a personal highlight to the audience, immersing them in the essence of their own musical universe. With these concerts, the Festival continues its ongoing vocation to bring world music into dialogue with Gnaoui heritage, while highlighting major figures of contemporary musical creation.

For over 25 years, the **Gnaoua and World Music Festival in Essaouira** has been shaping the story of a borderless music. Each edition is an invitation to connection, to the unexpected, and to shared wonder. More than just a festival, it offers a truly unique and rejuvenating collective experience. We look forward to sharing new highlights and reflecting on the full brilliance of this 26th edition.

Essaouira invites you to join us—June 19-21, 2025—for another extraordinary musical adventure.

PRODUIT ET ORGANISÉ PAR



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