

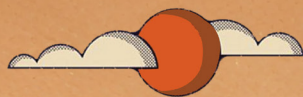


ESSAOUIRA
Gnaoua
& World Music Festival

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



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THE GNAOUA AND WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL: THE VOICES AND SOUNDS THAT WILL ABSOLUTELY ROCK THE BEACH STAGE AND BORJ BAB MARRAKECH

The **26th edition of the Gnaoua and World Music Festival**—to be held **June 19-21, 2025**—confirms its unique status as a melting pot of cultures, bringing together Gnaoua Maâlems and musicians from all over the world to create, fuse, and share, year after year. Following the announcement of artists scheduled to perform on **Moulay El Hassan stage**, these are the artists expected to perform on two other major stages: the main **Beach Stage** and the majestic **Borj Bab Marrakech**.

Main Beach Stage: a popular, festive, and activist atmosphere

Designed as a communal space facing the ocean, the main Beach Stage is the Festival's beating heart. **Maâlem Mustapha Baqbou**, a key figure of Gnawa tradition, will be joined on stage by his pupil and stage partner **Maâlem Najib Oubelkas** for a performance combining transmission and fusion. **Maâlem Mohamed Kouyou** brings a wealth of international experience to the stage, to share a moment of trance that combines ritual rigour and musical openness.

Faithful to its mission of transmission, the Gnaoua Festival has always been eager to support the new generation of Gnaoua musicians. At this 26th edition, the **Beach Stage** will welcome performances by a number of young Maâlems from a promising new generation that includes **Driss Semlali, Mehdi Kardoudi, Yassine El Bour, and Redouan El Kasri**. Each will demonstrate their own unique style, rooted in tradition but looking to the future.

Other highlights include **Tiken Jah Fakoly**, a leading figure in African reggae who lends his free and powerful voice to his stage presence. He is an artist/activist, whose hymns to justice, peace, and dignity will echo across Essaouira, carried by his globally-recognised performance energy.

Fehd Benchemsi & The Lallas offer a daring project that blends Gnaoua rhythms with the sounds of gospel and pop. Between fervour and audacity, this contemporary reinterpretation of Moroccan heritage reinvents codes with elegance, and not without mischief.

Also on the bill: **The Leila**, an independent artist who confidently fuses reggada and rock with social poetry, and **Ribab Fusion**, an Agadir-based group led by **Foulane Bouhssine**, reinventing Amazigh music with a funk, blues, and pop twist.



Borj Bab Marrakech: heritage architecture turned musical showcase

Every sunset during the Festival, **Borj Bab Marrakech**, the historic bastion overlooking the ramparts of Essaouira, transforms into a unique concert venue. The remarkable architecture, commanding position, and intimate atmosphere of the Borj make it the perfect setting for exceptional moments. The stage will play host to two renowned **Maâlems**: **Hassan Boussou**, builder of musical bridges and a Festival regular whose every appearance is a celebration of living heritage, and **Abdelkader Amlil**, whose sonorous voice reveals his mastery of authenticity, as a formidable guardian of a deep-rooted art.

The Borj will also be the setting for some very special performances. On Friday, **DUOUD**, the pioneering electro oud duo of **Mehdi Haddab** and **Smadj**, nicknamed **“the enfants terribles of the Oud”**, will bring their compositions—a blend of North African, Mediterranean, and urban cultures—to the stage.

On Saturday, **the Kurdish collective Nishtiman** Project will embark the audience on a journey through the popular music of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey, revealing the richness of a multi-faceted cross-border heritage.



An edition of abundance, between living memory and openness to the world

In 2025, the Gnaoua Festival will welcome **350 artists**, including **40 Gnaoua Maâlems**, from **Morocco, Africa, Europe, North America, the Caribbean and Asia**, for **54 concerts**, spread between **Moulay Hassan Stage, the Beach Stage**, and more intimate venues such as the **Borj Bab Marrakech, Dar Souiri, Bayt Dakira, Zaouia Issaoua and Zaouia Sidna Blal**.

Street concerts—organised in the emblematic squares of the medina—will extend this musical celebration into the heart of the city.

With this rich and daring programme, the Gnaoua Festival continues to pursue its mission of uniting spiritual tradition to artistic innovation, making the voices of the South heard, and building new bridges between cultures.

Join us in Essaouira—June 19-21, 2025—to experience what only the Gnaoua and World Music Festival can bring to life: a series of emotions that are equally intense, profound, and universal.

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