

HARKAN

Mohamed-Amine Kalai

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Harp,
Kanun
& Percussions



Seeing the European harp and Oriental qanun together is akin to watching two distant cousins realize they have so much to tell each other.

By giving life to this unique duet, Maïa Darmé and Mohamed Amine Kalai brought new colors to music from all around the Mediterranean.

Two instruments with entrancing timbres echoing each other, dazzling fingers flying on an ocean of strings... The versatility of these performers and their exotic instruments never ceases to amaze.

Harkan is a moment out of time and away from reality.



Harkan

“Unique, mesmerizing. This charismatic duet shatters expectations.”

World-class musicians performing an **eclectic repertoire** on a **never-seen-before combination of instruments**... Harkan is a most outstanding and unusual musical project.

Bringing together French and Tunisian virtuosos, the band led by Maia Darne on the harp and Mohamed-Amine Kalai on the qanun is thoroughly captivating. On stage, they often morph into a trio, with percussionists providing accompaniment on North African traditional drums (bendir, tar, daff...).

Harkan's concerts include the duet's own creations as well as music from all around the Mediterranean: Turkish, North African, Hispano-Andalusian, Italian, French and Greek. As the rhythm builds up, lively dances follow languorous pieces.

Harkan is the fruit of two years of research, rediscovering and arranging traditional repertoires, collaborating with contemporary composers and developing new playing techniques for both instruments to allow them to venture into foreign music cultures. The result is a program accessible to audiences of all ages and backgrounds, appealing to seasoned music lovers and first-time concert goers alike.

Music videos and live excerpts are available on the band's website: www.harpanun.com.



Mohamed Amine Kalai

Mohamed Amine Kalai is a Tunisian qanun player born in Kairouan.

He began his musical studies at the Regional Conservatory of Kairouan and obtained in 2009 the national diploma of Arabic music, before receiving in 2011 his instrument's diploma in qanun. His participation in the Festival of Young Musicians in 2006 was crowned with first prizes: in the qanun category as well as for the entire festival. In July 2013, he participated in the "Neapolis Music Days", during which he won the first prize with an "excellent" mention of the "very advanced" category and the Golden Rabeb of the same competition.



Recognized as a young talent, he played in February 2014 at the Festival Young Virtuosi in Ennejma Ezzahra and in October 2014 at the International Festival of Peoples in Aradeo, Italy. In June 2015, he participated in Istanbul's second Ottoman Music Summer School organized by the University of Istanbul, benefiting from six masterclasses with qanun virtuoso and renowned composer Göksel Baktagir.

Regularly invited to present his instrument and Tunisian music at national and international festivals, he notably performed at the International Celtic Harp Festival in Dinan, France, and at the Eastern Music Summer Academy in Sulzburg, Germany. He played with several well-known national musical ensembles, including the Tunisian Symphony Orchestra, with whom he gave an unprecedented performance of Vivaldi's Concerto in C Major RV 93 in an adaptation for qanun under the direction of Pierre-Yves Gronier.

After publishing in 2012 a collection of 57 works of his composition in the traditional Tunisian style (bachrafs), Mohamed Amine is currently deepening his research on traditional forms of Tunisian music. He is also working on the development of a new method of playing facilitating the adaptation of Western works (including baroque music written for lute). His first album, Mukkadima, is an anthology of anonymous pieces from the Andalusian repertoire of Tunisian music, completed with works of his composition.

In parallel of his musical career, he is currently pursuing an MD degree.

Maïa Darmé

Maïa Darmé is one of the most exciting and versatile harpists of her generation. Hailed as an ambassador for her instrument, she has earned an international reputation for her commanding on-stage presence and captivating performances. An active soloist and chamber musician, she has performed in over 20 countries on all continents.



Born in France, Maïa started playing the harp at the age of six when she moved to the home of Celtic music, Brittany. After receiving the first prize of the French Union of Musician Artists' competition by unanimous decision and with the highest distinction at age nine, she went on to learn under the guidance of some of the world's most acclaimed harpists (Alice Giles, Elisabeth Fontan-Binoche, Marie-Pierre Langlamet, Xavier de Maistre, Isabelle Moretti, Jana Bouskova, Audrey Perrin, Marie-Emmanuelle Allant-Dupuy, Isabelle Coulon...).

Having graduated from the Bordeaux and Paris conservatories, she moved to Australia to study harp performance and composition at the Australian National University. There she performed across the country with the much-loved Seven Harp Ensemble (SHE). Maïa's studies also took her to Columbia University, New York, where she attended courses in composition as well as diving into electronic music at the Computer Music Center. A recipient of the Gatsby foundation's Arts Initiative program, she worked extensively on writing for the harp with emerging composers, commissioning new pieces for her instrument.

As a classical soloist, she collaborated with orchestras such as the Moroccan Philharmonic Orchestra, Ukrainian National Radio Orchestra, Tunisian Symphony Orchestra, Dominican Republic National Orchestra, Camerata Caribensis, La Note Retrouvée or Orchestre Henri IV, and played under the baton of distinguished conductors, including Jean-Claude Casadesus, Nicolas Brochot, Pierre-Michel Durand and Pablo Mielgo. Passionate about expanding the repertoire available for her instrument, she has had the pleasure of premiering many pieces. She is also a prolific arranger, whose scores are published by Profs Edition and SMP Press.

Equally at ease playing ancient or electric harps, Maïa regularly experiments with a variety of musical genres. She has notably joined forces with world music, improvisation, experimental electro, punk, hip-hop, jazz and reggae bands. Through numerous artist residencies and stays in Maghreb and West and Central Africa (Niger, Guinea, Libya, Tunisia, Senegal, South Sudan...), she studied traditional music forms, teamed up with local musicians, taught workshops and worked on developing new playing techniques to help the harp grow in unexpected styles. Besides, having a taste for theatre, she performed extensively in drama productions, both as an actor and as a musician. She also holds a Masters in International Affairs from Sciences Po Paris. www.maiadarme.com