

13/08/2005

Dear all,

From July 28 to August 19, several Palestinian and French musicians, a filming documentary team, some members of the Al Kamandjâti administration and a Portuguese journalist (Expresso magazine) are in Palestine in order to organize series of music training workshops, to perform concerts, to meet up with our partners, and to contribute to the opening of music classes in September 2005 in Ramallah.

We spent 2 days setting up a musical programme (classical and oriental repertoires). Then, the whole group took part in the first Al Kamandjâti workshops in Al Amari refugee camp (one of the three Ramallah camps – Ramzi Aburedwan, Al Kamandjâti President, born in Al Amari). July 31, the musicians went to a school located in the Ayn Mushrayt neighbourhood (Ramallah) where about a hundred of children attended the musical animations. August 1, around 150 kids originate from Jalazoun camp (Ramallah) discovered several instruments: violins, violas, cellos, clarinets, flutes – and novelty for this summer session – harps and French horns. August 2, the performers joined in activities organized in partnership with Riwaq centre (a Palestinian NGO that supervises the renovation of our centre in the old city of Ramallah – we will launch soon the opening ceremony of the Al Kamandjâti Music School on the occasion of the end of the rehabilitation work). These workshops and concert gathered together children and inhabitants of 6 villages of the northern West Bank: Asira, Sabastia, Beit Imrin, An Naqura, Al Bathan and Burqa. August 3, the group conducted several workshops and concert in Qalandiah camp (Ramallah). August 4, the workshops took place within the Children centre in Jericho and we presented an evening performance in the Jericho town hall. August 6, we got going to the North in the Salfit area; many children partook in musical initiation in Farkha. August 7, we went on by travelling to Tulkarem where we met up with the children of the Tulkarem Orphanage. In the late afternoon, we played a concert in Deir Loghsoun. August 10, we were in Shu'fat camp (Jerusalem) to carry out workshops and a concert in the Women Center. Afterwards, we gave a concert in Jerusalem in the superb Mamlouki site of Hammam Al-Ein and Khan Tankaz of the old city, thanks to the assistance of the Center for Jerusalem Studies. Yesterday, we were in Hebron where we organized activities in cooperation with the Hebron Rehabilitation Committee, the Hebron municipality and the TIPH (Temporary International Presence in Hebron). Today, the whole group is realizing cultural activities in the UN boy's' school in Ayda camp, gathering children from Ayda, Azza and Deheisha camps (Bethlehem). At 7pm, a concert will occur in the international centre of Bethlehem: Dar el Nadwa. Tomorrow, we will set off again to Nablus and to Faraa (Sunday).

Please, find enclosed several pictures taken during the workshops and some of our centre situated in Ramallah downtown.

All these events are organized due to the support of the A.M. Qattan Foundation, the Palestine Avenir Foundation, Tamer institute, Riwaq centre, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and thanks to all our partners, sympathizers and members in Palestine, in Europe and abroad.

Faithfully,

Marie Albert, on behalf of Al Kamandjâti.

20/08/2005

Dear all,

The workshops organized in Faraa village (between Nablus and Jenin) ended the fifth session of workshops and concerts set up by Al Kamandjâti association, moreover the last group of musicians took flight from Tel Aviv to Paris, yesterday night.

Not yet the right time to draw up an appraisal of this journey but really the desire to go back briefly over our path.

In October 2002, when Al Kamandjâti was founded in Angers, it seemed as a crazed dream: Music for all in Palestine.

On the eve of our 3rd anniversary, this trip marks a huge change of direction because a lot of projects are coming out.

Our dream is becoming true: since September 2004, the first Al Kamandjâti lessons began in three Palestinian refugee camps, 2 harps entered on Palestinian territory for the first time in history last month, a two-ton container of music instruments arrived in Ramallah (August 16th 2005), a concert was performed on the occasion of the end of the rehabilitation of the place where music lessons will take place at the beginning of the new academic year 2005/06.

A lot of memorable moments: as late in the afternoon, in Sabastia (02/08), we all were speechless when a young girl sang some Slam pieces; as well as during the concert performed in the Center for Jerusalem Studies, located near the esplanade of the mosques (10/08). We discovered an unusual place for a classical concert: a traditional Hammam named Hammam Al Ein and Khan Tankaz. The performance taking place at dusk, we placed some candles in all the rooms. The audience was invited to a musical travel from a room to another, from Mozart to Debussy – magical atmosphere: candles, coils of incense and moving voice of Jessie, the group singer.

No need to tell how emotional was the moment when 3 young girls from Ayda camp (Bethlehem) made the musicians and the spectators burst into tears, when they went on stage (in Dar el Nadwa – 12/08) to play « frère Jacques » in front of 300 persons.

No word to express our feelings when the tremulous voice of Oday rose above the audience, taking us to the streets of his refugee camp: Al Fuwwar, leading us to the roots of Palestine. We met Oday in August 2003 during a workshop, since then he came to France to take part in Al Kamandjâti concerts and he pleased us being contributor of our tour in Palestine.

All these achievements wouldn't have happened without your encouragement and we thank you in advance for continuing to sustain our action.

We are eager to thank Riwaq, which supervised the renovation of our centre, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), which financed it, the Khalaf and Ghanem families, Tamer institute, the A.M. Qattan and Palestine Avenir Foundations, the French General Consulate in Jerusalem, and in particular Mr. Fillon-Dufouleur, Mr. Kraemer, Mrs Cavacciuti, Mrs Benhabylès, Mrs Najjar and the French cultural centres as well as the Palestinian ministries of education and culture, the municipalities of Ramallah and Al Bireh, the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music, the inhabitants of Ramallah old city and above all the Aburedwan family for its constant support and its warm welcome.

We are also grateful to all the musicians, to Oday, the young Palestinian singer who joined us in our trip in Palestine, Margarida (Portuguese journalist), the filming documentary team, H  l  ne and Jane who came to help the Al Kamandjâti administration in Palestine, Yamna, Karim, Yacine, D  lia, Selma, Samuel, Christophe, Jean-No  l, Marie-Paule, Catherine, Gw  na  l and those who took part in the container loading in Angers.

They allow Palestinian children to participate in music training workshops and concerts and contributed also to open further music schools in Palestine.

Please find attached some pictures of the last workshops, of the container arrival and of the inauguration.

Marie Albert, on behalf of Al Kamandjâti.