



A Musical Beehive

As the academic year winds to a close, most students choose travel, outdoor activities, or sports to occupy their summer holiday. For Al-Kamandjâti students, instruments and music making are the means of leisure. As the academic year concludes with their last monthly concert in May, the rapid rhythm of summer begins. With the approach of the Annual Music Days Festival in June, the constant and frequent visits to the center arose. Despite the high demand of the preparation phase and the daily rehearsals, the center was always filled with the spirits and contagious energy of youth. The level of students' commitment to each other and their music was admirable. One can proudly say these are the children of Palestine.

This year, The 6th Music Days Festival program showcased the talents and ongoing progress of our students alongside their teachers and guest musicians. The program included performances by the Ramallah Oriental Ensemble, Jenin Oriental Ensemble, Al-Kamandjâti Jazz Band, Al-Kamandjâti Percussion Band, Youth Orchestra, Camps Orchestra, Ramallah Orchestra, and Al-Kamandjâti Choir. Our featured vocal soloists included Odai Al Khatib, Ameer Jabarine, Fadi Basha and Saleh Chaaban.

June, Al-Kamandjâti was defined by the students participating in the festival, and by the sound of their music. The oriental beat from one end, the echo of jazz instruments in the air, and the melodies of classical music drew a beautiful combination between the architectural aesthetics of the space and the sound. A total of 60 students and 40 teachers and guest musicians participated in the festival, including those young men who return home to Palestine every summer from their college studies abroad. They are: Mohammad Karazoun, Ameer Malhees, Muntaser Jabreeni, and our first instrument maker and repairman Shehadah Shalaldah. The space seemed to grow as the sounds from the center spread all through the old city of Ramallah, with its warm, charming atmosphere.

Rehearsals shifted and moved between vacant and non-vacant rooms. Tensions were high with the excitement and nervousness of preparing for the festival. From dance to drama, comedy to music, our students' talents were revealed, taking us all to a new realm.

The 6th Music Days Festival June (10-24) 2011

Towards the end of May and during the month of

The festival began with a performance by the Al-



Kamandjâti Percussion Band, brought to us by the musical talents of Muaz Omari, Hashim Froukh, Khalil Abu Ein, Yanal Stati, and their percussion teachers Ibrahim Froukh and David Friederich from Germany.

The band's technical standard and lively rhythms were breathtaking. They presented the audience with an array of pieces ranging from Jazz, Classic, Latin, African and Pop/Rock. In addition, the program included their own compositions and improvisations. Their use of both Eastern and Western instruments produced a unique blend of rhythms and harmonies. David Friedrich, who has been a member of the Al-Kamandjâti teaching staff for over a year, commented : "I'm the students' teacher for Western percussion, and they are my teachers for Oriental percussion."

Our youth from the Oriental ensembles of Ramallah and Jenin, along with their instruments and voices, toured all over the country to share their music with and entertain their friends, families and communities. Concerts were held in schools, youth and community centers in Al Amari, Al Jalazoun, Qalandia, Shu'afat schools, The Children's Club, Ka'fr Ra'ai Society, Al Yamoun and Al Zababdah Municipalities.

Ramallah Oriental Ensemble presented a collection of popular and enchanting Arabic music and songs by Fayrouz, Marcel Khalife, Abu Arab, and Sayed Darweish. The Ensemble was formed in 2007 and includes the amazing vocalists Odai Al Khatib and Ameer Jabareen, the talented instrumentalists Mahmoud Karazoun, Bushra Jaradat, Rifa'at Al Masri, Mohammad Al Shafei, Hashim Froukh, Muaz Omari, Yanal Stati, and last but not least the young violinist Ala'a Shalaldah.

The height of the season came with the performance of the Jenin Oriental Emsemble. They performed a collection of timeless compositions and songs by Sayed Darwish, Abd Al Wahab, Ziad Al Rahabani, concluding with an amazing performance by Fadi Basha from a Pavarotti opera. The ensemble was formed last year under the guidance of musician, teacher and colleague Iyad Staiti. Due to his tremendous support and talents, the quality and standard of the group's performance was impressive. One could read the expressions of a proud father written upon his face. The ensemble includes Rashid Za'arour, Naji Al Ali Esrawi, Ibrahim

Salfeeti, Ayham A'yesh, Hamzah Salfeeti, Marwan Zughaybi, Kifah Salfeeti, Rami Abu Ali'a, Aseed Hikmat, Raadi Doulani, and vocalists Abed Abu Al Hasan, Saleh Sha'ban, Omar Said, and Fadi Basha. It was an intense summer, with immense work and effort by all. The achievements of the festival could not have been made possible without our teachers Iyad Stati, Khalid Sodouq, Dimitri Mikelis, Maddalena Pastorelli, Jason Crompton, and our everlasting friend and artistic director of the summer camp Peter Sulski. Thanks and appreciation also goes out to the administrators Khalil Ghnaim, Iyad Jaradat, Sahar Barghouti and Celine Dagher, as well as to all of our volunteers from Palestine and abroad.

Jazz in Jerusalem

The Al-Kamandjâti Jazz Band gave a successful performance in Jerusalem featuring our students Fadi Al Qadi, Mahmoud Karazoun, Muaz Omari, David Friederich, and Majd Al Qadi, lead by Dimitri Mikelis. Accompanying the band were our guest musicians, Professor Douglas Weeks, and in his Palestinian debut, Benjamin Grow. The concert included a collection of everlasting milestones such as "Straight, no chaser" by Thelonious Monk, "Nardis" by Miles Davis, "There will never be another you" by Harry Warren and "Blue Bossa" by Kenny Dorham.

Those who have been in Jerusalem can testify to its evening stillness due to the occupation and the constant policy of isolation. Therefore, to have an evening concert of Jazz in Jerusalem, and to have fans of Jerusalem as well as fans of Jazz come together in one place was a refreshing and uplifting surprise. Very few concerts in Palestine are dedicated to jazz, and in turn the concert was a rare and beautiful experience we were all fortunate enough to be a part of.

The journey to Jerusalem was not without some challenges, however. Some were as natural as the climate, in terms of distance between several locations, and the large number of the orchestra's members. Others were unnatural, such as the checkpoints, the apartheid wall, acquiring entry permissions for students and teachers, and other forms of the Israeli occupation policies. Nevertheless, the Al-Kamandjâti Orchestras over passed these obstacles and arrived safely in Jerusalem, at Qalandia checkpoint, and in the village of Battir on the 1948 border.

Our challenges only enforced our determination, willpower and free spirits until we were finally brought together with our guest musicians. From France for the very first time: Maestro Diego Masson, from Britain: Simon Hewitt Jones, Gunilla Kerrich, and Helen Sherrah-Davies, from Italy: Luca Franzetti, from North America: Eric Culver, Javier Caballero, Douglas Metcalf, Demetrios Karamintzas, and our everlasting friend Peter Sulski, and for the very first time Victoria Goldberg, and Tracy Lindboe. We were also privileged enough to have the passionate volunteer work of Elena Sordini from Italy, and Maelis Pardon from France, as well as the good company of our special and old friend the writer Sandy Tolan.



By Damascus Gate...In Jerusalem

The city holds a special place in the heart of every Palestinian and non-Palestinian. Reaching and performing in Jerusalem as scheduled for the festival's program was one of the most important missions we undertook. Permissions were not granted to some of us, so we had to find a way to get to Jerusalem on our own account. In the end every member of the orchestra was reunited.

In the heart of the old city, opposite Damascus Gate, we set up our equipment, instruments, and music stands. There we all stood, waiting for the conductor Jason Crompton's cue to begin. The historical site afforded us the best venue of any musical performance with no additions needed. As the Youth Orchestra performed, their musical vibes opened up the city's gates for us. The specification of the place, the unique concert sight, the orchestra members in black, and the sound of music all drew an extraordinary scene of a live performance. The Youth Orchestra presented us with beautiful performances of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's Symphony n° 5, Georges Bizet's Farandole from the orchestral suite L'Arlesienne, and Habanera and Danse de Boheme from the orchestral suite Carmen. As soon as we concluded the program, our amazing musicians carried their instruments and equipment through Al Zahra street and Sheikh Jarrah towards the Palestinian National Theatre (Al Hakawati) for the second scheduled evening concert of the Ramallah Orchestra. Lead by Maestro Diego Masson, they performed Beethoven's enchanting Concerto for Violin and Orchestra and his second symphony, followed by Marcel Khalife's Suite Andalouse. And so came an end to a historical day of music making in Palestine.

A musical trip to Qalandia checkpoint!

The spectacle of our enthusiastic youth packing, loading and pushing off from the Al-Kamandjâti center appeared a regular scene of students embarking on a school trip, or on a picnic, perhaps. But the destination, in this case, was unusual: the notorious Qalandia checkpoint.

Despite the safety concerns of the adults around them, the students' spirits were high as they gathered—in an unusually punctual fashion!—and boarded the bus. Firstly, Ramzi Aburedwan announced a set of precautionary instructions to all members, old and young, in case of a threatening situation. But as the bus departed, with students from their seats launching into songs and lively music making, a lightness arose. Gradually, the level of stress subsided, eventually vanishing altogether. For yes, we were headed to Qalandia checkpoint, but for the first time it was not to cross, nor to wait, but instead to play music—our presence a choice, not a requirement.

The transformation of mood which occurred at Qalandia checkpoint during the concert was unforgettable. From where the orchestra sat, it appeared for once that it was the Israeli soldiers who were behind bars, whereas we were in an enviable position, in an open and beautiful musical space. Our Youth Orchestra presented an extraordinary performance which brought joy to all the people passing, even if momentarily, through a place that is often so remote from beauty.

Summer Camp

In Talitha Kumi Once the 6th Music Days Festival program concluded, we headed to our annual summer camp, held this year at the Talitha Kumi School in Beit Jala. At this stage our friends and guest musicians from the Ensemble Orchestral de Paris from France joined us: Joel Sultanian, Fany Maselli, Helene Lequeux, Etienne Cardoze, Michel Giboureau, Bernard Chapron.

The nearly empty school, then in the midst of summer vacation, was brought to life in what seemed like an instant, as 115 people, loaded with instruments and equipment, descended upon it. We reopened classrooms, filled the dining hall, and occupied most of dormitory rooms. The beat and the liveliness of Talitha Kumi school was as in the midst of the school year, all classrooms occupied, students' voices and beautiful noise in every corner. The music echoed not only through the halls of the school, but beyond, past the cypress and pine trees and over the hills of Talitha. In this inspiring natural and creative atmosphere,

the work of Al-Kamandjâti's students, teachers, and guests continued at its usual, lively beat.

During the camp, mornings were devoted to individual classes, group classes, and ensembles. Afternoons saw seven daily workshops: Percussion, Brass, Bassoon, Conducting, Jazz, Folk, and Oriental.

Our students, charged with energy from their accomplishments during the festival days, exhibited an enthusiastic spirit for work and play during the camp. Sometimes, restraining that energy was a great challenge, particularly when it came to persuading them to go to bed! Each day involved a long program concluded by evening concerts, according to our tradition. Each evening brought something special out of the students, in their solo and ensemble performances, often sharing the stage with their mentor or instructor.

The camp's evening concert series was an exciting venue for the talents and potentials of our students. The percussion workshop group, led by David Frideriech, produced a dancing percussion performance known as a "Tap Dabkeh Performance." Students created rhythm, and tempo using their bodies and dancing to it. It was an outstanding and eye-opening performance, especially considering its mere four days' preparation. Also notable was the Bassoon workshop's performance, led by Fany Maselli. Accompanied by her students, Fany pleased us all with a memorable performance of the Pink Panther theme. It was an exciting experience, as music holding a sense of suspense, challenge, and persistence. Fany, along with Etienne Cardoze, had arrived at the summer camp from France accompanied by a new bassoon as a gift for Al-Kamandjâti students.

Our ongoing search for special concert venues did not stop during the summer camp. Being on the line of 1948, we were eager and curious to see the village of Battir, and excited to see the railway tracks there, which for some of us were the route of our grandfathers' travels between Jerusalem, Damascus, Beirut, and Cairo. Beyond the tracks, in the beautiful nature and landscape of Battir, we climbed up as high as we could with our instruments, settling finally on the perfect spot for the orchestra: overlooking Battir, surrounded by its hills. The scene took our breath away and for most of us it was the first time being in that place. Grief and joy combined, and both sensations could be felt in the music, and we rejoiced in sharing such a moving scene in that special place.



A Palestinian Musical Reunion

They say save the best for last, and for the Al-Kamandjâti Association, this was defined by our participation in the "Wein a' Ramallah" festival, annually organized by the Ramallah municipality. The Palestine National Ensemble of Arabic Music held the festival's closing night concert on July 30th, along with the welcoming of the holy month of Ramadan. The Ensemble presented a special night of timeless Arabic Classics. In the midst of downtown Ramallah a big crowd gathered for the concert. People came from the surrounding villages and towns, as well as from Jerusalem, to quench their thirst for Tarab and to listen to and enjoy the music.

The National Ensemble, lead by its Artistic Director Ramzi Aburedwan, presented a collection of unique pieces from Aleppo and Andalus Mushahat which the audience responded to passionately with excitement and escalating cheers. The performers included Ma'an Amashah from occupied Jolan, A'nbar Jaradat from Saeer, Jameel Salah Al Deen from Deir Ghawaleh near Jenin, Munzer Al Ra'ai from Al Aroub camp, Ameer Jabarine from Ramallah Downtown, and Odai Al Khatib from Al Fawar camp. Together, they each represented a style and a different unique quality of voice, presenting a rich and a diverse night nobody wished would end.

Palestine National Ensemble of Arabic Music was first established in 2009, for the preservation and revitalization of the classical Arabic Music heritage. In addition, Al-Kamandjâti wished to form a national body that could include musical and talents from all over Palestine. The ensemble's members come from the villages, camps and cities of Palestine, including Ramallah, Tulkarem, Jenin, Nablus, Al Ramah, the occupied Jolan, Haifa, Saeer, and Al Aroub camp. Since the ensemble's establishment, it has held several concerts between major cities in Palestine such as Jerusalem, Nablus, Bethlehem, and Ramallah, and participated in most of Al-Kamandjâti's annual festivals and other festivals organized in Palestine. It has also presented classical forms of Arabic music



such as Longat, Sama'iat and the art of Muashah, as well as pieces of contemporary Arabic music by Fareed Al Atrash, Mohammad Abd Alwahab, Riyad Sunbati, Mohammad Al Qasabji and Sabah Fakhri. Currently, the Ensemble is preparing for possible tours to major Arab and European cities during 2012 for the occasion of Al-Kamandjâti Association's 10th anniversary.

We will miss you, David

As part of Al-Kamandjâti's tradition of bidding farewell and a safe journey to one of its family members, this time we all had to say goodbye to our wonderful percussion teacher David Friederich, who had been with us for more than a year. For the occasion an exceptional Ramadan evening was organized for the Al-Kamandjâti Percussion Band, held at the Association's center in downtown Ramallah on August 12th. The band performed an array of pieces from several different music genres such as Introduction of March and Metallica's Fade to Black.

During the summer's evening, the association's terrace was packed with an audience from all age groups young and old, children and adults, as the band had accumulated great popularity over time, especially its leader David! The rhythm and the vibes from their performance traveled from Al-Kamandjâti's terrace and all through the old city of Ramallah. The passion and energy of the band's members transmitted through their instruments and to the audience. Their performance put a smile on everybody's face. It was a bittersweet night, as we all knew we would soon be saying goodbye to David.

It was a pleasure knowing David Friederich as a person, artist, and a giving teacher, and hard to see him go. We all said our goodbyes with a standing ovation, and later on in the evening the band members and

remainder of David's students and members of Al-Kamandjâti saluted David and wished him the best for all of his upcoming endeavors.

The music program in Qalandia, Al-Jalzoune, and Al-Ama'ari

Several music activities has been taken place at UNRWA schools (Boys/Girls) and community centers, in the Palestinian camps of Qalandia, Al-Jalazoune, and Al-Ama'ari, through the academic year 2010/2011, as part of Al-Kamandjâti's Music Education Program in the Palestinian Refugee Camps.

The music activities implemented at UNRWA schools are part of a co-funded project by the European Union and Terre des Hommes Italy, and in collaboration with UNRWA. The direct and continuous cooperation between all those actors had played a major role in raising awareness of music education significance among students and their families. Music education classes at schools also included trainings for UNRWA teachers who participated in those classes, so that they get involved in the program implemented by Al-Kamandjâti. In the community centers, instruments and group lessons were also given. Towards the end of the school year in June; most involved students and teachers participated in the 6th Music Days Festival. Most notably, students took part in the camps' orchestra concerts held during the festival also joined in for the annual summer camp of 2011, which gathered most of Al-Kamandjâti students from all its working areas.

Al-Kamandjâti students in Beirut streets during the 6th Music Days Festival June 2011

On Saturday 18th June, 20 children from Al-Kamandjâti in the Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon from Burj Al Barajnah and Shatila, went to the streets of Beirut's

busy Hamra district to show the Lebanese public what they can do!

The event is part of the 6th Music Days Festival activities, which involves Al-Kamandjâti students from all locations including Lebanon.

Bringing music to all, and the tradition of playing music in open and public spaces, such in the streets, or community centers is a goal and an approach Al-Kamandjâti had held over the years. It promotes the culture of music and encourages people to participate and enjoy superb performances in open spaces.

Al-Kamandjâti's students from Lebanon wished to participate this year in the Festival by bringing some short but energetic performances to different venues in Hamra. Once they finished their exams at school they practiced in earnest with a two-day summer

camp with their teachers and other musicians and artists (16-17 June) and on the 18th June they were ready to impress passers-by with their talent and energy.

The Pianist Rasha Doulani granted the Frederic Chopin Award

During June 2011 Rasha Doulani took a part in an intensive Piano master classes workshop in Szafarnia-Poland, with the musician and tutor Joanne Brzezinfka-Maurer.

The workshop was offered to Rasha for Frederic Chopin Award competition of the Chopin piano compositions held in Bethlehem in November 2010. Rasha Doulani, 17 years old has been one of our piano students from Jenin for the past five years.

Fadi Qadi in Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music

Fadi Qadi, 14 years old talented Clarinet player from Al-Kamandjâti for the last five years. Fadi represented Palestine earlier this year in the July annual summer camp for Chamber Music, organized by Apple Hill Center for Chamber Music in New Hampshire. The center has been dedicated for the teaching and understanding of Chamber Music since its establishment in 1970.

Al-Kamandjâti Team



Welcome our students, teachers for the academic year 2011-2012. Wishing you all a joyful and a productive year

Thank you:

A.M. Qattan Foundation, SIDA, the Ford Foundation, the European Commission, the General French Consulate in Jerusalem, the US Consulate in Jerusalem, the Goethe Institut in Ramallah, the Ramallah Municipality, the Ramallah Cultural Palace, Terre des Hommes Italy, UNRWA