



Berklee  
Global

ESSAOUIRA  
**Gnaoua**  
& World Music Festival

# BERKLEE AT THE GNAOUA & WORLD MUSIC FESTIVAL

JUNE 16-21, 2025 / ESSAOUIRA - MOROCCO



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## PRESS RELEASE

### Berklee at the Gnaoua and World Music Festival Returns for Its Second Year

The Berklee on the Road program will be held June 16–21, 2025 in Morocco.

**Casablanca (January 30, 2025)** – Applications are open for the second edition of **Berklee at the Gnaoua and World Music Festival**, to be held from June 16 to 21, 2025, in historic Essaouira, Morocco.

This immersive Berklee on the Road program was created for actively performing musicians seeking to advance their skills as improvisors, and welcomes students with a wide range of musical backgrounds, from classical and traditional Gnaoua to pop, rock, and jazz. Eligible candidates must be 18 years or older at the start of the program and have at least two years of performance experience on their principal instrument.

*“The partnership between the Gnaoua and World Music Festival and Berklee College of Music, launched last year, is a visionary initiative that seamlessly aligns with the festival’s role as a (musical laboratory),”* says Neila Tazi, CEO of A3 Communication and the festival’s producer and organizer. *“This pioneering training program in Africa offers a unique opportunity for musicians from around the world to expand and refine their artistic potential. Held in Essaouira, a city renowned as a global music capital for its rich cultural and musical heritage, the program blends the authenticity of the Gnaoua Festival with Berklee’s distinguished expertise in music instruction. It provides participants with an immersive, transformative experience, harmonizing diverse musical traditions and contemporary styles in an exceptional setting.”*

**Leo Blanco**, a Berklee professor and the program's academic director, designed the pedagogical approach of this unique five-day program based on expanding and merging diverse cultures in an inclusive manner. As a Latin American educator and researcher at the college for the past decade, Blanco has advocated for the inclusion of global music and history as fundamental elements for a more modern music education curriculum.

Classes will be taught daily from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. from a select group of esteemed Berklee faculty and artists including *Leo Blanco, professor of piano; Erini Tornesaki, assistant professor of voice; Fernando Huergo, professor of bass; Godwin Louis, assistant professor of saxophone; Jason Camelio, assistant vice president of Berklee Global; and Bri Tagliaferro, associate director of Berklee Global Partners and Programs.*

Instruction will be conducted in English, complemented by Arabic translation, to help ensure a broad and inclusive educational experience.

“Participants will engage in continuous performances with musicians from diverse corners of the world, deliberately exposing them to various grooves, rhythmic concepts, and harmonic and improvisational approaches,” says Blanco. “Berklee at Gnaoua Festival will guide students on how to seamlessly merge multi-cultural musical elements, contributing to a rich and immersive learning experience while receiving guidance on how to intertwine their own musical language with others, beginning with learning to actively listen and comprehend the musical concepts of their peers.”

Workshops will focus on advanced concepts such as integrating diverse musical styles, technical approaches to improvisation, musical collaboration, and the Gnaoua musical tradition, with a particular emphasis on music technology for live creation and performance.

Interested candidates should submit an online application to secure their spot in the program. Students that are accepted will receive free passes to all stages of the Gnaoua and World Music Festival.

Tuition for the program is **\$420 USD/4,299 MAD**. The deadline to submit the application is **Monday, March 31<sup>th</sup>, 2025**. To apply, please visit the Berklee on the Road program page.

### **About Berklee College of Music**

A leading institution in contemporary music and performing arts, Berklee offers undergraduate and graduate programs in Boston and Valencia, as well as online through Berklee Online. Dedicated to fostering the growth of artists, Berklee boasts numerous alumni who have received Grammy, Tony, Oscar, and Emmy Awards.

### **About the “Berklee on the Road” Program**

This program offers immersive learning experiences around the world, connecting musicians to diverse musical cultures and allowing them to study with Berklee faculty and artists in unique settings. These programs emphasize collaboration, creativity, and cross-cultural exchange to support artistic and professional development.

### **About the Gnaoua and World Music Festival in Essaouira**

Since 1998, this iconic festival has transformed Essaouira into an artistic crossroads, blending traditional music with contemporary sounds. Renowned for its bold musical fusions, it provides a valuable platform for emerging artists while attracting renowned performers and an international audience each year. **The 26<sup>th</sup> edition will take place from June 19 to 21, 2025**, promising another unforgettable celebration of musical diversity.