



16<sup>Th édition</sup>

# The Fès Festival of Sufi Culture and World Spiritualities

Know thyself



From 20 to 27 April 2024

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Photo : Benjamin BINI



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# Edito.

‘Know thyself’ – Socrates made this injunction, inscribed on the pediment of the temple of Delphi, the principle of all wisdom. It implies a certain capacity to distance oneself, to become the object of one’s own knowledge. This can of course be understood at different levels. It can be the subject of an analysis or rational introspection through which we seek to probe different aspects of our personality. However, such an approach cannot replace the deepest feelings that Sufis liken to ‘flavors’ that lead us towards the highest and most mysterious regions of our soul. In this perspective, this knowledge is first and foremost a journey, a process through which one traverses different levels of deepening self-awareness. Science and consciousness are then inseparable and combine to allow us to reach, beyond the multiple veils of our illusory identities, the source of our deepest being. Approaching this source is, according to the different paths of wisdom, to approach a state of unconditional inner happiness and freedom. ‘I was between myself and myself,’ says the poet, ‘separated from myself by myself, and the one I truly love has never ceased to be my source and my spirit.’

The question that then arises is how to better understand the premises and the specific modalities of such a journey.

Faouzi Skali





## Note on the artistic programme

### Milan Otal, artistic director

Concerts, film screenings, performances, exhibitions and confraternities: the programme for this 16th edition of the Fez Festival of Sufi Culture reflects the event's desire to promote dialogue between cultures and spiritualities. The concerts will feature musical traditions from Africa, Asia and Europe. Fatimzahra Qortobi, Abdelkader Ghayt, the maalmat from Meknès, Fatou Mint Enghdey, Senny Camara, Yahya Hussein Abdallah, Sain Zahoor, Aurélien Pascal, Marouane Hajji and I Muvrini are just some of the artists who will be inviting us to discover the beauty and depth of this music of soul-to-soul dialogue. At its heart is sama', the art of listening that permeates tasawwuf, the Sufi way.

To open the festival, the two great Oujdi singers, Fatimzahra Qortobi and Abdelkader Ghayt, will fill the Jnan Sbil park with the sound of Andalusian muwashahat, introduced by the words of actress Sophia Hadi. The magnetic Sain Zahoor (winner of the Aga Khan Music Award 2022) will come from Lahore in Pakistan to convey the message of the Sufi poets, a timeless message of love and the quest for union with the divine.

African mystical song will be particularly well represented, with the participation of Mauritanian griot Fatou Mint Enghdey, Senegalese singer Senny Camara accompanied by her kora, and the inspired Tanzanian singer Yahya Hussein Abdallah (Winner of the Aga Khan Music Award 2022).

In a bid to open up to the world's spiritualities, the festival is inviting the young cello prodigy Aurélien Pascal (Instrumental Soloist Revelation at the 2023 Victoires de la Musique Classique awards) to perform Johann Sebastian Bach's first three cello suites in the Jnan Sbil park. The huge Corsican singing group I Muvrini will be sharing its telluric vocal universe inspired by Corsican spiritual polyphonies. No syncretism here. Just a listening to sounds that have been handed down from heart to heart, in different regions and eras, and that open the heart of anyone who listens to them.

The maalmat of Meknès, heirs to a unique musical genre, will be sharing the mystical art of masmoudi to the rhythm of the gwell, the t'bla and the bendir. The brilliant singer Marouane Hajji will bring to life the century-old words of the mystical poets Al-Harraq, Al-Choustarî and Al-Busarî. Finally, in the closing concert, the Taybah ensemble will be drawing on the Syrian Chadhili repertoire to lead the ecstatic dance of the whirling dervishes and invite us to enter the Way of Love.

Throughout the festival, the Qadiriya-Boutchichiya, Wazzaniya, Sqaliya and Cherqawiya tariqas, four brotherhoods from Morocco, will be sharing their musical and ritual heritage. The Hamadcha of Fez, led by master Abderrahim Amrani Marrakchi, will be offering visitors the chance to enjoy a unique spiritual experience during a lilâ, or "spiritual night". Finally, two exhibitions will highlight the richness of contemporary Arabic calligraphy through the work of painter and psychotherapist Sami Ali and photographer Benjamin Bêni, two artists who explore the potential of this art through original and inspiring works. A retrospective of Sami Ali's work will take place at Riad Sheherazade. Benjamin Bêni and painter Mohamed Charkaoui will be exploring the thoughts of the Sufis, plunging into a visual and conceptual journey where calligraphy and photography come together to reveal a profound and plastic artistic message.

Milan Editorial



# Program of the 16 th édition



Photo : Benjamin BINI

# FROM 20 TO 27 APRIL 2024

Saturday, April 20 April  
2024

10:00 AM: Opening  
of the festival.  
Medersa Bouananiya

4:00 PM: Round table  
discussion: In the  
Footsteps of Abraham.  
Medersa Bouananiya

8:00 PM: Opening Show:  
The Religion of Love:  
Mysticism and Poetry  
With Fatima Zahra Qortobi  
and Abdelkader Ghayt.  
Jnan Sbil Park

Sunday, April 21, 2024

10:00 AM: Caring for  
the Soul: Spirituality and  
Psychotherapy (with Sylvie  
Cady and the c.i.p.s.r.)  
Opening of the exhibition  
by Sami Ali (calligraphy)  
and musical interlude  
Riad Sheherazade

2:00 PM: Opening of the  
exhibition by Benjamin  
Bāni, with a performance

of painting on photography  
Les Őtoiles Cultural Center

4:00 PM: Round table  
discussion: Ibn Arabi and  
Rumi, a Continuous Dialogue  
Musical opening with Senny  
Camara, France / Senegal  
Jnan Sbil Park

8:30 PM: Concert:  
Sain Zahoor, Pakistan  
Jnan Sbil Park

Monday, April 22

10:00 AM: Round table  
discussion: What is the  
Human Soul? Debates  
among philosophers,  
scientists, and mystics  
Medersa Bouananiya

5:00 PM: Concert: The  
Art of Masmoudi by the  
Maallmat of Meknes,  
Morocco  
Jnan Sbil Park

8:30 PM: Ritual:  
Tariqa Qadiriya  
Boutchichiya, Morocco,  
Jnan Sbil Park



# Continuation of the program...



**Tuesday, April 23**

**10:00 AM: Round table discussion: The Different Degrees of the Nafs ('Self') in the Quranic Text According to Al-Hakim al-Tirmidhi Medersa Bouananiya**

**4:00 PM: Round table discussion: Hayy ibn Yaqdhan, 'The Living Son**

**of the Awake': Visionary Narratives and Inner Journeys Jnan Sbil Park**

**5:00 PM: Concert: Fatou Mint Engdhey (Mauritania) Jnan Sbil Park**

**8:30 PM: Ritual: Tariqa Chergawiya, Morocco Jnan Sbil Park**

# Wednesday, April 24

**10:00 AM: Round table discussion: The Andalusian Legacy: What Lessons for the Future?** Medersa Bouananiya

**2:00 PM: Sanskrit Calligraphy Workshop by André Riehl**  
Les étoiles Cultural Center

**5:00 PM: Concert: Aurélien Pascal Performs the Cello Suites by Johann Sebastian Bach, France** Jnan Sbil Park

**8:30 PM: Ritual: Tariqa Wazzaniya, Morocco** Jnan Sbil Park

**10:30 PM - 2:00 AM: Ritual: Lîla Hamadcha, Morocco** Jnan Sbil Park

# Thursday, April 25

**10:00 AM: Round table discussion: Transhumanism: What Place for Spirituality?**  
Medersa Bouananiya

**2:00 PM: Screening: Bab'Aziz: The Prince Who Contemplated His Soul, by Nacer Khemir, Tunisia**  
Cultural Center Les étoiles

**5:00 PM: Concert: I muvrini, France, Corsica** Jnan Sbil Park

**8:30 PM: Ritual: Tariqa Sqaliya, Morocco** Jnan Sbil Park

# Friday, April 26

**10:00 AM: Round table discussion: Creative Imagination and Self-Knowledge**  
Musical opening: Jérôme Daoud Cormier, France  
Jnan Sbil Park

**4:00 PM: Round table discussion: Al-Ghazali: The Niche of Lights (mishkat al-anwar)** Jnan Sbil Park

**8:30 PM: Marouane Hajji and Yahya Hussein Abdallah, Tanzania, Morocco**  
Jnan Sbil Park

# Saturday, April 27

**4:00 PM: Synthesis of the round tables**  
Musical opening: Enris Qinami  
Jnan Sbil Park

**8:00 PM: Taybah Ensemble and the Whirling Dervishes of Damascus, France/Syria** Jnan Sbil Park



# The concerts:

## SATURDAY, APRIL 20

8:00 PM

Opening night: The Religion of Love: Mysticism and Poetry  
With Fatima Zahra Qortobi and Abdelkader Ghayt  
Jnan Sbil Park

The muwashshah is a poetic genre that was invented and developed by Moukaddam Ibn Mouafa of Qabra in Arab Andalusia at the end of the 10th century. This melodious, gentle song, structured in stanzas, has over time taken various forms, both in North Africa and the Middle East. In Tunisia, Algeria, and Morocco, it merges into the nouba and constitutes a common heritage for Spanish Christians, Sephardic Jews, and Muslims who work to perpetuate this music. In this opening concert, two great voices from Oujda, Fatima Zohra Qortobi and Abdelkader Ghayt, revive this ancestral musical tradition, immersing us in the world of muwashshahat where earthly and divine love co-exist.

The artists:

Fatima Zohra Qortobi, vocals  
Abdelkader Ghayt, vocals, and his ensemble  
Sophia Hadi, recitation.



# SUNDAY, APRIL 21

8:30 PM

Sain Zahoor, the Transmission of Love  
Pakistan

Jnan Sbil Park

Those who had no one in this world, These sons, I have seen them grow  
By His grace, I have seen people cross oceans. People say that the pulsations do not soften, I have seen stones melt. Baba Bullhe Shah

Born in the village of Haveli Lakhan, in the southern Punjab of Pakistan, Sain Zahoor leaves home at the age of ten and begins to travel through Sufi shrines. His first musical inspirations arise during his visit to the Punjabi shrine of the famous 17th-century Punjabi Sufi poet, Baba Bullhe Shah, in Kasur. It is there that he meets Ustad Sain Raunka Ali and begins to learn the Sufi kalams (poems). For decades, he primarily sings in the streets or at Sufi shrines throughout the country, thus earning his living as a nomad. In 1989, Sain Zahoor performs for the first time on a concert stage at the famous All Pakistan Music Conference. Since then, he has been a regular guest at festivals in Pakistan and then abroad, especially since receiving the BBC World Music Award in 2006. The main goal of his show remains the transmission, through his magnetic voice, of the message of the Sufi poets, a timeless message that conveys love and the quest for union between human beings and the Divine Beloved.

The artists:

Sain Ahmad Zahoor - vocals, tumbi

Riyasat Ali - chimta

Waseem Ali - tablas

Rashid Hossain - dholak





continuation of the con-  
certs...

**MONDAY, APRIL 22**

5:00 PM

Concert: The Art of Masmoudi by the  
Maallmat of Meknes

Jnan Sbil Park

Led by Maalma Hassana, the maallmat of Meknes perform female trance rituals and practice the art of masmoudi, long praises in honor of the Prophet and the Saints. These praises are followed by faster sections of intermediation to the rhythm of drums: the gwell (cup drums), the t'bla (small clay timbales), and the bendir (frame drum).

8:30 PM

Ritual: Tariqa Qadiriya-Boutchichi-  
ya,

Morocco

Jnan Sbil Park

Under the impetus of Sheikh Sid al Haj al 'Abbas, then by his son, his successor Sidi Hamza, who died in 2017, and finally, his current representative Sidi Jamal, this tariqa has undertaken a true revival of Sufism. This renewal is distinguished by its



# TUESDAY APRIL, 23

5:00 PM

Concert: Fatou Mint Engdhey

Mauritania

Jnan Sbil Park

Fatou Mint Engdhey, inheritor of the Iggawin tradition (equivalent to African griots or Occitan troubadours), is initiated into the subtle art of the ardin, this Moorish harp whose practice is reserved for women. Her songs embody the entire memory of the Mauritanian people, drawing from both secular and sacred texts. She sings ancient poetry, the founding epics of past empires, and the tragic loves of yearning lovers, or invokes the divine love of the mystics Al-Burai and Ibn Al-Farid. Her performances have paved the way for her participation in major festivals in Mauritania and abroad.

9:00 PM

Ritual: Tariqa Cherqawiya,

Morocco

Jnan Sbil Park

The Cherqaouia Zawiya was founded, at the same time as the city of Bejaad, by the great Sufi and apostle of Sufism in the greater Tadla region, Sheikh Sidi Bouabid Echarqi, in the second half of the 16th century. The holy city of Bejaad has become, for centuries, a beacon of civilization. Among the most illustrious saints and thinkers, we mention Sidi Salah and his son Sidi El Maati who bequeathed the famous Dakhira dedicated to the praises of the Prophet in sixty-six volumes.





# WEDNESDAY APRIL 24, 2024

5:00 PM

Concert: Aurélien Pascal performs the Cello Suites by Johann Sebastian Bach, France

Jnan Sbil Park

Let me become like the angels!

Cantata BWV 31, Johann Sebastian Bach

From 1717 to 1723, Bach was at the court of Coethen in the service of Prince Leopold. A fine amateur musician, Leopold demanded concerts almost every evening. It was in this context that Bach created the Cello Suites and the Partitas for solo violin. Aurélien Pascal, a young cello prodigy (First Prize and Audience Prize at the Emanuel Feuermann competition at the Berlin Philharmonie in 2014; ‘Revelation Instrumental Soloist’ at the Victoires de la Musique Classique 2023...), makes the sumptuous Jnan Sbil garden resonate with the first three suites of Bach.

In a play of tension, the illusion of polyphony is offered to the listener, where a single bow and a single string are enough to create an imaginary orchestra. The further one progresses in the work, the more one marvels at the poetry and humanity that emanate from it.

Artist

Aurélien Pascal - cello (France)

Program

Bach, 1st Suite

Bach, 2nd Suite

Bach, 3rd Suite

Bach, 2nd Partita for

Violin: Sarabande,

Chaconne





8:30 PM Ritual:  
Tariqa Wazzaniya,  
Morocco  
Jnan Sbil Park

The Wazzaniya tariqa, originating from Jazou-lite (Shadhilite), was founded by Moulay Abdellah Chrif in Wazzane, a city he also founded and which is considered sacred to this day. The Wazzaniya Zawiya was also known as 'Dar Dmana' (the house of guarantee or protection) because, in addition to being a spiritual center, it also offered asylum.





**Wednesday**  
**10:00 PM - 2:00**  
**AM**

Ritual: Lîla  
Hamadcha, Morocco  
Ben Youssef Cultural  
Complex  
Founded by the  
Saint Sidi Ali Ben  
Hamdouch in the 17th  
century, the Hamadcha  
brotherhood has  
distinguished itself  
by the originality  
of its repertoire, its  
mesmerizing dances,  
and the trance-  
therapy qualities of  
its members. They  
perform notably  
during lîla-s ('night-s'),  
organized at the request  
of individuals to bring  
baraka, celebrate  
the moussem, a  
wedding, a birth, or  
a circumcision. The  
Hamadcha ritual is  
a space for therapy,  
and as such, some  
individuals also seek  
them out to experience  
a form of spiritual  
exaltation (hâh). The  
Hamadcha of Fez, led  
by master Abderrahim

Amrani Marrakchi,  
are distinguished  
by their in-depth  
knowledge of the  
repertoire and their  
remarkable musical  
qualities. During  
this lîla, storyteller  
Frédéric Calmès will  
immerse us in the  
fascinating legends of  
the brotherhood.

Artists:  
Abderrahim Amrani  
Marrakchi - Gemri,  
percussion  
Frédéric Calmès -  
storytelling, singing,  
percussion  
H a m a d c h a  
Brotherhood of Fez



# THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024

5:00 PM

Concert: I muvrini, France, Corsica  
Jnan Sbil Park

Lacrime passione ne aghju una vita.

The tears of passion have a life

I muvrini

Jean-François Bernardini, his brother Alain, and their accomplices perpetuate the tradition of singing in the Corsican language around the world. Their enchanting harmonies, accompanied by guitars and traditional instruments, have captured the beauty of traditional Corsican songs without confining them to the clichés of folklore or nationalism. A vibrant testament to the island soul, i muvrini spreads a universal message of peace and unity by sharing their passion for the Corsican language and the preservation of cultural heritage. By singing in a marginalized, forbidden, and diminished language, their poetics is that of anger combined with action, imagination, and the artist concerned about the state of the world. They have forged, through more than thirty albums, a discography of incredible richness, a true bridge between Corsican culture and the rest of the world, illuminated by 8 Gold Records and 2 Victoires de la Musique. The concerts of I Muvrini are always moments of sharing a rare emotional power: their vocal universe becomes organic, almost telluric while taking on a spiritual dimension inherited from Corsican polyphony.

## Cast

Jean-François Bernardini - vocals

Alain Bernardini - vocals





8:30 PM:

Ritual: Tariqa Sqaliya, Morocco  
Jnan Sbil Park

The Sqalli chorfas of Fez are the descendants of the Saint Moulay Ahmed As Sqalli. The Zawiya Moulay Ahmed Sqalli was founded in the 17th century. It is still a place where Dhikr and Samaâ are regularly practiced. These sessions often lead to ecstatic dances known as 'spiritual intoxication' ('Khamra').



# FRIDAY, APRIL 26 2024

8:30 PM

Concert: The Soul is a Symphony  
Parc Jnan Sbil

If you want to put an end to the dispute between you and your soul, flee to God. Manâqib al-sharîf abî 'Abd Allah Muhammad ibn Muhammad al-Harrâq al-'alamî al-titwânî

In this concert, two immense Sufi singers, Moroccan Marouane Hajji and Tanzanian Yahya Hussein Abdallah, intertwine their voices with the inspired words of the mystics Al-Harraq, Al-Choustarî, and Al-Bousairî.

Artists:



# SATURDAY, APRIL 27, 2024

8:00 PM

Closing Night: Ecstasy and Healing  
Parc Jnan Sbil

## Taybah Ensemble and the Whirling Dervishes of Damascus, France/Syria

The Taybah Ensemble originates from the Shâdhiliyya tradition of Damascus and continues the sama' tradition in France. The suites (waslât) string together praises (anashid) to the glory of God and His Prophet, drawn from the Syrian repertoire (Great Umayyad Mosque of Damascus, zawayyas of Aleppo), as well as mystical poems exploring metaphors of love poetry. These chants are traditionally performed in the form of a spiritual concert (sama') in gatherings of remembrance (dhikr). Here, as part of the Sufi Culture Festival, their measured rhythms lead to the ecstatic dance of the whirling dervishes and invite us to enter the Path of Love.

Distribution:

Yassin Battieh - chant

Juneid Bourret - chant

Ismail Bourret - chant

Zacharie Thibon - chant

Sammy Maccario - chant

Al Firdaus Ensemble, Spain (1st part)

Taybah Ensemble and the Whirling Dervishes of Damascus, France/Syria





# Exhibitions:

SUNDAY, APRIL 21 2024

10:00 AM

Opening of the exhibition by Sami Ali (calligraphy)  
Riad Sheherazade

A Frenchman born in Egypt in 1925, therapist, emeritus professor of psychology at Université Paris Cité, philosopher, painter and visual artist, translator, Sami-Ali is above all an innovative theorist of psychosomatic unity, of relational psychosomatics. His concept of unity transcends the links between the psychic and the somatic. Unity in inspiration that simultaneously unfolds on several levels: scientific, literary, and calligraphic. A space indeterminable among spaces, a boundary where the poem, touching the silence of the brush or the pen, extends into an infinity of echoes: a way of seeing the unspeakable. At the confluence of Eastern and Western cultures, he has held about thirty exhibitions, including at UNESCO in Paris (France), UNESCO in Beirut (Lebanon), and the Library of Alexandria (Egypt). He has published 33 books in the fields of art, poetry, and relational psychosomatics.

2:00 PM

Les Étoiles Center of the Medina

It is through the captured light and the points composed by the calame, the words that rhyme with the poet, that the truth is revealed. A light that every artist pursues without limit. A quest, a journey in search of oneself, of knowledge, of truth.

Mohamed Charkaoui

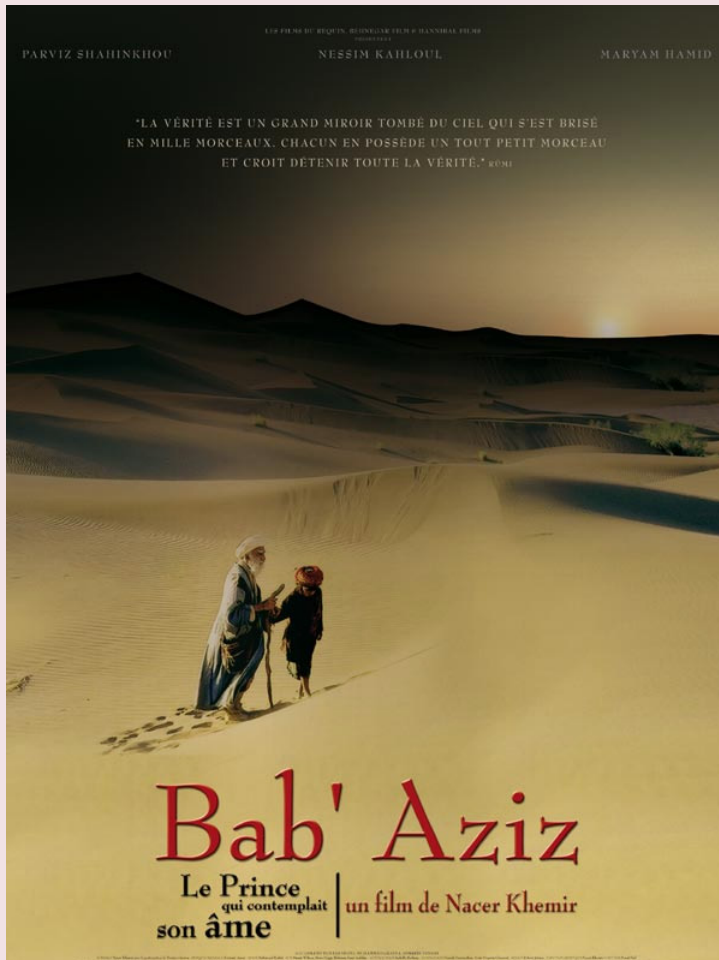
In this exhibition, the artists explore the thoughts of the Sufis, delving into a visual and conceptual journey where calligraphy and photography meet to reveal a profound and plastic artistic message. Discover the world of photography and calligraphy in co-creation through an exhibition and a participatory workshop.

The artists:

# Screening :

## THURSDAY, APRIL 25, 2024

### 2:00 PM



Screening: Bab'Aziz, The Prince Who Contemplated His Soul  
Nacer Khemir  
France-Germany-Iran-Tunisia-Great Britain / 2003 / 100 min

Les étoiles Cultural Center  
Although it is a film based on Sufi tradition that fills us with joy and love, it is also an eminently political film.  
Nacer Khemir

Lost in an ocean of sand, the young Ishtar and her grandfather Bab'Aziz, a blind dervish, journey towards the gathering of dervishes that takes place every thirty years. But to find this secret place, one must 'listen to the infinite silence of the desert with one's heart'.

#### Credits

Director: Nacer Khemir

Assistant Director: Benjamin Blanc

Screenwriter: Nacer Khemir

Script Collaborator: Tonino Guerra

Co-production: Les Films du Requin (Paris), Behnegar Films, Hannibal Films, Pegasos Film Verleih und Produktions GmbH (Cologne; Frankfurt am Main), Inforg Stúdió (Budapest), Zephyr Films (London)

Producers: Cyriac Auriol, Ali-Reza Shojanoori

Original Distributor: Gebeka Films (Lyon)

Director of Photography: Mahmoud Kalari

Sound Engineers: Stuart Wilson, Steve Higgs, Bahman Ardalan

Mixer: Róbert Juhász

Composer of Original Music: Armand Amar

Costume Designer: Maud Perl

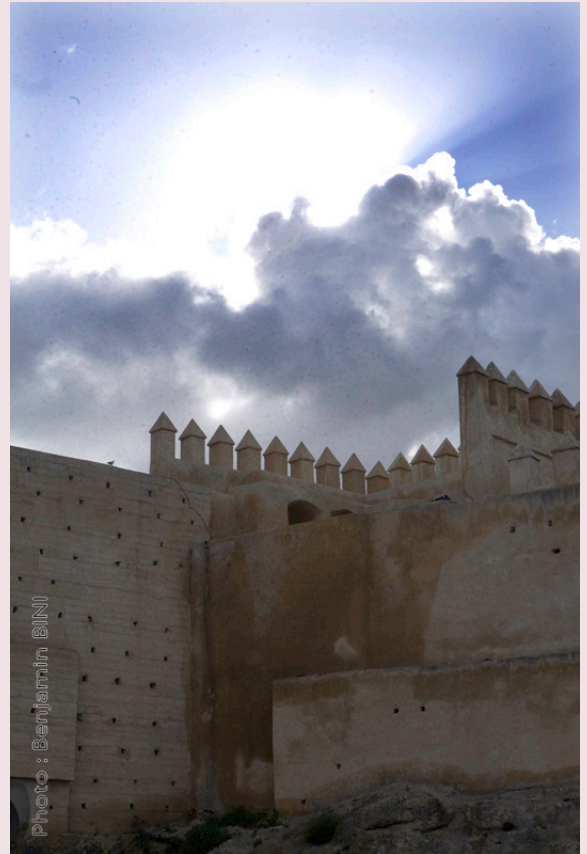
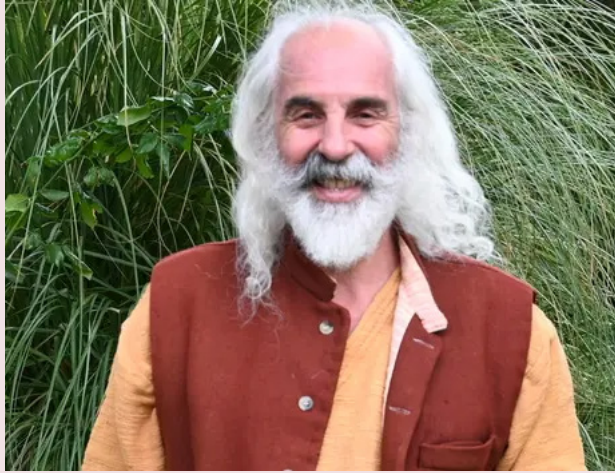
Editor: Isabelle Rathery

Cast: Parviz Shahinkhou (Bab'Aziz), Maryam Hamid (Ishtar), Nessim Kahloul (Zaïd), Muhammad Grayaa (Osmane), Golshifteh Farahani (Nour)

**Calligraphy Workshop :**  
**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 24 at 2:00 PM**  
**Les étoiles Cultural Center**

**Sanskrit Calligraphy Workshop by André Riehl**

Practical workshop on the study of the Sanskrit alphabet as a meditation on its fifty spandas (vibrations). Some very traditional combinations of Sanskrit letters are almost identical to the chant of dhikr. Open to participants



\* This program is provisional; changes may be considered.



# The Festival of Fes of Sufi Cul- ture Association

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Mohamed GHALMI steering committee  
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