

MOHAMED NAJEM

“A mix between Arabic and world music with a touch of jazz” is the way Mohamed Najem describes the musical style of his band Mohamed Najem & Friends. He uses classical techniques in an Arabic interpretation and thus creates an original sound and style on his clarinet. His compositions reflect an eclectic combination of rhythms and melodies.

It all started in his childhood home in Beit Sahour. While he was locked down in his house as a young kid as a result of Israeli martial law during the first Intifada, Mohamed would spend most of his days listening to his father’s music tapes. Noticing his child’s obsession with music, Mohamed’s father would later take him to the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Palestine (ESNCM) to study the clarinet and the nay. Later on, Mohamed headed to the Regional Conservatory of Music in Angers, France, graduating with a DEM (diploma in musical studies) in 2011.



Later that year, Mohamed returned to Palestine to teach clarinet at the ESNCM, becoming its first Palestinian teacher for the instrument. He also served as academic supervisor of the ESNCM Ramallah branch and head of the conservatory’s winds section between 2011 and 2014. In addition, he played in the Palestine National Orchestra, Palestine’s first professional orchestra, which has performed under the motto “today an orchestra, tomorrow a state.”

In 2014, Mohamed returned to France, as he wanted his music to reach a global and international audience. The quartet Mohamed Najem & Friends performed at La Défense Jazz Festival in Paris, represented France at the Katara European Jazz Festival in Doha and the French Institute in Gabon, and toured the United Kingdom. In addition, Mohamed has performed with accordionist Manfred Leuchter as the duo Encounter, with Sharaka Ensemble, and with Liouane Ensemble, and has appeared and toured as a soloist with the Palestine Youth Orchestra. In 2015, Mohamed released his first album titled *Floor No. 4*, and two other CDs will become available later this year. In 2016, he obtained a state degree in clarinet teaching from the Superior Conservatory of Lille and started teaching at the Philharmonie of Paris, for the DEMOS project, an initiative that aims to give access to musical and orchestral education to children from low-income communities.

Today, Mohamed is a pedagogical referent with the DEMOS project and a freelance musician residing and based in Paris, further developing his projects Mohamed Najem & Friends and Liouane Ensemble, touring Europe and the Middle East to perform at various venues, and teaching master classes. For more information and links to some of his performances, please visit his website at <https://mohamednajem.com/>.