



# Ramzi Aburedwan & Dal'Ouna Ensemble

featuring Oudai Al Khatib

*A DISCOVERY OF THE LEVANTINE MUSICAL UNIVERSE,  
BETWEEN CREATION AND TRADITION*

OCTOBER 11, 2024 | 6:00 PM  
HEMMLE RECITAL HALL



SCHOOL OF  
MUSIC

TEXAS TECH  
J.T. & Margaret Talkington  
College of Visual & Performing Arts



VERNACULAR  
MUSIC CENTER

TEXAS TECH  
J.T. & Margaret Talkington  
College of Visual & Performing Arts  
School of Music



## Program

*A discovery of the Levantine musical universe,  
between creation and tradition*

**Ramzi Aburedwan and Dal'Ouna Ensemble**  
Featuring: Oudai Al-Khatib

*Music composed by Ramzi Aburedwan*  
**Mahinour**  
(Full Moon)

**Fragments de Rêve**  
(Dream Fragments)

**Les Deux Escargots**  
(The Two Snails)

**Sahara**  
(Deserts)

**Salat**  
(Prayer)

**Les Bourgeons D'amandier**  
(The Almond Buds)

**Palestinian Wedding Suite**  
*arr. Ramzi Aburedwan, Florent Pujaila, and  
Owen Sallee, Texas Tech first year student*



## Program Notes

### RAMZI ABUREDWAN

Ever since I was small, these melodies have lived in my mind and fed my imagination. I heard them on the street, on the radio, on television, then, after I became a musician I heard them on stage, at the theatre.

As in a waking dream, they go on playing constantly in my mind, providing a source to a very strong sense of identity. So I questioned myself concerning their origins, my origins. Passed on from generation to generation, they are the sound and melodic inheritance from the Fertile Crescent, that geographical region the French call the Levant, meaning from where the sun “rises” for them (‘se lever’, in French), more commonly known nowadays as the Near-East.

Although each performer has made these melodies his own over the centuries, their common essence has not disappeared and they continue to carry a sense of belonging to this region now divided into several countries. The melancholy, the nostalgia I experience every time I hear these melodies seem imprinted into my genetic heritage.

I thus wish to pay tribute to my ancestors: the Natufians.

The term “Natufian” comes from the eponymous valley of Wadi el-Natuf, located in Ramallah’s high hill country. This is where, near the village of Shoqba in an underground shelter, were found identifiers of populations with a sedentary lifestyle. Following a long process of cultural transformations, Natufian populations began the transition from nomadic hunter-gatherers to that of an agro-pastoral economy. Found in a chronological window circumscribed by two glaciations - stretching from 12 300 BC to 9 600 BC – Natufian culture was first found in Palestine (central hills, Mount Carmel and Galilee) and in Jordan before spreading out, with regional variants, to the whole of the Levant, in a territory stretching from Anatolia to the Sinai, and from the Oriental shores of the Mediterranean to the Euphrates river.

With this new musical project, I would like to be in the present and in the past at the same time. Paying tribute to this nature that was such an integral part of my ancestors’ daily life, evoking unity. While respecting this heritage, I also wish to ground these melodies in my time period, by providing them with a slightly more contemporary frame, using instruments that make us journey through time. The bouzouk and Oriental percussions will provide the nomadic aspect of the repertoire, the oud will serve as mirror to the past and the accordion and synthesizer will bring us back to the present. My colleagues from the Dal’Ouna ensemble will also embody, in their own way, the contemporary arrangements to this Levantine heritage.



### RAMZI ABUREDWAN AND DAL'OUNA ENSEMBLE

**DAL'OUNA ENSEMBLE** is named after a festive Palestinian music genre. Through its music, the ensemble expresses the hopes of a people who love to laugh and sing and who seek peace and freedom. The ensemble's repertoire extends from Egypt to Andalusia, passing through various regions and traditions of the Middle East, and adding medieval and jazz accents to a musical confluence of East and West. On their musical journey, Ramzi Aburedwan and Dal'Ouna bring us into their world, their music, their poetry and traditions. They combine traditional Arab instruments including the bouzouk, the oud, and oriental percussion with viola and accordion. The repertoire ranges from instrumental to traditional poetic genres that focus on love, freedom, and nature. Dal'Ouna is a story of shared experiences, a refuge where borders don't apply, and a message of hope for its members and audiences.

Featured tonight are violist and bouzouk player **Ramzi Aburedwan**, percussionist **Anne Laure Borget**, oud player **Ziad Ben Youssef** from Tunisia, **Michael Geyre** on accordion and keyboard, with special guest vocalist **Oudai Al Khatib**.

## Personnel

### RAMZI ABUREDWAN AND DAL'OUNA ENSEMBLE

Ramzi Aburedwan, bouzouk & backing vocals  
Ziad Ben Youssef, oud & backing vocals  
Michael Geyre, accordion & keyboard  
Anne Laure Bourget, percussion  
Oudai Al Khatib, lead vocals

### MUSI 1300 STUDENTS

Students enrolled in Creating the Critical Listener were given the option of voluntarily joining these musicians on stage for the final song. They participated in several additional rehearsals this week to prepare. Additionally, first year student Owen Sallee created arrangements of the composition Palestinian Wedding Suite for his classmates. Students who signed up to participate include the following:

Camellia Asadi  
Cole Adams  
James Fludd  
Seth Grayson  
Libby Herring  
Anthony Horne  
Rafael Quilpas  
Bryant Le  
Saige Long  
Johany Marin

Bailey Newton  
Tyler Parks  
John McWilliams  
Rose McAllister  
Tyler Moore  
Sofia Rogers  
Tris Swisher  
Ryken Tucker  
Matthew Williams

### ADDITIONAL PERSONNEL

Anthony Craft  
Edith Frank  
Jordan Langehennig  
Edgar Quintanilla





## About the Musicians



**RAMZI ABUREDWAN** grew up in the Al Amari refugee camp in Ramallah, where his family took refuge after being driven out of their home in Palestine in 1948. The violence of the first Palestinian intifada (1987-1993) marked Ramzi's childhood and adolescence. At age 16, Ramzi participated in a musical workshop, which proved to be a life-changing experience. From 1996 to 1998 he studied at the Edward Said National Conservatory of Music in Ramallah. In 1998-2005, Ramzi received a scholarship to study viola at the National Regional Conservatory of Angers (France). Ramzi graduated

with a DEM in viola, and chamber music. At the French conservatory, Ramzi met up with other students with whom he created the Dal'Ouna Ensemble in 2000. Today, Ramzi splits his career amongst many projects. He has worked as a concert performer, bandleader of Dal'Ouna, musical director, composer and arranger for the Palestine National Arabic Music Ensemble, and viola soloist performing Western classical music with chamber music ensembles and orchestras throughout the Middle East and Europe. Ramzi's deep engagement with Palestinian youth led him to realize a lifelong dream in 2005: the creation of the Al Kamandjati Association. Al Kamandjati's mission is to bring musical education to Palestinian children and, in particular, to those who are most vulnerable – the children of the refugee camps. Al Kamandjati has provided music education to children living in refugee camps of Al Amari, Jalazon, Tulkarm and Qalandia, in the village of Deir Ghassana, and the cities of Ramallah, Jenin, Gaza City and Hebron in Palestine as well as in Lebanon, in the refugee camps of Bourj el Barajneh and Shatila.



**ZIAD BEN YOUSSEF's** passion for the oud began in his native Tunisia, encouraged by some local masters who introduced him to the world of "Eastern Maqam", the main foundation of oriental music with roots in Arabic, Persian, Turkish, and Armenian traditions. His musical path was forged with the Bashir brothers, Ali Sriti, Farid Ghosn, Anouar Brahém, Saliha, Manolo Sanlúcar, Sabicas and many others. Ziad continues to pursue his goal of expanding the boundaries of this instrument vis à vis improvisation and exploration of diverse musical traditions, including Flamenco, Eastern

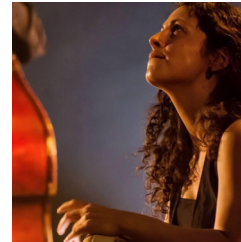
European, jazz and other contemporary music. Ziad has ventured into the world of theater and has participated in numerous projects such as "The Thousand and One Nights" with English director Tim Supple, poetry performances, and film soundtracks: "Happiness" (Alexander Medvidkine), "Kedaba" (ElHachmia Didi Alaoui), "ADN, Ame de la terre" (Thierry Obadia), and "Tomb of the Lovers," performed live at the Louvre Auditorium.



**MICHAEL GEYRE** was born and raised in a family comprised of musicians dating back five generations. Michael is an extremely versatile composer/arranger and multi-instrumentalist. He started classical piano at 5 and became a professional musician at the age of 16.

He has toured with various bands (FranÇOis Cornéloup, Elektro Tayfa, Balkan Kartet, Forro da Lua, etc...), playing many kinds of music (Balkan, Brazilian, jazz, rock, electro, French songs, and more). He has toured with singer Allain Leprest, Marc Delmas, Zed Van Traumat, Julie et le vélo qui pleure,

Bordelune, Le Barber Shop Quartet, Pierre Perret, and Rue de la Murette, to name a few. Additionally, Michael has worked on over 40 CDs as a musician, composer, arranger or technical consultant on projects such as Hook, Dances with Wolves, XII Alfonso, and more.



**ANNE-LAURE BOURGET** is a percussionist and an ethnomusicologist. After studying at the conservatory, she specialized in traditional music and ethnomusicology at the University of Tours. A multi-instrumentalist, she works within the realm of world music as well as in jazz, pop, electro, and baroque sounds. Currently, she performs in concert alongside Christine Salem in the project "Sahariennes," with Meïkhâneh, and Samin Dong Rock. She has also played with Mohamed Abozekry & Heejaz, Kwai, Orange Blossom, the "Waed" ensemble (Bouhassoun), Maria Robin, Lo'jo, in the project

"The Night of Antigone," the Ziryab quartet, and more. In 2015 and 2020, she created, in duo with Ollivier Leroy, the youth cine-concerts "Not Afraid of the Wolf!" and "Phantoms."

As an ethnomusicologist, she has conducted several research stays in Africa (Burkina Faso) as part of her academic studies. She devoted part of her doctoral work to the language of the Bwaba xylophone. Wanting to open the field of ethnomusicology and traditional music to a wider audience, she initiated numerous events within the Department of Music and Musicology at the University of Tours, such as "Ethno Teas." She has also contributed to events at the Musée du Quai Branly-Jacques Chirac, including performances at the Claude Lévi-Strauss Theater, the Fès Festival of World Sacred Music, and other European festivals and cultural landmarks.



**UDAI AL-KHATIB** is a singer and musician from Ramallah, Palestine. He is the programs Coordinator at Al Kamandjati, where he is also a choir teacher. In addition to his work as a music educator, Oudai founded the Arabic music group Sharq Ensemble, known for performing mowashahat and kodod halbia songs in a variety of concerts and festivals. He has traveled internationally, performing in Australia, Spain, Greece, and France with musical organizations such as the Palestinian Youth Orchestra, Palestine National Ensemble of Arabic Music, Dal'Ouna, and the Al Kamandjati band.

## Letter of Gratitude

Thank you for joining us this evening to experience the music of Ramzi Aburedwan and Dal'Ouna Ensemble. It is with much gratitude that we welcome these artists back to Texas Tech after six years.

I first learned about Ramzi and his work in 2017 by reading the non-fiction account of his life in the book *Children of the Stone*,\* written by award-winning, critically acclaimed journalist and author Sandy Tolan.

Yo-Yo Ma had this to say about the book:

*"In a world where so much popular fiction depicts life in a dystopian world, it is refreshing to have this non-fiction account that reflects one individual's belief in the power of music and culture to transform lives. Congratulations to Sandy Tolan for bringing us the story of Ramzi Aburedwan, his philosophy and his personal mission to make a difference. His story is proof of the famous words of Margaret Mead – 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world indeed, it's the only thing that ever has'."*

I couldn't agree more, which is why, after reading the book, I reached out to the author to see if we could bring Dal'Ouna Ensemble to Texas Tech. One thing led to another, and pretty soon, Ramzi and the Dal'Ouna ensemble found themselves in West Texas, eating barbeque at Evie Mae's, jamming with orchestra students at Lubbock High School, and teaching Texas Tech students about Arabic folk music. In 2018, they performed on stage in a bare bones theater with no sound monitoring. It was amazing, and it changed the way my students thought of the Middle East.

We tried to bring the ensemble back sooner, but our plans were disrupted first by Covid and then by the war, and so I'm absolutely overjoyed to finally see my friend again in person after many years and in the newly renovated Hemmle Recital Hall.

In addition to creating much of the beautiful music heard this evening, Ramzi founded the Al Kamandjâti Association. This organization works to strengthen appreciation for Palestinian culture and identity through music. He and his associates organize cultural events, raise funds, and collect musical instruments and teaching materials to provide music education and opportunities for Palestinian children. It takes a special person to take tragedy and respond with beauty, and that is what Ramzi has done with his music.

As you listen to the music on the program tonight, I encourage you to reflect on the transformative power of music in your own lives and communities. How can we build on Dal'Ouna's example and use music to tell our stories, build connection, and ultimately change the world?

As Ramzi says, each artist is a dreamer, or they should be.

Thank you once again for being here. May you leave more hopeful than you arrived.

*Sue Biehn*

## Fun Facts



### WHAT IS THE LEVANT?

The Levant is a historical and geographical term referring to a region in the Eastern Mediterranean. It includes countries such as Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Palestine, Israel, and Turkey, and the island of Cyprus.

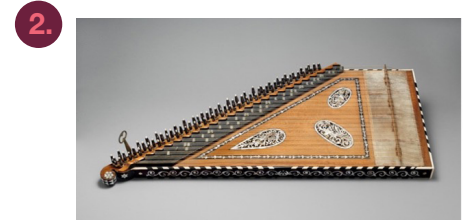
The term "Levant" comes from the French word for "rising," referring to the direction of the rising sun (the east). The Levant has long been a center for trade and cultural exchange and development. Most people living in the region speak Arabic.

### INSTRUMENTS YOU MAY SEE AND HEAR TONIGHT:

Arabic music features a variety of traditional instruments, many of which are commonly used across the Levant and wider Middle Eastern region.

These instruments are integral to music of the Levant, both in traditional and contemporary contexts.

1. **Oud:** A fretless string instrument with a pear-shaped body, similar to a lute. It is widely used in Palestinian and other Middle Eastern music and has a rich, deep sound.
2. **Qanun:** A zither-like string instrument with a trapezoidal shape, played on the lap or on a table.
3. **Darbuka:** A goblet-shaped drum played with the hands.
4. **Bouzuk:** A long-necked string instrument related to the oud but with a higher pitch. It is used in folk and classical music.
5. **Riqq:** A type of frame drum, similar to a tambourine.



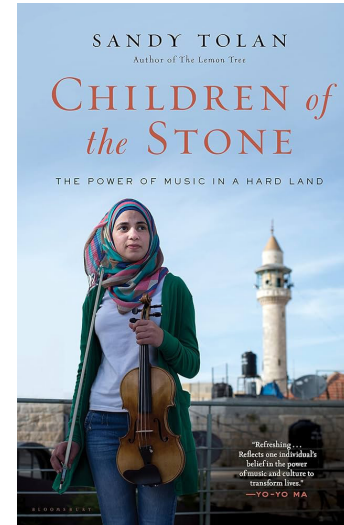


### WHAT IS TATREEEZ?

You may notice beautiful embroidery on the clothes of some of the performers. These geometric designs are also featured elements in the borders of the program you are holding. These designs are called tatreez, a tradition that involves intricate and colorful stitching patterns, often used to adorn clothing. The motifs and designs in tatreez symbolize regions, traditions, cultural heritage, and elements of identity. There are motifs to represent different cities, industries, and stories. These are woven together by stitches, much like traditional melodies are connected by pitches associated with people and places. Like music, tatreez is a cultural tradition that can be used to preserve memories, stories, and meaning.



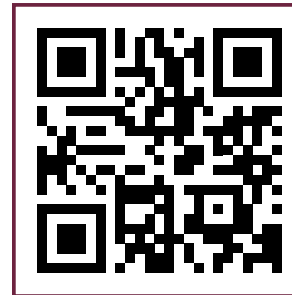
## More Information



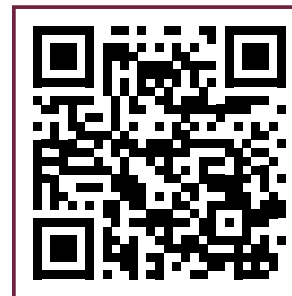
### CHILDREN OF THE STONE

We have copies of *Children of the Stone* available in the lobby. Meet us in the Hemmle Recital Hall Foyer.

*Children of the Stone* tells the dramatic story of Ramzi Aburedwan's life growing up in an occupied Palestinian refugee camp and his transformation from a stone throwing youth of the first intifada, to a talented musician studying at the Edward Said Palestine National Academy of Music and a French Conservatory and his final return to Palestine to realize his life's dream of founding a music school, Al-Kamandjati that has centers in Gaza, the West Bank and Lebanon. He views Al-Kamandjati and related projects with international musicians as a combination of safe haven, creative response, and trauma therapy for the least fortunate Palestinian children, many living in refugee camps.



Scan here to visit [www.ramziaburedwan.com](http://www.ramziaburedwan.com)



Scan here to visit [www.alkamandjati.org](http://www.alkamandjati.org)





## UPCOMING EVENTS

### **Trombone Choir featuring Guest Artist Jim Nova**

Friday, October 11 | 8:00 pm  
Hemmle Recital Hall

### **Alice Anne Light and Guest Artist Luke Williams Duet Voice Recital**

Saturday, October 12 | 8:00 pm  
Hemmle Recital Hall

### **Chamber Music Showcase I**

Sunday, October 13 | 2:00 pm  
Hemmle Recital Hall

### **Chamber Music Showcase II**

Sunday, October 13 | 4:00 pm  
Hemmle Recital Hall

### **Tech Folk Orchestra and Historical Performance Ensemble**

Saturday, October 19 | 10:00 am  
LHUCA

### **Myles Boothroyd Guest Artist Saxophone Recital**

Sunday, October 20 | 4:00 pm  
The Kent R. Hance Chapel

### **Tech Folk Orchestra**

Wednesday, October 23 | 8:00 pm  
Hemmle Recital Hall

### **East African Quartet**

Friday, October 25 | 8:00 pm  
Kent R. Hance Chapel

### **Nataliya Sukhina Faculty Piano Recital**

Saturday, October 26 | 4:00 pm  
Hemmle Recital Hall

### **University Choir**

Sunday, October 27 | 6:00 pm  
Buddy Holly Hall - Crickets Theater

### **Concert Band and Symphonic Band**

Monday, October 28 | 7:30 pm  
Buddy Holly Hall - Crickets Theater

### **Mariachi los Matadores de Texas Tech Concert**

Monday, October 28 | 8:00 pm  
Hemmle Recital Hall

