

Town Hall  
Seattle and  
SAMA: Music +  
Art present

GLOBAL

RHYTHMS

2025

2026

The Next Generation of Global Music



Town Hall Seattle and SAMA: Music + Art present

**SAHA GNAWA:  
Where Morocco Meets NYC**

March 20, 7:30pm in The Great Hall  
Curated by Jon Kertzer



# SAHA GNAWA: Where Morocco Meets NYC

**Maâlem Hassan Ben Jaafar** - lead vocals, guembri, and tbal

**Amino Belyamani** - vocals and qarqabs

**David Lizmi** - vocals and qarqab

**Jason Lindner** - synthesizers

**Daniel Freedman** - drums and vocals

*Program will be announced during the show.*

## About Saha Gnawa

**SAHA GNAWA brings North African futurism to the U.S., uniting the founders of Innov Gnawa with leading figures from New York City's jazz and contemporary music scenes to reimagine modern Gnawa music.**

Often referred to as "Sufi Blues," Gnawa is rooted in Morocco's ancient history. Over centuries, infectious rhythms and polytheistic spiritual beliefs originating from West African slaves integrated with Islam and the indigenous culture of Morocco, giving birth to a hybrid spiritual sect and musical community. The lyrics of Gnawa songs are prayers invoking saints and spirits for freedom and liberation. Gnawa music is revered and treasured throughout Morocco for its soulfulness and healing power.

The ensemble is co-led by **Maâlem Hassan Ben Jaafar**, a master musician carrying forward generations of Gnawa tradition as the son of esteemed Maâlem Abdullah Benjaafar of Fes.

Media Sponsor



Free and reduced-cost tickets made possible in part by



Ben Jaafar performs on vocals and guembri (a three-stringed bass lute), leads the Grammy-nominated group Innov Gnawa, and has collaborated with artists like Randy Weston.

Co-leader **Daniel Freedman**, a drummer and composer, brings decades of experience collaborating with artists like David Byrne and Angelique Kidjo, as well as deep knowledge of traditions from Africa, the Middle East, and beyond. The ensemble also features **Amino Belyamani** (Innov Gnawa, Dawn of Midi) and **David Lizmi** (Innov Gnawa, Bombino) on qraqebs and backing vocals, **Jason Lindner** (David Bowie, Now vs Now) on keys and synths.

Refined via late-night sessions at LunÀtico in Bed-Stuy, Brooklyn, Saha Gnawa explores trance-like states through its intuitive interplay, allowing ancestral rhythms and melodies to drift into unknown territories. What emerges is both an authentic performance of centuries-old Gnawa tradition and a bold step into new dimensions of sound — where traditional song forms dissolve into ecstatic dance tracks laced with subtle electronics.

*"A mix of tradition and Afrofuturism, acoustic and electronic, east and west fumigating in a cauldron of rhythms, chants, solo explorations, and full ensemble blow-outs."*

— **Tim Cumming, The Arts Desk**

## Thank you to our Global Atmosphere Partners!

### Preshow Food Vendor

**Marrakesh** serves traditional cuisines in a sumptuous, ethnic oasis located in the heart of downtown Seattle.



### Preshow Speaker

**Philip Schuyler** is an Associate Professor Emeritus of Ethnomusicology in the School of Music at the University of Washington, Seattle. Formerly, he served as the chair of Middle East Center and the chair of Ethnomusicology at the UW. A specialist in the music of North Africa and the Middle East, Professor Schuyler has carried out extensive research in Morocco and Yemen over the past 45 years.

# WANT MORE GLOBAL MUSIC?



## **Novalima** **Apr 28**

With roots in Peru, Novalima bridges past and future with a shared passion for traditional Afro-Peruvian music



## **Canzoniere Grecanico Salentino** **May 20**

This seven-member ensemble revives the trance-like ritual of pizzica tarantata.

## Join us for the rest of the Global Rhythms series

Details at [thsea.org/globalrhythms](https://thsea.org/globalrhythms)

## Town Hall for Everyone!



### Donate to Town Hall Today

Your gift supports our mission to amplify ideas, foster civil discourse, and connect people through events in a vibrant historic building — inspiring lifelong learning, discovery, and dialogue.

**DONATE**

[townhallseattle.org](https://townhallseattle.org)  
[samamusicarts.org](https://samamusicarts.org)

[f @townhallseattle](https://www.facebook.com/townhallseattle) [b @townhallseattle](https://www.instagram.com/townhallseattle) [@ @townhall\\_seattle](https://www.tiktok.com/@townhall_seattle)