

PRESS RELEASE

**18<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Mawazine Festival Rhythms of the World**

**Popular jubilation and a high-level program for the opening of Mawazine**

**Rabat, June 21<sup>st</sup> 2019:** Under the High Patronage of His Majesty King Mohammed VI, the 18<sup>th</sup> edition of the Mawazine Festival- Rhythms of the World kicked off on Friday night with fanfare and a cheering crowd. All generations were present, confirming the exceptional popularity of the event that was recently ranked, with over 2.5 million spectators, as the first musical event on the planet by the site Statista, far ahead of the Donauinsselfest in Austria or even Coachella in the USA!

On the Nahda stage, the highly anticipated concert of the Lebanese diva Carole Samaha has gathered a large audience to listen to her most beautiful songs. Titles sang in unison by a charmed audience! The performance of Mohamed Réda, a figure of modern Moroccan music shared the oriental stage, has also received a standing ovation.

At OLM Souissi, it was time for Latin music with the Colombian singer J Balvin. A true prodigy, the South American star has delighted festival-goers with his unique style and reggaeton-inspired compositions. Ditto for the sublime Rosalía, who has also conquered the audience. As a Spanish icon, the 25-year-old singer has shown that she remains attached to her flamenco roots, to which she added urban sounds that made the crowd vibrate. A consecration for an artist who already has five Grammy Latinos nominations!

In Salé, Moroccan music was once again in the spotlight with Zahira Rbatia first, who has been acclaimed by the public. Originally from Salé, this exceptional voice performer has excelled in raï, aïta and chaâbi music. Accustomed to the festival, the Casablanca native Mustapha Burgundy was also full of energy. Regarded as one of the most popular artists of Moroccan music, the man not only has a great voice but plays the violin in a mesmerizing and electrifying! way

From Morocco to the mainland, the Bouregreg scene has honored a South African group like no other. BCUC delivered a crazy performance, sailing halfway between free jazz, hip hop origins, dissonant Stooges and the balanced energy of James Brown. With the group coming from Soweto, the famous township of Johannesburg, it is also the memory of Fela Kuti and his afro-beat cocktail made in Lagos that made festival-goers dance the night away!

The Mohammed V National Theater was also full of energy with a packed room. As is traditional, the Mawazine Festival-Rhythms of the World was inaugurated a little earlier in this legendary hall with an opening concert that will remain in the annals: that of the Flamenco Ballet of Andalucía, the most emblematic institution of Andalusian folk art. Ambassador of flamenco since its inception more than twenty years ago, the company has performed on stages around the world. Their visit to Rabat has made a great impact with an unforgettable performance.

A wonderful introduction to an 18<sup>th</sup> edition which is already announced as a great moment of popular celebration, music and discovery!

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**Useful information:**

18<sup>th</sup> Edition of the Mawazine Festival – Rhythms of the World from June 21 to 29, 2019.

**About the Mawazine Festival - Rhythms of the World**

Established in 2001, the Mawazine Festival Rhythms of the World is the essential rendezvous for music amateurs in Morocco. With over 2.5 million festivalgoers for each of its last editions, it is considered the second largest cultural event in the world. Organized every year for nine days, Mawazine offers a rich and demanding program that mixes the biggest stars of the world and Arabic repertoire, making the cities of Rabat and Salé the scene of exceptional encounters between the public and renowned artists. Very committed to the promotion of Moroccan music, Mawazine devotes more than half of its programming to the talents of the national scene. Bearer of the values of peace, openness, tolerance and respect, the festival offers free access to 90% of its festival-goers, making the accessibility of the public an essential mission. It is also a major support to the regional tourism economy and a leading player in the creation of a real entertainment industry in Morocco.

**About Maroc Cultures Association:**

Created in 2001, Maroc Cultures is a non-profit organization whose main mission is to guarantee the public of the Rabat-Salé-Zemmour-Zaër region a cultural and artistic animation of a professional level worthy of the Moroccan capital. Echoing the fundamental values of His Majesty King Mohammed VI's development policy, Maroc Cultures concretizes this noble mission through the Mawazine Festival Rhythms of the World as well as organizing various events, multidisciplinary symposiums, art exhibitions and concerts.