

LamaJamal

Genre: Gypsy Surf, Middle Eastern, Balkan, Turkish, International
Contact: Nicole Sieczka
Cell: (773) 727-0159
Email: lamajamalmusic@gmail.com
Website: www.lamajamal.com



Gary Kalar *Guitar, Jumbush, Tanbur, Mandolin, Percussion*
George Lawler *Drum set, Percussion, Vocals*
Ronnie Malley *Oud, Guitar, Melodica, Keyboards, Percussion, Vocals*
Eva Monzingo *Clarinet, Alto Sax, Dulcimer, Percussion*
Joey Spilberg *Upright and Electric Bass, Vocals*

Lamajamal combines a wide variety of musical styles, instruments, rhythms and songs into one universal expression. The goal of the group is to display musically how specific traditions from around the world can harmonize with each other. Their current sound is influenced by music from the Balkans, Turkey, North Africa, and the Middle East, as well as a touch of 60's "Surf Sound." Whether playing a dabke dance from the Levantine region or an odd meter Balkan folk tune, Lamajamal never fails to get the crowd on their feet taking the listener on a musical journey from the Black Sea to the Nile.

The group formed in 2004 after meeting for late night jam sessions at a local bellydance store in Chicago. With each member trained in different musical traditions, they chose to forge these styles to find historical and musical commonalities. Their name is a palindrome for the Arabic word for beauty "jamal". The play on words symbolize the use of universal sounds and syllables found in languages of the world.

Lamajamal has established themselves as a renowned name in the world music market, playing the 2006-2008 Chicago World Music Fest, the Museum of Contemporary Art, the Oriental Institute at U of C, Chicago Turkish Festival, the Chicago Arabesque Festival, Chicago Cultural Center, CBS morning news, the Chicago Middle East Music Ensemble's concert of Ottoman & Turkish Music, Greek Archdiocese Byzantine Remembrance Ceremony, Xauen music's Chicago Arabesque, local music venues like the Empty Bottle, the Hideout, Martyrs', and many more. This year the group has been featured at several private Balkan dance parties, quickly gaining a reputation as one of the most energetic live "gypsy party" bands in the city of Chicago.

"...Lamajamal is a band without borders." -Tony Sarabia Chicago Public Radio

"...when they're on, they're on, arriving at a fuzzy, garagey take on Roma music thanks to a knack for sexy, serpentine grooves and a mean, mean oud player." - Monica Kendrick Chicago Reader

"Lamajamal -- it must be said -- isn't a novelty act. Nor are they taking traditional Gypsy music and simply updating it. They take folk music from all over the world and they put their own spin on it. The response for what they have performed and released has been very encouraging." - Pioneer Press

"So, here's my thumbs-up to Lamajamal for creating a fun and accessible musical experience that offers the full range of expression from silly to sophisticated. Some of the tight harmonies and culturally-mixed lines and phrases stopped me cold as I found myself transported to who-knows-where. The skill and confidence it takes to be that relaxed playing complex material can only be achieved through much hard effort. What ensemble work!" - Roxane Assaf - Public Relations Chicago Arabesque

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