

BIOGRAPHY



KEYVAN CHEMIRANI

[Rhythms and improvisations in Persian and Indian modality]

HIS EARLY YEARS

Keyvan Chemirani was born in Paris in 1968. He grew up in the hills above Manosque, in the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence region, where he immersed himself in Eastern and Mediterranean music. His father and master, Djamchid Chemirani, passed on to him the traditional knowledge. It was Djamchid's own master, Ostad Hossein Tehrani, who elevated the zarb from a mere accompanying instrument to that of a solo voice.

Until 1989, Keyvan Chemirani pursued parallel studies in mathematics up to the master's level, while beginning an international career as both a soloist and accompanist. Together with his father Djamchid and his brother Bijan, he formed the Chemirani Trio, which has performed all over the world. Drawing on Persian poetry, the Chemirani family composes and develops modern forms that emphasize polyrhythms and the diversity of sounds, revealing to audiences the infinite possibilities of Persian percussion.

Through various musical encounters (flamenco, Ottoman music, Greek, Arab-Andalusian, Carnatic, jazz), he has come to understand the unique characteristics of different traditions. The science of Indian rhythmic cycles—especially from South India—has always fascinated him, leading him to undertake several trips to better grasp the logic behind Carnatic classical music. Influenced both by modal music traditions (from the Mediterranean basin to India) and by major jazz performers, he seeks to find a common language between these diverse musical cultures.

MUSICAL CRÉATIONS

2004: the rhythm of speech

A project bringing together guest artists from diverse musical backgrounds: Mali, South India, Iran, Morocco, Provence, Brittany, Judeo-Arab-Andalusian traditions, Turkey, and Pakistan.

2005: meeting with Mauritanian singer Mohamed Salem Ould Meydah

Creation of Thawol — a unique encounter between Persian percussion, and flamenco and Mauritanian singing and dance.

2006: the rhythm of speech II

A staged performance featuring singers Ali Reza Ghorbani, Nahawa Doumbia, and Sudha Raghunathan, exploring vocal traditions from Iran, the Wassoulou region of Mali, and India.

2008: heartbeats of the east

A musical meeting between the Persian zarb (Keyvan Chemirani) and the Indian tabla (Pandit Anindo Chatterjee). This exchange was enriched by the participation of other musicians, including his sister...

Maryam Chemirani, sarod player Ken Zuckerman, Socratis Sinopoulos (kemenche), Stelios Petrakis (lyra), Bijan Chemirani (zarb, saz), Henri Tournier (bansuri).

2008: growing collaborations with jazz musicians such as Sylvain Luc, Didier Lockwood, Renaud Garcia Fons, Louis Sclavis, Michel Portal... as well as with early music ensembles and baroque musicians, including cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras.

2013: rhythm alchemy

Centered around the family trio, this project opens up to the percussion traditions of the Indian subcontinent and the West; continuing to explore the relationship between rhythm and prosody, with the addition of two bowed string instruments—either supporting or elevating the musical structure: Vincent Ségal on cello and Sokratis Sinopoulos on lyra.

2014: avaz

At its heart: Amzer Nevez in Brittany. Around the voices of Annie Ebrel and Maryam Chemirani, Hamid Khabazi and Sylvain Barou weave connections between Breton and Persian cultures, where the gwerz songs respond to mystical Persian poetry from the 12th and 13th centuries (Hafez, Rumi...).

2015: jasmin toccata

Building bridges between the warm, delicate sounds of Baroque instruments (Thomas Dunford on theorbo and Jean Rondeau on harpsichord) and the world of Middle Eastern modality.

2015: rhythm alchemy (revival)

The project is revived, this time featuring Julien Stella on beatbox and bass clarinet.

2018: hâl, the journey of love

Conceived during a carte blanche at the Saint-Denis Festival and later realized at the “Les Rares Talents” festival in Montreuil and the Abbey of Royaumont. This creation highlights the warm, charismatic voice of Maryam Chemirani and the virtuosity of Sylvain Barou on bansuri and Celtic flutes.

2023: negar

He creates and composes the music for the opera Negar.

To think of Iranian percussion as a kind of syntax—a language through which to engage with oral and written music traditions from around the world, and to create new works: this is the challenging and fascinating path that Keyvan Chemirani has chosen. Along this path, he gradually transforms the Persian musical heritage passed down from his father, Djamchid Chemirani, into multifaceted creations. That is why, at 53, he is now able to teach the legacy of the oral tradition, while keeping a contemporary vision in mind

SELECTIVE DISCOGRAPHY :

TRIO CHEMIRANI

1998 Trio de zarb, Al Sur, ALCD 241
2002 Qalam Kar, Iris Music, 3001 854
2004 Tchechmeh, Emouvance, emv 1019
2011 Trio Chemirani invite..., Accords-Croisés, AC 143
2015 Dawâr, Harmonia Mundi

TRIO CHEMIRANI & NEBA SOLO TRIO

2002 Falak, Cobalt, 09352-2

TRIO CHEMIRANI & ROSS DALY

« Blue Dragon » Live in Théâtre de la Ville, Paris

KEYVAN CHEMIRANI

1997 Zarb duo, zarb solo, Al Sur, ALCD 231
2004 Le Rythme de la parole, Accords-Croisés, AC 104
2005 Le Rythme de la parole II, Accords-Croisés, AC 112.13
2007 Battements au coeur de l'Orient, Accords-Croisés, AC 121
2012 Melos, Accords-Croisés, AC 146
2014 Avaz, Innacor
2019 Keyvan Chemirani and the Rhythm Alchemy, Molpé production
2021 Hâl, ballades amoureuses, Alpha Classic

COLLABORATIONS

---- with baroque music ----

« Il diluvio universale » de Michelangelo Falvetti dirigé par Leonardo Garcia Alarcon

---- with jazz ----

Louis Sclavis « Silk and Salt melodies » ECM records