

IN THE SOIL MEMORY IS A CAVE

a palestine mixtape

While talking with my friend Sotiris about music from the Middle East, he sent me a playlist featuring contemporary artists and bands from the region. I immediately singled out the Palestinian artist Maya Al Khaldi and her album *Other World*. That sparked my curiosity, and I began exploring music from Palestine.

The first thing I came across was the album *The Heaviest Shrouds Are The Smallest Ones* by Firas Shehadeh. The album hit me like a stone in the stomach—and at the same time, I was shocked to find out it had been released just a few days earlier, in July 2025.

As I continued digging, I found other new artists who had recently released their work—in 2025, 2024, and 2023. There's an obvious implication here: the cultural production emerging from the occupied and bombed territories of Palestine during the years 2023–2025. All of this unfolding in the midst of a genocide that, to this day, is still ongoing.

At the same time, I came across field recordings on freesound.org, captured in Palestinian cities over the last two years. In June 2025, an album of on-site recordings from the ruins was released by 18-year-old Samin Madhoun (oud, vocals).

Having now discovered a whole scene of electronic and experimental music (Muqata'a, Firas Shehadeh, Makimakkuk, Maya Al Khaldi, Julmud, Kamilya Jubran, among others), I began to wonder whether any traditional Palestinian music had been preserved—either in old recordings or more recent ones.

That's when I came across Mom'in Swaitat, a Palestinian artist and journalist who—being the son of a Dervish musician himself—found an archive of 7,000 tapes containing music from Palestine and the broader region. Since then, he has been digitizing them and sharing them with us via NTS Radio. I also found a compilation from 1959 and another from 1997. These are the only examples of documented traditional Palestinian music that I could locate.

Between the traditional past and the experimental present, there's an in-between step: the rock bands *Al Bara'em* and *The Intifada 1987*.

Below, I've collected some basic information about each artist, along with a few links for further exploration, for anyone interested. The links also include the Instagram accounts of the contemporary artists—because the first question that came to mind was whether they were still alive. And so, I came into contact with their lives and realized that almost all of them are connected, participating in each other's projects and works.

*Wherever there is a '—', it means that the track is an inserted track

PROGRAM NOTES

- [Killing an Arab - Firas Shehadeh | The Heaviest Shrouds Are The Smallest Ones | July 2025](#)
- [1948 - Checkpoint 303 | The Iqrit Files | May 2015](#)
- [600 DAYS GENOCIDE - Moe Moussa - Poppy H | Displaced Heart | July 2025](#)
- [sounds from palestine street vendors with megaphones melon deal fruit seller field recording palestine - sounds from palestine | freesound.org | July 2025](#)
- [Gaza: Unedited - El Jehaz | Gaza: Unedited | December 2023](#)
- [The land is calling the vanished through the song - Ruanne Abou-Rahme & Basel Abbas | Only Sounds That Tremble Through Us | May 2025](#)
- [09 - Samih Madhoun | Oud Music from Gaza Volume 2 | June 2025](#)
- [Cosmic Rababa - El Jeha | Single | 2020](#)
- [Yama - Kamilya Jubran and Werner Hasler | Wa | October 2019](#)
- [Mijwez - Traditional Music and Songs from Palestine | 1997](#)
- [sounds from palestine banging pots for gaza peaceful protest in ramallah - sounds from palestine | freesound.org | July 2025](#)
- [Palestinian Psychedelic 1970s Dabka Archive - Atef Swaitat & Abu Ali | Palestinian Psychedelic 1970s Dabka Archive | July 2025](#)
- [Like An Event In A Dream Dreamt By AnotherInsomnia - Firas Shehadeh | Youtube Video | June 2025](#)
- [Tareeq - Al Bara'em | Al Bara'em](#)
- [Taḡamus Muḡawim - Muḡata'a | Inkanakuntu | 2018](#)
- [Al Fedayeen - Firas Shehadeh | The Heaviest Shrouds Are The Smallest Ones | July 2025](#)
- [Taki Chasma - Folk Music of Palestine | 1959](#)
- [MABI - Muddyoush - Third From The Sun | 2024](#)
- [kyles calls to prayer palestine noon heard from garbage dump with machines and people scooping waste and distant traffic gaza - sounds from palestine | freesound.org | July 2025](#)
- [Al Fedayeen - Firas Shehadeh | The Heaviest Shrouds Are The Smallest Ones | July 2025](#)
- [sounds from palestine teenage boys yelling in arabic in palestine - sounds from palestine | freesound.org | July 2025](#)
- [Al Daw' - Maya Al Khaldi | Other World | March 2022](#)
- [1948 - Checkpoint 303 | The Iqrit Files | May 2015](#)
- [Mijwez - Traditional Music and Songs from Palestine | 1997](#)
- [Gaza: Unedited - El Jehaz | Gaza: Unedited | December 2023](#)
- [Bidaeyat - Makimakkuk | Only Sounds That Tremble Through Us | May 2025](#)
- [Tulkum - Folk Music of Palestine | 1959](#)
- [Marj Ibn Amer - Muḡata'a | Inkanakuntu | 2018](#)
- [banging pots for gaza peaceful protest in ramallah - sounds from palestine | freesound.org | July 2025](#)
- [Kuluhum Qaluu Ya Qadar - Ahmed Al Kelani | Jamila | Majazz Project | December 2021 \(rec. 1990's\)](#)

- [Mazzikaw Khof - TAMER ABU GHAZALEH, MAURICE LOUCA, MARYAM SALEH | Lekhfa | September 2017](#)
- [kyles calls to prayer palestine noon heard from garbage dump with machines and people scooping waste and distant traffic gaza - sounds from palestine | freesound.org | July 2025](#)
- [By Numbers - Maya Al Khaldi | Other World | March 2022](#)
- [Wa pt.2 - Kamilya Jubran and Werner Hasler | Wa | October 2019](#)
- [Al Fedayeen - Firas Shehadeh | The Heaviest Shrouds Are The Smallest Ones | July 2025](#)
- [A new love - El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe | Zaghareed | 1997](#)
- [My Nakba Birthday - Mohammed El-Kurd & Clarissa Bittar | Bellydancing Wounds | 2019](#)
- [kyles calls to prayer palestine noon heard from garbage dump with machines and people scooping waste and distant traffic gaza - sounds from palestine | freesound.org | July 2025](#)
- [Gaza: Unedited - El Jehaz | Gaza: Unedited | December 2023](#)
- [I'm from Jerusalem - Riad Awwad, Hanan Awwad and Mahmoud Darwish | The Intifada 1987 | 2022 \(rec. 1987\) | Majazz Project](#)
- [Marhale A'la - Julmud | Only Sounds That Tremble Through Us | May 2025](#)
- [El Shahwa Wel Soaar - TAMER ABU GHAZALEH, MAURICE LOUCA, MARYAM SALEH | Lekhfa | September 2017](#)
- [Taki Chasma - Folk Music of Palestine | 1959](#)
- [Tha'er - Al Bara'em | Al Bara'em](#)
- [Cursed Land - Firas Shehadeh | The Heaviest Shrouds Are The Smallest Ones | July 2025](#)

info

The Heaviest Shrouds Are The Smallest Ones is an album of mourning, rage, fury, and refusal — composed in the aftermath of two years of genocide, siege, and unspeakable horrors in Gaza. Drawing from harsh noise, field recordings, and textures, this release assembles a sonic document that mourns the collapse of meaning itself. Gaza is no longer a place — it is a black hole. A gravitational rupture that swallows ethics, history, and language. This release is a death ritual for a world that allowed the ongoing genocide in Gaza to happen. At a time when the “international community” reveals itself as a society of vampires, and “world order” as a machinery of extermination, this album responds with distortion and fracture — a scream in the absence of law, logic, or time.

firasshehadeh.bandcamp.com/album/the-heaviest-shrouds-are-the-smallest-ones
<https://www.instagram.com/firas.shehade/>

Checkpoint 303 is an activist sonic project that creates experimental & electronic music, by combining field recordings performed mainly in Palestine, Tunisia & Egypt with electronic beats, audio archives, oud & piano.

Moe Moussa - Poppy H - Displaced Heart

An urgent collaboration between Palestinian poet Moe Moussa and British musician and producer Poppy H.

Moe vocalises his lived experience of the genocide in Gaza through raw, impassioned spoken word, set to intense beats, melodies, helter skelter instrumentals and haunting ambience. Displaced Heart is a timely and necessary musical statement as the situation in Moe's country grows ever more grim and deadly.

"It's so important for artists to collaborate, create purposeful art, fight for justice, and unite the world – music and poetry are perfect for that."

- Moe Moussa

Proceeds from the sale of the album will go to charities supporting Palestinians affected by the genocide.

Hi, I'm **Mohammad**, a field recordist and sound artist from Palestine. Through this profile, sounds_from_palestine, I aim to share the unique sonic textures of daily life across Palestinian cities, villages, and landscapes. I believe in the power of listening as a way to understand, connect, and preserve. All recordings here are free to use under Creative Commons—just give credit if you can. freesound.org/people/sounds_from_palestine/

Gaza: Unedited is an archival sonic experience that encapsulates the essence of Gaza through authentic recordings as an act of resistance against our collective memories. This album compiles genuine sounds captured from bustling streets and markets, coastal areas, and community gatherings and the reality of military drones flying over it all the time, offering an unfiltered portrayal of life in Gaza. Each recording acts as a window, immersing listeners in the vibrant ambience of these diverse settings. From the dynamic city streets to the tranquil sounds of the coast and the lively spirit of communal events, the album creates a vivid sonic portrayal of daily life in Gaza. Through these authentic sounds, "Gaza: Unedited" invites listeners to connect intimately with the region's reality. It's a collection that documents everyday moments, enabling audiences to experience the sounds and atmosphere of Gaza firsthand. This unconventional approach provides a unique insight into the cultural tapestry and daily rhythms of the region.

soundcloud.com/el-jehaz/sets/gaza-unedited-a-sonic-tour

<https://www.instagram.com/eljehaz/>

The album **Only sounds that tremble through us** is a double LP. The first record features a full album of compositions by Abbas and Abou-Rahme, developed as part of the project between 2022-2024, while the second record is an album made up of commissioned compositions by Hiro Kxone, Drew McDowall, Makimakkuk, Julmud, Haykal, SCRAAATCH, Muqata'a, Freddie June, and DJ Haram in conversation with the project. The artists invited have all had a long engagement with the wider project, several of these artists had been invited by Abbas and Abou-Rahme to perform in the installation as part of the exhibitions of the work, whilst others are featured in the work itself. The artists in this double LP take the wider project and archival material as a conceptual and at times a literal starting point (through sampling, and synthesis) for their compositions.

The wider project begins with a collection of online recordings of unknown figures (mostly from Palestine, Iraq and Syria) performing through song, music and dance either in the intimacy of their homes, or on a street, in a square, at a wedding or on a beach having just found refuge. It takes these moments as the basis for new performances developed with electronic musicians and a dancer in Palestine (Makimakkuk, Julmud, Haykal and Rima Baransi), responding to specific gestures, music or texts from the archive. May amnesia examines the place and significance of voice in the form of song and oral poetry and body in the form of dance and gesture as a political act of embodiment and becoming in a moment marked by various forms of colonial violence against entire living fabrics. The project repositions these moments as a material witness inscribed through body, movement, rhythm and voice to the destruction of everyday life that is occurring or has occurred. Equally it is also one of the most critical ways in which these fractured communities are resisting their own erasure and laying claim to space, self and community once more. Often quite literally embodying and performing through their bodies and voice within and against these violences through renewed rituals of movement and song. At times splintering, even if momentarily, the various regimes of power that have rendered them uncounted, inaudible.

bilnaes.bandcamp.com/album/only-sounds-that-tremble-through-us

Samih Madhoun's "Oud Music from Gaza" holds a claim to be the most important album released in 2024. Entirely recorded in the Gaza strip by the 18 year old maestro, a mixture of traditional, contemporary and self written songs, the album stands as an affirmation of the human spirit and the power music holds even in the most intolerable circumstances.

<https://ergophizmizmusic.bandcamp.com/album/oud-music-from-gaza-volume-2>

Kamilya Jubran (singer, oud) and Werner Hasler (trumpet, electronics) have been collaborating since 2002. Their first collaboration Mahattaat was their earliest experiment into bringing together disparate cultural and artistic roots. Their next collaboration, Wameedd, released in 2004, combined Jubran's vocal skill and limitless imagination with Hasler's melodies and his original aesthetics in electronic music. The duo then released Wanabni in 2010 followed by W asl in 2016, featuring French double bass player Sarah Murcia. In Wa (Arabic for and), their third album together as a duo, Kamilya Jubran and Werner Hasler continue to interrogate their listening and their expression, their research and their desires, to unravel a musical universe of possibilities; "a unison of timbres, cultures complementing, the complicity of verses, and modes and languages confronting each other" in the duo's own way of communicating respective origins and contemporaneity.

kamilyajubranwernerhasler.bandcamp.com/album/wa-2

https://www.instagram.com/kamilya_jubran/

Recordings by **Bashar Shammout** and **Gidi Boss** in cooperation with Westdeutscher Rundfunk ,
Cologne - Germany.

Popular Art Center PAC-1001.

The **Popular Art Center** (PAC) launched the Traditional Music and Song Research Project in the mid 1990s in an attempt to build a National Archive for the research and preservation of Palestinian folklore. With the help of the Welfare Association in Geneva, Switzerland and Buntstift Foundation, in Goettingen, Germany, the Center was able to collect and document many aspects of Palestinian life including information about traditional musicians, singers, songs, genres, instruments, rhythms, lyrics, melodies, and regional melodic variations as well as conducting more general research into the function of music in Palestinian society. The Center recorded hundreds of hours of live and/or staged performances mainly in the northern and central regions of the West Bank. The Center released this CD in 1997 as a first step towards introducing this music to the rest of the world. Thereafter, the Center has continued its collection of musical material and has expanded the regions that have so far been investigated. This recording does offer something that has long been wanting in this field. Whereas the music of most other Middle Eastern regions has been the subject of ethnomusicological fieldwork for a number of decades now, that of Palestine is not so well known. Hence, this work provides documentation of some of the vernacular traditions of various folk instruments and vocal styles.

www2.umbc.edu/MA/index/number7/boulos/palesti.htm?utm_source

Palestinian Sound Archive (Majazz Project)

Over several years, **Mo'min Swaitat** has amassed an archive of rare tapes and vinyl from Palestine and beyond, spanning field recordings of weddings to revolutionary tracks and synth-heavy 80s funk. Many of these were acquired from a former record label in Jenin in the north of the West Bank. The Majazz Project is a research project borne out of the archive, focused around sampling, remixing and reissuing vintage Palestinian cassettes. It is a collaboration between Arab and non-Arab DJs, producers and artists interested in shedding new light on the richness and diversity of Palestinian musical heritage.

Atef Swaitat (yarghul) and **Abu Ali (lead vocals)** are popular Bedouin wedding musicians continuing a long family tradition in Jenin and the north of historic Palestine. The album is comprised of immersive field recordings from weddings across the Galilee in the 1970s.

<https://majazzproject.bandcamp.com/album/palestinian-bedouin-psychedelic-dabka-archive>

<https://www.nts.live/shows/palestinian-sound-archive>

<https://www.instagram.com/mominswaitat/>

Insomnia is the second iteration of Like An Event In A Dream Dreamt By Another. It explores how Palestinian players transform RPG games into acts of defiance and worldbuilding, not as escapism but as survival. In Palestine, where sleeplessness is imposed by the constant hum of drones, wakefulness becomes both a curse and a battleground. Rejecting the role of an NPCs in a rigged game, Palestinian modders hack, rewrite, and reclaim their narrative, asserting their agency through play. The game is no longer a colonial fantasy; it is a contested ground where Return is the endgame, and resistance is written into the code. The film traces the lineage of colonial violence from Turtle Island to Palestine in Los Santos.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=-LgdS-pCvIQ

<https://www.instagram.com/firas.shehade/>

Al Bara'em: Palestine's first original Arabic rock 'n' roll band

<https://www.vice.com/en/article/palestines-first-rock-ban-al-baraem/>

<https://albara3em.com/>

Mugata'a's family were Palestinian refugees that moved between Cyprus and Jordan before coming back to Ramallah. From a young age, he played the piano, and his older brother played the guitar. His brother introduced him to genres like Trip Hop, Downtempo, and Jazz, which later found a way into his music. His introduction to Hip Hop came through the likes of Wu-Tang Clan, RZA, and Gravediggaz. He only started making music at the age of 12 using basic software on his computer. Later, he was influenced by Mos Def and Talib Kweli from Black Star and DMX. With so little to almost no Arabic hip hop at the time, Mugata'a had to formulate a writing style of his own, which gave him his authentic method and technique.

scenenoise.com/Features/Mugata-a-The-Godfather-of-Palestinian-Underground-Hip-Hop

<https://www.instagram.com/mugataa>

In this 1959 collection, **American folklorist Harold Courlander** documents a tradition of Palestinian folk song that has previously been known only through oral ritual. The compilation features vocally driven recordings as they are performed for ceremonial and spiritual purposes, including "Song of the Month of Fasting," "Recitation from the Koran," and several wedding songs. Songs capture different dialects and regional choral techniques.

folkways.si.edu/folk-music-of-palestine/islamica-world/album/smithsonian

drawing inspiration from the 90s dance scenes of detroit, chicago & new york along with the jungle movement of the uk, **muddy** partakes in a modern electronic revivalist movement aiming to push these styles to a newer, and larger audience, through his own fusion of styles.

producer first, dj second, muddy's personal releases aim to present these ideas to inexperienced listeners, blending multiple genres at once.

delusion.cc/muddyyoush

Maya Al Khaldi

This album is inspired by Palestinian folklore, influenced by the present, and imagines a sonic future. All songs include either lyrics, melodies or samples from audio recordings from the traditional music archive of the Popular Art Center.

tawleef.bandcamp.com/album/other-world

tawleef.space/

https://www.instagram.com/maya_al_khaldi/

Makimakkuk is an independent music producer, selector and mc. Maki is a lemur and type of sushi, and makkuk is a space shuttle but also a sewing machine's bobbin. The name's crazy but that's because she is Palestinian and borders irritate her. She loves bass music, footwork, dub, trip hop, hip hop, afrobeat, spoken word but also soothing calm music. Put all those in a pot and mix them together because it will work.

<https://www.instagram.com/makimakkuk/?hl=en>

<https://makimakkuk.bandcamp.com/>

Ahmed Al Kelani - Majazz project

This album is a field recording of a wedding in Jenin in 90s, with music by Ahmed Al Kelani and his band. Ahmed was a popular singer from the North of the West Bank who covered Iraqi music and Palestinian "street" songs. This is the original art work from the cassette cover.

Majazz project is a Palestinian Electrical Recording Company, an alternative research platform and an archival record label reissuing and sampling vintage Arab music.

<https://majazzprojecti.bandcamp.com/album/jamila>

TAMER ABU GHAZALEH, MAURICE LOUCA, MARYAM SALEH

(TAMER FROM PALESTINE)

Three musicians who came of age in 1990s Cairo, their disparate paths in music intersect a couple of decades later when they're drawn to each other's work, and agree to meet at a seaside cabin in Alexandria, followed by residencies in Amman, Cairo, and Beirut to create and record a new album. Maryam Saleh, Maurice Louca, and Tamer Abu Ghazaleh, names that have turned heads in alternative Arabic music with solo albums and conspicuous collaborations.

The album is produced by Mostakell with the support of the Arab Fund for Arts and Culture (AFAC)

<https://lekhfa.bandcamp.com/album/lekhfa>

El-Funoun Palestinian Popular Dance Troupe, founded in 1979, champions Palestinian cultural heritage through dance and music, confronting Israeli cultural suppression. Their performances, notably "Folkloric Scenes" and "Wadi a-Tuffah," blend art with political activism, earning widespread acclaim. El-Funoun also initiated "Palestinian folklore day" and established the Popular Art Centre, fostering community arts involvement. Renowned for integrating their art into Palestinian identity, the troupe has become a key cultural and communal pillar, uniting members across diverse backgrounds

<https://www.el-funoun.org/>

A collection of six poems expressing the lived experiences of the Palestinian people by Palestinian Writer + Poet **Mohammed El-Kurd** and Palestinian Oud player & Producer **Clarissa Bitar**.

Both Palestinian artists cultivated their creative talents and merged their skills to publish an album that exemplifies the profound experience of living in occupied Palestine. The narratives in the track strike a chord in all and push listeners to lean in and hear the literary messages of the poet El-Kurd. This album provides listeners with rhythm and music that makes you want to sway your hips while constructed and moving poems initiate tears.

<https://clarissabitara.com/>

<https://www.mohammedelkurd.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/clarissabitara/>

Just one week after the outbreak of the First Intifada in 1987, **Riad** brought his sisters **Hanan**, **Alia** and **Nariman** together in their living room and began recording The Intifada album on equipment he had made himself. One of these was co-written with their friend, the acclaimed Palestinian writer **Mahmoud Darwish**.

During the first lockdown of 2020, artist and music collector **Mo'min Swaitat** was in Jenin, in the north of the West Bank, when he met up with a family friend and former record label owner, whom he remembered from childhood. The family friend told him he no longer ran the label and that all his cassettes were now in storage and had not been played for decades. Mo'min purchased over five thousand cassettes from him, amongst them a large collection of music from the First Intifada. One of these was The Intifada album.

<https://majazzproject.bandcamp.com/album/the-intifada-1987-2>

<https://www.nts.live/shows/palestinian-sound-archive>

Julmud

The omnipresence of violence in occupied Palestine—from evictions at gunpoint in [Sheikh Jarrah](#) to the devastating [blockade](#) and [bombings](#) in Gaza—might belie the creativity and agency of its people. But Ramallah-based producer Julmud and his contemporaries in the rising [Palestinian music scene](#) are making themselves heard over the din of occupation. With techno queen [Sama](#) and hip-hop pioneer [Muqata'a](#), collectives like [BLTNM](#) and Jazar Crew have been engaging in their own form of resistance by creating spaces for joy and connection across divided territory, defying Israeli checkpoints and walls. Their music itself also reflects this disregard for borders, and Julmud's debut album [Tuqoos | طُقُوس](#) is no exception. Released via [Bilnaes](#), the label and art collective run by Muqata'a and NYC-based visual artists Ruanne Abou-Rahme & Basel Abbas, *Tuqoos* weaves traditional Arabic sounds with contemporary hip-hop and electronic music genres, opening up sonic space in confined land.

<https://daily.bandcamp.com/album-of-the-day/julmud-tuqoos-review>

https://www.instagram.com/julmud_1/

further links

https://no-niin.com/issue-25/exploring-palestines-musical-heritage-before-1948-an-interview-with-nader-jalal/?utm_source

<https://daily.bandcamp.com/features/ramallah-palestine-music-bilnaes-guide>

appendix

*For as long as I have For as long as I have
A sad tale with the water springs
A story where I'd lost my home (country)
And in perishing I have a brother lost
And a sky that wakes up not
Do not ask me who I am.*

Tareeq - Al Bara'em

*In the soil memory is a cave
Where everything returns and nothing returns the same*

Al daw' - Maya Al Khaldi

*My nakba birthday
Birth lasts longer than death
In Palestine, death is sudden
Instant
Constant
Happens in-between breaths
I was born amongst poetry
On the 50th anniversary
The liberation chants outside the hospital room
Told my mother
To push*

My Nakba Birthday - Mohammed El-Kurd & Clarissa Bittar

*I held it so tightly,
like an olive tree guarding memory.
My memories echoed the indescribable.
The voices of my brothers whispered to me:
"Hold on, Eyad! Don't worry, Abu Musa."*

Sumud - Palestinians in the Israeli dungeons