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Festival to focus on Moroccan Jewish musical tradition Morocco music festival to unite Muslims, Jews



Evenings of Spanish flamenco and music from India are also on the programme (File)

RABAT (AFP)

This year's festival of the Atlantic Andalusias, held in the Moroccan port of Essaouira, will focus on a Moroccan Jewish musical tradition known as Matrouz, organisers announced Thursday.

During the festival, to be held from October 29 to November 1, there will be concerts to gather together "our poets, our musicians and our singers, Muslims and Jews, to sing and dance together," Andre Azoulay, festival chairman and an advisor to Morocco's King Mohammed VI, told AFP.

The north African country's Jewish art is a "major component of the cultural wealth and identity in Morocco," Azoulay said. "It shouldn't just be reduced to folklore (...). It gives the best example of how to make mentalities evolve by going out to meet other people."

Matrouz is a tradition that dates back several centuries. One example of the art form will be a concert in which the rabbi Haim Louk will sing accompanied by the Zyriab orchestra from Oudja in east Morocco.

Azoulay said that the Franco-Algerian pianist Maurice El Medioni, "one of the great masters of the Jewish Arab tradition," will perform with the Jewish Moroccan singer, Raymonde El Bedaouia.

In the future, there will be a prize for the preservation and performance of Matrouz music, Azoulay added.

The festival will pay a posthumous tribute to 1950s singer Zohra Fassia, who was a militant for the peaceful coexistence of Jews and Muslims in Morocco.

Evenings of Spanish flamenco and music from India are also on the programme for the festival, which is the sixth of its kind.

