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## Tarik and Julia Banzi

### Al-Andalus

The once-powerful domain of the Muslim kingdom of Al-Andalus gave the world a musical style and flavor which permeated throughout the world, including the evolution of Flamenco and other cantes. Tarik and Julia Banzi combine their musical talent with the Arabic influence, keeping its distinct sound alive in the Northwest. They write much of their own music, and have named their band, Al-Andalus, to honor the region in southern Spain that the Arabs had controlled for over 800 years.

The focus of Tarik and Julia's performances is a melodic and sophisticated mixture of the Far East, India, and Africa. They fuse the classical Arabic, Sephardic, and jazz, into a soulful blend of meaningful harmony. The Banzis have created a wonderful compilation with Al-Andalus, entitled "Illumination." All thirteen tracks on this cd make you feel a strong connection with the Middle East and Spain.

Tarik grew up in Tetuan, Morocco. He earned his Doctorate of Fine Arts at Complutense University, in Madrid, Spain. Tarik has toured all around Europe, Russia, Yugoslavia, and Romania for many years. He and Julia met in the 1980's in Spain during one of Tarik's performances of flamenco jazz. Julia was then becoming actively known as one of the only world-recognized female flamenco guitarists.

Born in Denver, Colorado, Julia had spent many years studying guitar both at home and in San Francisco. She had moved to Spain to pursue a deeper involvement with flamenco and study under Spanish tutors.

Their passion for music brought them together as a couple. After getting married, they moved on to perform throughout Europe. Focusing their concerts on Julia's talented flamenco guitar, and Tarik's gifted abilities with the `oud (the Arab instrument from which the lute and guitar developed), their mixtures include the kamanja, the Arab violin, the nay, or reed flute, and the darbuka, a ceramic drum.

After leaving Spain, they chose to move to the Northwest, and reside here in Portland. Since their relocation, the Banzis have been involved with many projects. They developed the music for a school book and cassette, entitled *The Rise of Islam*. Their work with Al-Andalus has also been recorded on musical compilations, such as their song "Taktokah" on the cd "The Bridge." They performed their original score for Portland's "Romeo and Juliet." The Banzis are active in the `Young Audiences' where they have performed throughout schools to help to break down cultural barriers with their wonderful music. The Banzis also travel abroad to share their gifted music throughout the world.

Both Tarik and Julia teach private lessons on flamenco, guitar, oud and percussion. If you would like to see the Banzis perform, they have an evening concert at Artichoke Music on Valentine's Day. You will also have an opportunity to hear them perform on their new , which is in the process of being released, hopefully in March. You may order their CD "Illumination" released on KOCH Recordings at any area record store or by sending \$15 to the address below. For more information on their teaching, cd, or concerts, do write to them at [music@andalus.com](mailto:music@andalus.com) or visit their website at [www.Andalus.com](http://www.Andalus.com).

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