

“Protecting” America’s Borders: Musical Instruments Destroyed by TSA and US Customs Officials

Professional musician in tears after losing his lifetime collection of flutes

By [Global Research News](#)

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Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [Police State & Civil Rights](#)

Boujemaa Razgui had his ney flutes taken from him by TSA and destroyed by US customs officials in New York. Boujemaa Razgui is a virtuoso ney player and longtime Al Andalus Ensemble (<http://www.andalus.com>)

You can hear Boujemaa Razgui’s beautiful ney playing on the Al Andalus Ensemble “Illumination (<http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/alandalus2>)” on the track “Nabil.” Boujemaa has performed and recorded with Beyonce, Shakira and the Cirque de Soleil and is a regular with the Boston Camarata.

Boujemaa has made many trips around the world for over three decades with these flutes and never before has had a problem. He was traveling back to the US to his home in Boston, Ma from Marrakech, Morocco via Madrid, Spain when his instruments were confiscated and destroyed in New York. Boujemaa is a Canadian citizen and longtime US permanent resident. His wife and children are US citizens. In addition to the loss of his valuable instruments, Boujemaa said he was treated very poorly by US Customs officials where he was questioned for hours, photographed and fingerprinted without cause.



Boujemaa was in tears when he told us about the loss of his neys. He explained:

“besides representing my livelihood, the neys are like my children. Each one was carefully and lovingly crafted. Seasoned and oiled, and regularly played upon. With the years, the sound of the ney just grows better and better. I don’t know what I am going to do now...”

Professional ney flutes are almost impossible to purchase and most professional ney players

must resort to making them themselves. This however, is not an easy process as the reed required to make this soulful and mourning instrument is increasingly difficult to come by.

Ney players typically carry one set of neys as a different ney is required for each key. The ney flutes which Boujemaa had taken from him are ones which he has spent a lifetime collecting, making and playing upon. From literally hundreds of pieces of reed, a ney player/maker might find one reed that is suitable to make a ney with. Thus, the eleven neys and two kawala's represents over three decades of searching thorough many tens of thousands of reeds.

The artists of the Al-Andalus Ensemble build a new artistic language that unifies Eastern & Western cultures. Further the advancement of international understanding, goodwill & peace by supporting a group that reflects a place and time where Christians, Jews & Muslims lived together for a cultural flourishing: [Al-Andalus](#).

Boujemaa with the Al Andalus Ensemble performing in Sevilla, Spain. <http://www.flickr.com/photos/al-andalus/11696202115/in/photostream/lightbox/>

More pictures of Boujemaa can be downloaded here

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/al-andalus/>

We thank Norman LeBrecht at the Slipped Disc Arts Journal for being so proactive in spreading the word about this sad loss. Here is his original article together with a follow up by Boujemaa.

<http://www.artsjournal.com/slippeddisc/2013/12/jfk-custom...>

Here is also is an article in the Boston Globe about the incident.

<http://www.bostonglobe.com/lifestyle/names/2014/01/01/cus...>

We would appreciate it greatly if you would please assist us in bringing this incident to the attention of the public. If you have any questions or require any further information, please contact: Al Andalus Ensemble: <http://www.Andalus.com>

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