

If you only have 30 minutes ...

Trace Hatim Belyamani's personal musical journey and analyze how *tanfis* reflects the mission, cultural influences and innovation of Remix↔Culture.

Introduction

Tanfis is an Arabic word describing a spiritual release akin to a long-held breath. Tanfis is also the title given to Hatim Belyamani's multiple musical journeys that are a centerpiece to the nonprofit organization Remix↔Culture. These encompass artistic interpretations of traditional and cultural music performances adapted and transformed with modern electronic sounds and technological twists. Tanfis is the reflection of Belyamani's personal musical journey from classical pianist to "orchestra conductor from the future".

Text Mining (12 minutes)

Task 1: Complete the paragraph below using the **Cloze Word Bank**:¹

The Beginnings of Belyamani's Musical Journey

Belyamani grew up in a _____ family in Casablanca, Morocco. His father, a radiologist, regularly pulled out the _____ at parties and family gatherings, while he and his two brothers studied _____ from an early age at Casablanca's Conservatoire de Musique, becoming skilled _____ pianists. At home, his parents played _____ of an eclectic mix of Rachmaninov, The Beatles, Duke Ellington and _____ Moroccan music.

As a teenager, Belyamani largely dismissed Moroccan music, until one night in Marrakesh when he heard former Led Zeppelin _____ Robert Plant sing a Gnawa _____. The performance shifted his perspective. He began

reflecting on the music of his own _____ and how it fit alongside the sounds he was raised with.

A top _____ at the Casablanca American School, he graduated as valedictorian and entered Harvard University in 1995. While majoring in social studies, he explored music courses, drawn especially to _____—though he found it challenging without an _____. That changed when a roommate introduced him to _____ music, with its _____ and sound samples. “I realized I could hear my music without needing an orchestra at all,” he says.

Still electronic pop music left him cold until he heard Icelandic singer Bjork’s heavily electronic 1997 album, *Homogenic*. Bjork’s use of _____ to create “rhythms that were alive and that blended seamlessly with string sections and with live _____ so the electronic and acoustic were _____. I’d never heard anything like it,” Belyamani says.

Cloze Word Bank:

harmonious	local	musical	oud	orchestra	classical	composing
electronic	piano	recordings	sections	frontman	student	synthesizers
tune	vocals					

Task 2: Identify a phrase from the article that describes a source of inspiration or influence that led to the creation of Remix↔Culture during different phases or events in Belyamani’s life.

The Latter Years of Belyamani’s Musical Journey

Text Analysis (12 minutes)

Using your completed Cloze Reading Passage and the article, fill in the table below with text-based evidence and thoughtful analysis.

Life Phase/Event	Guiding Questions	Text Evidence (from reading)
Belyamani quit his job with Apple and returned home to Morrocco in 2012. ²	What motivated Belyamani to make this life change 12 years after graduating from college?	
Belyamani borrowed his mom's car and traveled to the northern city of Khenifra. ³	What turning point at the beginning of his trip helped shape Remix↔Culture's core values?	
Belyamani achieved a small grant to create an art installation at a festival in California. ⁴	What was the content and design of the installation? Why was it important for the future development of Remix↔Culture?	
Belyamani was inspired to film more musicians around the world ⁵ .	What musical cultures were included as Remix↔Culture officially launched in 2016?	

Synthesis (6 minutes)

What factor (mission, cultural influence, or fusion of tradition and innovation)—do you believe was most influential in Belyamani's journey? Support your answer with examples from the article.⁶

Common Core Standards

CCRA.R.1 Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.

¹ Belyamani grew up in a **musical** family in Casablanca, Morocco. His father, a radiologist, regularly pulled out the **oud** at parties and family gatherings, while he and his two brothers studied **piano** from an early age at Casablanca's Conservatoire de Musique, becoming skilled **classical** pianists. At home, his parents played **recordings** of an eclectic mix of Rachmaninov, The Beatles, Duke Ellington and **local** Moroccan music.

As a teenager, Belyamani largely dismissed Moroccan music, until one night in Marrakesh when he heard former Led Zeppelin **frontman** Robert Plant sing a Gnawa **tune**. The performance shifted his perspective. He began reflecting on the music of his own **culture** and how it fit alongside the sounds he was raised with.

A top **student** at the Casablanca American School, he graduated as valedictorian and entered Harvard University in 1995. While majoring in social studies, he explored music courses, drawn especially to **composing**—though he found it challenging without an **orchestra**. That changed when a roommate introduced him to **electronic** music,

with its **synthesizers** and sound samples. “I realized I could hear my music without needing an orchestra at all,” he says.

Still electronic pop music left him cold until he heard Icelandic singer Bjork’s heavily electronic 1997 album, *Homogenic*. Bjork’s use of **computers** to create “rhythms that were alive and that blended seamlessly with string sections and with live **vocals** so the electronic and acoustic were **harmonious**. I’d never heard anything like it,” Belyamani says.

2 “I needed to reconnect with my family, with my home country, with my community”; “I felt so disconnected in the US and that feeling extended to my music.”

3 “He gave Belyamani a crash course, not only on the music but also the Amazigh culture that had created it”; “Honor the source and context behind the music”.

4 “He turned to his his Khenifra recordings and photographs”; “engage passersby for the 2012 festival”; “He designed an interactive music and image program that allowed people to create their own remixes of the original songs and images”; “The germ of Remix↔Culture began to take root.”

5 “Belyamani was back in Morocco seeking out more musicians around the country to film and record”; “In addition to Morocco, the team ventured to Brazil, China, Hungary, Lebanon, and Albania.”

6 Answers will vary, but students should evaluate and explain the importance of the different events, experiences and interactions that motivated Belyamani along his musical journey.