

THE ROUGH GUIDE to the music of

Morocco

I remember the moment when the real Morocco blew a hole in the haze of my romantic views about the country. It was at a bus stop in a suburb of Rabat. My friend Khalid and I were on our way back to his flat in the town centre after visiting a friend who had aspirations – hopeless ones, as it turned out – to become a rock star, in the mould of Pink Floyd and Dire Straits. The evening was gloomy, chilly even, and a dirty dusk filled the air. On the wasteland opposite us, an old man was grazing his meagre flock of emaciated goats on brittle pasture strewn with rubbish. Men and women in bobble hats and headscarves were hurrying home from work and shopping, heads down, shuttered, eager to reach the glow of their family hearths. Where the wasteland ended, a forest of newly built housing blocks had sprouted – grim, cubist and spangled with satellite dishes and clotheslines. A few enormous advertising hoardings pummelled the eye with the latest cut-price mobile phone deal or insurance heaven. Cars, trucks and busses roared by indifferently. The grinding joylessness of the scene was ubiquitous and unequivocal.

Welcome to Morocco, I thought. Not the Morocco of medieval souks and clattering silversmiths, or sumptuous Ryads with topaz swimming pools or picturesque Kasbahs high in the clean silvery air of the Atlas Mountains. No. This was the Morocco of the daily grind; the Morocco that has driven thousands of its own young into self-imposed exile in Europe and North America; the Morocco where youthful joy is proscribed by the dogma of imams and moral guardians, where corruption, unemployment and poverty are endemic, where Everyman and Everywoman has little chance

against the power of the *makhzen* – the ruling elite who snuggle up against the walls of King's Palace and caress the strings of power in their sumptuously ringed fingers. It's the ambitious unsentimental Morocco of shopping malls and supermarkets, of cybercafés and nightclubs, of flirting on beaches, cruising in cars, of silicon dreams and loud urban music.

This, too, is the Morocco that exploded briefly on 20 February 2011 in a conflagration of anger, disorder and violence, inspired by the revolutions in Tunisia and Egypt. The nationwide demonstrations and riots forced King Mohammed VI to instigate a new constitutional project and call for fresh elections. Will M6 (the cheeky term most Moroccans use to refer to their monarch) and his fawning acolytes survive? The jury's still out. Meanwhile, the daily grind goes on inspiring a whole new generation of hip hop and rock bands to step out of line, speak up and sing the truth in *darija*, the unadorned street slang of the Moroccan 'hood.

The Moroccan musicians, MCs and DJs that came of age in the decade following the death of the old authoritarian King Hassan II and the accession of the young, supposedly modern, sexy and enlightened M6 back in 1999 share plenty of common ground. They've turned their backs on the Arab heartlands of the Middle East, and the stifling Cairo and Beirut pop factories, to travel deep into cyberspace and draw inspiration from the urban youth styles of the West, especially hip hop and metal. They have little empathy with the old *chaabi* pop of the 1970s and 1980s, or the more traditional strains of classical *andalusi* and *melhoun* that still

dominate national radio and TV, even though most of them agree that they owe a huge debt to Nass El Ghiwane, those 1970s superheroes of musical radicalism and free street-level expression.

The new breed waste no time worrying whether their music represents a defeat of traditional Moroccan culture by the forces of globalization. They don't hang around waiting for blessings from the official media or state-backed cultural apparatus, knowing that none will ever come. They're no longer duped by the dream of emigration to Europe or North America. They want to build their future at home, in Morocco, finding ways to get around barriers to progress by using the tools of cultural as well as political revolution: the internet, Facebook, YouTube, instant messaging, SMS and *le telephone Arabe*, aka 'word of mouth'. They're proudly independent and resolutely DIY in their approach. The immense annual Boulevard des Jeunes festival in Casablanca, responsible for nurturing and breaking so many of the new acts, is a perfect and hugely successful example of what this new spirit can achieve.

Although inter-city musical rivalry is as vital in Morocco as it is in the USA and elsewhere, most agree that Moroccan hip hop originated on the edges or the medina or old town of Casablanca, in and around the market of Bab Jdid in the early 1990s. Two decades later, Morocco has the most prolific rap scene in the Arab world bar none. Every city or town has its own rap family, comprising MCs, DJs, 'graph' artists and b-boys, and some of them have managed to become national and even international heroes of free speech and deep beats:

Fnaïre (Marrakech), H-Kayne (Meknes), Fez City Crew (Fez), Style Souss (Agadir), Casa Crew (Casa) and Zanka Flow (Tangiers). These bands may idolize US heroes like Eminem, 50 Cent, Tupac Shakur and Notorious B.I.G., but they're also discerning enough to appreciate the need to nurture the values that make them unmistakably Moroccan – musically, stylistically, spiritually and morally.

Meanwhile, the old Morocco is still there if you have a mind to look for it. Shepherds and subsistence farmers still tend their flocks and till the soil under the unforgiving sun, banging a drum or playing a flute when God and time permit. Older generations still revere the great *chaabi* singers of yesteryear, be they crooner cantors like Samy Elmaghribi or heroes of Morocco's great decade of revolutionary protest songs in the 1970s, like Lemchaheb. People still flock to Sufi ceremonies in their thousands, proud in their affiliation to brotherhoods like the Tidjani, the Gnawi or the Aissawa, and comfortable with a form of worship that allows them to feel the presence of God with their heart and soul whilst enjoying the support of their community and tolerating diversity and difference in their ever-evolving world.

The new Moroccan generation has lost its fear and found its voice. As every generation must, it is redefining Morocco's cultural identity and reinventing the country's creative magic in its own image. Thanks to this new generation, Morocco remains relevant, forward-looking, prolific and musically blessed, despite (or maybe even thanks to) the frenzy of modernity and the grimness of the daily grind.

Je me rappellerai longtemps le jour où le vrai Maroc a jailli devant moi, dissipant mes vues romantiques sur le pays. C'était à un arrêt de bus dans la banlieue de Rabat. Mon ami Khalid et moi-même revenions vers son appartement du centre ville après avoir rendu visite à un ami qui aspirait - sans espoir, comme il s'est avéré - à devenir une rock star, à l'instar de Pink Floyd et Dire Straits. La soirée était maussade, l'air froid; un crépuscule gris emplissait l'espace. Sur la friche en face de nous, un vieil homme faisait paître son maigre troupeau de chèvres émaciées sur des pâturages fragiles et emplis de détritrus. Les hommes et les femmes, portant chapeaux et foulards, se dépêchaient de rentrer, qui du travail, qui des courses, tête baissée, impatientes d'atteindre la chaleur de leurs foyers familiaux. Aux abords de la friche, une forêt de logements nouvellement construits avait germé - sombre, cubiste et pailletée d'antennes paraboliques et de cordes à linge. Quelques panneaux publicitaires énormes matraquaient l'œil du passant avec la dernière remise sur une offre de téléphone mobile ou d'assurance. Voitures, camions et bus rugissaient aux alentours, indifférents. L'absence de joie de la scène, sensible partout, était sans équivoque.

Bienvenue au Maroc, pensais-je. Pas le Maroc des souks médiévaux et des orfèvres cliquetants, des riads somptueux avec piscines topaze ou des kasbahs pittoresques haut dans l'air pur argenté de l'Atlas. Non, c'était le Maroc du quotidien, le Maroc qui a poussé des milliers de ses propres jeunes en exil en Europe et en Amérique du Nord; le Maroc, où la joie juvénile est proscrite par le

dogme des imams et des gardiens de la morale, où la corruption, le chômage et la pauvreté sont endémiques, où monsieur ou madame Toutlemonde a peu de chance contre le pouvoir du *makhzen* - l'élite dirigeante qui se blottit contre les murs du palais du roi et cresse les ficelles du pouvoir dans ses doigts somptueusement bagués. C'est l'ambitieux Maroc asentimental des centres commerciaux et supermarchés, des cybercafés et des discothèques, du flirt sur les plages, des équipées automobiles, des rêves de silicium et de la musique urbaine bruyante.

Cela aussi, c'est le Maroc qui a explosé brièvement le 20 février 2011 dans une conflagration de colère, de désordre et de violence, inspiré des révolutions en Tunisie et en Egypte. Les manifestations et les émeutes dans tout le pays ont contraint le Roi Mohammed VI à engager un nouveau projet constitutionnel et à organiser de nouvelles élections. Est-ce que M6 (le surnom audacieux que la plupart des Marocains utilisent pour désigner leur monarque) et ses acolytes serviles survivront au printemps arabe? Nul ne sait. En attendant, le train-train quotidien continue, inspirant toute une nouvelle génération de groupes de rock et de hip hop et les incitant à parler et à chanter la vérité en *darija*, l'argot brut de la rue marocaine.

Les musiciens marocains, MCs et DJs, qui ont grandi dans la décennie suivant la mort de l'ancien roi autoritaire Hassan II et l'accès au pouvoir en 1999 du jeune roi M6, soi-disant moderne, sexy et éclairé, partagent de nombreux points communs. Ils ont tourné le dos aux bastions arabes du Moyen-Orient, à la vie étouffante

du Caire et aux usines pop de Beyrouth pour voyager profondément dans le cyberspace et s'inspirer des nouveaux styles urbains de l'Ouest, en particulier du hip hop et du métal. Ils ont peu d'empathie pour la vieille pop chaâbi des années 1970 et 1980, ou les courants plus traditionnels des *melhoun* et *andalusi* classiques qui dominent encore la radio et la télévision nationales, même si la plupart d'entre eux conviennent qu'ils ont une dette énorme envers Nass El Ghiwane, et ceux qui étaient dans les années 1970 les super-héros du radicalisme musical et de l'expression urbaine.

La nouvelle génération ne perd pas de temps à se demander si sa musique représente une défaite de la culture marocaine traditionnelle par rapport aux forces de la mondialisation. Elle n'attend pas les bénédictions de la presse officielle ou d'être soutenue par l'appareil culturel d'État, sachant qu'aucun de ses représentants n'assistera jamais à ses concerts. Elle n'est plus la dupe du rêve de l'émigration vers l'Europe ou l'Amérique du Nord. Ce qu'elle veut, c'est construire un avenir sur place, au Maroc, trouver des moyens pour contourner les obstacles au progrès en utilisant les outils de la révolution culturelle et politique: Internet, Facebook, YouTube, la messagerie instantanée, les SMS et le téléphone arabe, ou «bouche à oreille». Elle est fièrement indépendante et résolument débrouillarde dans son approche. L'Immersion Festival annuel Boulevard des Jeunes à Casablanca, qui porte aux nues ou plonge dans l'oubli tant d'artistes, est un parfait exemple de ce nouvel esprit, qui rencontre un grand succès.

Bien que la rivalité musicale entre les villes est

aussi flagrante au Maroc qu'aux Etats-Unis et ailleurs, la plupart conviennent que le hip-hop marocain a vu le jour sur les bords ou dans la médina (vieille ville) de Casablanca, dans et autour du marché de Bab Jdid, au début des années 1990. Deux décennies plus tard, le Maroc a la scène rap la plus prolifique du monde arabe. Chaque ville ou village a sa propre famille de rappers, comprenant des MCs, des DJs, des graphistes et des b-boys, dont certains sont parvenus à devenir des héros nationaux et même internationaux de la liberté d'expression et des beats profonds: Fnaïre (Marrakech), H-Kayne (Meknès), Fez City Crew (Fès), Style Souss (Agadir), Casa Crew (Casa) et Zanka Flow (Tanger). Ces groupes peuvent idolâtrer des héros américains comme Eminem, 50 Cent, Tupac Shakur et Notorious B.I.G., mais ils sont aussi suffisamment exigeants pour comprendre la nécessité d'entretenir les valeurs qui les rendent incontestablement marocains - musicalement, stylistiquement, spirituellement et moralement.

En attendant, le vieux Maroc est toujours là s'il vous prend l'idée de le chercher. Bergers et agriculteurs font toujours paître leurs troupeaux et cultivent la terre sous le soleil implacable, frappent sur un tambour ou jouent de la flûte quand Dieu et le temps le permettent. Les anciennes générations vénèrent toujours les grands chanteurs *chaabi* d'antan, qu'ils soient crooners tels Samy Elmaghribi ou héros de la grande décennie de chansons révolutionnaires protestataires des années 1970, comme Lemchaheb. Les cérémonies soufies attirent toujours des milliers de Marocains, fiers de leur appartenance à des confréries comme

les tidjanis, gnaouis ou aissawas, et appréciant une forme de culte qui leur permet de sentir la présence de Dieu avec leur cœur et leur âme tout en profitant du soutien de leur communauté et en tolérant la diversité et la différence dans leur monde en constante évolution.

La nouvelle génération marocaine a perdu sa peur et trouvé sa voix. Comme chaque génération le doit, celle-ci redéfinit l'identité culturelle du Maroc et réinvente la magie créatrice du pays à sa propre image. Grâce à cette

Recuerdo el momento en que el verdadero Marruecos hizo un agujero en la bruma de mis visiones románticas sobre el país. Sucedió en una parada de autobús en un barrio de Rabat. Mi amigo Khalid y yo íbamos de camino a su piso en el centro de la ciudad después de haber visitado a un amigo que tenía aspiraciones — imposibles, como resultó ser— para convertirse en una estrella de rock, al estilo de Pink Floyd y Dire Straits. La noche era sombría, fría incluso, y un amanecer sucio llenaba el aire. En el descampado que había enfrente, un anciano pastaba su escaso rebaño de escuálidas cabras en precarios pastos llenos de basura. Los hombres y mujeres —que llevaban gorros con borlas y pañuelos en la cabeza— se apresuraban por llegar a casa. Venían del trabajo o de hacer la compra, con las cabezas gachas, cansados, deseosos de llegar al bienestar de sus chimeneas familiares. Donde terminaba el descampado, una profusión de viviendas de nueva construcción había surgido. Eran lúgubres, cubistas y estaban

salpicadas de antenas parabólicas y tendedores. Algunas enormes vallas publicitarias llamaban la atención con un paraíso de últimas ofertas en teléfonos móviles o seguros. Los coches, camiones y autobuses pasaban de largo con indiferencia. La falta de alegría absoluta de la escena era omnipresente e inequívoca.

Bienvenido a Marruecos, pensé. No al Marruecos de los zocos medievales y plateros ruidosos, de suntuosos *ryads* con piscinas de topacio o pintorescos *kasbahs* en lo alto del plateado aire limpio del Atlas. No. Este era el Marruecos de la rutina diaria; el Marruecos que ha llevado a miles de sus jóvenes hacia un exilio autoimpuesto en Europa y Norteamérica; el Marruecos donde la alegría juvenil está proscrita por el dogma de los imanes y los guardianes de la moral; donde la corrupción, el desempleo y la pobreza son endémicos; donde todos los hombres y mujeres tienen pocas oportunidades contra el poder del majzén —la élite gobernante que se acurruca junto a los muros del palacio del rey y acaricia los hilos del poder con dedos anillados lujosamente—. Es el Marruecos ambicioso y poco sentimental de centros comerciales y supermercados, de cibercafés y discotecas, de ligues en las playas, de paseos en coches, de sueños de silicio y de música urbana a todo volumen. Este es, también, el Marruecos que estalló brevemente el 20 de febrero de 2011 en una conflagración de ira, desorden y violencia, inspirada por las revoluciones en Túnez y Egipto. Las manifestaciones y disturbios en todo el país obligaron al rey Mohammed VI a iniciar un nuevo proyecto constitucional y convocar nuevas

elecciones. ¿Sobrevivirán M6 (el atrevido término que utiliza la mayoría de los marroquíes para referirse a su monarca) y sus aduladores acólitos a la primavera árabe? El jurado sigue deliberando. Mientras tanto, la rutina diaria sigue inspirando a toda una nueva generación de bandas de *hip hop* y de rock para desmarcarse, hablar más alto y cantar la verdad en *darija*, la jerga callejera sin adornos del pueblo marroquí.

Los músicos marroquíes, MC y DJ que alcanzaron la madurez en la década posterior a la muerte del viejo y autoritario rey Hassan II y la subida al trono del joven, supuestamente moderno, sexy e inteligente M6 en 1999 tienen mucho en común. Les han dado la espalda a los centros árabes de Oriente Medio, y a las factorías pop opresivas de El Cairo y Beirut, para viajar en las profundidades del ciberespacio e inspirarse en los estilos jóvenes urbanos del Oeste, especialmente el *hip hop* y el metal. Tienen poca empatía con el viejo pop *chaabi* de las décadas de 1970 y 1980, o con las variedades más tradicionales del andalusí clásico y el *melhoun* que todavía dominan la radio nacional y la TV, aunque la mayoría de ellos está de acuerdo en que tienen una enorme deuda con Nass El Ghiwane, los superhéroes del radicalismo musical de la década de 1970 y las expresiones callejeras libres.

La nueva generación no pierde el tiempo preocupándose por si su música representa una derrota de la cultura marroquí tradicional por las fuerzas de la globalización. Ellos no esperan bendiciones de los medios oficiales ni del aparato cultural del Estado, a sabiendas de que no

llegarán. Ya no son engañados por el sueño de la emigración a Europa o Norteamérica. Quieren construir su futuro en casa, en Marruecos, encontrar formas de sortear barreras para progresar por medio de herramientas de revolución culturales y políticas: Internet, Facebook, YouTube, mensajería instantánea, SMS y *le telephone Arabe*, también conocido como el 'boca a boca'. Se enorgullecen de su independencia y son resolutivos con su propio enfoque. El inmenso Festival del Boulevard de los jóvenes músicos que tiene lugar anualmente en Casablanca —responsable de alimentar y romper la mayoría de los nuevos actos— es un ejemplo perfecto y de gran éxito de lo que este nuevo espíritu puede alcanzar.

Aunque la rivalidad musical interurbana es tan importante en Marruecos como en Estados Unidos y otros lugares, la mayoría coincide en que el *hip hop* se originó en la medina o barrio antiguo de Casablanca, en el mercado de Bab Jdid y sus alrededores a comienzos de la década de 1990. Dos décadas después, Marruecos posee, sin duda, la escena rap más prolífica en el mundo árabe. Cada ciudad o pueblo tiene su propia familia rapera, que consta de MC, DJ, artistas gráficos y *b-boys*, y algunos de ellos han logrado convertirse en héroes nacionales e incluso internacionales del discurso libre y los ritmos profundos: Fnaïre (Marrakech), H-Kayne (Meknes), Fez City Crew (Fez), Style Souss (Agadir), Casa Crew (Casa) y Zanka Flow (Tangiers). Estas bandas pueden idolatrar a héroes estadounidenses como Eminem, 50 Cent, Tupac Shakur y Notorious B.I.G., pero también son

lo bastante exigentes para apreciar la necesidad de fomentar los valores que los hacen ser marroquíes —musicalmente, estilísticamente, espiritualmente y moralmente— de manera inconfundible.

Mientras tanto, el antiguo Marruecos sigue ahí si queremos buscarlo. Los pastores y los agricultores de subsistencia continúan cuidando sus rebaños y labrando la tierra bajo el sol implacable, tocando un tambor o una flauta cuando Dios y el tiempo lo permiten. Las generaciones anteriores aún veneran a los grandes cantantes *chaabi* de antaño, ya sean cantantes *crooner* como Samy Elmaghribi o héroes de la gran década de canciones de protesta revolucionarias en la década de 1970, como Lemchaheb. Miles de personas siguen acudiendo a ceremonias sufíes, orgullosas de pertenecer a hermandades como los tidjanis, los gnawis o los aissawas. Se sienten cómodas con una forma de culto que les permite sentir la presencia de Dios en sus corazones y almas, mientras disfrutan del apoyo de la su comunidad y toleran la diversidad y la diferencia en su mundo en constante evolución.

La nueva generación marroquí ha perdido su miedo y ha encontrado su voz. Como cada generación debe, está redefiniendo la identidad cultural de Marruecos y reinventando la magia creativa del país en su propia imagen. Gracias a esta nueva generación, Marruecos sigue siendo relevante, progresista, prolífica y bendecida musicalmente, a pesar del —o quizá incluso gracias al— frenesí de la modernidad y la crueldad de la rutina diaria.

FNAÏRE FEAT. SALAH EDIN - Fnaïre call their distinctive style of hip hop *rap traditionnelle*. The term sounds like an oxymoron, but makes perfect sense when you hear the way in which they solder various styles of traditional music like *gnawa* to hip hop beats, so expertly that it's hard to see the join. MCs Khalifa and Achraf, DJ Van and Tizaf Mouhssine come from the southern city of Marrakech, where tradition and culture are not only an immense source of pride but of tourist revenue as well. Despite the tragic death in a car crash of their DJ, Hicham Belqas, in 2008, Fnaïre have risen to become one of Morocco's most successful hip hop outfits.

COMPAGNIES MUSICALES DU TAFILALET - Led by the mandol player Charif El Hamri, the Compagnies Musicales Du Tafilalet are one of a number of local music troupes from the Tafilalet in the far south of Morocco, bordering the vast Sahara desert. Their sparse, yearning music is a faithful evocation of the region's epic physical grandeur and rich culture, which in turn reflects a rural lifestyle still faithful to its ancient traditions. Many sages, rulers and tyrants have emerged from the Tafilalet during its long history, and in this song El Hamri sings the praises of the region's many saints.

AMIRA SAQATI - 'Amira Saqati' is a mild slang insult meaning something like 'a piece of nothing'. The group was a side-project of the groundbreaking Moroccan dub and electro foursome Aisha Kandisha's Jarring Effects. With the help of their label, Barraka El Farnatshi Productions, Aisha

Kandisha helped to popularize and wayward amalgam of raw traditional Moroccan sounds and rap, electro, funk ... whatever fitted best. Their pioneering efforts opened the doors for many an aspiring purveyor of urban Moroccan beats and set the scene for the arrival of the new generation of the 2000s.

LES IMAZIGHEN - There's been hope for Morocco's Berber-speaking minority since 2001, when the new King Mohammed VI declared a commitment to introduce Tamazight, the Berber language, into the national curriculum. In reality, little progress has been made since then. Mohamed Rouicha, from Kenitra in the Middle Atlas, is one of Morocco's great Berber singers and virtuosos of the *lthar* (four-stringed lute). 'Iberdane' is a love song that belongs to a huge repertoire of Berber love music known collectively as *izlan*, which is performed by venerable musicians in turban and *gandoura* cloak called *chioukh* (singular *cheikh*) or their female equivalent, the *cheikhate*. This is the sound of rural Morocco and it exudes the hard simplicity and sweet yearnings of rural life.

U-CEF - London-based, Moroccan born and raised, Youssef Adel aka U-Cef, has been at the vanguard of the urban 'funkification' of Moroccan music for over decade. His 2001 release, 'Halalium', was a blueprint for the experimental blending of traditional Moroccan styles such as *gnawa* and *melhoun* with the urban beats of hip hop, drum 'n' bass and electro. 'Boolandrix' is the result of an imagined collaboration between Jimi Hendrix - who spent several months in Morocco in the late 1960s, hanging out and jamming

with *gnawa* musicians - and the contemporary *gnawa* master or *maalem*, Said Damir. US MC Johnny Biz, aka Bizmatik, adds his contemporary urban flow to the mix.

LEMCHAHEB - When Moulay Cherif Lamrani met Mohammed Bakhti at a downtown Casablanca café called La Comedie back in 1973, the young musician wanted to form a band in the image of his heroes, Nass El Ghiwane. Bakhti had already worked with Ghiwane and other groups in the radical Moroccan *chaabi* movement of the 1970s, such as the wonderful Tagada. Under Bakhti's management, Lemchaheb became one of the most popular radical combos of Morocco in the 1970s, second only to Nass El Ghiwane, who continued to reign supreme. In the 1980s, Lemchaheb's collaborations with the German group Dissidenten earned them an international audience beyond the Moroccan diaspora. Despite their decline and eventual breakup in 2004, Lemchaheb remains a seminal name in the story of contemporary Moroccan music.

MAALEM SAID DAMIR & GNAWA ALLSTARS - The Gnawi are a Sufi brotherhood that dominate Morocco's traditional music landscape. Although they have been living for centuries in the south of the country, especially in and around the cities of Marrakech and Essaouira, their ancestors were originally brought north across the great Sahara from black Africa many hundreds of years ago as slaves or prisoners of war. Long reviled by polite Moroccan society, their music is designed to achieve states of trance during which profound spiritual and physical healing can occur. Said Damir is prominent among a new younger breed of *gnawa maalems* (masters)

from Marrakech, and this song praises his roots in the culture of the Bambara, a black people from the shores of the great River Niger in southern Mali.

H-KAYNE – Fnaïre’s rivals for the Moroccan hip hop crown are H-Kayne, from Meknes. The group was formed when DOGS, one of the original Moroccan hip hop pioneers from the early 1990s, met DJ Khalid in Montpellier, France. Together they have been adept at implementing Plan ‘D’ (as in *debrouillard*, a great French word meaning ‘adept at hustling and finding ways and means’) to circumvent obstacles on the road to national and international success. They won the Best Hip Hop Act award at the Boulevard Des Jeunes festival in 2003, and have released three hit albums since then. ‘Jil Jdid’ means ‘New Generation’ and the song packs a humorous yet portentous message about the delights and dangers of internet addiction among Morocco’s youth.

SAMY ELMAGHRIBI – Samy Elmaghribi was one of the greatest Moroccan singers and composers of the twentieth century, and a revered figure in Judeo-Moroccan culture. Born in 1922, he grew up in the Jewish quarter of Rabat. He became an adept of classical *andalusi* music and started writing songs in his early twenties, mixing the strict classical forms of *andalusi*, *haouzi* and *gharnati* and the more popular street-level poetry of *melhoun* into a unique style, which he used to sing about contemporary events such as the return of King Mohammed V in 1955 or the terrible earthquake of Agadir in 1961. In 1960, Elmaghribi emigrated to Canada, where he devoted himself increasingly to religious Jewish music, although he managed to

combine both the sacred and profane in his concert repertoire right up until his death in 2008.

MAZAGAN – They call their style *chaabi*-groove, probably because it’s popular (*chaabi*) and groovy. Based on that clash of Moroccan and Western sounds so typical of the country’s new breed of rock and pop bands, the Mazagan sound mixes local *aïta*, *gharnati*, *soussi*, *gnawa* and *rai* with worldly funk, rock and reggae rhythms. The group was formed in 1998 by three friends – Younes Ramzi, Issam Kamal and Abdelhak Amal – in the seaside town of El Jadida. Mazagan has since expanded to become a seven-piece outfit with an enviable reputation for scintillating live performances and catchy, intelligent pop tunes.

MASTER MUSICIANS OF JOUJOUKA – When the villagers of Joujouka in northern Morocco welcomed a scruffy blond-haired Westerner and his entourage into their midst in 1968, little did they know that the name of Brian Jones of the Rolling Stones would become forever associated with their remote mountain home. Truth is that Joujouka has already been ‘discovered’ by beat poet Brion Gysin a decade and a half before, and its hereditary musicians – the village seems to be inhabited mainly by musicians-had been playing primal drum, flute and vocal music since the day when a Pan-like mythical figure called Boujeloud, half-man and half-goat, exchanged his flute for the wife of a local shepherd. How long ago did it happen? Centuries...possibly millennia. Boujeloud’s gift is celebrated in an annual festival, which Jones recorded and released on the Rolling Stones’ label in 1971, thus outing a very old secret to the world.

- 01 **FNAÏRE FEAT. SALAH EDIN** Sah Raoui
from the album YED EL HENNA (2007)
(Adel Damoussi, Khalifa Mennani, Achraf Aarab, Salah Edin) pub Fnaïre.
Licensed from Fnaïre Management UK.
- 02 **COMPAGNIES MUSICALES DU TAFILALET**
Compagnie El Hamri/Ya Rijal L’bled
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