

AMARSA



Press Kit
2022

IMARHAN

Biography

Imarhan are Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane aka Saddam, Tahar Khaldi, Abdelkader Ourzig, Hicham Bouhasse and Haiballah Akhamouk. All born in Tamanrasset, Southern Algeria, a city where the Tuareg community of Northern Mali, Kel Tamashek people, ended their exile in the early 1990s, following the multiple struggles they have been experiencing since the 1960s.

Imarhan, meaning 'the ones I care about', a loose collection of friends began in 2006, to play together under the watchful eye of their community and released their debut album "Imarhan" in 2016, then "Temet" in 2018. In two albums, Imarhan have become an emblem of the new Tuareg generation, breathing a new wind into the Assouf, the desert blues.

Imarhan celebrate Kel Tamashek stories of today and create a rare symbiosis of the ancient and modern and channeling this rich and varied wave of musical influences. They have a sound that reflect their cultural and generational background which draw upon traditional Tuareg music, ballads from Sub Saharan Africa, and modern pop and rock from Algeria and the West they have heard while growing up.

By building their own studio in the middle of the Hoggar in 2019 where they recorded their third album, "Aboogi" released in 2022, Imarhan becomes the spokesmen of the young Tuareg generation. They make the old nuggets of Tamashek music shine with the renewed light of their vibrant energy, an energy that has moved beyond the exile, wandering and humiliation suffered by their forebears, an energy that gives back to Tamanrasset what it gave the band long ago, and places the city firmly and confidently on the world of musical creativity.

Biographie

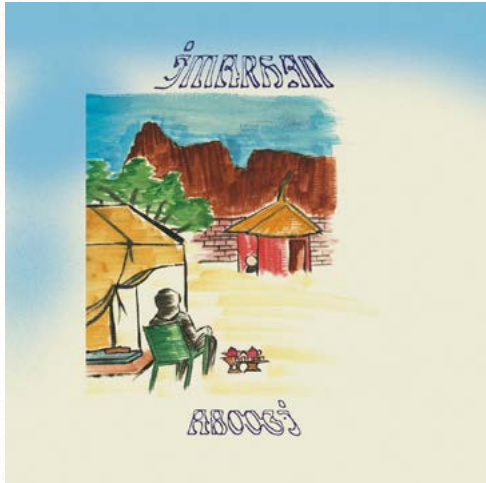
Imarhan ce sont Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane aka Saddam, Tahar Khaldi, Abdelkader Ourzig, Hicham Bouhasse and Haiballah Akhamouk. Ils naissent et grandissent Tamanrasset, sud de l'Algérie, où nombre de leur communauté Kel Tamashek, peuple touareg du nord du Mali trouve refuge au début des années 1990, s'exilant de sa terre natale et des multiples luttes essuyées depuis les années 1960.

Imarhan ou 'ceux qui me veulent du bien', une fidèle bande d'amis, ébauchent en 2006 leurs premiers accords sous l'oreille bienveillante de leur communauté, et publient leur premier album "Imarhan" en 2016, puis "Temet" en 2018. En deux albums, Imarhan deviennent un emblème de la nouvelle génération Touareg, insufflant à l'Assouf, le blues du désert un vent nouveau. Imarhan célèbre le quotidien de l'ardente jeunesse Kel Tamashek, entre l'immensité du désert et la vie citadine. Le son d'Imarhan reflète leurs influences plurielles, une symbiose rare issue à la fois de leurs racines ancestrales Touareg, de balades d'Afrique Sub Saharienne, et d'expériences pop rock d'Algérie et de l'Occident écoutées en grandissant.

En créant leur studio au coeur de Tamanrasset et du Hoggar en 2019, où ils enregistrent "Aboogi" leur troisième album, publié en 2022, Imarhan se fait porte-parole de la jeune génération Touareg. et redonne à la ville de Tam ce qu'elle lui a offert, fait briller les pépites de la culture Tamashek grâce à une énergie vibrante qui transcende le passé de l'errance, de l'exil, les souffrances de l'humiliation, et consacre, avec confiance, sa place sur la mappemonde de la créativité musicale.

IMARHAN

discography



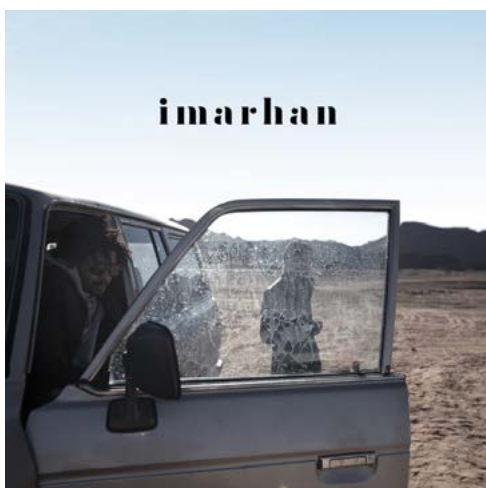
ABOOGI

FORMAT : CD/LP
RELEASE DATE : 28.1.22
LABEL : CITY SLANG



TEMET

FORMAT : CD/LP
RELEASE DATE : 23.2.18
LABEL : CITY SLANG



IMARHAN

FORMAT : CD/LP
RELEASE DATE : 29.4.16
LABEL : CITY SLANG

IMARHAN

ABOOGI press UK

UNCUT



Imarhan: finding "a new colour" in their own studio

IMARHAN

Aboogi

CITY SLANG

8/10

Tuareg rockers reconnect with the serenity and sadness of their home. *By Sam Richards*



IMARHAN have long been anointed as official heirs to Tinariwen's desert-rock throne. Frontman Iyad Moussa Ben

Abderahmane (aka Sadam) is the cousin of Tinariwen's bassist Eyadou Ag Leche and has joined them as a touring member on occasion. The bond between the two bands continues on this album, with Tinariwen's Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni and Mohammed Ag Itlale (aka Japonais) contributing guest vocals – the latter, poignantly, in his final recording session before his death in February.

While the music Imarhan make draws from the same well, combining blues and rock with Tuareg folksong and its distinct flavour of "assouf" (which broadly translates as longing or solitude), they always set out to distinguish themselves from their forebears by incorporating poppier influences and appealing to a younger generation. Press photos around the time of their 2016 self-titled album showed the quintet dressed in jeans and leather jackets rather than the traditional allchu veils, while the promo clip for the following year's terrific "Azzaman" found them cruising around the suburbs in fancy shades and pulling donuts in the desert, in a knowing nod to hip-hop culture. The video for "Achinkad", Aboogi's first single and opening track, is markedly different. The band are dressed in traditional robes, seated around a campfire, picking out a doleful, hypnotic pattern on acoustic guitars. Although the song explodes into life with a holler

SLEEVE NOTES

- 1 Achinkad
- 2 Derhan
- 3 Temet
- 4 Tindjatan
- 5 Asof
- 6 Assosam
- 7 Taghadart
- 8 Laouini
- 9 Imaslan N'Assouf
- 10 Tamiditin
- 11 Ardor Newlan

Produced by: Patrick Votanz and Maxime Kosinetz

Recorded at: Aboogi Studio, Tamanrasset

Personnel includes: Sadam (vocals, guitar), Hicham Bouhasse (percussion, guitar), Abdelkader Ourzig (guitars), Halballah Akhamouk (percussion), Tahar Khaldi (bass), Japonais (vocals on "Tamiditin"), Gruff Rhys (vocals on "Ardor Newlan", guitar and backing vocals on "Imaslan N'Assouf"), Sulata Elyas (vocals on "Taghadart"), Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni (vocals on "Tindjatan")

halfway through – with the campfire tableaux giving way to scenes of exuberant sword-dancing and a jeep barreling across the sand – the message is clear. This is a deliberate restatement of Imarhan's Tuareg roots, a sign of their commitment to the music and traditions of their semi-nomadic people.

While Imarhan were forced to record previous albums abroad owing to a lack of suitable facilities, in 2019 they took matters into their own hands and began building their own studio in their home city of Tamanrasset, in Algeria's Saharan south. *Aboogi* is the first fruit of that endeavour, and as a result of being able to work on home turf, on their own clock, it's more relaxed and airy than the preceding *Temet*, with the focus on acoustic instruments, goatskin percussion and massed vocals chants.

But that doesn't mean Imarhan have mislaid their pop smarts. "Derhan" ("Hope") is an infectious, accelerating anthem powered by handclaps and funky Richie Havens-style strumming, while the slow-burning "Temet" ("Relations") constructs a snaking, hypnotic groove around which wisps of psychedelic guitar curl and fade. Even "Laouini", a cyclical paean to an estranged lover, quickly

lodges in your brain despite its counter-intuitive rhythm and lack of rock heft.

The music instantly conveys a strong sense of defiance in the face of sorrow, a feeling that is confirmed when you read the startling English translations of some of Sadam's lyrics. "This year I saw the unimaginable", he sings in his native Tamasheq. "The Devil walking about in broad daylight... An old man distraught... No-one is left here". Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni's visceral tale of battlefield defeat on "Tindjatan" is complemented by Sadam's articulation of the Tuareg people's present-day struggles under the various national governments who control their homelands. "They want us to stay ignorant", he rails calmly on "Assosam". "They don't care what happens to us".

While *Aboogi* pulls back from the slicker, crossover sound suggested by *Temet*, it's by no means an insular record. Tinariwen's last album *Amadjar* showed how sympathetic fellow travellers such as Warren Ellis and Cass McCombs could be profitably welcomed into the fold without having to change course, and *Aboogi* boasts a couple of winning cameos of its own. The appearance of Sudanese vocalist Sulata Elyas, exchanging verses with Sadam on the exquisitely desolate "Taghadart" ("Betrayal"), provides one of the album's highlights, as she sings gorgeously in Arabic about "the size of emptiness". Initially, Gruff Rhys' guest turn on album closer "Ardor Newlan" might seem more incongruous, but his gently stirring hymn to the universal pleasure of "te cryf" (Welsh for "strong tea") meshes perfectly with Imarhan's distinctly double-edged depiction of desert life and "rocks that are full of fear/Full of buried secrets".

Ultimately, *Aboogi* leaves a rather melancholy trace. It's always going to be tough to unequivocally celebrate your hometown when the everyday reality is poverty and disenfranchisement. But as Sadam says, Imarhan's music aims to bring those issues to wider attention while simultaneously representing the richness of their culture – a feat that *Aboogi* pulls off with passion, skill and no little style.

Q&A

Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane, aka Sadam: "You feel the suffering of our people"

How key was it to record in your home city?

It is obig difference. Instead of feeling the tiredness of travelling again to record, we felt our elements and got fresh ideas. We feel with Aboogi Studio we found a new way of playing and a new colour. The colour of Tam [Tamanrasset] is one of quietness, the balance of the city and the desert, the melody of the languages... It's all different in Tam.

What made you want to pull back a little from the slicker, more electric sound of Temet?

The sound of *Temet* is the energy we feel on tours around the world. *Aboogi* is the atmosphere of Tam. We love and need both.

How did you get Gruff Rhys involved?

We met him on an Africa Express session in London in 2019. He seduced us by his work for preserving his language and we felt a strong link with him. He understands "assouf" well and his language works well with

ours. Gruff is a very special artist and a sweet person – no stress, easy-going. He could be totally from Tam.

You allude in the lyrics to Tuareg struggles both historical and current...

Tam is a magic place but it's also full of young people with no education, no job and no help. Tam is forgotten by Algeria. The only way out young people find is by becoming gold diggers, and it's a very dangerous existence. While listening to Imarhan you can feel, softly, the suffering of our people.

INTERVIEW: SAM RICHARDS

IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press UK

MOJO



Imarhan: making music which expands to fill the space.

view of the world, with its vast skies and 360-degree horizons.

Imarhan's 11 songs come wrapped in a soundscape; a surround-sound version would have the guitars and vocals central, but dust devils and translucent scorpions in the corners of your room, a sweet tea bubbling away and, after dark, the shuffling of a hyena behind the settee. The music expands to fill the space. That said, a slightly prosaic complaint: there are at least a couple of songs that end just as the listener is settling down for 30 minutes of endless aboogi... sorry, "endless boogie"... and you know the producer must be sitting on tapes that would make awesome 12-inch extended mixes. Just saying...

Anyway, that's the spiel, the "why you should listen"; you probably have a decent idea what this album sounds like, who it

sounds quite like. Imarhan eschew the robes and traditions of Tinariwen – they wear jeans and leather jackets and heavy boots, because these are practical in the Sahara – but guests include Abdallah and Japonais from that pioneering outfit, and they sing a song,

Tindjatan, about a defeat the Tuaregs suffered at the hands of the French before colonisation. They don't have an axe hero like Mdou Moctar but they do get Gruff Rhys in to sing about kinship in Welsh (Adar Newlan).

Aboogi – a trad Tuareg term for a semi-permanent dwelling – may only be the latest chapter in a humungous epic, something that will make total sense finally viewed from several centuries' distance, but it's a reminder that walls and boundaries exist primarily in the head, that we all have a huge space in which to exist. It feels comforting right now. A small part of something bigger. Just like us.

It's only rock'n'roll?

Algerian Tuaregs' third album adds to the sweep of an epic history lesson, reckons David Hutcheon.

Imarhan

★★★★★

Aboogi

CITY SLANG. CD/DL/LP

ARE YOU READY for the country? The further we get from the initial surprise that the 'desert blues' exist, the more each album reveals about the lives of the protagonists. Rather than setting up the music as a scene in which competing yet complementing bands joust for a hearing – à la Britpop, or whatever

– the Tuaregs' records coalesce to form a single narrative, different parts of one story delivered in varying voices yet, ultimately, unified. A Mahabharata or Ramayana for the Tamashek people who once reigned unchallenged across northern Africa.

"We give space to the wind, the sun and the sand," says Sadam, the band's nominal leader. "We want to express their colours through music." That this synaesthesia is the goal will be no surprise to anyone used to the atmospheres Tinariwen argued to have present on their more expansive albums, once they could drag producers out to Kidal to record, surrounded by the heat-shattered rock, sand, aquifers and oasis that shape their



IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press UK

FINANCIAL TIMES

LOUD & QUIET

World David Honigmann



Imarhan
Aboogi
City Slang
★★★★☆

At the time of their previous album, 2018's *Temet*, Imarhan were leading a more nomadic life than usual, split between southern Algeria and Paris. "I'm homesick," sang Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane (aka Saddam) on "Alwa", "I long for my country/And for all that I've left behind." This lament now seems to have been a rallying cry, because the following year the band built their own recording studio in Tamanrasset, the city's first (though many excellent albums have been recorded there on mobile equipment). They named it Aboogi, after the first buildings their forefathers constructed when stabilising their nomadic way of life. The Welsh musician Gruff Rhys, who recorded there with the band, has spoken of coming up with songs while sitting out under the stars, and then strolling into the studio to record them.

On the basis of the new album, the studio sounds perfect: the quieter looping acoustic guitar riffs and tiny ticks of percussion that start "Achinkad" are crystal-clear. A couple of minutes in the



Nomadic way of life: Tuareg band Imarhan

music pauses, as if at the top of a dune, and then plunges into an electric riff powered by sharp ululation and handclaps – as if a close-up has pulled abruptly back into a wide landscape.

Imarhan are arguably the only of the Tuareg guitar bands to make acoustic guitars work (Tinariwen's *Emmaar*, for example, was a rare misfire) and here they switch with ease from delicate balladry to full-on rock and roll in the space between two single bars.

"*Temet*" is tightly wound, slow-burning menace. "This year," sings Saddam, "I saw the unimaginable: the devil walking about in broad daylight, a child barking." The guitars echo and howl like far-off wolves. The history lesson of "Tindjatan", supported by Tinariwen's Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni,

is equally grim, recalling a battle between two Tuareg communities before French colonisation. As Saddam sings on "Asof", to a deceptively lulling sway, "The treachery of your enemies isn't painful; that committed by those supposed to love you is the worst."

Some of the prettiest guitar work on the album comes on "Taghadart", Saddam singing darkly about betrayal, alongside impassioned Arabic verses from the Sudanese singer Sulafa Elyas, all microtones and occluded melodies. One of Tinariwen's founders, the now-deceased Mohamed Ag Itlale (aka Japonais) makes his final appearance on "Tamiditin". And Rhys, on "Adar Newlan", celebrates in Welsh the quest for freedom and the solidarity to be found in strong sweet tea.



Imarhan — Aboogi (CITY SLANG) In 2021, the population of Tamanrasset, the chief city of the Algerian Tuareg, reached 108,289. At the beginning of 2019, the construction of the city's first ever professional recording studio began under Imarhan's supervision. Upon completion, the Tuareg rock quintet named it Aboogi, paying homage to the early structures that helped form their ancestral villages. It was in this self-built studio where the group captured their finest musical ideas to date. It was only natural, then, for them to use the name for their third LP, *Aboogi*.

The significance of their hometown is integral to these brilliantly diverse compositions. There's an elevating sense of community embedded in the record, providing an overarching cohesion across its duration. Whether it's a demonstration of unity via layered harmonies on 'Assossam' (where collective voices explore economic corruption served by the government) or excellent individual contributions from Tinariwen's Abdallah Ag Alhousseini ('Tindjatan'), the wised cadence of the poet Mohamed Ag Itlale on 'Tamiditin' or the unexpected appearance of Gruff Rhys singing in his native Welsh tongue on the mesmerizing closing track, 'Adar Newlan'.

Whilst Imarhan's sound is firmly rooted in the traditional Tuareg style, *Aboogi* is an assured presentation of instrumental range. An abundance of infectious hooks exist in the masterful performances throughout 'Adar Newlan', 'Achinkad' and beyond. Compared to their previous output, however, *Aboogi* is a far more introspective proposition. Wistful blues inflections colour guitar tones on the enveloping 'Temet' and 'Imaslan N'Assouf'. The latter, with an irresistible rippling tremolo permeating the arrangement, is one of the immediate highlights from the LP. A gripping body of work from the offset. **8/10** Zara Hedderman

IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press UK

SONGLINES



Imarhan Aboogi

City Slang (44 mins)

★★★★★

Softer sounds and clever collabs are a triumph for these Touareg rockers



All aboard the Touareg camel train once again for Imarhan's third album *Aboogi* – and a serene, timeless trip across the desert it is, too. The recent trend among Touareg guitar bands has been for every release to try to rock harder than what has gone before, but here the group led by Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane (aka Sadam), dial it down with a semi-acoustic record full of haunting beauty.

After their first two albums were recorded in exile in France, perhaps it was the joy of being able to record for the first time in their home city of Tamanrasset in

southern Algeria that persuaded them to relax and chill. The result is an album that sounds markedly different from the traditional Tinariwen template. True, the electric guitars still get cranked up here and there, such as on the desert blues coda to the otherwise gentle opener 'Achinkad', but *Aboogi* is in effect a Touareg folk-rock record on which the rhythms pulse with a subtle transcendence. The collaborations with Sudanese singer Sulafa Elyas on the mournful 'Taghadart' and Super Furry Animals' Gruff Rhys singing in Welsh on 'Adar Newlan' are smartly done, too.

NIGEL WILLAMSON

TRACK TO TRY *Achinkad*

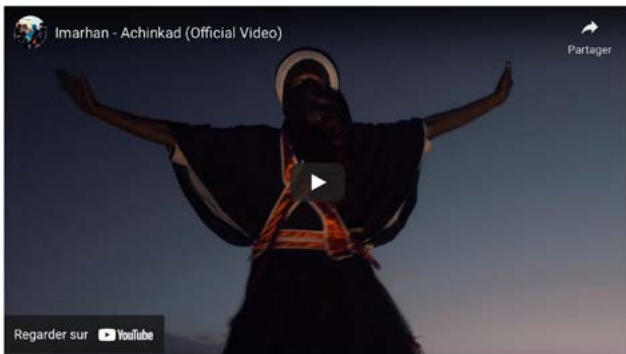
IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press US

NPR

5. Imarhan: "Achinkad," from *Aboogi*



We next hear from the Southern Algeria Tuareg band, [Imarhan](#) and the hypnotic sounds of the song, "Achinkad." I end the show with a mysterious bit of music that includes bird songs, peaceful outdoor ambiance and a synthesizer that has a music box quality. The song, by the Istanbul-born and Glasgow-based artist Isik Kural, is called "paper hat."

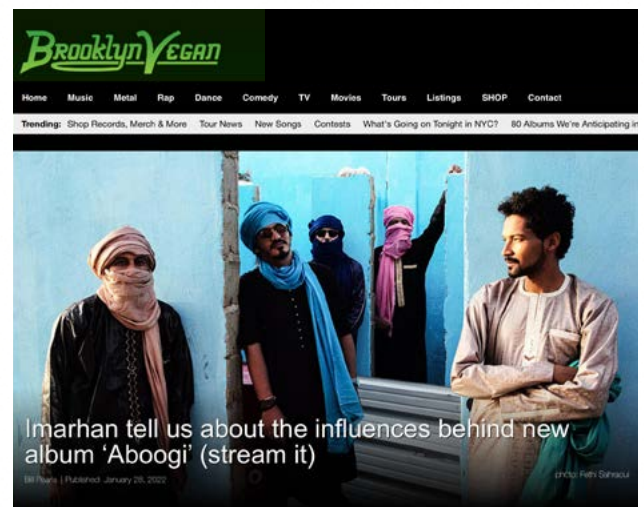
FADER

"Tamiditin (feat. Japonais)" — Imarhan



Imarhan's grooves are more laid back than the guitar gymnastics most western listeners have come to associate with Tuareg music, courtesy of Tinariwen's desert blues domination and, more recently, Mdou Moctar's world-beating freakouts. The band formed in Algeria in 2006, nearly three decades after Tinariwen converged in Mali but years before Moctar's tall shadow fell on his native Nigerien scene. They've dabbled in the more U.S.-friendly, electrified strain of North African rock, but on "Tamiditin," their acoustic six-strings intertwine thoughtfully over plodding percussion. Guest singer Mohamed Ag Itlale (Japonais) — a prolific Tuareg poet who passed away shortly after recording the track — murmurs sorrowfully, repeating each phrase multiple times for emphasis. "My girl, I beg of you, don't despise me / The scorn will only lead to hatred," he pleads in Tamahaq as the hypnotic beat pushes on beneath him. "You're a gazelle and I'm a wanderer / I beg you gazelle, don't abandon your fawn." — RH

BROOKLYN VEGAN



Tuareg greats [Imarhan](#) released their new album *Aboogi* today via City Slang. The album features a number of notable guests, including Tinariwen's Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni, and Super Furry Animals' [Gruff Rhys](#). Here's part of this week's [Notable Releases review](#):

“ The album is rooted in traditional Tamasheq music and it's not sung in English, but it's easy to see why Imarhan have connected with so many people in the English-speaking indie rock world. As I also wrote when reviewing *Temet* in 2018, Imarhan's music has so much in common with the British/American definition of "psychedelic rock," and *Aboogi* is a trippy, hypnotic, guitar-based rock record that feels fresher than even some of today's biggest psychedelic rock bands. The melodies are arresting, the aura is transportive, and the music completely defies whatever language or cultural barriers that may exist. ”

You can stream *Aboogi* below.

We asked the band to tell us about some of the influences behind the album, and they gave us a list of ten artists, some of which may be obvious and others that are not. Some are so obscure that there aren't even songs on YouTube but we've include music where it could be found. Check out the list and their commentary on each item, below.

IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press US

UNDER THE RADAR



UNDER THE RADAR

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Monday, February 21st, 2022

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Imarhan on Recording Their New Album "Aboogi" in Their Algerian Hometown Found in Translation

Jan 28, 2022 | By Kyle Mullin | Photography by Fehti Sahraoui | WEB EXCLUSIVE

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An isolated, notoriously [dangerous desert](#) is preferable to amenity rife Western locales. At least that's the case for [Imarhan](#) while working on an album. That's because the rising Tuareg Saharan nomad-descended rockers draw on their small Algerian town of Tamanrasset for inspiration and productivity. The band is an up-and-comer in the sand-and-sun swept "desert blues" rooted in their local folk lineage while incorporating Western elements. Spearheaded by the acclaimed band [Tinariwen](#) 40 years ago, the niche but beloved genre has seen acts like Bombino open for Robert Plant and recruit The Black Keys' Dan Auerbach as producer, while Mdou Moutar's *Afrique Victime* cracked a number of major publications' best albums of 2021 lists. Imarhan's third album, *Aboogi*, is poised for similar breakout success, the flaring climactic guitar solo and full throated chanting on opening track "Achinkad" striking a just-right balance between his homeland's traditions and his Western influences. The album's third single, "Adar Newlan," even features guest vocals from [Gruff Rhys](#) (of Welsh band [Super Furry Animals](#)).

Ahead of today's release of *Aboogi*, frontman Sadam Ag Ibrahim brought new meaning to the phrase "home is where the heart is" when describing Tamanrasset to *Under the Radar* over Zoom. Clad in both a Nike sweater zipped to the chin and a watch with its wide face on the inside of his wrist, Ibrahim spoke softly, his native Tamashek translated by an interpreter who was also on a video call that cut out repeatedly because of his far flung homeland's spotty internet. Ibrahim stroked his neatly trimmed goatee with his long slender fingers and smiled warmly while recalling how Imarhan were some of the last musicians to ever work with Tuareg elder statesman Japonais, before describing why Tamanrasset weddings are as fun to play than the most hyped of Western gigs, and going on to share much more.

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Photo: Fehti Sahraoui / Courtesy of Pitch Perfect PR

IMARHAN RETURN WITH LUMINOUS DESERT ROCK ON 'ABOOGI'

Desert rock's Imarhan have always been strongest for their subtleties, and never more so than on the immaculately crafted tracks of *Aboogi*.

By [Adriane Pontecorvo](#) / 25 January 2022

In 2019, desert rock group [Imarhan](#), a band with blood and creative ties to [Tinariwen](#), started to build a studio in Tamanrasset, Algeria, a major Kel Tamasheq city that the ensemble calls home.

They named it Aboogi—for a type of early Kel Tamasheq dwelling structure—and there began to record its namesake album. Like every Imarhan record to date, *Aboogi* is rapturous, marked by warm vocal harmonies, trenchant commentary, and agile guitar work. Within this recognizable structure, though, the group sound more poised than ever before, the production fine-tuned and instruments overlapping in organic, dreamlike layers. Imarhan have always created exquisite work, but *Aboogi* is a cut above their previous two albums in terms of how each artful piece comes together.



ABOOGI
IMARHAN
City Slang
28 January 2022

IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press FR

LIBÉRATION

LES INROCKUPTIBLES

MUSIQUE/



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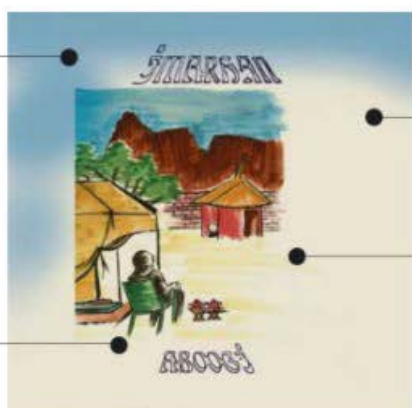
LA POCHETTE

Imarhan «Dessiner ce que nous avons bâti»

Le quintet touareg de Tamanrasset dévoile un cinquième album ancré dans la terre qui l'a vu naître et totalement ouvert sur le monde. Tahar Khaldi, bassiste du groupe, raconte la genèse d'une pochette qu'il a lui-même dessinée.

L'idée. «Cet album est le premier enregistré au Aboogi Studio construit de nos propres mains, chez nous. Le premier de toute la région. Nous avons envie de le représenter sur la pochette, mais aussi l'atmosphère de Tamanrasset, du désert du Hoggar. Ce qui compose notre quotidien et comment nous le ressentons. Je préfère toujours les dessins aux photos, je trouve que ça laisse plus de place à l'imagination. Quand on voyage en Europe, je vois beaucoup de pochettes avec des photos de groupes et ça ne m'attire pas, je pense que ça apporte une information qui ne concerne pas toujours la musique.»

Le dessin. «J'en ai réalisé plusieurs mais c'est celui-là qu'on a retenu. Il correspondait exactement aux couleurs de l'album et de notre univers. Petit, je dessinais tout le temps en recopiant ce que je trouvais dans des livres, puis j'ai aimé de plus en plus créer des saynètes d'animation, mais j'ai arrêté car je me suis consacré à la musique. J'y ai repris goût depuis quelques années.»



IMARHAN ABOOGI (City Slang)

Le personnage. «C'est moi, le dessinateur. C'est une place que j'occupe régulièrement. Je regarde le studio, qui a été terminé juste avant l'enregistrement. Les quelques jours qui ont précédé l'entrée dans ses murs, nous allions là-bas nous retrouver, prendre le thé et discuter. J'y allais seul aussi, l'admirer. Je suis heureux, satisfait du travail accompli.»

Le lieu. «En arrière-plan, la montagne Adrienne, aussi emblématique pour Tamanrasset que la tour Eiffel l'est pour Paris. Quel que soit, l'endroit où l'on se trouve dans 'Tam', on a vu sur cette montagne. Ensuite, vous entrez dans l'enceinte de Aboogi, avec le studio d'enregistrement. La tente, c'est où on se retrouve pour répéter, prendre le thé. Le mur représente la cour du studio. Aboogi n'est pas en plein désert, il est à Tamanrasset, dans le quartier résidentiel Tapsit dans Serssouf, le coin où tout le groupe a grandi. Avant que l'on commence l'enregistrement, et même avant que l'on construise ce studio, cette cour, c'était là où nous nous réunissions avec Imarhan. C'est une forme d'accomplissement de dessiner à la fois ce que nous y avons bâti et ce que nous avons écrit et composé.»

Recueilli par P.B.



ABOOGI d'Imarhan

Avec ce troisième album, le groupe de Tamanrasset défait les stéréotypes sur la musique touareg mais garde le sens de la transe.

L'émergence internationale des groupes touaregs au milieu des années 2000 charrie bien des clichés. S'ils ont trop souvent été loués pour leurs attitudes rock, maladroitement comparés aux bluesmen américains, l'essence de leur musique est pourtant à trouver dans leur féroce enracinement local, dans l'héritage musical qu'ils n'ont de cesse de transmettre. Imarhan remet les point sur les i avec *Aboogi*, troisième LP enregistré à Tamanrasset, leur capitale touareg située à l'extrême sud de l'Algérie. Centré autour des guitares acoustiques et du chant pénétrant de leur leader vocal Sadam, ce disque conte le quotidien de la cité, ses joies et ses affres, préférant le calme à l'énergie, et la spiritualité à la revendication frontale. S'il s'agit bien de tradition, les cinq musiciens d'Imarhan se plaisent à y intégrer de superbes nappes synthétiques, sur *Asof*, ou des guitares électriques pleines de réverb sur *Temet*. L'influence de Ry Cooder est là, mariée à celle des amis Tinariwen (dont deux membres sont ici invités). Mais *Aboogi* s'en démarque en misant sur la grande profondeur du son, sur la lente transe qui les anime (le superbe *Taghadart* avec la chanteuse soudanaise Sulafa Elyas). Imarhan semble passer un cap sans jamais se renier, ni perdre de vue l'idée que malgré les envies souvent



légitimes de plaire au marché occidental, c'est bien dans Tamanrasset que la formation puise l'âme de ses albums.

Brice Mielot

Aboogi (City Slang/PIAS). Sortie le 28 janvier. En concert le 30 mars à Paris (Gaîté Lyrique) et en tournée française.

IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press FR

ROCK AND FOLK

Imarhan

"Aboogi"
CITY SLANG

Foisonnante il y a une dizaine d'années, la scène rock touarègue a été depuis victime de la combinaison de deux phénomènes. Deux crises, plus exactement : celle du disque, qui a balayé les petits labels de world music, et celle, géopolitique, qui a rendu inaccessible certains des territoires où sont basés les groupes, notamment le nord du Mali. Composé de musiciens d'une trentaine d'années à peine, Imarhan a le bonheur d'échapper à ces deux fléaux. Il est signé sur un label de rock allemand, et ses membres résident de longue date à Tamanrasset, au sud de l'Algérie, où ils ont aménagé leur propre studio, qui donne son nom à cet album, leur troisième. On ne comprend guère le tamashek mais, au vu de la tonalité



d'ensemble de ce dernier, les membres du groupe, et notamment leur leader Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane, alias Sadam, semblent avoir été rattrapés par un certain désenchantement : là où les deux premiers efforts seraient bon l'euphorie des jeunes années, celui-ci baigne dans l'assouf, ce spleen propre aux populations du désert. Le titre final, "Adar Newlan", débuté par le chanteur des Super Furry Animals, Gruff Rhys, ne fait pas exception, les ruptures de rythme n'atténuant pas sa mélancolie. Deux autres invités témoignent de la filiation du groupe avec les aînés de Tinariwen — Abdallah ag Alhousseyni, l'un de ses leaders, et feu "Japonais", l'un de ses fondateurs. Si les structures empruntent rarement les chemins balisés du rock occidental, la grande force de la scène touarègue et de ce disque réside dans les guitares. Sur cet album, elles sont acoustiques pour les fondations, électriques pour les ornementations, avec, entre les deux, de fins éclats de sables et des strates d'un ciel infini.

☆☆☆
BERTRAND BOUARD

3 COULEURS



MAGIC



IMARHAN
Aboogi
(CITY SLANG) - 28/01/2022

Sur le dernier titre, *Adar Newlan*, le groupe Imarhan s'associe à Gruff Rhys (ex-leader des Super Furry Animals) : cinq minutes trente de pur songwriting où la guitare ultra-pop du Gallois rencontre la fascinante culture touarègue. Deux mondes, pas si éloignés finalement, s'entrechoquent et offrent un morceau au temps suspendu et à la grâce évidente. Autour, nos yeux d'Européens pourraient seulement voir dans ce *Aboogi* une invitation au voyage aux portes du désert, même si cela va bien au-delà pour ses auteurs et surtout sa tête pensante Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane, alias Sadam. Le nom du disque renvoie au studio créé au cœur de Tamanrasset et du Hoggar dans le sud de l'Algérie. La musique d'Imarhan raconte la vie au quotidien dans cette région : par ses mélodies, on en imagine les couleurs, l'architecture et le climat. Sur des rythmiques traditionnelles, les guitares, elles bien contemporaines, accompagnent des textes engagés, aux sujets lourds comme la frustration du peuple touareg ou les luttes des jeunes de Tamanrasset pour leur survie. Les onze morceaux sonnent comme un appel à la lutte et une lueur d'espoir. Devant ses structures parfois évanescents, la beauté des notes nous fait perdre nos repères. Mais la force de *Aboogi* nous dépasse : il sublime des rites ancestraux pour se faire le porte-parole d'une nouvelle génération.

Luc Magoutier ★★★★★

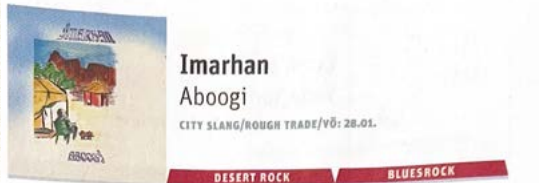
SORTIE CD, VINYLE ET NUMÉRIQUE

IMARHAN

ABOOGI

press & cc

VISIONS



Imarhan
Aboogi
CITY SLANG/ROUGH TRADE/VÖ: 28.01.

DESERT ROCK | BLUES ROCK

Das Tuareg-Quintett baut sein eigenes Studio und entschleunigt. Es entsteht das gelassenste Album der Band. Imarhan errichten das erste professionelle Studio in Tamanrasset überhaupt, das nun in ihrer südalgerischen Heimatstadt steht und mit hochwertigem Equipment ausgestattet ist, mit dem Musiker aus der Sahara-Region gewöhnlich nicht in Berührung kommen. Der internationale Erfolg ihrer ersten beiden Platten ermöglicht es der Band, etwas davon zurückzugeben. Die Band taufte es *Aboogi*, benannt nach den ersten semi-permanenten Strukturen, die ihre nomadischen Vorfahren beim Aufbau von Siedlungen und Dörfern errichteten. Die Platte, ein in sich ruhendes Album, offen und weit wie die Wüste, bekommt kurzerhand denselben Namen. Es ist der Gegenpol zu seinem flotten, festlichen Vorgänger *Temet*, dessen Faden in einem gleichnamigen Song auf *Aboogi* dennoch fortgesponnen wird. Der Song ist exemplarisch für den Detailreichtum des Albums, den Hallfahnen über jeder Menge Zupfinstrumenten, Glockenspiel-Rascheln und internationalen Gästen. Gruff Rhys von den Super Furry Animals etwa besingt in *Adar Newlan* den Wert der Verwandtschaft in seiner walisischen Muttersprache. Auf *Aboogi* singen sie gemeinsam mit einer Stimme von den Frustrationen der Tuareg im postkolonialen Südalgerien. Doch auch ohne der Sprache mächtig zu sein, findet sich in jeder Note ein kosmopolitischer Spirit mit Wüsten-Prägung, eine globale Band, mit universellen Songs und einem dritten Album als Gesamtsieg. DANIEL THOMAS

DAS STECKT DRIN Songhoy Blues, Tamikrest, Tinariwen

KULTURNEWS

Platten

Die beste Musik

2/2022



Yeule
Glich Princess

HYPERPOP Lange bevor die Pandemie uns alle zu Stubenhocker gemacht hat, hat Nai Cmil sich vor der Welt ins Internet geflüchtet. Als nicht-binäre Künstler:in ist Yeule für Cmil ein Weg gewesen, eine neue Identität zwischen Mensch und Maschine zu konstruieren, und genauso kommt das zweite Album „Glich Princess“ auch daher. Cmil filtert und pflückt die eigene Stimme, bis sie klingt, als würden wir dem Traum eines Roboters lauschen. Ideal: Retro-Videospielmelodien und zerstückte Melodien mit Feedback und Noise. Das erinnert an andere Cyber-Künstler:innen mit digitalen Affektiven wie Aika, Grimes oder FKA Twigs, doch Yeules Musik ist fragilen Selbst, wenn die Beats mal industriell schräg („Mandry“), dauert es nicht lange, bis aus Cmils Schreiben wieder ein Flüstern wird. Aber auch leise Töne können radikal sein, wie der Aufbau von „Glich Princess“ beweist. Nach zwölf Tracks von normaler Länge folgt mit „The Things they did for me out of Love“ ein dreißigminütiges Ambientstück. Zum Glück erst ganz zum Schluss, sodass es bei Bedarf gekippt werden kann. [my](#)

Imarhan

Aboogi

DESERT BLUES Auf Imarhans drittem Album „Aboogi“ geht es um erste Themen: die Benachteiligung der algerischen Tuareg, die Nachwirkungen des Kolonialismus, den Kampf um politische Selbstbestimmung. Insofern überrascht es, wie in sich selbst das Quintett aus Tamanrasset dabei klingt. Die Songs entfalten sich langsam und gemessen, die elektrischen Gitarren, die auf dem Vorgänger „Jemel“ (2018) noch so prominent waren, sind zu großen Teilen durch akustisches Geplätsch ersetzt worden. Hauptgrund für diesen Wandel ist das neue Studio, das Imarhan in ihrer Heimatstadt gebaut haben und das ebenfalls „Aboogi“ heißt, nach den ersten Siedlungen ihrer halbnomadischen Vorfahren. Dort sollen nicht nur Imarhan selbst, sondern auch andere Musiker:innen aufnehmen können, die bisher keinen Zugang zu professionellem Equipment hatten. Gemeinschaft und Solidarität sind der Leitmotiv des Albums – dass das weit über ethnische Grenzen hinaus gilt, machen Imarhan deutlich, wenn sie die sudaneseische Sängerin Sulata Eyyes oder Gruff Rhys von den Super Furry Animals in ihrem Muttersprachen zu Wort kommen lassen. [my](#)



Earl Sweatshirt

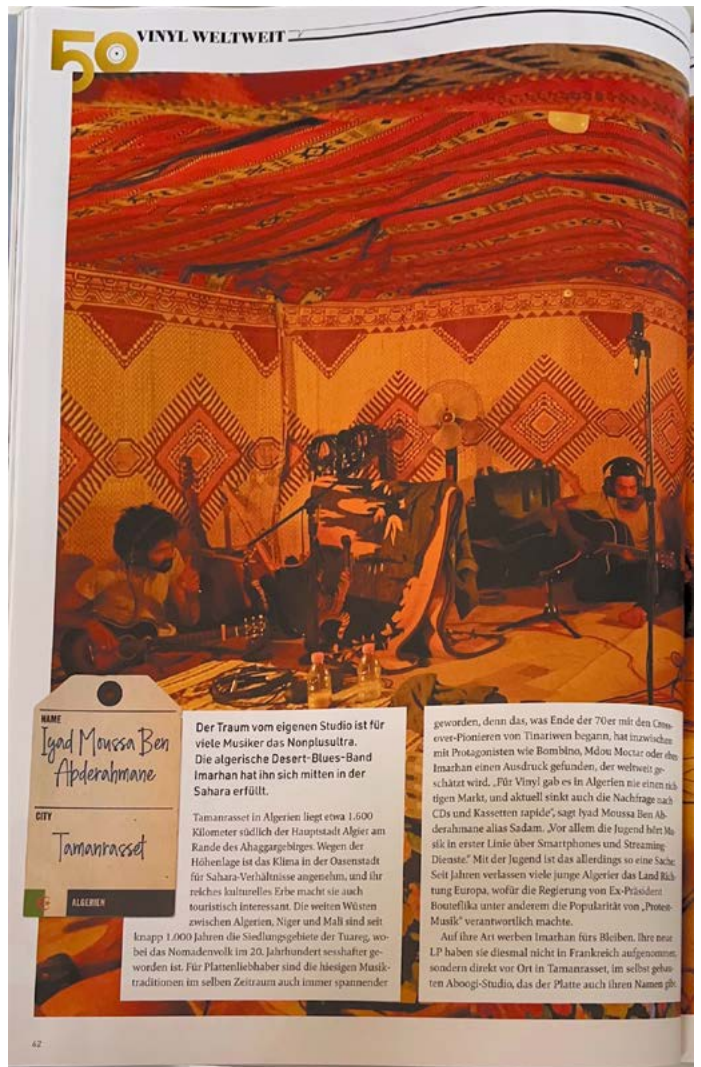
Sick!

Van Overste

HIPHOP Technisch ist Earl Sweatshirt nach wie vor einer der besten Rapper seiner Generation – eben weil er nie so klingt, als würde er rappen, sondern als spräche er einfach spontan über das, was ihn bewegt. Auf „Sick!“ ist das, wie der Titel andeutet, unter anderem die Gegenwart samt Pandemie und Polizeigewalt. Themen, die Earl auf Tracks wie „Old Friend“ oder „Violet“ mit seiner Unwegsamkeit behandelt. Nachdem sein letztes Album „Some Rap Songs“ mit

seinem radikal chaotischen, teilweise an Free Jazz erinnernden Sound Klänge zum Rauschen gebracht hat, sind die Beats auf „Sick!“ wieder konventioneller und manchmal „Übers“, „Itanic“ sogar trippig. Earl hat auf mehreren Tracks mit alten Bekannten wie The Alchemist oder Black Noise gearbeitet. Das passt zum gemessenen Eindruck, nach dem der Rapper eine neue Balance gefunden und die auf „Some Rap Songs“ im Zentrum stehenden Traumata zumindest teilweise verarbeitet hat. Als fröhenbackener Vater bekommt der 27-Jährige sogar gewisse Mentorschaften. „I do what I have to with the fragments“, rappt er auf „Sabala Road“ mit Armand Hammer. Tun wir jemals etwas anderes? [my](#)

MINT



50 VINYL WELTWEIT

NAME
Iyad Moussa Ben Abderrahmane

CITY
Tamanrasset

ALGERIEN

Der Traum vom eigenen Studio ist für viele Musiker das Nonplusultra. Die algerische Desert-Blues-Band Imarhan hat ihn sich mitten in der Sahara erfüllt.

Tamanrasset in Algerien liegt etwa 1.600 Kilometer südlich der Hauptstadt Algier am Rande des Ahaggargebirges. Wegen der Höhe liegt es das Klima in der Oasenstadt für Sahara-Verhältnisse angenehm, und ihr reiches kulturelles Erbe macht sie auch touristisch interessant. Die weiten Wüsten zwischen Algerien, Niger und Mali sind seit knapp 1.000 Jahren die Siedlungsgebiete der Tuareg, wobei das Nomadenvolk im 20. Jahrhundert sesshafter geworden ist. Für Plattenliebhaber sind die hiesigen Musiktraditionen im selben Zeitraum auch immer spannender

geworden, denn das, was Ende der 70er mit den Cover-Pionieren von Tinariwen begann, hat inzwischen mit Protagonisten wie Bombino, Mdou Moctar oder eben Imarhan einen Ausdruck gefunden, der weltweit geschätzt wird. „Für Vinyl gab es in Algerien nie einen richtigen Markt, und aktuell sinkt auch die Nachfrage nach CDs und Kassetten rapide“, sagt Iyad Moussa Ben Abderrahmane alias Sadam. „Vor allem die Jugend liebt Musik in erster Linie über Smartphones und Streaming-Dienste.“ Mit der Jugend ist das allerdings so eine Sache. Seit Jahren verlassen viele junge Algerier das Land Richtung Europa, wofür die Regierung von Ex-Präsident Bouteflika unter anderem die Popularität von „Protest-Musik“ verantwortlich machte.

Auf ihre Art werben Imarhan fürs Bleiben. Ihre neue LP haben sie diesmal nicht in Frankreich aufgenommen, sondern direkt vor Ort in Tamanrasset, im selbst gebauten Aboogi-Studio, das der Platte auch ihren Namen gibt.

IMARHAN

TEMET press UK

MOJO



Updating the desert blues: Imarhan make space in the Sahara.

Shifting sands

Will the newest Saharan sounds upstage the establishment?
Asks David Hutcheon.

Imarhan
★★★★

Temet
CITY SLANG, COBBLER

HAVING WATCHED the ascent of Tinariwen from focal point of Tuareg resistance to international stars, the quintet who formed Imarhan 10 years ago must have wondered whether or not there was room for another Saharan blues-rock band. And, arguably more importantly, how would they create their own space?

As the first out of the traps, their – culturally and literally – cousins found themselves in uncharted territory. Tinariwen were instinctive musicians, but they weren't born entertainers. They split, they regrouped, they dug deeper into their heritage for poetic inspiration, they ventured out of remote parts of the desert and they got bored fending off questions about Kalashnikovs.

Living in Tamanrasset, a Tuareg-dominated city in southern Algeria, Imarhan couldn't help

but benefit. Not just from the knowledge of the pioneers, but from the advantages of geography and technology (primarily access to the internet and all the music they could digest), and by the fact the world's ears were primed by the time they released their debut album in 2016.

Older musicians, they said, had a message that did not always apply in the second decade of the 21st century. The goal was not to communicate to a small number of compadres, but to treat the world as a stage. Not for Imarhan, then, the rounds of arts centres and folk festivals: they opened their European account supporting Kurt Vile. A mismatch, to these eyes and ears, because where the headliner was deliberately, by his own admission, "all over the place", the Africans were tight, focused and in command.

OK, so we know what they can do. The camel-walk rhythms, the vocal harmonies, the guitar interplay, hook-laden melodic simplicity. What can they do that we haven't heard any other Tuareg band do? If the opening bass salvo on Azzaman suggests intent, the guitars on Tamudre announce a desire to update the desert blues for the Tame Impala demographic. Ehad Wa Dagh rattles along at the sort of speed their elders would avoid, the rhythm guitar owing more to Nile Rodgers than Ali Farka Touré (not the only time disco is an obvious influence); and the climax of Tumast is a trance-drone masterpiece that the band would be foolish not to stretch to its limits in concert. Only closer Ma S-Abok suggests there is a comedown side to Saharan psychedelia.

What they don't do, however, is pull the carpet from under the feet of their elders. Indeed, Tinariwen's bassist, Eyadou Ag Leche, co-produces – but this may be the last leg-up Imarhan need from the previous generation. It turns out there is plenty of room in the Sahara for another gang of guitar slingers.

IMARHAN

TEMET

press UK

BBC 6 ALBUM OF THE DAY !



THE GUARDIAN

Also out this month

Imarhan are a young Tuareg band who grew up in the deserts of southern Algeria and bring a distinctive breezy approach to desert blues. Their second album, *Temet*, was recorded with help from Tinariwen's Eyadou Ag Leche, and matches thoughtful acoustic passages with sturdy riffs and solos on rousing songs that will guarantee crossover success. From Nicosia, the engaging trio **Monsieur Doumani** mix Greek Cypriot folk influences with blues on their third album *Angathin*. Their rapid-fire vocals are backed by the unlikely combination of tzouras, guitar and trombone, and their angry, poetic songs tackle everything from fake news and greed to environmental concerns. Thankfully, a translation of the lyrics is provided. **Robin Denselow**

THE INDEPENDANT

IMARHAN

Temet

★★★★★

*Download: Azzaman;
Tamudre; Ehad Wa
Dagh; Tumast*



Hailing from southern Algeria, Imarhan are youthful standard-bearers for Tuareg desert blues. Like their appearance, which blends the traditional head-swaddling cheche with goatee beards and designer shades, the group's sound mixes old and new, east and west. Dramatic rock-style flourishes punctuate the rolling shuffle "Alwa", and there are echoes of country picking in the brisk, stinging guitar fills of "Ehad Wa Dagh". Most potently, there's a Santana-esque flavour to the Afro-Latin funk of "Tamudre" and "Tumast".

UNCUT

IMARHAN

Temet

CITY SLANG

8/10

Southern Algerian sextet deliver sparkling second



2016's self-titled debut posited Imarhan at the head of a new generation of Tuareg musicians who dress like New York punks and borrow from rock, blues and beyond. *Temet*, translated as 'Connections' in Tamashek, manages to broaden their sound further, forging links to funk, soul and jazz. Crucially, though, they've retained the traditional rhythms that make them so captivating, from the syncopated grace of "Zinzizumegh" to the joyous desert grooves of "Tamudre". Meanwhile, the influence of fellow pluralists Tinariwen (whose Eyadou Ag Leche, cousin to Imarhan's singer Sadam, is once again co-producer) continues to run deep.

ROB HUGHES

IMARHAN

TEMET press UK

METRO

48 | METRO | Friday, September 7, 2018

WEEKEND

IMARHAN'S WAY

THE TUAREG BAND ARE ALL ABOUT MIXING UP TRADITION, HEARS SHARON O'CONNELL

AFRICA may be the undisputed source of the blues, but the folk music of Algeria - specifically, of the desert region close to the borders of Mali and Niger - probably isn't the first thing that springs to mind when you think of it. But that's what Tuareg band Imarhan play, although it's a highly distinctive blues style with a mesmerising drone quality and an air of ancient longing.

Based in the city of Tamanrasset, Imarhan are just as likely to rock the global uniform of jeans, T-shirt and

leather jacket on stage as they are traditional Tuareg dress and although their rhythms are strongly connected to the past, their sound is respectful, rather than reverential.

Gnarly electric guitars drive it forward with faint echoes of funk-rock on their current (second) album, *Temet*, although that's not a term

frontman Iyad Moussa Ben

Abderahmane (aka Saddam) likes. 'The base of our music is traditional and we combine it with new elements,' he says, speaking to Metro via an interpreter. 'It's like a living traditional music. Our songs share some topics such as the suffering of life in the desert. We combine it with fresh ideas and we add new sounds with new gear, but the

tempo remains based on the tinde [drum] - that's the basis of Tuareg music. We wanted our second record to have a different energy, closer to our live shows,' adds Saddam.

'The evolution of our music came naturally, though; we didn't decide to add funk or rock and we don't really use those words. We toured a lot with our debut album and met various artists on the road, listened to different kinds of music... I guess it's through these meetings that we got inspired.' Perhaps the best known exponents of this 'desert blues' are Tamarwen, an older band from Mali that feature Saddam's cousin on bass (he also produced Imarhan's self-titled debut LP), but acts like Songhoy

Blues, Toumast, Terakft, Bombino and Tamikrest show that there's a tonne of talent within the genre. Imarhan knows them all: 'Everyone knows each other in the Tuareg music community. We know all of the Tuareg artists in Algeria, Mali, Niger, Libya... everyone has his own style but we all share the same love for music.'

So, do some Tuareg music traditionalists disapprove of

Imarhan's take? 'In order to maintain traditions it's also important to keep them evolving,' Saddam reasons. 'We've always received full support from our community; they are actually very proud that we are like ambassadors of Tuareg music all over the world. Each generation has to play its own truth, and today in Tamanrasset there is a real mix of tradition and modernity. Our music is the mirror of today's community at home.'

Called 'assouf' in Tamashek, the deep yearning in Tuareg music refers to 'the nostalgia of our nature, our desert, our people. It's both the suffering and the love of living in the desert,' Saddam explains.

Is that how listeners who don't understand a word of Tamashek can connect to it instantly? 'When you listen to the music, you don't always need to understand the words. You will feel the music first. And through the music you will feel the words. Music is a worldwide language; everyone understands it.'

■ *Tonight, District, Liverpool; tomorrow, Band On The Wall, Manchester; Monday, Thekla, Bristol; skiddle.com*



'Desert jazz': Imarhan, from left, Tahar Khaldi, Haiballah Akhamouk, Abdelkader Ourzig, Hicham Bouhasse and Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane

IMARHAN

TEMET

press USA

Rolling Stone

Mali, Niger and Algeria Are Producing Some of the Planet's Most Vital Rock Music

Sidi Touré, BKO, Tal National and Imarhan showcase the high-octane evolution of rhythm and inter-ethnic sounds

Imarhan. *Temet* | ★★ ★



Imarhan Visions Particulières

"We are a people living in mountains without water," sings one of the seven vocalists who supply lead vocals on *Tantabara's* eight tracks, this time in the Tuareg people's Tamashek tongue. "We are a people who live in these places not because there is gold or dollars." Probably the fastest, grungiest *assouf*-style track recorded to date, "Akokas" offer everything but a breather.

In their black leather jackets and torn Levis, members of the Tuareg band **Imarhan** sure *look* like rockers in photographs. Imarhan (meaning "the ones who care about me") are the second generation of *assouf* guitarists, as the deeply grooving style is known, the so-called "children of Tinariwen." The connection is strong. Imarhan lead singer and guitarist Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane subbed for Ibrahim Ag Alhabib for a couple of years when the Tinariwen founder needed some family time, and Tinariwen bassist Eyadou Ag Leche produced their second album, *Temet*.

Tough but warm, *Temet* contains the handclaps, female vocal responders, and grain-mortar and goatskin *tindé* percussion of Tuareg music, but with gnarlier guitars and *no* ululating exclamations. "All pleasure ends in death; you must know that," Ibrahim sings stonily in "Tamudre" ("Living"), a rock-noir highlight that works itself up to a

dark Keith Richards-ian solo before fading out with several seconds of amp hum. Based in Tamarasset, Algeria, Imarhan are urbanites who spice up *assouf's* incessantly rolling grooves with disco, funk and reggae as needed. "You have to function in the world of today and make use of the internet and all that," Ibrahim told *The Guardian's* Andy Morgan, "but you mustn't let go of the fundamentals, of your *ashak* [Tamasheq for dignity and hospitality] – that's essential." They're still more Hooker than Hendrix, but you can sense them pushing further into the darkness at the edge of the town, the desert, wherever.

BANDCAMP : ALBUM OF THE DAY !

The Algerian band Imarhan's 2016 self-titled debut was a fine example of the form, with track after track of groovy, meditative riffs. Their sophomore effort, though, is a step further. The rock influences have been amped up and combined with a good bit of funk; the result is less trance, more swagger. The first track, "Azzaman" has a shoulder-shrugging, loose-limbed backbeat that you would fit right in on classic rock radio; it climaxes with a guitar solo that leans so heavy on the wah-wah it's almost self-parodic: ridiculous and glorious at once. "Ehad wa dagh" has a tasty hook and a rhythm section racing along at punk rock speeds without breaking a sweat. "Tumast" has a slinky bottom end, walls of blazing guitar, and a vocal chorus that wouldn't be out of place in Bollywood pop; it's an honest-to-god desert dancefloor stomper.

"Zinzjumejh" starts as a pretty acoustic number, bluesy in the spirit of folks who love both Robert Johnson and Robert Plant. Halfway through, the amplified guitar comes in, breaking the song open like a rolling cloudburst. The meditative closer "Ma 5-Abok" is dreamy acoustic folk-rock, with singer Sadam Ag Ibrahim's providing gentle vocals that slide between chant and confessional. Even the quiet bits of *Temet* feel like they're speaking loud enough for the whole world to hear. In Imarhan's hands, Tuareg isn't a regional style, but a universal language.

RELIX

American listeners have grown familiar with Tuareg music and what's become known as "desert blues," primarily through the recordings of Tinariwen, a band whose roots stem from the southern Sahara desert. (Other artists, like Etran Finatawa, Bombino and Mdou Moctar, have emerged to hint at the musical richness of the region as well.) Imarhan are a young Tuareg band from Southern Algeria in Northern Africa. Their new record, the title of which means "connections" in Tamashek, was recorded in Paris, and produced with help from one of the members of Tinariwen, who is a relative of Imarhan's lead singer. The production balances gleaming guitar details mirrored with submerged murky tones, like on "Imuhagh." Imarhan play with the traditional loping rhythms, the bright trebly and delicate guitar filigree, the bluesy drones that hover over the songs and the joyous call-and-response singing, bolstered by energetic handclaps. Imarhan infuse their music with a little more of a rock vibe, with shredding guitar solos and, particularly, with a prominent reggae feel. Crisp djembe drum patterns give the music a forward motion. This is a band that understands the importance of tradition and the value of building on what's been handed down. The rapid-fire guitar playing, coupled with the swift rhythmically articulated singing, like on "Tumast," can suggest connections to both fusion and hip-hop.

IMARHAN

TEMET press USE

OKAYAFRICA

Imarhan Are Pushing the Boundaries of Desert Rock

The group's new album, *Temet*, doesn't just take the next step in Tuareg music. It sends it into hyperspace.

Imarhan's second studio album, *Temet*, is as much about where Tuareg music has been as it is about where it's going.

Throughout, the desert rock sextet seamlessly combines influences as diverse as Algerian Rai music, American jazz, Burkinabé funk, and global pop. But, given their heritage, this intelligent eclecticism makes perfect sense.

Imarhan's musical stylings stem from centuries old Tuareg traditions. As a semi-nomadic people, the Tuareg forged their culture across North Africa with territory stretching from Tripoli to Ouagadougou to Timbuktu. Tuareg music has always encompassed elements of the numerous cultures located along their historic trading routes while retaining their own unique pentatonic scales and polyrhythmic patterns. On their eponymously titled debut album, Imarhan paid homage to these origins through the emerging genre of desert rock and simultaneously nudged the tradition forward.

But *Temet* doesn't just take the next step in Tuareg music. It sends it into hyperspace.

The album is an addictive listen from the start and the opening track, "Azzaman," sets the tone. A haunting solo infused with Rai music's vibrato opens up to an increasingly rich chorus of voices that chant the song's hook as if it were an incantation. Layered beneath are hypnotic polyrhythmic beats accompanied by a reverbed guitar loop. The song culminates in a bluesy guitar solo reminiscent of 1960s **Led Zeppelin**. This sparse instrumentalization leading to a complex soundscape makes it seem like the song itself is traveling through the desert into a metropolitan city like Imarhan's hometown of Tamanrasset, Algeria.

By far the album's most danceable song, "Ehad wa dagh" sounds like something Joe Strummer wished he wrote for the **post-punk days of the Clash**. The opening riff signals it's about to be time to move and is quickly joined by a counterpointed conversation between rhythm and melody that continues throughout. Conversely, "Tarha Nam" with its acoustic guitar and soulful vocals recalls early Tuareg music and conveys the lonelier side of wanderlust.

In essence, every song on *Temet* is a complete narrative arc unto itself, each describing one facet of Tuareg's multivariate culture. But more than that, *Temet* reveals a broader view of North Africa in general and Imarhan's home in Tamanrasset in particular, suffused as they are with multiculturalism.

IMARHAN

TEMET press USE

OKAYAFRICA

While some groups might worry about leaving behind fans loyal to more traditional forms of desert rock, Imarhan takes a philosophical approach when talking about their new sound. As the group's leader **Iyad Moussa Ben Abderahmane** comments, "We didn't think about changing our music, it's been a very natural evolution."

Similar to Tuareg music's early eclecticism, extensive travel is to thank for catalyzing Imarhan's evolution. "With our debut album we played lots of shows in lots of different places," Abderahmane continues, "we also met many artists on the road." These experiences inspired the band to question imposed limitations, and as he puts it, " borders of all sorts and especially in music."

Embracing outside influences for Imarhan is by no means an abandonment of their heritage. Though *Temet* includes different kinds of influences, "the main influence remains and will always remain the tamashek culture. It's the base of our music, the rhythm, the words, the poetry" says Abderahmane. Fittingly, Imarhan's lyrics are written in the Tuareg language of Tamashek and part of the self described mission of the group is to preserve it since, as Abderahmane observes, "language is the basis of any culture."

But nor are local and global antipodes in a simplistic binary equation for Imarhan. According to Abderahmane, "we feel the whole world is part of the same house. Temet means connections, between people, between brothers, friends or simply neighbours...everything and everyone is connected." This ability weave complex connections between their own culture and those they encounter creates a kind of fluidity between definitions of the personal and universal as each become inextricably intertwined with the other. In this, *Temet* becomes something transcendent. It is both the next step in Tuareg music and audible proof that dispensing with boundaries doesn't mean the loss of identity or the dilution of culture.

Rather, in literally harmonizing so many diverse cultures while retaining and enriching the core of their own, Imarhan creates a model of what the world might look like beyond boundaries and borders. It's also just a really good listen.

Temet is available from **City Slang** on Spotify, YouTube, BandCamp, and elsewhere. Starting July 14 Imarhan goes on tour across Europe.

IMARHAN

TEMET press FR

ROCK & FOLK

Prospect

L'histoire d'Imarhan est celle chantée par Mick Jagger dans "Street Fighting Man"



IMARHAN

Une nouvelle génération touarègue tape à la porte du désert ? Rencontre avec *Ceux qui s'aiment*, quintette de Tamarassat, mélangeant rock, funk et blues.

Situé à l'extrême sud de l'Algérie, Tamarassat est la dernière agglomération avant les étendues rocailleuses et noires, hérissées de contre-forts montagneux, du Hoggar. C'est l'un des refuges de la communauté touarègue depuis des décennies, et l'un des berceaux de son blues rock lumineux et lyrique : les fondateurs de Tamarassat s'échangent leurs premiers «iff» de guitare au début des années 1980, marquant une révolution musicale qui résonne aujourd'hui sous de multiples formes, dont l'une des plus prometteuses se nomme Imarhan.

Mille-feuilles de guitares

Tamarassat s'est beaucoup développée ces dernières années, sous les regards s'affaissant pour fuir les conflits au Mali, au Niger, en Libye. Les Touaregs y sont majoritaires depuis 2011, c'est le seul endroit viable pour eux, raconte Salim, le leader de la formation, le passage à Paris.

Né dans la cité alantenne voilà vingt ans, Salim est l'incarnation de la nouvelle identité often opele qui fait longtemps désigner comme celui du désert, exotisme par la force des choses mais dont la puissance, grande en ville, s'est conservée au monde via Internet. La filiation avec Tamarassat n'est pas que musicale : Salim, alias Iwal Moussa Ben Akherdjan, est cousin d'Abbas Ag Leche, le fondateur du groupe central du rock touareg, et a remplacé lors de récentes tournées sa figure la plus connue, Ibrahim Ag Abouali, mortellement dans le nord du Mali en raison du conflit qu'évoque la stylo depuis plusieurs années. L'histoire d'Imarhan est celle chantée par Mick Jagger dans "Street Fighting Man" : quelle perspective pour un jeune de Tamarassat à partir rejoindre un groupe de rock'n'roll ? Salim commence à jouer son guitar à 13 ans avec des amis de son quartier de Tamarassat. Un groupe se forme, qui anime fêtes, mariages, concerts des dromes en Italie, en 2011, à la faveur d'une première tournée à Strasbourg. Un album arrive en 2013 sur le label berlinois City Slang, qui est aussi celui de Galaxie et fut celui d'Arcade Fire. Le deuxième continue aujourd'hui les ensembles de la bande : deux Touaregs portugais les

dirige au Mali et les autres marocains. Imarhan arrive prêt au plateau sur une haute masse des rochers, rythme des mille-feuilles de guitares aux thématiques extérieures, à l'esprit de "Azzaman" et de ses dérivés, tout rock. Langage des grands espaces et tempes traditionnelles pour les aïeux, fera saluer et hâter en cœur pour la relève. Le groupe a été noté en studio par un label, qui, après la collaboration traditionnelle, lui confère une puissance de feu inimitable. "Azzaman" de ces chansons sont très collaboratif et faites pour durer, ça peut ressembler au peu à peu, explique Salim. La base est marquée dans le mélange avec d'autres styles, du blues de jazz, de funk blues avec Red Hot Chili Peppers. "Si les frontières avec le Mali et le Niger ont été levées par le gouvernement algérien, celles avec l'Occident se sont avérées plus faciles à franchir. Les jeunes musiciens ont notamment allé aux États-Unis plusieurs années, certains pour Dream Walker, House Club, Kurt Vile ou même les Beatles, constatant la réception favorable qu'y trouvaient leurs morceaux. "Le public français comprend vite ce genre de musique, ça ressemble au blues, au rock, il y a pas mal de similarités identiques." Comparer les amateurs de rock avec le jazz de tous les genres touaregs. De leur côté, depuis une vingtaine d'années, Imarhan semble le mieux placé pour effectuer le grand saut. *

BERTRAND BUREAU

Album "Temet" (City Slang) En concert le 29 mars à la Mairie de Paris (Paris) et le 30 à La Maison de la Musique (Paris)

Photo

03 MARS 2018

PAN AFRICAN MUSIC

NEWS

Le virage funky du groupe touareg Imarhan

By Pan African Music on 9 novembre 2017 / 0 Comments



À l'occasion de la sortie de leur deuxième album *Temet* prévu pour le 23 février 2018, Imarhan sort le dansant single « Azzaman ».

TRENDING

POSTS



La

Chicago house afrofuturiste de Jamal Moss

8 novembre 2017



Cli de

semaine : Cassper Nyovest, Tiwa Savage, Wizkid, Big

NOVA



Imarhan, et la nouvelle vague de la disco funk touareg

Nouvo Nova : « Azzaman » d'Imarhan.

IMARHAN

TEMET press FR

TSUGI



Étendards de la nouvelle génération de la musique touarègue, les rockeurs algériens d'Imarhan troquent le turban et la tente pour un blouson de cuir et un dancefloor en métropole. De quoi réconcilier les peuples de toute confession sonore.

VIOLAINE SCHUTZ

En Occident, les clichés sur les Touaregs nourrissent une oasis de multiples fantasmes. Les tableaux orientalistes et films hollywoodiens les représentent en peuple nomade noble et libre occupé à boire du thé dans des tentes, à conduire des chameaux et à porter des traditionnels chéchés bleus, sur fond de paysages désertiques à l'imminence hallucinogène. Le groupe Imarhan, cinq garçons âgés de moins de 30 ans, a beau se vêtir le plupart du temps en cuir et jean et vivre une vie plus urbaine, il entretient la légende de cette culture fascinante. "Chez nous, la musique commence par les tam-tams des femmes", raconte le chanteur Sadam Ag Ibrahim. Pour cette formation, pas de répétition dans des caves citadines sombres et froides, mais sous les étoiles, dans la brousse ou le sable, bercés par le vent du Sahara. "On répète dans le désert. Tout le monde joue dehors. On se met sous un arbre, on fait un feu, on branche nos ampis avec des piles ou à l'aide du groupe électrogène et on improvise. Les concerts à Tamanrasset, ce sont les mariages. Pas de fêtes, ça veut dire pas de live. D'ailleurs, on fait toujours les mariages."

L'ASSOUF DES ISHUMARS

Mais peut-être qu'aujourd'hui Imarhan, qui sort son deuxième album sur le label berlinois City Slang (Yo La Tengo, Arcade Fire, Caribou), prendra sans doute plus cher pour jouer à votre mariage qu'il y a presque dix ans, quand ils ont commencé de façon très "amateur". À Tamanrasset, dans le sud de l'Algérie - à la frontière du Mali -, où ils vivent, pas de salle de spectacle ni de magasins de guitares. Devenir nomade en faisant le tour du monde en tour bus et non caravane relevait alors du miracle. "Nous étions une bande d'amis qui a grandi et joué au foot ensemble, dans le même quartier (Sersouf). Les débuts étaient difficiles. On n'avait pas d'endroit où jouer ni de matériel. On partageait la même guitare (en mauvais état), les mêmes percussions. Un jour, le groupe Tinariwen (le bassiste Eyadou Ag Leche est le cousin de Sadam et il a coréalisé le nouveau disque d'Imarhan, ndr) qui m'avait donné une guitare nous a apporté une basse. Ça nous a beaucoup aidés. Quand on a commencé à former le groupe en 2010, on bossait à côté, on faisait des chantiers, des petits boulots. La

musique ne suffit pas pour vivre ici. Et ça prend du temps pour arriver à tourner en Europe." Pour s'évader, Imarhan a opté pour une démarche DIY, distribuant ses CDs gravés dans le Sahara pour prêcher la bonne parole de la musique touarègue dans la lignée des grands frères de cœur, les légendaires Tinariwen. La base de la musique d'Imarhan, c'est le blues du désert appelé assouf ("nostalgie"), des chansons jouées par des "ishumars" (du mot "chômeurs"). "Notre influence majeure, c'est le mode de vie touarègue, le sable, le désert, la communauté, les paysages, le sentiment de mélancolie qui caractérise les racines du peuple, le silence. Il y a ici quelque chose de très posé, naturaliste, dont la lenteur est la même que celle des pas des chameaux. Mais le fait d'avoir tourné en Chine, en Europe ou aux États-Unis a influencé notre son. Le bruit des villes, les voyages nous ont amenés vers plus de rock, de danse. Et Tamanrasset s'est beaucoup développé, avec des routes, des magasins et même le wi-fi." Imarhan a quitté le désert pour des salles comblées des festivals et scènes mondiales aux côtés de Songhoy Blues, Howe Gelb de Giant Sand, Kurt Vile et Steve Shelley. Même le rappeur Usher les a filmés lors d'un live à Venice Beach, fasciné par leurs percussions.

GUERRES ET PAIX

Après un premier disque sorti en 2016, le groupe continue sa route vers l'asphalte avec Temet, un album plus urbain qui veut parler "à la nouvelle génération", précise Sadam. Des guitares chaloupées et des rythmes funk, disco et krautrock se parent d'une voix habitée de vieille âme. À la manière des métissages aventureux d'Omara Souleyman, Habibi Funk, Acid Arab ou Bachar Mar-Khalifé, Imarhan prône l'hybridation avec panache. Mais la forme n'est pas à séparer du fond. La conscience politique d'Imarhan les pousse à vouloir faire passer des messages. Même si l'heure n'est plus à la "révolte". Alors que la génération de Touaregs des années 1980-1990 meurt par la répression, la sécheresse, l'exil et les camps guerriers en Libye chantait la rébellion au point de se voir interdite au Mali et au Niger, Sadam et ses amis ne veulent plus de conflit. Le nom même d'Imarhan peut se traduire en langue tamasheq (calle dans laquelle Sadam Ag Ibrahim chante et qui est en train de disparaître) par "ceux qui s'aiment, qui se côtoient et sont sincères". Et Temet signifie "liens, connexion" et a pour vocation l'ouverture des frontières comme des cœurs. "Le peuple touareg reste très soudé. Quand quelque chose se passe au Mali, ça a des répercussions sur nous. C'est comme une famille. Mais en voyageant, on s'aperçoit que beaucoup ont perdu ce lien. Le propos de Temet, c'est qu'il ne faut pas perdre la transmission entre les générations et les gens, ni le sens de l'amitié. Partout, la société individualiste conduit à la déconnexion et à la solitude, alors même qu'Internet voulait nous nous connecter." Sur "Ehad Wa-Dagh", Sadam s'interroge: "Pourquoi ne parvenons-nous pas à l'union?" Et si leur groove fédérateur y parvenait enfin? 🎧

TEMET (CITY SLANG/RIAS)
IMARHAN.COM

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THE NEW WAVE OF DESERT ROCK

A new generation of Tuareg bands are refreshing Tinariwen's Saharan blues for the Facebook generation. **Andy Morgan** talks guitars, Kalashnikovs and education with Imarhan and Kel Assouf

The Sahara is in a mess. It's not just the terrorism, kidnapping, drug trafficking and other headline-hogging afflictions (the ones that tend to obsess western governments and analysts), it's the vicious subsoil from which those headlines grow: the poverty, corruption, political indifference, underdevelopment, armed conflict and desertification. Those underlying calamities turn the daily lives of many Saharan people into a grinding struggle. The modern world has not been kind to them or to their old nomadic ways.

"It's tough, all that's happening at the moment," says Anana Ag Haroun, lead singer of the band Kel Assouf. "In fact, we're a bit lost. I wish our homeland was a place of peace, as it once was. But it's becoming a place where you live in fear." A strange world - or "*adounia tikounen*" in Tamashek, the language of the Tuareg people.

Tikounen is the title of Kel Assouf's new album on the Belgian imprint Igloo Records. Its lyrics evoke much the same problems and feelings that Tinariwen sang about more than 30 years ago when they invented the style often referred to as "guitar" or "*assouf*" by the Tuareg themselves, and "desert blues" or "Tuareg guitar" by the rest of the world. The predominant emotion is *assouf*, meaning loss, longing, homesickness, or "the pain that is not physical". It's a word that encapsulates all that the Tuareg once had, but since have lost. No word is more prevalent in modern Tuareg music and poetry.

The problems facing the Tuareg have changed little since the early 80s, when Tinariwen introduced their radical new sound. But the world itself has changed, at a dizzying pace that has left many desert-dwellers feeling bewildered and lost. Meanwhile, the enduring *assouf* of the Tuareg - for their homeland, their past, their freedom - has spawned a new generation of bands that are responding to those changes with youthful optimism and

defiance. For reasons obscure, their names often begin with a T - Terakaft, Tamikrist, Toumast. But not always - Imarhan, Bombino, Kel Assouf, Mdou Moctar, Ezza. Some people call them "the children of Tinariwen".

"I don't like that term much," says Sadam Ag Ibrahim, lead singer of Imarhan, whose eponymous new album is one of the strongest releases the new Tuareg generation has produced. "The music of Tinariwen is the music of the *ishumar*," he says, referring to the name for the generation of young Tuareg exiles who became synonymous with the guitar style in the late 70s and 80s. "Our music is more of a mix. It's a bit more modern, more open to the world."

Breaking the Tinariwen mould is no easy task. Their political revolution (many of the original members of the band fought in the "great rebellion" against the Malian army in 1990-91) was matched by a musical and lyrical revolution that changed the musical landscape of the southern Sahara for ever. For younger Tuareg musicians, moving beyond Tinariwen would be the equivalent of a British or American musician trying to escape the domination of a band whose line-up included Lennon, Dylan, Marley and Brown (James, that is). The reverence for the founders of the guitar style - especially for Ibrahim AKA "Abaraybone" and Inteyeden, the two men who launched Tinariwen back in 1979 - is universal.

"It's a great honour even just to talk about them," says Bombino, the most successful singer/guitarist of the younger generation, both at home in Niger and worldwide. "For me, Abaraybone is one of the best musicians in the world." Haroun from Kel Assouf doesn't disagree: "Abaraybone is an icon. Inteyeden, too. They're the people who opened the door, and woke the Tuareg people up."

Ibrahim took time out from Imarhan

Out of the desert (clockwise from right): Imarhan, Tinariwen and Anana Ag Haroun of Kel Assouf



to stand in for Abaraybone for two years from 2014, while Tinariwen's frontman took time off to look after his family and herds during yet another outbreak of armed conflict in northern Mali. "It was very, very difficult," Ibrahim says. "Everybody was thinking, 'Who is this little kid who's come to take the place of Abaraybone?' But then they understood I wasn't really trying to take his place. There was a lot of responsibility, but it was a pleasure, too."

Tinariwen put the guitar at the heart of their revolution, adapting traditional Tuareg melodies and rhythms to this new and alien instrument. When they began to jam together in the late 70s, guitars were as rare as rain in the Sahara. Now every desert kid owns a beaten-up Chinese copy, or knows someone who has one. "Everyone's in love with that instrument," Bombino says. "It's the joy of the entire youth."

But the guitar's unshakeable hold on modern Tuareg music has also made it harder for the new generation to innovate. "I think for those who aren't part of our [Tamashek] community, this guitar that dominates everything and this music that always stays in the orbit of Tinariwen can get boring at times," admits Haroun. "It becomes repetitive. For me, music is like a quest. One has to seek, always, and not do something that has already been done before."

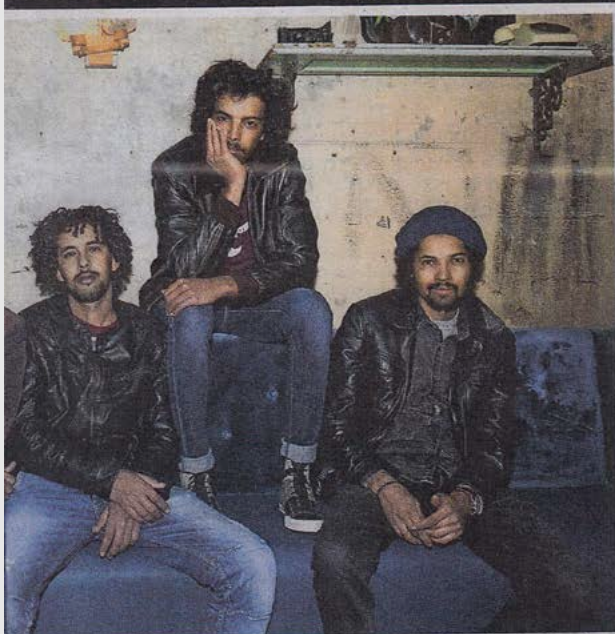
True to his word, the opening track on *Tikounen* is a leap forward in the modern Tuareg sound. Rather than taking the guitar as his point of

'Music is like a quest. You must not do something that has already been done'



IMARHAN

IMARHAN press UK



departure, Haroun and his Tunisian producer, Sofyann ben Youssef, have gone right back to the rhythm of the *findé*, the grain-mortar and goatskin drum that is traditionally played by women and gives the primal pulse of Tuareg music. It's been given a very 21st-century treatment, inspired by Haroun's love of bands such as Led Zeppelin and Queens of the Stone Age. The result is a kind of techno-tindé trance, gilded by the rasping vocals of Toulou Kiki Bilal, the female star of Abderrahmane Sissako's unsettling hit film *Timbuktu*. For well-seasoned ears, it sounds truly radical.

In another great leap forward, Imarhan asked a fellow Tuareg, the bassist of Tinariwen (and Sadam Ag Ibrahim's uncle), Eyadou Ag Leche, to produce their debut album. The result is a balance of raw edge, simplicity and mellow gentleness that producers from Europe or the US have never quite managed to achieve. Outsiders tend to empathise with and therefore accentuate the "rock" of Tuareg guitar music, rather than its "roll". "Perhaps we'll soon have our own sound engineers, too," Ibrahim says. "Before there was none of that, but now we're doing it ourselves, not just in music, but in other professions, too."

More radical than any musical innovation, it is the change in style, language and values that defines the younger generation. Unlike the old-timers from Tinariwen, most of them grew up in towns, and now live in cities, one step removed from the nomadic roots of their culture. Imarhan, who were born and grew

up in the southern Algerian city of Tamanrasset in the 90s, look more like a friendly bunch of stoner millennials, on and off stage, than the enrobed Tuareg nomad of western imagination. That's intentional. They don't feel they have to conform to an outsider's view of what a Tuareg should look like. But that doesn't mean the old values aren't important to them.

"You don't let go of your own culture," Ibrahim says, "but you can take the good things from other cultures. Before, there wasn't much in the way of technology where we come from, but now there is. You have to function in the world of today and make use of the internet and all that, but you mustn't let go of the fundamentals, of your *ashak* - that's essential."

Ashak is another crucial Tamashek word, meaning dignity, hospitality, respect and consideration. How *ashak* can be preserved in what Haroun calls an "agitated world that's crushing many values" is a subject that crops up constantly in Tuareg discourse. Haroun is hopeful. "When I look at groups of Tamashek students studying all over the world, chatting on Facebook, I really love their vision of things," he says. "They're not into that old tribal thing, all the internal conflicts, based on nothing at all, that have ripped our people apart. They have another vision of the world, where it's work that counts, it's knowledge."

The title of Bombino's new album is *Azel*. *Azel* is the name of a tiny desert village where the first primary school in northern Niger was founded. Many future leaders were educated there.



When I ask musicians from the younger generation what the priority is for the Tuareg people today, most of them answer "education". It's strange to see bands such as Imarhan, Kel Assouf and Bombino weaving their horizontal grooves and skeletal guitar riffs around the heads of young hipsters all over the world, while they sing about the importance of going to school. Not so much guitars and Kalashnikovs, as guitars and homework.

"We have to consider every solution before we take up arms," says Ibrahim. "The war of the TV, of the internet, is more important than the war of weapons. Everybody must go to school now."

THE DETAILS

Imarhan's debut album is out now on City Slang. Kel Assouf plays *Rich Mix* in London on 1 July, and their new album, *Tikoune*, is out now on IglooMondo. Azel by Bombino is out now on Partisan.

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IMARHAN

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JUNE 2016

Imarhan

Imarhan CITY SLANG



Imarhan push Tuareg guitar rock into its middle period on their self-titled debut. With a first generation well-ensconced on the international touring circuit in Tinariwen and the second generation exemplified by the Auto-Tune-using Mdou Moctar (also starring in a Tuareg-language non-remake of *Purple Rain*), Imarhan represent something between the two. Focused on the laid-back lonesomeness of the desert blues, songs like "Idarchan Net" slip easily into sweet grooves that, were one to gloss over the turbulent life of the musicians and their nomadic people, might be mistaken for the type of perfectly mellow sounds that escaped rural towns like Woodstock in the '70s. The music links easily to other traditions, through both intention and musical genetics, like the reverberating gospel handclaps of "Assossamagh," the insistent straight-up funkiness of "Tahabort" (accompanied by only hand percussion, ready for its big remix), and the pure pop smarts of the disc-opening "Tarha Tadagh." Songs like the sleek "Arodj N-Inizdjam" capture the feeling of barreling through the night, a rite of twentysomethings most anywhere in the world. *Jesse Jarnow*

ALL SONGS considered @allsongs · 13 min
Hard to imagine more perfect music in the world than the Tuareg jams of @Imarhanband itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/mon... Voir la traduction

24/3/2016

SPIN's 7 Favorite Songs of the Week: Kero Kero Bonito, Minor Victories, and More | SPIN



Imarhan, "Assossamagh" (City Slang)

Like their Tuareg brethren in Tinariwen and Bombino (and sistren in Tartit), this Mali five-piece grooves on a psychedelic blues guitar signature that sounds like nowhere else. Imarhan falls on the more cleanly polished end of the spectrum, like the Damon Albarn-minted *Amadou and Mariam*, which might explain why they're touring with Kurt Vile for their first-ever U.S. dates this spring. But like any Tuareg guitar collective, their hypnotic, almost ska-indebted aura on "Assossamagh" is a sea of mystery that no one on these shores is solving anytime soon. — DAN WEISS

IMARHAN

MARSHAL press FR

OPENMAG

MUSIQUE

IMARHAN BONS BAISERS DU DÉSERT



Des dunes du désert résonnent parfois de vieilles guitares électriques. À la fois relève et fer de lance d'une scène blues rock touareg trop souvent méconnue, le groupe Imarhan débarque à la conquête du monde avec un premier album éponyme à paraître le 29 avril prochain chez City Slang.

Par Maxime Lefebvre

On ne connaissait pas grand chose de la musique touareg et de l'assaf, une musique mêlant blues, rock et musique traditionnelle touareg. Il y a bien sûr eu Tinariwen, le premier groupe à avoir popularisé le genre en Occident. Maintenant il y a aussi Imarhan, une bande de potes d'enfance issus de Tamarassat, dans le sud de l'Algérie. Rien d'étonnant donc lorsque l'on apprend que Eyadou Ag Leche (le bassiste de Tinariwen) n'est autre que l'oncle de Sadam, le chanteur d'Imarhan : « On a commencé vers 13 ans. Eyadou m'a acheté ma première guitare et il a donné à mon ami Tabar sa première basse. Tinariwen c'est notre modèle ». D'un rêve de gosse un peu fou, il aura fallu plus d'une dizaine d'années et une bonne dose de patience avant de se frayer un chemin vers la notoriété qu'ils ont aujourd'hui acquise. « C'était difficile au début, ce n'est pas comme en Europe où il y a beaucoup de salles. » Après une prestation remarquée aux Trans Musicales de Rennes cet hiver, aujourd'hui le groupe s'appête à sortir son premier album, composé dans le désert puis enregistré dans le confort d'un studio parisien et produit par... Eyadou Ag Leche - encore lui ! Loin de l'étiquette « world music » à

laquelle il aurait été trop facile de les cantonner, ce premier opus sortira sur le label City Slang, aux côtés d'artistes comme Caribou, Arcade Fire ou Tindersticks. On y retrouve des riffs psychédélics lancinants associés à une rythmique envoûtante, le tout soutenu par la beauté orientale des chants en langue touareg. Quand on leur demande s'ils ont peur que leur message d'amour et de réconciliation soit freiné par la barrière de la langue, ils répondent sans équivoque « la musique est un langage universel ». On n'aurait pas dit mieux.

Imarhan - Imarhan
(City Slang)
sortie le 29/04/2016

Album disponibles en magasin Fnac et sur fnac.com

IMARHAN

IMARHAN press FR

musiques



oasis rock

Dans le sillage de Tinariwen, les guitares électriques se sont durablement installées dans le désert. Trois albums signés **Imarhan**, **Kel Assouf** et **Bombino** témoignent du renouveau rock de la musique touarègue.

Tout ce qu'il était possible de faire avec une guitare électrique l'a été. Et le rock, l'esprit du rock, s'est déplacé ailleurs. Le guitariste (de Pat Smith) Lenny Kaye ne pouvait sans doute pas imaginer que son expertise sur un sujet sur lequel on ne lui dénierait pas quelques compétences serait remise en cause entre Tamanrasset et Agadez. C'est pourtant de ces deux oasis sahariennes que souffle depuis quelque temps le vent du renouveau.

C'est au cœur du grand désert blanc que l'épopée du rock, et de son instrument fétiche la guitare, a repris de l'élan. Une épopée qui, depuis l'avènement d'une poignée de groupes, se confond avec le destin de ces enfants de l'oasi, de cette diaspora touarègue fuyant un conflit vieux d'un demi-siècle auquel les nombreux cessez-le-feu décrétés, les accords de paix signés n'ont jamais su mettre un terme.

Fils de réfugié, Sadam Ag Ibrahim a commencé, comme tout jeune touarègue, par se fabriquer une guitare à l'aide

de câbles de vélo et d'un bidon d'huile de moteur. Puis un jour, il en a trouvé une vraie, abandonnée dans la décharge publique de son quartier de Serssouf, à Tamanrasset, dans le sud algérien.

Aujourd'hui, Sadam a 25 ans et est le leader d'Imarhan, groupe qui rattrait le style "ishumar", propre aux Tamashaq (Touaregs) que la guerre a dispersés aux quatre coins du désert et dont Tinariwen fut le précurseur. Leur brillant premier album vient de sortir sur City Slang, l'ancien label d'Arcade Fire, produit par Ebadou, bassiste de Tinariwen et cousin de Sadam. Symbole d'un passage de témoin, en 2014 Sadam suppléait à l'absence d'Ibrahim, leader charismatique de Tinariwen, lors d'une tournée mondiale.

Plus âgé, Anana Ag Haroun vient d'Agadez, ville-carrefour du Niger située à mille kilomètres au sud de Tamanrasset. Il avait 12 ans quand, dans les années 1980, sa famille a dû fuir en Lybie, passant d'un camp de réfugiés à l'autre. Après un an et demi de formation militaire, Anana

Écoutez les albums de la semaine sur inROCKS.com

74 les inrockuptibles 29.07.2014

le désert en 2016

inROCKS.com

Depuis Tamanrasset, dans le sud de l'Algérie, le groupe Imarhan est parti pour incarner la nouvelle génération du rock touarègue. Avant la sortie en 2016 d'un album produit par le bassiste de Tinariwen, on a pu découvrir le single *Tahabort* sur le net. Vivement la suite.

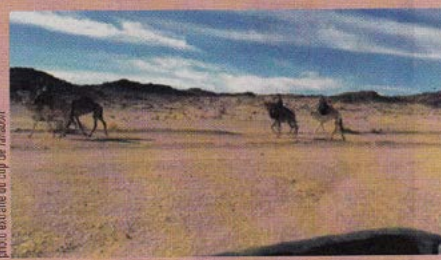


photo extraite du clip de Tahabort

Imarhan, dans le vent du désert



Le 08 juin 2015 par Cédric Lalanne

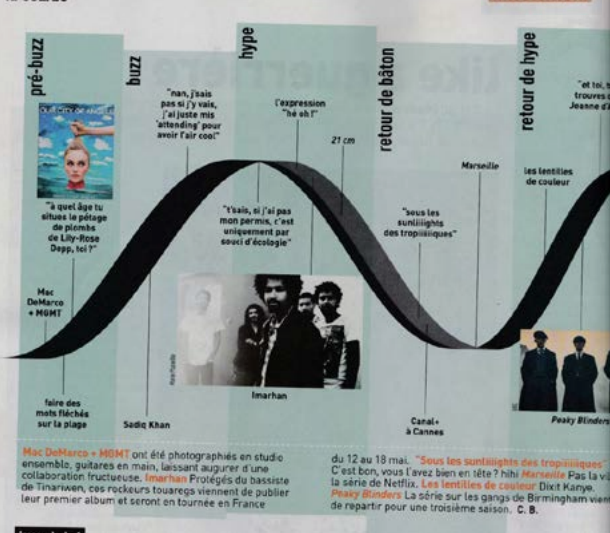
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© Imarhan

Ils viennent tout juste de diffuser leur premier titre sur Internet et font déjà parler d'eux. Les touaregs d'Imarhan s'annoncent comme la relève du blues d'Afrique du Nord.

la courbe



LIBERATION

IMARHAN «Nous allumons un feu et sortons les amplis»

Blues tamasheq
Après dix ans de succès dans le Sahara, la formation touarègue, en tournée en France, sort son premier album studio. Son chanteur, Iyad Moussa ben Abderrahmane, retrace les parcours et motivations des cinq hommes.



CHABLINE LECAMPTIER

IMARHAN

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KALAKUTA

UNE PLANÈTE, MILLE MUSIQUES



IMARHAN

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PRINTEMPS
TOUAREG

Gilles Peterson

La saga ZE Records

The Gloaming

Charles Bradley

Les Vikings de la Guadeloupe

Le retour de Davy Sicard



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Oase im eigenen Dasein

Rhythmisches Feuerwerk der Band Imarhan aus Algerien

Musik aus Ländern, die man nicht zwingend auf dem Radar der Populärmusik hat, ist seit mindestens zwei Jahrzehnten immer nur einen Mausklick weit entfernt. Und doch dauert es immer noch mehr als nur ein kleines Weichen, bis man diese für sich entdeckt. Die Gründe für diese nicht zu erklärende und schon gar nicht zu rechtfertigende Form der Ignoranz (die auch bedauerlicherweise den Autor dieser Zeilen immer wieder befallt) kann man in ein bis zu 20-seitiges Dossier packen – oder aber darauf setzen, dass es ein paar gute alte Dinge noch gibt. Label zum Beispiel, die ihren Job so kundig und leidenschaftlich machen. City

Slang ist so ein Label, und City Slang beschert uns nun Imarhan aus Algerien. Deren aktuelles Album heißt exakt so wie die Band, und auf „Imarhan“ feuern Imarhan ein rhythmisches Feuerwerk ab. Und lassen dabei mit Ranzanz und variantenreich Afrobeats, poppige Melodien, Jazz-artiges und knochentrockene Gitarrenriffs miteinander verschmurgeln.

Mit dem knackigen „Tahabort“ kann man sofort jede vermiefte Indie-Disco bestens durchlüften; bei dem gekonnt verschlurften „Ibas Ichikou“ kann man sich getrost Klischees von endloser Wüsten-Weite durch die Synapsen schwirren lassen – und „Idarchan Net“ ist die klang geworde-

ne Bastelanleitung für den sofortigen Bau einer Oase im eigenen Dasein.

Nein, wir können nun wirklich nicht die Bohne Arabisch und verstehen deshalb leider kein einziges Wort von dem, was Iyad Moussa Ben Abdreahmane singt. Wer aber dem Sound der Band aus Algerien lauscht, bekommt auch ohne arabische Sprachkenntnisse einen feinen Eindruck von dem Geist und Grips, der durch die Musik von Imarhan weht. (MaW)

WELTMUSIK
Imarhan (City Slang)
Hören Sie doch auch mal:
Mulatu Astatke: New York – Addis – London



Foto: Julien Bourgeois

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musik

cd-player

**** Fela Ransome Kuti And His Koola Lobitos: „Highlife Jazz And Afro-Soul (1963-1969)“ (Knitting Factory/Rough Trade)
Bevor Fela Kuti in den Siebzigern als Pionier des Afro-Pop wahr genommen und gewürdigt wurde, hatte er bereits etliche Jahre mit einer Combo namens Koola Lobitos zunächst die Nigerianische Musik-Szene und später den ganzen Kontinent aufgemischt. „Highlife“ nannte man diesen Stil, der afrikanische Traditionen mit Jazz und (teils mit) Off-Beat-Rhythmik verband und ganz unmittelbar auf den Tanzboden zielt. Dieser 3-CD-Digipak legt davon vorzügliches Zeugnis ab. Kuti lässt seine Trompeten (und später das Saxophon) jubeln, feuern, kratzen, rotieren, Kapriolen schlagen. Es ist wunderbar. **alt**

**** Parquet Courts „Human Performance“ (Rough Trade/Beggars Group/Indigo): Seit 2011 veröffentlichten diese vier New Yorker schon vier Alben. „Human Performance“ ist damit Album Nummer fünf. Darauf schütteln sie sich einige brillante Indierock-Songs aus dem Armel: beispielsweise den umwerfenden Titel „Song“, der uns durch den kommenden Sommer begleiten dürfte, oder „Paraphrase“, das zwischen laut und leise hin und her pendelt. Parquet Courts sind vielfältig; ihre Songs sind unter dem Einfluss der Gitarrenrock-Genres Alternativer Rock, Noise-rock und Post-Punk entstanden, heißt: Melodie trifft Geschredder. **kb**

**** = grandios
**** = hervorragend
**** = stark
*** = solide
** = diskutabel
* = dürftig



Die Band Imarhan hat neben politischen Botschaften auch schnelle Gitarren-Riffs im Gepäck. Foto: City Slang

**** „Imarhan“ von Imarhan – Das Début der Malter muss sich vor den Größen des Afro-Pops nicht verstecken

Authentisches Mitgefühl

Von Andreas Lüschen-Heimer

Ein bisschen dekadent kommt es einem ja vor, wenn man sich zu Wüsten-Blues wagt, zu Klängen, die von der existenziellen Bedrohlichkeit erzählen, von den Mühen der Nahrungbeschaffung und von sozialer Ungerechtigkeit. Auch Imarhan tun das – und zwar besterend wie seit der Band Tinarriwen niemand mehr. „Imarhan“ (City Slang) ist ein Début, doch steht es auf Anhieb in eben jener großen Tradition dieser Art Afro-Pops. Kein Wunder, schließlich ist Iyadou Ag Leche von Tinarriwen ein Cousin von Iyad Moussa Ben Abdreahmane, dem Frontmann von Imarhan, der als Songschreiber und Produzent kräftig mitgemischt hat. Indes ist schwer zu sagen, wie wichtig oder auch prägnant letztlich

diese Verwandtschafts-Unterstützung war. Fakt ist allemal, dass dieses Werk ein ganz besonderer Genuss ist! Wohl ist der Info-Zettel-Schreiber sehr bemüht, vermeintliche Unterschiede zu anderen Genre-Vertretern (und insbesondere zu Tinarriwen) heraus zu stellen: „komplex, poetisch und urban“ sind diese junge Band Tinarriwen anstatt „hymnisch und psychedelisch wie die Altvorläufer“, mithin „fernab von Nostalgie“. Was ein jeder Insider gerne selbst bewerten darf.

Zunächst noch ein paar Fakten: die sechs Mitglieder von Imarhan kennen sich seit Ewigkeiten, sie sind normalalischer Abstammung und wuchsen in einem süd-algerischen Dorf auf – wo

der sogenannte Tuareg-Sound seit jeder Teil des Alltags vieler Nomaden ist. Erzeugt wird er zuvorderst von diversen Gitarren und einer vielfältigen Percussion. Transportiert wird er von einer Lead- und mehreren Chorstimmen. Melodie & Rhythmus werden also ganz dicht verwoben – und doch bleibt enorm viel Raum und Luft zum Atmen. Die Gitarren schneiden scharf, pulsieren warm, rufen trocken, rotschwindelnderregend, die Stimmen schweben, das Schlagwerk erdet. Es entsteht im besten Fall die reinste Magie, ein Sog, ein Flow, selbst wenn die Songs ein relativ breites Spektrum beinhalten. Und dieser Flow sperrt sich einfach beharrlich gegen jede Mühe einzel-



Imarhan

**** „Hopelessness“ von Anohni – Die Musikerin transportiert im Synthipop-Gewand schreckliche Bilder

Eindeutig und schonungslos

Antony And The Johnsons ist ebenso Geschichte wie Antony Hegarty. Denn Antony heißt jetzt Anohni und ist eine Frau. Deren erstes Album trägt den Titel „Hopelessness“ (Bouquart Trad/Beggars Group/Indigo) und der Verstand in Co-Produktion mit Hudson Mohawke und Oneohtrix Point Never. Mit dem Produzenten-Duo sind auch Live-Auftritte geplant. Wie der Titel vermuten lässt, spricht das Album nicht

vor Optimismus. Die Enttäuschung über Barack Obamas Politik („Obama“), Drohnenkriege („Drome Bomb Me“, „Crisis“), die Zweifel nach einer gescheiterten Liebesbeziehung („I Don't Love You Anymore“) und die Enderwartung („4 Degrees“) bestimmen die Texte. Die sind eindeutig und schonungslos;

der Soundtrack dazu ist nicht weit, sondern wunderschön und düster. Anohnis Stil ist von der Dance-Musik und vom Synthipop geprägt, der Kammerspop zu hören für water / I want to see the fish go belly-up in the sea.“ Doch Vorsicht: Als Hörer kann man schnell in die Falle laufen, wenn man sich von

den bezirrenden Klängen einhüllen lässt, ohne auf die Texte zu achten – siehe „Execution“ oder das eindringliche „4 Degrees“, in dem es zu Anfang heißt: „I want to see this world / I want to see it fish go belly-up in the sea.“ Herrliche Musik, die schreckliche und nicht mal utopische Bilder transportiert. **kb**

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VON THOMAS MAUCH

Jetzt ist es doch so, dass es dem Indierock nicht wirklich gut geht und er deswegen ruhig mal wieder gerettet werden muss. Weil der Rock halt allgemein nicht mehr prominentestes Role-Model im Pappgeschäft ist, und im Speziellen es dieses Alles-schon-mal-gehört-Syndrom gibt im han delblühlichen Indierock. Eine hübsch sortierte Odissee, da darf die Aufregung gern auch mal aus der Wüste kommen.

Was man bei den einschlägigen Indierocklabels durch aus mitbekommen hat. Gern schmücken sie sich mittlerweile mit Bands aus dem Maghreb. Auch das Berliner Indie-label City Slang hat jetzt mit Imarhan eine Band aus Algerien im Programm. Gerade ist deren schlicht „Imarhan“ betiteltes Débutalbum erschienen.

Darauf hört man eine gelassen vor sich hinspielende Musik, die an die schönsten Momente des frühen Southern Rock erinnert, neu verortet. Das ist hier eben ein „Sweet Home Sahara“, mit ruhig atmen den Liedern und einem schmeichelnden Gesang, das neben den Indierock hören durchaus auch die Chan-son-Fans an dem Sound aus der Wüste Gefallen finden sollten.

Und wenn die Band das Tempo mal etwas anzieht und den Wüsten-Blues zu einer Art Wüsten-Funk zuspizt, klingt der natürlich etwas anders als ein James Brown. Weil man in Algerien halt doch anders schwitzt.

Die Musiker von Imarhan stammen aus Tamanasset, einer Oasenstadt im Süden von Algerien, mitten in der Sahara. Wobei man Tamanasset wohl als Epizentrum des Tuaregrock bezeichnen muss, weil sich hier auch Tinarriwen gefunden haben, die Pioniere dieses speci-



Die Mark Knopfers aus der Wüste: Imarhan tragen lieber Jeans als Kalfans. Foto: Julien Bourgeois

Sweet Home Sahara

TUAREG-ROCK Auf der Spur von Tinarriwen, mit neuen Perspektiven: Imarhan aus Algerien kommen ohne Folkloreffimel

ellen Wüstenrocks in der schmelzung von Rock mit traditionellem Tuaregfolk. Mit Tinarriwen gibt es bei Imarhan schon deswegen eine enge Beziehung, weil deren Frontman Sadam ein Cousin von Eyadou Ag Leche von Tinarriwen ist. Und es gibt eigene Wege: So ist es Imarhan gar nicht so wichtig wie den Tuaregrockkollegen von Tinarriwen oder Familienes, elastisch in Richtung Trance zu spielen. Sie suchen mit den wehütigen Melodien andere Formen von hypnotischen Stimmungen.

Und, ein wirklich augenfälliger Unterschied: Im Gegensatz zu anderen Tuaregbands tragen Imarhan keine Kalfans und sonstige traditionelle Tuaregkleidung, sondern kommen schlicht in Jeans und T-Shirt auf die Bühne. Weil sie, wie sie sagen, keine Folklore-Tanzgruppe sind. Sondern einfach eine Rockband. Die auch ohne den exotischen Kitzel der bunten Tücher bestens funktioniert.

Konzerte: 24. 5. Hamburg, 25. 5. Potsdam, 28. 5. München, 29. 5. Dresden, 30. 5. Düsseldorf

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