

NEO-BEAT AMAZIGH BAND



NEO-BEAT AMAZIGH BAND is an Afro-Amazigh trance group of committed poets and musicians inspired by the local and international grassroots movement who believe in the miraculous powers of spoken and written word for a better change of the world. It is a band that brings together music and poetry in a beautiful combination that allows for both improvisation and accurate composition. The concentrate on performances of their translations of revolutionary Beat poetry, e.g. Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac, Michael McClure, Diane Di Prima, Joanne Kyger, Amiri Baraka, Anne Waldman and other, in Amazigh and classical Arabic. The melodies and rhythms the band plays are inspired by the countryside folklore of Southern Morocco, mainly Ahwash, blended with Sufi, jazz and Gnaoua music. In a serious attempt to articulate Amazigh struggle, the band establishes its theoretical foundations on the native culture of the linguistically and racially undermined Moroccan social groups. As members of 100 Thousand Poets for Change movement the band voices its preoccupation with themes and issues ranging from social justice, equality, freedom of expression, political transparency to ecological sustainability, interfaith dialogue

and peace, all blended with soulful music from North Africa underlying Bedouin and Amazigh identity, driven by polyrhythm and hypnotic grooves.

Amazigh Neo-Beat Band features the poet and translator El Habib Louai, the percussionist Hassan Bendouz on djembi and tam tam and Mohamed Ennajihi. The band was created to revive and bring to the local and international cultural scene a socially and politically conscientious music that originates from the deep high Atlas Mountains and villages of the South of Morocco, a country where all races and languages mingle together in cohesion. The Neo-Beat musical group, which plays as a trio most of the time, is a flexible platform open for artistic collaboration and exchange as it can easily incorporate eclectic types of music, mainly jazz, blues and Middle Eastern rhythms. They also consider themselves as being troubadour musicians who believe in the positive impact of travel on people's consciousness. The road is life for them and they are always ready to hit it.



FHassan Bendouz and Mohamed Ennajihi

The lead poet, translator and musician El Habib Louai is originally from Taroudant, Morocco. He currently works as a junior high school English teacher at Azzaytoun, Agadir. He is active in various projects relating to poetry, spoken word and native Amazigh music. He edited and translated an anthology of contemporary Moroccan poetry (Big Bridge Magazine). His poems have been published in various international literary magazines, anthologies, journals and reviews and he has read his work in the UK and USA. His literary criticism has been published in various journals.



100TPC with Michael Rothenberg and Terri Carrion



Anne Waldman, John Giorno and El Habib Louai

In 2013 Louai went on a tour in USA as a recipient of a scholarship by Jack Kerouac School of Disembodied Poetics at Naropa University in Boulder, Colorado. While at Jack Kerouac School, he performed with internationally celebrated artists such as Anne Waldman (the founder of Jack Kerouac School with Allen Ginsberg), Thurston Moore and Amborse Bye. On his epic tour in USA Louai also met and read with Bob Holman, Joanne Kyger, Youssef Alaoui, Patricia Jabbeh Wesley, Paul Corman Roberts, Terri Carrion, Jessica

Wilson, Clifton Snider, Michael Rothenberg, the trust agent of the famous Beat poet Philip Whalen and the co-founder 100 Thousand Poets for change. He also had the great pleasure and honor of having the celebrated Beat poet Michael McClure attend his reading at Moe's Books:

<http://www.moesbooks.com/130826-michael-rothenberg-el-habib-louai-and-youssef-alaoui-fdili/>



El Habib and Bob Holman

Louai was also a featured poet with Paul Nelson in different venues in Seattle and its environs. They both went climbing Desolation Angeles Peak to visit Jack Kerouac's fire. El Habib Louai (whose Arabic translation of "America" we featured a few weeks back

<http://ginsbergblog.blogspot.com/2013/08/fridays-weekly-round-up-139.html>) and Paul E Nelson performed together at

the North Cascades Institute as part of their Beats on the Peaks event. Paul previews his talk, and features audio of El

Habib Louai, (from Sunday, reading at the Spring Street Center, in Seattle) here

<http://paulnelson.com/el-habib-louai-in-cascadia/>



While in Seattle Paul Nelson and El Habib Louai were feature with Jim O'Halloran Quintet, including Jim O'Halloran (flute), Bill Anschell (piano), Dean Schmidt (bass), Jacques Willis (drums), Denny Stern (percussion), Elva Pope (vocals), Paul Nelson (poet) at Bradner

Gardens Park Summer Jazz Concerts

http://www.earshot.org/Publication/Previews/2013v_08_AugustJazzAlfresco.html

At Levantine Cultural Center in LA, Louai performed with Youssef Iferd a fusion of Moroccan and western music with the bands Radio Essaouira, Kif Samba and Moor Rockin' Time:

<http://www.levantinecenter.org/cultures/north-africa/amazigh-berber>



Lately, the band went on a tour in UK. They performed at two venues in Oxford: the Oxford Modern Art Gallery where the event was curated and hosted by poet-singer-songwriter Humphrey 'Huck' Astley and PinDrop, as part of the Oxford Modern Art Gallery's William Morris/Andy Warhol

exhibition 'Love Is Enough'; and at the Albion Beatnik Bookshop. To condemn all forms of terrorism and extremism, they were also invited by Exiled Writers Ink to perform at The Poetry Café in London (<http://www.exiledwriters.co.uk/cafe.shtml>).

As teachers of Amazigh language and English, members of the band have also worked with Peace Corps volunteers and various expats in cultural associations. The band also teaches course on cultural diversity, which also include workshops in traditional Amazigh music, poetry and folklore. Lately, they performed for Jonathan Skinner's creative writing class in ecopoetics/ecocriticism at Warwick University: <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/arts/english/writingprog/litbiz/>

These are links to some of their videos online:

<https://www.youtube.com/user/elhabiblouai/videos>