

Ohra presents

Nûba of gold and light

Andalusian Symphony...

A film by Izza Génini

A co-production OHRA - SOREAD / 2M - SIGMA
With the support of the SACEM

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Summary

« **Nûba of Gold and Light** » tells the story of a music. The Arab Andalusian music, with Nûba as its symphony...

As a musical tree, its branches are nourished by the sap flowing since fourteen centuries from Morocco's most remote areas and currents coming from Arabia, grew in the courts of the Andalusian Caliphs, gained strenght in medieval Spain, mingled with the songs of the troubadours and the Sephardim, before being replanted in the Maghreb and flourishing further into Morocco under the name of *el Ala*.

Birth, Zenith and Decline, the three periods of the *El Andalus* Civilization left their marks in the Oriental *mmashhaba*, the *Cantigas* of Santa Maria of Alphonse X, in the Sephardic chants and the « *sanâa* », the art of nûba as is still lives around the Mediterranean.

Dawn, Evening and Night inspire the musicians and the poets with nûba imprgnated with the light of day, inhabited by human feelings and temperaments, carried by a public and artists who, from Tangiers to Tel-Aviv, interpret them in unison in a vibrant communion.

The meaning of a “nûba”

Etymologically, the word “nûba” means “each one in turn”. Kings and princes originally listened to the musicians in turn. Subsequently the word was used to describe a set of poems sung to a precise tempo. The birth and expansion of this music are parallel to that of the *El Andalus* civilisation in Spain, a blend of Oriental and North Moroccan trends.

In 822, a man of letters and a musical genius arrived in Cordoba, Zyrab, also called “the Blackbird”. He came from Baghdad and was installed at the Caliph's Court in Cordoba. There he set down the foundations of Arab Andalusian music, which was later called Al-Ala (the instruments) in Morocco. The orchestras of Fez, Tangiers, Chefchaouen, Ksar El Kébir or Safi, while all standing by the classical tradition of this music, all interpret the nûba in a style that is characteristic of each town.

The scholarlyart of nûba follows a precise system based on mystical concepts and medical principles of the time, called the “tree” of modes and temperament, a corpus depicted as a “tree”. Structured in five different movements, the nûba appeal foremost to the senses, stirring them up or appeasing them, depending on the time of day or the mood of the listener; it is a music that refers to the elements of nature, from which it extracts its texture and motion.

Author's note

It will have taken me some time and a more profound knowledge of Arab Andalusian, or Andalusia-Maghreb music, to realize that the impression of monotony and immobility that the musicians of Moroccan “Ala” orchestras, aligned in a motionless row, inspire the uninitiated, is simply a misguided opinion voiced by ignorance or indifference. It is the fervour of those who are enthralled by this music and its passionate advocates that triggered my curiosity to such an extent that I felt compelled to make a film on this music, to remove this prejudice and share the beauty and the pleasure.

I chose to film it:

- In its context (the town, the house, the school, the music salon), in its side aspects (rehearsals, music lessons), in its performance (voices, instruments, gestures), in its results and in its future (under threat or in full growth? Static or receptive to innovation?).
- In its relations to the Arab Andalusian civilization of medieval Spain.
- In its close relation to the elements, the hours of day and human feelings.
- In major towns and surrounding areas of Northern Morocco, heirs to the Andalusian heritage and in its centennial steps, or on the benches of a class in Paris, where musicians, poets and singers revive, from Tanger to Tel-Aviv, the sounds escaped from Spanish Courts, by playing the nûba, an Andalusian symphony.

Izza Génini

Artistic and technical data

Film title : Nûba of Gold and Light

Author/Director : Izza Génini

Genre : Musical documentary feature

Duration : 80 minutes

Version : Original Arabic Spanish with French subtitles

With

Francoise Atlan and the Orchestra of Mohammed Briouel from Fez

Ihsan Rmiki and the El Awj Ensemble

The Amine El Akrami Orchestra of Tetouan

The orchestra of M. Zitouni and the musicians of the Hanafta café in Tangiers

The Arab Andalou Orchestra and the Hadarate of Chefchaouen

Albert Bouadanah and Gérard Edery

Musical Advisors : Henri Lecomte, Abdeslam Khaloufi

Image : Jean-Jacques Mrejen, Guillaume Génini

Sound : Samuel Cohen

Editing : Claude Santiago, Abderrahim Mettour

Location : Morocco / Spain / France

Post production : France / Maroc

Co-Production : OHRA (Paris) - SOREAD/2M - SIGMA(Morocco), with the support of SACEM

Production and distribution

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Izza Génini

Born in Casablanca in 1942.
In France since 1960.

- From 1966 to 1970 : in charge of reception and external relations for the Tours and Annecy festivals.
- From 1970 to 1986 : manager of the Club 70, a private film screening room.
- Since 1973, in charge of SOGEAV (now named OHRA), a company aimed at producing feature films (“Transes”, “Zeft”, “Hadda”...), promoting Moroccan films (“1001 mains”, “Alyam Alyam”), distributing films in Africa (“Rue cases nègres”, “Bob Marley Exodus”, “Salsa”...), and distributing worldwide and in cinemas (“Baiser de Tosca”, “Ablakon”...).

Filmography

Since 1987, Izza Génini has conceived, written and directed “**Morocco Body and Soul**”, a collection of documentary films dealing with different aspects of Moroccan culture and society.

Gnaouas - Hymns of Praise - Rhythms of Marrakech - Aïta - Lutes and Delights
Mousssem - Nuptials in Middle Atlas - Vibrations in High Atlas - Embroidered Canticles -
Citron, Fruit of Splendor - Concerto for 13 voices - Songs for a shabbat

And also:

- « Voices of Morocco », new editing from the whole series « Morocco Body and Soul »
- « For the eye's delight »
- « With drum beating »
- « Cyberstories »
- « Nûba of Gold and Light ». Full length musical documentary.

Bibliography

Izza Genini is the author of several articles and the texts of the CD-Rom:
« Maroc Rythmes et Cultures » (Project Images Films)

And of the books:

- « Maroc » (« Morocco » Richer/Vilo Publisher)
- « Maroc, Royaume des 1001 Fêtes » (« Morocco, Kingdom of the 1001 Celebrations » Plume/Flammarion Publisher)

SOGEAV-OHRA, the production

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- 1973** Creation of SOGEAV that runs the private screening room, CLUB 70.
Later SOGEAV starts films distribution and production, mainly devoted to African cinema.
- 1981** Production of 'TRANCES (84') directed by Ahmed El Maanouni.
- 1987** SOGEAV is named OHRA.
Since then Its main occupation is the production of a documentary sery dealing with different aspects of Moroccan culture and society.
Conceived, written and directed by Izza Genini, « MOROCCO, BODY AND SOUL » includes the 26' films :
- Aita - Songs of Praise - Lutes and Delights - Gnawas - Malhoune - Rhythms of Marrakech - Songs for a Shabbat - Embroidered Canticles - Vibrations in High Atlas - Nuptials in Middle Atlas - Moussem
- And also:
- Return to Oulad Moumen (50') - Concerto for 13 Voices (90') - For the eye's delight (52') - Citron, Fruit of Splendour - With Drums Beating (52') - Cyberstories (28') - Voices of Morocco (52').
- 2007** Production of a full-lengh documentary on Arabo-andalusian music : NUBA OF GOLD AND LIGHT (80'), directed by Izza Génini.
- 2007** TRANCES is choosen by Martin Scorsese and selected in Cannes Classic 2007 for the launching of the WORLD CINEMA FOUNDATION.