



## AISSAWANIYYA

### CONFERENCE / WORKSHOP ABOUT THE SUFI TRANCE RITUAL



The sufi ritual of the Aïssawa brotherhood is a ceremony which forwards to the trance. The ritual is a nocturnal domestic ceremony called *lila*, which means “night”. The term of *lila* is common to various Maghrebian confreric bands (such as Gnawa, Hamadcha or Jilala); animated by Aïssawa, this evening is often called “Aïssawa night” (*lila Aïssawiyya*) or sometimes even “sufi night” (*lilasûfiyya*).

In Morocco these trance ritual are organized mainly by the request of the women sympathizers. In this country, women are currently the principal customers of the orchestras of the Aïssawa brotherhood. The reasons to organize a sufi ceremony are varied : celebration of religious festivities, wedding, birth, circumcision, exorcism, search for cure or contact with God by the extase. The ritual includes mystical recitations of psalms, songs of spiritual poems and a collective dance of trance. The ludic aspects of the ceremony are current and asserted by the participants (laughs, songs, dances) just as the extatic body demonstrations (cries, tears).

On the level symbolic system, the ceremony represents the initiatory progress of the sufi : an ascending mystical voyage towards God and the Prophet with return on hearth. The odyssey culminate in the higher spheres, point of meeting of the man and the Divine.

The sufi trance ritual puts in scene musical, body and poetic expressions. This ritual constitutes a strong example of interaction between the disciplines. Although anchored in a major tradition, the ritual is in constant evolution and accepts elements of contemporary creation. The members of the Aïssawa brotherhood consider their ceremony as a space of safeguard of various artistic elements, symbolic systems and histories of the Moroccan culture.

The conference/workshop that we propose to you will present of it to you an eloquent illustration with the french-moroccan band **Aïssawaniyya**, directed by Mehdi Nabti and Haj Azedine Bettahi. The public will be put in situation of active participation.

**Goals :**

- To discover the tradition of the sufism and to initiate peoples with its aesthetic
- To enter in detail of an exemplary tradition as an introduction to the musics of oral tradition
- Discovery how a tradition can lead to modern musics

**Contents :**

We propose 4 teaching actions being able to be held around the project Aissawaniyya. These actions can be organized in the shape of regular or exceptional workshops and masterclasses.

- |          |   |
|----------|---|
| Action 1 | <b>INTRODUCTION TO THE SUFISM</b>                         |
| Action 2 | <b>CONFERENCE / WORKSHOP ABOUT THE SUFI TRANCE RITUAL</b> |
| Action 3 | <b>ANIMATION / CONCERT WITH AISSAWANIYYA</b>              |
| Action 4 | <b>WORKSHOP SUFI MUSIC / CONTEMPORARY AND IMPROVISED</b>  |

**Duration :**

Changeable according to the various actions. From a participative unique meeting of 1h30 to several days.

**Place and equipment :**

- A room of show or conference having a stage or a space to include whole or part of the public in a principle of masterclass
- Chairs for the speakers and the participants
- Sound equipment

**Tariff :**

2000 euros HT + transport charge

## Intervenors :

**Aissawaniyya** (10 musicians) lead by Mehdi Nabti and Haj Azedine Bettahi

### France

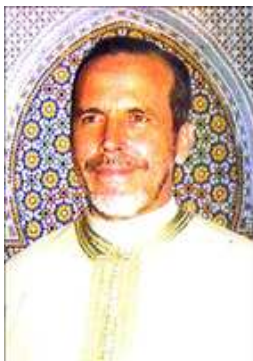
**Mehdi Nabti** [alto sax, arr., comp.]  
**Adrien Daoud** [ten. sax]  
**Maxime Daoud** [elec. basse]  
**Mathias Bernheim** [drums]

### Morocco (Aissawa brotherhood)

**Haj Azedine Bettahi** [vocals, tabla, bendir, dir.]  
**Taoufiq Bouzouba** [vocals, bendir, tbel, tarija]  
**Muhammed Njioui** [vocals, bendir, tbel, tarija]  
**Said Omri** [vocals, bendir, tbel, tarija]  
**Moustafa Sebai** [oboe, chant, tarija]  
**Aziz Chaoui** [oboe, chant, tarija]



**Mehdi Nabti** (30) is a saxophonist, doctor in socio/anthropology of Islam and lecturer. Born in France, he studied and playing jazz music before he conducted a scientific investigation in Morocco during five years inside the brotherhoods Aissawa, Qadirriyya and Hamadcha. He is the author of a thesis and several scientific articles on the sufism and the brotherhoods, taking part in many conferences in France, Canada and North Africa. He's the co-leader and artistic director of **Aissawaniyya**.



**Haj Azedine Bettahi** (59) is a musician and sufi master. He is actually the « leader of the delegates » (al-muqaddem-muqaddmin) of the Aïssâwa brotherhood in the district of Fez (Morocco). Sharp at the sufism since he was seven and appointed in 1996 by the mother-zawiya in Meknès to lead, judge and represent all the musicals soufis groups in the town of Fez. Therefore, Haj Azedine Bettahi is one of the most important figure of the hierarchy of the mystical brotherhood. He's the guarantor of a hundred years hold tradition that he transmits to the new generations of musicians of his orchestra. In Morocco, Haj Azedine Bettahi is the reference for all the people who wants to learn the Aïssawa mystical doctrine and the spiritual music. His sufi band is request all over the country by admirers. He's the co-leader director of **Aissawaniyya**.

## Contact coordination & diffusion :

Mehdi Nabti 0033 6 87 36 20 06 [mehdinabti@hotmail.com](mailto:mehdinabti@hotmail.com)

<http://aissawaniyya.free.fr>

<http://www.myspace.com/aissawaniyya>