

# ALGERIAN STREET CHAABI

Official Booklet  
By Nota Noche

An invitation to discover a musical universe where tradition and modernity intertwine, carried by the voice and strings of a passionate artist.



Ahcene AZZOUZ

“Nota Noche”



# Presentation

## A voice from the street

Ahcène Azzouz, known as Nota Noche, is a self-taught musician who mainly performs in the streets and public spaces of Algiers.

His instrument of choice is the Algerian mandole, with which he plays pieces from the chaâbi repertoire as well as his own compositions, sometimes enriched with influences from other musical traditions.

Without formal training or institutional guidance, he learned by listening to recordings, and practicing daily.

This self-taught journey, nurtured by direct contact with the public in open, accessible spaces, allowed him to develop a personal style –respectful of the codes of chaâbi while leaving room for improvisation.

This triple album reflects that approach : a direct recording, faithful to the spirit of the street, preserving the nuances, imperfections, and sincerity inherent to his practice.

Each volume explores a different facet of his world, while remaining deeply connected to his roots and musical environment.





# Why this triple album

## From the street to the world's ears

This project aims to preserve the authenticity of a playing style and sound shaped in the street, while making them accessible to a wider audience.

For three months, the recording took place outdoors, surrounded by the city's sounds and atmosphere.

The choice of a light mastering follows the same principle : keeping the real, raw atmosphere of each take, without erasing the elements that are an integral part of this sonic experience.

The triple album is made up of three distinct sections:

- The Roots : a return to the sources, blending texts from the chaâbi heritage of Algiers and North Africa with original compositions.
- The Colours : the world of the Mouloudia Club of Algiers stands, with chants from ultras adapted and reinterpreted on the mandole.
- The Journey : an instrumental journey inspired by various musical traditions—from Spain to Turkey, via Italy and Russia—while remaining anchored in the soul of chaâbi.

This triple album is for those who appreciate sincere music, rooted in everyday reality yet open to multiple influences and horizons.

# Chaâbi : A Living Heritage

Chaâbi is a musical genre born in the heart of Algiers at the beginning of the 20th century, in the Casbah and surrounding indigenous neighborhoods. At the crossroads of cultures, it draws inspiration from Arabo-Andalusian music, religious chants, “melhoun” poetry, and popular North African rhythms.

From its beginnings, it has been the expression of a people : telling of joys, sorrows, love, and struggles.

It found its place in Moorish cafés, family celebrations, and on Algerian radio—both during colonial times and after independence.

Figures such as El Hadj M’Hamed El Anka codified and popularized this genre, while Amar Ezzahi and Dahmane El Harrachi infused it with a freedom of interpretation that still sets the standard today.

Chaâbi is more than music—it is a living heritage, passed down from generation to generation, continuously adapting to the world’s influences without ever losing its soul.

# Inspirations and Influences

Nota Noche's style is shaped by diverse inspirations, all united by a respect for chaâbi and a desire to play with sincerity.

His greatest reference is Amar Ezzahi, a major figure of Algiers' chaâbi, known for his refined mandole playing, his closeness to the public, and his use of improvisation as an essential part of his artistic expression.

Nota Noche's biggest wish is to follow this example: to be as close to the people as he is to his instrument. He sometimes confides, in private to close friends, that he can "feel" when his mandole is not in its best condition—as if the instrument were a part of him.

He also draws from world music—Spain, Italy, Russia, Turkey—that blends naturally with the rhythms and melodies of chaâbi.

Finally, the chants of the Mouloudia Club of Algiers' supporters hold a special place: a collective energy he adapts to the mandole, keeping their strength and warmth.

# The MCA and Stadium Chants

Founded in 1921, the Mouloudia Club of Algiers is a historical and popular symbol.

Born in a colonial context, it carried the hopes and identity of a youth determined to exist and affirm itself. Its colors, green and red, represent hope and love of the homeland.

Stadium chants are an essential part of the MCA's culture. They express loyalty, pride, but also protest and a spirit of resistance. Each tells a story—an emotion lived collectively in the stands.

By adapting these chants to the mandole, Nota Noche sought to give them another dimension : bringing them from the fervor of the stands to the intimacy of a musical piece, while preserving their energy and message.

# Amar Ezzahi : Master and Inspiration

## The art of improvisation and openness to the world

It is impossible to talk about Nota Noche without mentioning Amar Ezzahi.

Born in 1941, Ezzahi is considered one of the greatest masters of Algerian chaâbi.

He shaped the genre not only through his virtuosity but also through his artistic philosophy : music that is free, sincere, and open to influences.

Ezzahi never limited himself to reproducing the standards of chaâbi. He improvised, adapted, and integrated sounds from elsewhere : Nino Rota's theme from The Godfather, the Russian folk song Katyusha, or Esmeralda, inspired by the melody of Bésame Mucho yet embedded in the world of Algiers chaâbi...

This curiosity and freedom deeply influenced Nota Noche, who found in Ezzahi a model of an artist able to honor tradition while enriching it.

In The Roots as well as in The Journey, Ezzahi's benevolent shadow can be felt : the desire to remain faithful to the chaâbi language while daring to blend it with other musical cultures.



# Casbah, Chaâbi & MCA

## A Living Legacy

The Casbah of Algiers is a place of memory. Listed as a UNESCO World Heritage site, it is the historical heart of the city, with its labyrinthine alleys, whitewashed houses, and terraces overlooking the sea.

During the War of Liberation (1954–1962), the Casbah was a bastion of resistance. Its narrow streets sheltered and connected fighters, while chaâbi music, often played in secret, became a vehicle of solidarity and identity.

The Mouloudia Club of Algiers, founded well before independence, shares with the Casbah this symbolic dimension: being a rallying point for those who carried Algeria in their hearts. In Nota Noche's album, this link translates into an emotional continuity: the chaâbi pieces evoke the Casbah and its spirit of resistance, while the MCA chants carry that pride into the present. Together they form a sound fresco where past and present constantly dialogue.



# The Green Corsairs and Verde Leon

## From the Stands to Chaâbi

At the Mouloudia Club of Algiers, supporters' passion goes far beyond the 90 minutes of a match. Among them, two ultras groups stand out for their creativity and collective strength: the Green Corsairs and the Verde Leon.

These groups don't just cheer for the team. They create powerful chants, write lyrics mixing passion, nostalgia, protest, and love for the club. They were the first to bring to life the words now found in the *The Colours* volume of this album.

Their creations are born in the stands, carried by hundreds of voices, accompanied by the beat of drums, the glow of flares, and the spectacle of tifos. They tell of loyalty to MCA, memories of past victories, and resistance against injustice.

The very name "Green Corsairs" echoes the corsairs of the Regency of Algiers (1515–1830), feared sailors who roamed the Mediterranean in service of the city and its sovereignty. Like their predecessors at sea, the Green Corsairs and Verde Leon operate collectively, with rigorous organization and a daring spirit that makes them unforgettable.

By reinterpreting their chants in chaâbi style, Nota Noche does more than pay homage: he passes on a legacy. The lyrics move from the raw energy of the terraces to the intimacy of a mandole piece, creating a bridge between two worlds—those of stadiums and Moorish cafés—where memory, passion, and resistance answer each other through time.

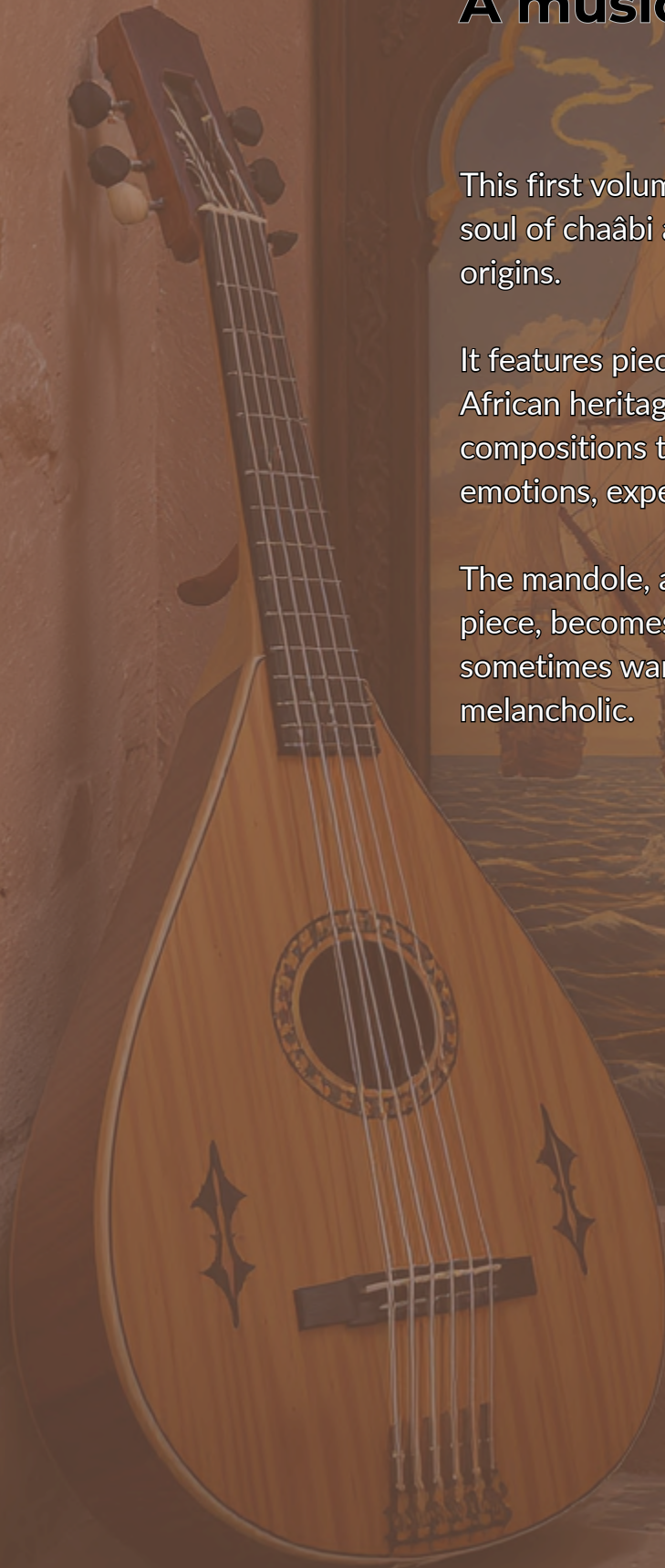
# Volume I : The Roots

## A musical Heritage

This first volume is a tribute to the soul of chaâbi and to his own musical origins.

It features pieces from the North African heritage as well as personal compositions that convey his emotions, experiences, and beliefs.

The mandole, at the center of every piece, becomes the main voice—sometimes warm, sometimes melancholic.



## 01 - Esmeralda Part 1 (Instrumental)

A reinterpretation of Amar Ezzahi's classic, played solely on the mandole. Stripped of the orchestra, the melody appears in its purest form, with each note resonating like a suspended memory.

## 02 - Aalach Qloub Ennas Rahet / why people's hearts are gone

An original composition blending the breath of chaâbi with the sensitivity of blues. The lyrics speak of a hardened world, where innocence has vanished, hearts have closed, and lies seem to rule. Both intimate and universal.

## 03 - Al Mahroum / The Deprived (Version 1)

A heartfelt cry against the deprivation of freedom and the wounds caused by addiction. Hypocrisy, betrayal, and solitude confront preserved dignity. Prayer and faith become shields against pain.

## 04 - Ryah Al Qdar / Destiny's Wind

A piece that ironically taunts those who think themselves untouchable. It reminds us that the wheel turns and that beauty, wealth, and power are fleeting. A simple message, carried with incisive energy.

## 05 - Al Mknassiya

Inspired by a poem from 18th-century Moroccan poet Kadour Al Alami, popularized in Algeria by El Hadj M'Hamed El Anka. This version tells of the loss and recovery of a home, symbolizing dignity and memory. A piece that bridges both shores of the Maghreb through poetry.

## 06 - Al Mahroum / The Deprived (Version 2)

Same text and intensity as the first version, but recorded indoors. The warmer, softer acoustics give the piece a more intimate and introspective character.

## 07 - Aalach Qloub Ennas Rahet / why people's hearts are gone (Instrumental)

Without lyrics, the mandole becomes the narrator. Each note conveys the bitterness and nostalgia of the sung version, while allowing the listener to project their own emotions.

## 08 - Esmeralda Part 2

The continuation of Esmeralda, enriched with melhoun poems and Maghrebi chaâbi heritage. It evokes a caged goldfinch as a metaphor for lost freedom, a dialogue with an abandoned ring, and the memory of a childhood love—a blend of human stories in one musical piece.

# Volume II : The Colours

## The colors of his passion

This second volume dives into the culture of the Mouloudia Club of Algiers terraces.

These chants, reworked on the mandole, retain their collective strength while adopting a more melodic tone.

Each track is a declaration of love to the club, and a mirror of the hopes and anger of its supporters.



## **01 - Rosso Verde**

A vibrant anthem to MCA's red and green. A chant mixing pride, loyalty, and defiance toward rivals, with a chorus that sticks in the ear.

## **02 - Courage Ndirouh / We Will Be Courageous (Version 1)**

A passionate vow: always here, always loyal. The track evokes the power of tifos, the heat of flares, and the unity of supporters through every trial.

## **03 - Al Qalb Skhoun / The warm Heart (Version 1)**

A chant where the heart beats to the team's rhythm, even in hard seasons. It speaks of perseverance and unwavering loyalty.

## **04 - Maranach Mlah / We Are Not Well (Version 1)**

An openly engaged song: denouncing corruption and the business that eats away at football, and affirming that the club belongs to its true supporters.

## **05 - Al Qalb Skhoun / The warm Heart (Version 2)**

A reprise of track 3, with richer chords that add depth and gravity to the message.

## **06 - Courage Ndirouh / We Will Be Courageous (Version 2)**

An arranged version of track 2, reinforcing emotional power with stronger harmonies.

## **07 - Maranach Mlah / We Are Not Well (Version 2)**

A new arrangement of track 4, more dramatic, highlighting the protest spirit of the lyrics.

## **08 - Norek Ma Yetfa / Your light Never Dies**

An ode to perseverance and eternal love for MCA. The lyrics speak of a light that never goes out, indestructible memories, and the strength to keep going despite obstacles.

# Volume III : The Journey

## Journey around the Mediterranean

This final volume is entirely instrumental.

It imagines a crossing that links different cultures through the thread of chaâbi.

Each piece evokes a place, an atmosphere, an emotion.



## 01 - Alba Andaluz (Andalusian Dawn)

Sunrise over Andalusia. The notes rise gradually, like light spreading across the hills, before unfolding in warm arabesques.

## 02 – Turkish Nocturne

A minor-key melody with a mysterious hue, inspired by nights on the Bosphorus. The mandole playing is more intimate, almost meditative.

## 03 - Sorriso Mediterraneo (Mediterranean Smile)

A luminous piece inspired by Italian melodies. You can feel the simple joy of a smile shared on a Mediterranean harbor.

## 04 - Tears of the Levant

A melancholic ballad with Eastern influences, where the mandole carries a deep sadness—an echo of stories of departure and exile.

## 05 - Katyusha (Algerian Echo)

An Algerian take on the famous Russian song, with chaâbi rhythms lending it a unique Mediterranean flavor.

## 06 - Waltz of the Shores

A reimagined Mediterranean waltz. Each measure suggests waves brushing the Algerian coast under the sun.

## 07 - Capricho of Algiers

A homage to the Spanish “Capricho Árabe,” enriched with chaâbi ornamentation—creating a dialogue between the North and South of the Mediterranean.

## 08 - Capricho of Algiers (Long Version)

An extended version that leaves more space for improvisation and melodic exploration—like a musical conversation that doesn't want to end.

# Behind the Scenes

## The raw soul of the recordings

Every track on this triple album carries the imprint of a unique moment. Recording in the street means embracing the unexpected : approaching footsteps, a passing car, distant laughter... These sounds are part of the album's story.

Nota Noche choses to keep this authenticity because it reflects the reality of his journey. The mandole is not just an instrument—it is his traveling companion, witness to his hours of practice, his trials and errors, his small musical victories.

Sometimes a piece takes shape in minutes, as if it had been waiting for him forever. Others require days or weeks to find the right nuance, tempo, or breath. But each time, it is an intimate dialogue between him and his instrument, where the heart leads the way.

## Lyrics and Poems

### Words that travel

The lyrics in this album come from various sources: traditional melhoun poems, popular songs, and personal creations. They speak of love, betrayal, nostalgia, but also of resistance and hope.

In El Meknassiya, the loss of a home becomes a universal metaphor for the precious things we think are ours but can vanish in an instant.

In Esmeralda, the beauty of a caged goldfinch tells of confinement and the longing for freedom. In other pieces, a simple object—a ring, a scarf—becomes the starting point of an emotional journey.

These words, whether inherited or invented, travel through time and place. They link generations, cities, and peoples. They remind us that music is a language everyone can understand, even without translation.

# Acknowledgments

## “To those who walk with me”

To my family, who gave me the strength and patience to pursue my passion, even in moments of doubt.

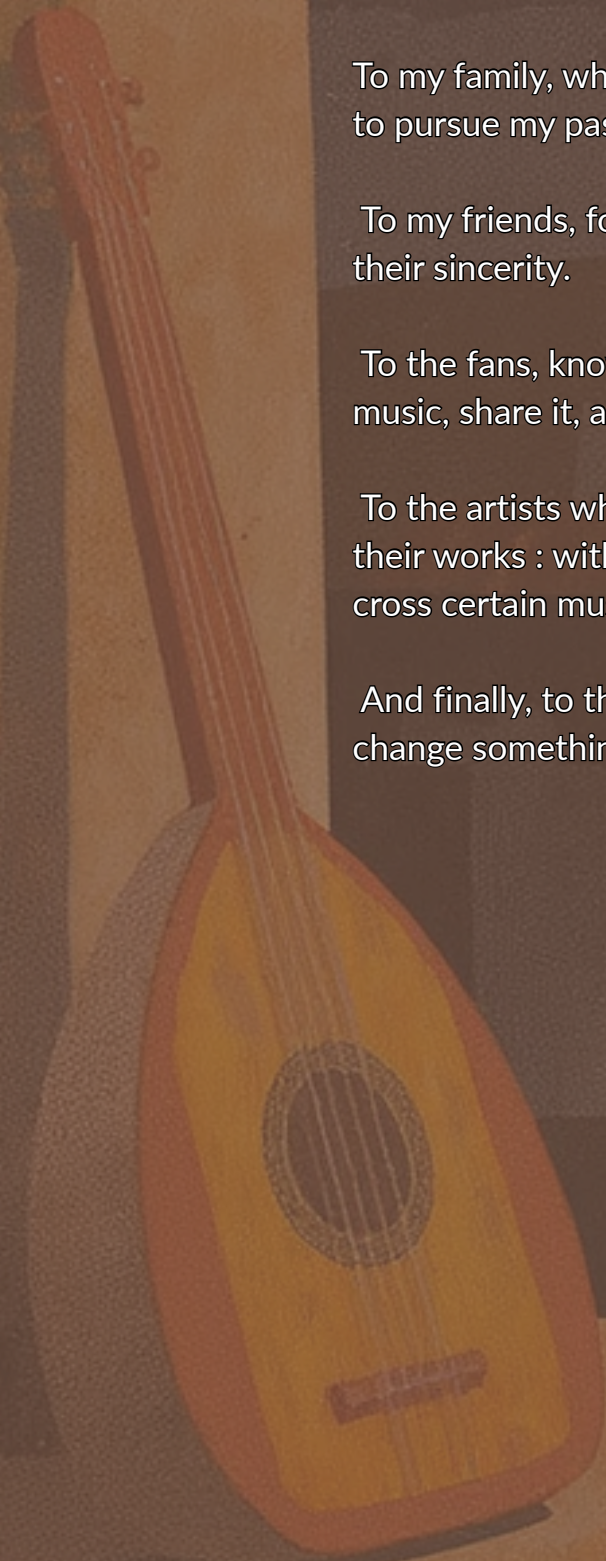
To my friends, for their presence, their advice, and their sincerity.

To the fans, known or unknown, who listen to my music, share it, and encourage me to continue.

To the artists who inspired me, directly or through their works : without them, I might never have dared to cross certain musical boundaries.

And finally, to those who still believe that music can change something in this world.

- Nota Noche



# Stay Connected

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A night sky with a large, glowing blue moon and a starry background, overlooking a city at night. The city is illuminated with warm lights, and a silhouette of a person is visible in the foreground on a balcony.

**From the heart of Algiers to ears  
around the world**

**Nota Noche builds bridges between  
cultures.**

**His name reflects his soul :  
Nota for music, Noche for the night  
where it comes alive.**

**“Like a raw diamond, his talent reveals itself to  
those who take the time to listen.”**