



## LES BOUKAKES

### The rock 'n' raï band from Montpellier presents its new album *Marra*

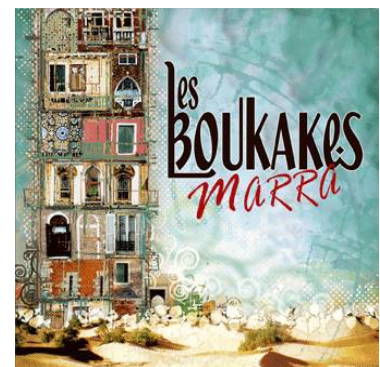
Les Boukakes stand for music created in exile – for the perfect symbiosis of orient and occident. “Rock ‘n’ raï”, that’s how the six musicians from Algeria, Tunisia and France call their music style, a speedy mix of rock, raï, gnawa and châabi, which they catapulted within a few years from the streets and clubs of Montpellier onto the big festival stages and into the French radio charts. With their second album *Bledi* (2005) Les Boukakes received international attention and thrilled thousands of fans with their strong live performance. After two successful years of touring the power-band now presents its new album *Marra*: Les Boukakes managed to capture the energy of their live concerts and unfold their joyful playing in twelve ingeniously arranged songs.

The success story of Les Boukakes starts in 2004 when they participated in the well known music competition *Printemps de Bourges*. Celebrated as the new discovery of the festival, the European TV channel ARTE produces a documentary on the band touring throughout Europe and sharing the stages with famous musicians such as Manu Chao, Natacha Atlas, Rachid Taha or Femi Kuti.

The exciting year 2005 was rounded up by the release of their album *Bledi* which promptly resulted in an invitation to the biggest international World Music fair Womex in Newcastle, UK. With their fantastic concert – which the British magazine fRoots called the “Womex Hit” – Les Boukakes did not only convince numerous festival organisers but also made the rock legend Robert Plant dance and headbang to their music. A USA tour and many concerts at the biggest European World Music festivals followed. Finally the year 2006 culminated in a nomination for the BBC World Music Award 2007. After two successful years of touring Les Boukakes devoted the last year to the recordings of their new album *Marra* which is going to be released on August 15<sup>th</sup> 2008.

#### NEW ALBUM MARRA

On their third album *Marra* Les Boukakes achieve to transfer the incredible energy of their live concerts into the studio and unfold their joyful playing in twelve ingeniously arranged songs. The six musicians merge wild rock and hard beats with tuneful oriental sounds floating over which the adjuratory singing of Bachir Mokthar. Screaming electrical guitars and rapid Karkabous communicate with a fascinating ease. Next to the rock songs one also finds on the diverse album melodious songwriting as well as more traditional pieces, instrumented by the Gnawa lute guembri or the oriental percussion tar.



As on their last album Les Boukakes were also this time keen to experiment and added additional flavour to their songs by using instruments such as Greek Bouzouki or the South American Charango.

On **August 15th 2008** *Marra* has been published by the Austrian World Music label Atlas Music pro and is currently available in stores in Germany (Indigo), Austria (Hoanzl), France (Nocturne), Spain (Ventilador), the Netherlands and Belgium (LC Music), Great Britain (Proper Music) and as MP3 downloads via the common platforms.

## **PRESS**

"[...] Opener *Hammouda* sets the tone: launched with a swung dub beat, it unexpectedly cuts into a distorted rock riff, which in turn gives way to shuffling percussion and funky wah-wah. As the album continues, derbouka, tar and bendir beat out Arab rhythms over rocky kit drums, while acoustic guembri and charango tangle with electric guitar and keyboards. Rachid Taha makes an inevitable and appropriate point of reference: *Marra* is built upon the same genre-defying spirit, bringing a little gnawa and a lot of rai together with diverse western styles. [...] This diverse collection reminds us that Les Boukakes are alive and well. Let's look forward to another exhilarating European tour next year."

**fRoots, January 2009**

"[...] Les Boukakes leave no stone unturned in *Marra*, with their fusion of Eastern and Western rock. Playing a sound that fuses as much world instrumentation as conventional bass, guitar and drums, the band is impossible to pigeon hole. [...] *Marra* is well worth a listen - never predictable, packed with fresh instrumentation presented in the unlikeliest of places."

**Sheffield Telegraph, December 2008**

„Sur leur dernier album, le groupe joue le raï comme si les Stones, les Doors ou les Clash s'étaient mis au blues du bled."

**Liberation, December 2008**

„[...] Considerably more edged are Les Boukakes who massively pump up their raï-rock on their new album *Marra* (Atlas Music). Already the opening song combines heavy guitars and arabesques so powerfully that Rachid Taha will soon become scared. And also the following titles alternate in a skilful interplay between dirty reggae, rumbling gnawa riffs and melodic Maghreb-rock – the guys from Montpellier are indeed playing in a higher league than most exile-bands from France."

**Jazzthing, August 2008 (translated from German)**

„Rachid Taha has got competitors. Les Boukakes from Montpellier are giving raï-rock a new drive. Their album *Marra* is following their breakthrough-CD *Bledi* and transports hearty North-African rock with reggae influences, but also calm acoustic-electric Arab pop. Unlike Taha Les Boukakes seem to refine their songs to greater extent. [...] In any case, the guys always go strong when it comes to the heart beats - when guitars are strumming, drums, derbouka and gnawa-plates are rattling, bass is mumbling and Bachir Mokkhtar is raising his raspy voice."

**Sound & Image, August 2008 (translated from German)**

„Les Boukakes from Montpellier let it crash again heftily on their new album. Rock 'n' raï they call their music from orient and occident. In their speedy music they gaily and bold combine elements of rock, raï, gnawa and chaâbi. Their success speaks for itself. Their last album *Bledi* having been a master piece already, they can easily keep up to this quality



on *Marra*. Besides the usual line-up of a rock band they use instrumentation such as *guembri* (the *gnawa*-lute), different oriental drums, *bouzouki* and *charango* - altogether resulting in a pounding and colourful music."

**Weltmusik-Magazin, August 2008 (translated from German)**

„Oh wow – *raï* rocks! The Tunisian-French-Corsican band is immensely sparkling and knows how to swing an electric axe. In doing so these guys are groovy and danceable - and come up with easygoing melodies just like that. Tasty orient-occident cocktail."

**Andreas Russ, Freizeit-Kurier, 12. Juli 2008 (translated from German)**

„Already after a few beats it becomes clear that here we are dealing with representatives of a new generation who are carrying on the achievements of *Rachid Taha & Co.* They themselves call their music rock 'n' *raï*, whereas the sound spectrum is much bigger than the tag suggests. The ingenious sound hybrid, played with lots of verve, leaves no doubt that this is the sound of a world that clearly grows together."

**Jazzeit, July-August 2007 (translated from German)**

"Les Boukakes offer on *Bledi* a balanced mix of pop and *raï*, rock and *gnawa*, songwriting and *chaâbi*; and this continuously danceable. An excellent CD for which you do not have to be a fan of oriental music – but you might become one."

**Folker!, July-August 2007 (translated from German)**

"The term *cultural melting pot* seems to have been invented for bands like Les Boukakes. On this, their second release, the Montpellier-based group, comprising musicians from Algeria, Tunisia, France, Corsica and Italy, bring their varied cultural influences to bear on an album of discerning musicianship and diversity. [...] The result is a potent musical cocktail. Overall, this is a fun mixture of rock 'n' *rai* and the band thoroughly deserved their nomination at this year's BBC Awards for World Music. [...]"

**Songlines, July-Aug. 2007**

"Rock'n'roll comes in all shapes and styles, but one thing that's evident is that it can cross all manner of borders. France's Les Boukakes had them dancing and headbanging at their showcase. They pitch their camp somewhere between the raw punk fires of the late *Mano Negra* and *Rachid Taha*, bringing together French and North African members in a very fertile collaboration that doesn't so much percolate as boils over time after time. Make a note of the name. If there's any justice, you're going to be hearing lots of them in the near future."

**fRoots, 2006**

"Hybrid music was all over the festival, sometimes in kitchen-sink combinations, but often in synergistic ones. Les Boukakes, with a lead singer from Algeria and members from Tunisia and France, put rock dynamics behind impassioned lyrics about social conditions and the long, gutsy vocal lines of Algerian *rai* music."

**The New York Times, 2005**