



ABDEL HADI HALO  
& THE EL GUSTO ORCHESTRA OF ALGIERS

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### DESCRIPTION

*Chaabi* ("of the people") has its roots in the Andalusian music of Moorish Spain, spreading to North Africa with exiled Jewish and Moorish communities; but it really took off in the music schools, parties and bars of occupied, post-WWII Algiers, where its Andalusian, Middle Eastern and North African lineage fused with the Mediterranean soundtrack of that era – chanson, jazz, snatches of tango, a little boogie-woogie. A *chaabi* band combines traditional instruments such as the *qanoun* (or zither), *mandole*, oud, *gambar* (a stringed turtle shell), *bendir* and *derbouka* (types of drum); together with the piano, flute, banjo (brought to Algiers by American GIs), violin (played upright on the lap to save space in crowded venues), accordion and bongos. With subject matter ranging from God to pretty girls, the songs often touch on taboo issues. For this recording, the **Abdel Hadi Halo & The El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers** includes four singers – joined in chorus by the voices of the entire orchestra and five-man banjo, percussion and violin sections. The scale and organization are thrilling; the music is swirling and improvisatory, surging from the haunted to the bluesy, the devotional to the knees-up. This album was recorded on the tilting fifth floor of the Conservatoire d'Algiers, in a room overlooking the sea on one side, and the Casbah on the other: the orchestra was recorded live in full flight – all together, in continuous takes.

### TRACK LISTING

01. Win Saadi
02. Fatouma
03. Fi Bahr El Hob Mwadji, Kifash Nwassi
04. Min Yaati Kalbou Lil Melah
05. Lalla Fatima
06. Mal Djifni



### HIGHLIGHTS

- This is a collection of *chaabi* music performed by **Abdel Hadi Halo & The El Gusto Orchestra of Algiers** that bridges the territories between Jewish and Muslim communities in Algeria. Recorded live in one continuous take.
- Mixed by **Moritz von Oswald (Basic Channel, Maurizio)** and **R. Schulte** and produced by **Damon Albarn (Blur)**.
- "This is soulful, devotional and with the kind of conviction you rarely hear in modern pop and backed with a story almost as good as the record itself, how can you possibly resist? Highly recommended." –Boombkat
- "There are six lengthy songs, each concerned with love, in either its deepest subjective manifestation, or in an outward-reaching relationship to the wider judgement of Allah. The call-and-response lines are suitably poetic, traversing the heights and depths of extreme emotional states ... Its development is beautifully arched over an intense 19 minutes, its words tragic and desperate, with almost conversational declamations delivered by the very passionate **Ahmed Bernaoui**." –BBC Online

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