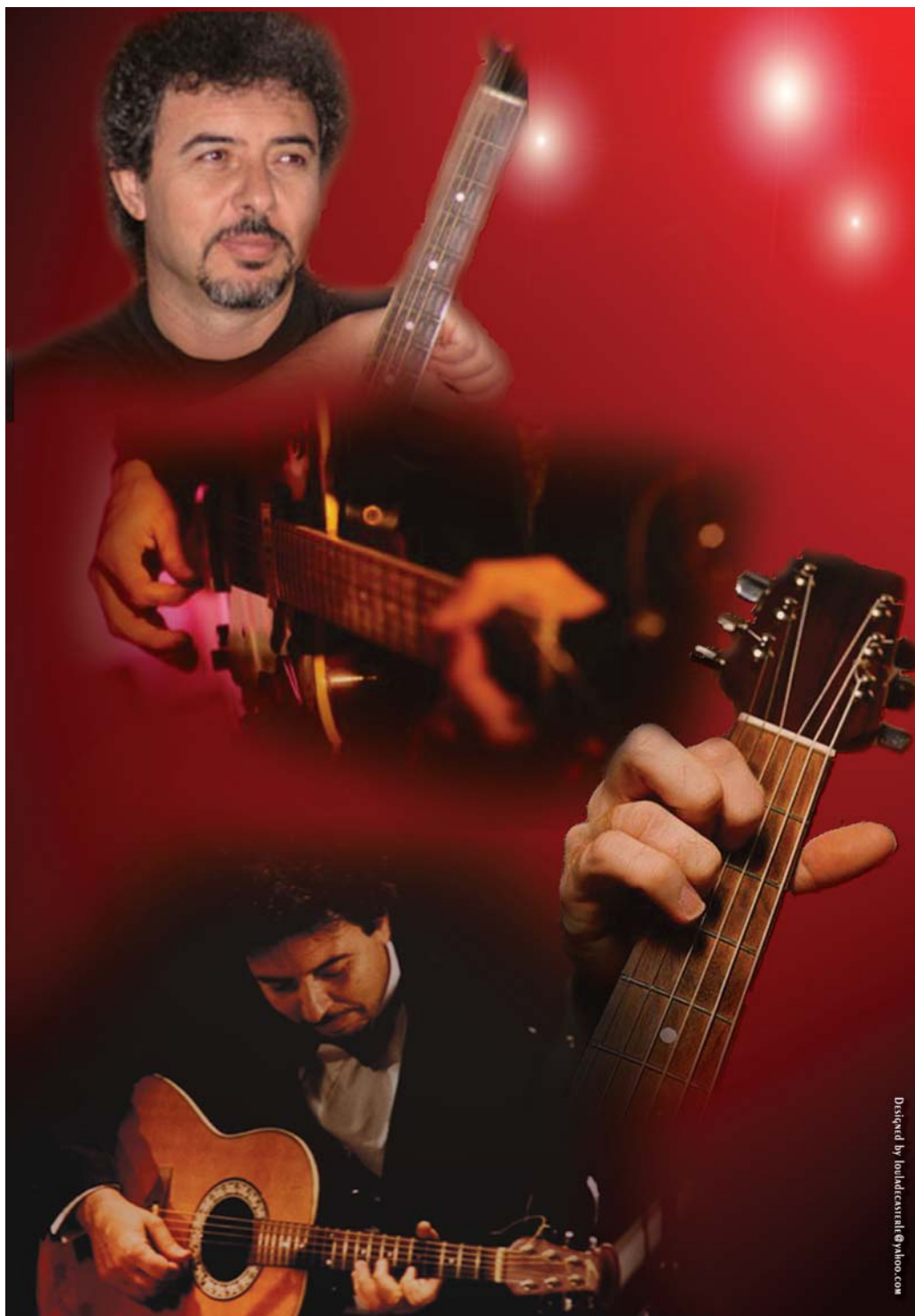


# MAMDOUH BAHRI

**JAZZ GUITAR & WORLD MUSIC**

**Mediterranean Afro Latin Jazz Music**



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# Mamdouh Bahri Quartet

## A trip to the Mediterranean Afro Jazz Music via New York

*While standing at cultural crossroads, Mamdouh Bahri has chosen jazz as his lift off point to create new musical worlds. Although he is carrying on the tradition of jazz guitar — from Wes Montgomery to the present day — he has expanded some musical boundaries, combining Afro-Mediterranean music with the jazz tradition. He thus stands as a go-between connecting Africa and America. His savvy original compositions catch listeners, generating a symbiotic affinity between the artist and the audience through groove and jam-oriented music.*

*Mamdouh Bahri's alchemy blends jazz, blues and rock into an exciting new music with African, Mediterranean and Latin undertones..*

NEFTA is a town from Southern Tunisia. This project was originated by Mamdouh Bahri in April 1989 to perform original tunes, at the cross-road of blues and Middle-Eastern melodies, using jazz changes and North African rhythms. Among Mamdouh Bahri's bands, this quartet is inspired by the manifold language of rhythm. It celebrates the universal love for dancing that music from Africa, South America and the Mediterranean has put forward through the extensive use of percussions. With Nefta, Mamdouh Bahri gives free rein to the sheer joy of a pulsing beat.

**Mamdouh Bahri** *Guitar & composition*  
**Francis Balzamo** *Bass*  
**René Nan** *Drums*  
**Rachid Sbaï** *Percussion*

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# MAMDOUH BAHRI

## IN THE PRESS - Concerts - INTERNATIONAL

...What was most impressive was the deft performance at the guitar by Bahri. His astute finger work and fluency were simply remarkable. What was pleasantly unique about the performance was the tempo of the nature of the tunes. It was an interesting mix of western and oriental music. Oriental, with the Middle Eastern flavor it carried. Mamdouh Bahri's jazz was a genre by itself. While jazz by all accounts, it was a unique confluence of the orient and the occident.

His performance catered to all tastes, those with a flair for eastern music and those who are Western-orientated. Despite it being jazz, there was no discord in between notes... **Anil Datta - The News, Karachi - November 27, 2006**

It was one of the greatest evenings of music that Alliance Francaise d'Islamabad is used to arrange. The performance of Afro Caribbean Jazz, namely The Mamdouh Bahri Trio, got a great and heartily appreciation by its music lover-audience on Wednesday evening at NIC auditorium... Touching the heart and harmonious melody has successfully portrayed "Autumn in Bloom" as it was the title of the concert... A unique recognition of Mamdouh Bahri is an exceptional way of propelling the Mediterranean heritage mixed with the jazz and blues. **Tarik Zia - The Nation, Islamabad - November 16, 2006**

The Mamdouh Bahri Trio renders the audience spellbound with the Afro-Jazz music at concert in Islamabad... French jazz band Mamdouh Bahri captivated the audience during their one-hour performance at the NIC auditorium... The Tunisian-born guitarist, Mamdouh charmed the guests with unabated demonstration of his Mediterranean heritage, Afro-Asian jazz, blues and rock and unique combination of traditional notes with new experiments. He also demonstrated the extent to which African music had influenced jazz... There was a lot of interplay and enquiries among the three musicians... **Jonaïd Iqbal - Dawn, Islamabad - November 16, 2006**

The evening's emotional peak was given by the performance of Mamdouh Bahri, a Tunisian born French guitarist. He and the two other group members performed a jazzy funky musical journey... the spirit of fusion and mixing styles copes perfectly with jazz... **Pierre Jolit - Dawn, Lahore - November 12, 2006**

...The track teemed with blends of Funk and Jazz laced with the undertones of ethnic music. With traditional jazzy beats and rhythm provided by Da Costa and Balzamo, Bahri interwove, with the extra manipulation of his fingers on the guitar, licks of the traditional music he grew up with in Tunisia... The audience especially appreciated a subsequent number which was immersed in Hispanic notes, littered with guitar licks that were reminiscent of Santana with lapses of Hendrix and Montgomery, capturing a Samba-like quality and yet staying true to jazz... **Cecil J. Chen - Daily Times, Karachi - November 08, 2006**

... Y así quedó reflejado con la brillante presentación que hiciera el músico tunecino, radicado en Francia, Mamdouh Bahri, en un concierto que duró una hora y media en la Piedra Feliz al imponer el jazz con los músicos del grupo Congreso Jorge Campos (bajo), Raúl Aliaga (batería) y Sebastián Almarza (piano). La guitarra de Mamdouh Bahri se impuso con un variado estilo que iban del jazz hasta la fusión de melodías con el blues, según expresó el propio Bahri, quien reconoció la calidad del público que se apostó en la Piedra Feliz para escuchar, a partir de las 22:25, hora de inicio de la presentación musical, un variado programa de melodías del jazz con toques de influencia árabes en algunos pasajes de la presentación. La noche porteña de un verano en el mes de enero, se llenó de alegría y calidez al escuchar a este virtuoso músico que ha recorrido el mundo con su guitarra para entregar la magia del jazz al público... **Miguel Chamorro**

La música de Mamdouh Bahri cruza el mundo como un gran tejido de la diversidad cultural que traspassa las fronteras de Finlandia, Estonia, China, la India, Bahrein, Gracia, Marruecos, pasando también por reconocidos lugares como Nueva York y París. **Universidad de Valparaíso**

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# MAMDOUH BAHRI

## IN THE PRESS

Mamdouh Bahri's group of five musicians offered a Mediterranean evening, with notes brewed to a fine oriental savor. They took the audience on a voyage, amateur listeners and connoisseurs alike conquered by the melodies and rhythms. Cohorts in life, but also on the stage, the five artists carried on musical conversations, notes rebounding from one instrument to the next. The applause testified to the quality of chorus after chorus that brought joy to all, and introduced the public to these musicians of the highest level... music lovers captured by this music with the imprint of American jazz and Tunisian inspiration, where each listener could appreciate a highly developed degree of improvisational discourse, mirror of the musicians' love of jazz... The enthusiastic public gave the musicians a warm standing ovation as they departed

***Journal de la Haute Marne – April 13, 2004*** (Translation by Cynthia Hilts)

This Friday at MJC Picaud we had the pleasure and the "privilege" of attending our very first performance by Tunisian guitarist Mamdouh Bahri and his new quartet. His music is poetic, limpid, and simply beautiful. It takes you on a trip to the countries of "North Africa", around the Mediterranean, with a few stopovers in West Africa...

***KAT – Jazzbreak.com – January 23, 2004*** (Translation by Cynthia Hilts)

... And when Mamdouh and his musicians go onstage, it is an invitation to the East that they offer. A talented guitarist, Mamdouh Bahri succeeds in a true fusion between Western jazz and the music of the Mediterranean Basin, touched with Eastern accents. On stage the guitar weaves a heady tapestry, taken over perfectly by a completely smooth horn section. Between the derbouka's beat and a drum set that plays in its turn with syncopation or diffusion, the rhythms carry this subtle cocktail of swing and Eastern sweetness to heights of wonder. Luminous and mysterious, erudite and yet harshly effective, his original compositions make the listener submit to being rocked by the spiraling sounds. Well set behind his six strings, Mamdouh Bahri plucks the notes, sometimes letting them wander off into electric forays, reminding one that in the beginning, B.B. King or Santana were his big influences. A perfectly arranged set...

***N.D. - Press Ocean, Nantes – August 31, 2002*** (Translation by Cynthia Hilts)

With Mamdouh Bahri, it is still the East of the North Africa (and, beyond, to Persia) which interlaces its rhythmic forms and structures with the undulations virtuosos of the jazz guitarist. Here all is only dance and languor, songs that take their time whatever the tempo, exquisite nonchalance, volutes and flown away calligraphers. That is to say another beautiful page which sign (and comments with meticulousness in its liner notes) the guitarist of The Spirit of Life Ensemble.

***Philippe Carles - Jazz Magazine #489 – February 1999***

First, put in a mambo rhythm by guitarist Mamdouh Bahri then add a little West African drums by Everald Brown with a dash of click sticks for timing by Carlos DeSexias. Add some more Bahri and then pour in some smooth trumpet by Carlos Francis. Continue to mix with the rest of the band, while sprinkling in some alto by Cleave Guyton. Stir well and keep cooking. You now have an African Flame.

***CD "Live at the Five Spot, New York" - 1996***

A carnival samba beat with intimations of waltz time propels "Flying High" featuring guitarist/composer Mamdouh Bahri.

***George Kanzler - Sunday Star-Ledger - November 27, 1994***

"Flying high" a tribute to the legendary pianist, Randy Weston is an up-tempo feel good tune with extraordinary solo throughout by guitarist Mamdouh Bahri.

***Ben Duncan WBGO-FM 88 Jazz Radio - 1994***

Mamdouh succeeds the synthesis between American and Mediterranean music. This music, which has the color of hot sand and the odor of the agitated nights, sounds magnificently due to the precision of his arrangements.

Mamdouh Bahri which frequently works with Horace Parlan and seems to have listened to George Benson with admiring attention is undoubtedly a great guitarist but also an excellent composer ...

***Ch. Brackers d'Hugo - Les abonnés du jazz / La Voix du Nord - 1993***

The artistic work of the guitarist Mamdouh Bahri is completely original. Not only because it takes as a starting point the musical traditions of his country, but still more because he is authentic and deep creator who composes a plentiful music of an amazing richness. Mamdouh Bahri is a musician of a great poetic requirement.

***Michel Arcens - Midi Libre – June 6, 1993***

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# MAMDOUH BAHRI

## BIOGRAPHY

*He is carrying on the tradition of jazz guitar from Wes Montgomery to the present day while expanding some musical boundaries, combining Afro-Mediterranean music with a tradition well represented by jazz standards. His savvy original composition catch listeners, while making groove and jam-oriented music create a symbiotic affinity between the artist and the audience.*

Mamdouh Bahri was born in Sfax (Tunisia) and came to Montpellier, in the south of France, at the age of 25. He grew up listening to the traditional music of Tunisia, where he absorbed the Eastern strains into his music and started playing *Derbouka* (hand drum percussion).

As a teenager, he listened to Jimi Hendrix, Carlos Santana, Eric Clapton and B.B. King. When he got his first guitar at eighteen, he started emulating their sounds and performing with local bands, adding his own personal flair to the popular songs of the seventies.

When he heard George Benson's "Weekend in L.A.", he got interested in jazz and started listening to the work of Benson, Wes Montgomery, and Joe Pass, and later to Pat Martino, which sparked a lifelong love of jazz.

In 1982, he moved to Montpellier and was recruited by JAM (Jazz Action Montpellier) to teach music, and played a key role in the development of the organization until 1991. He became a very active musician and has kept an open musical mind, listening to more jazz (Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, and Miles Davis) and learning to play straight-ahead jazz.

His first recording "Song for Sarah", recorded in 1987, was post-bop funk-oriented.

In 1988, Mamdouh Bahri came up with a unique way of propelling his Mediterranean heritage mixed with the jazz and Blues.

From 1989 to 1993, he formed a quartet with the pianist Horace Parlan that also included Italian bassist Riccardo Del Fra and drummer Idris Muhammad from New Orleans. In 1991, they recorded live in Carthage, the CD "From Tunisia with Love".

In 1991, he moved to New York City and joined the collective "The Spirit of Life Ensemble" led by Daoud Williams, and performed with Talib Kibwe, Ted Curson, Michael Cochrane, and Winard Harper, among others. He recorded seven albums with them, using his distinctive playing and compositional skills to bring freshness to the sound of the collective.

In 1993, he released his third album "Nefta". The original tunes were influenced by a variety of musical traditions including Middle Eastern, Jazz and North African music.

In 1998, he continued with an acoustic album "African Flame" in trio (guitar, percussion & bass), exploring and growing his music, transcending cultural, genre and language barriers.

Now he is taking all these diverse influences and styles and mixing them with jazz all over again

## Performances

**Festivals & Venues: France, Estonia, Finland, Tunisia, Bahrain, Chile China, United Arab Emirates, Gabon, Guadeloupe, Greece, India, Morocco, Pakistan, Qatar, and USA**

## Media

**TV & Radio: USA, Tunisia, UAE, Chile, France**

## Discography

- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| <b>France</b>    | ** Mamdouh Bahri "Tabarka", CD: JMA 0511-1 (2005)                                |
|                  | ** Mamdouh Bahri "African Flame", CD: Aljazzira JC 55004 (1998)                  |
|                  | ** Mamdouh Bahri "Nefta-les portes du désert", CD: ZZ 84110 MFA (1993)           |
|                  | ** Mamdouh Bahri "From Tunisia with Love", Live at Carthage, CD: RECD 025 (1992) |
|                  | ** Mamdouh Bahri "Song for Sarah", K7: Aljazzira JK 55001 (1987)                 |
| <b>USA/Japan</b> | ** Spirit of Life Ensemble "Live au Duc", CD: RUP 100-12 (2002)                  |
|                  | ** Spirit of Life Ensemble "Song for My Father", CD: KICJ 361 (1998)             |
|                  | ** Spirit of Life Ensemble "Collage", CD: RUP 100-10 (1998)                      |
|                  | ** Spirit of Life Ensemble "Live at Pori Jazz", CD: RUP 100-9 (1997)             |
|                  | ** Spirit of Life Ensemble "Live! At the 5 Spot, NY", CD: RUP 100-8 (1995)       |
|                  | ** Spirit of Life Ensemble "Feel the Spirit", CD: RUP 100-4 (1994)               |
|                  | ** Spirit of Life Ensemble "Inspirations", CD: RUP 100-3 (1993)                  |

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