

Biography ANOUAR BRAHEM

Born in 1957 in Halfaouine, in the heart of the Medina in Tunis, Anouar Brahem wasted when he began studying the oud at the National Conservatory in Tunis, and later pursued his apprenticeship with the great master Ali Sriti.

In an Arab musical environment where popular songs and crowded orchestras dominated – the oud was reserved for accompaniment – Brahem revealed his many facets in undertaking a mission to restore the oud to the status of an emblematic solo instrument in Arab music, and at the same time breaking with tradition in his work as a composer by integrating elements of jazz and other musical traditions from the Orient and the Mediterranean.

In 1981 he moved to Paris for four years, where he collaborated with Maurice Béjart and composed numerous original works, notably in Tunisian films and theatre.

On his return to Tunisia in 1985, he spent the next five years composing and giving concerts which established his reputation.

In 1989 he met producer Manfred Eicher, who gave Brahem the opportunity to record his first album for the highly prestigious ECM label. *Barzakh* marked the beginning of a particularly fruitful association which, in the space of twenty years, has seen Anouar Brahem in the company of some of the world's most talented musicians, whatever the genre or tradition : Barbarose Erköse, Jan Garbarek, Dave Holland, John Surman and Richard Galliano to name only a few. To date, Brahem has recorded no fewer than eight other albums, all of which have received similar public and critical acclaim : *Conte de L'Incroyable Amour* (1991), *Madar* (1994), *Khomsa* (1995), *Thimar* (1998), *Astrakan Café* (2000), *Le Pas Du Chat Noir* (2001), *Le Voyage De Sahar* (2006), *The Astounding Eyes Of Rita* (2009).

In 2006 his love for films became tangible when he directed and coproduced his first documentary film "Mots d'après la Guerre", made in the Lebanon following the war between Israel and the Hezbollah. The film was selected for the Locarno Film Festival.

In 2010 Anouar Brahem was appointed to the Jury for the official feature-film selections shown at the Carthage Festival in Tunis. Considered in his country to be the most innovative composer and instrumentalist of recent years, Anouar Brahem enjoys considerable esteem among young Tunisian composers and oud-players; and today he has become, more than ever, one of the most influential figures in contemporary music, both in the Arab world and beyond.

In 2012, shortly after the revolution in Tunisia, he was named a Member of the Tunisian Academy for Science, the Arts and Literature.

In 2014, after six years of silence on record, Anouar Brahem has published *Souvenance* (ECM), an ambitious double-album whose sound is at once a sumptuous aesthetic synthesis of 15 years of experiment in his quest for an authentic "common understanding" between Orient and Occident, and an offbeat, personal and reflective response to the events in Tunisia early in 2011.

In the course of his career Anouar Brahem has obtained many awards and decorations : the "Prix National de la Musique" (Tunisia, 1985); an Edison Award for his album *Le Voyage de Sahar* (Netherlands, 2006), and an Echo Jazz Award as "Best International Musician of the Year" for his album *The Astounding Eyes of Rita* (Germany, 2010). In 2009 he was decorated "Chevalier des Arts et des Lettres" by the French State.

Today he appears regularly on the most prestigious stages of the world.