



ARENAS

A NEW ALBUM BY NETA ELKAYAM

MUSICAL PRODUCTION BY AMIT HAI COHEN

PRESS KIT



Listen now



NETA ELKAYAM | ARÉNAS

Produced by Amit Hai Cohen

TRACKLIST

1. Shufi
2. A'ala Ya'ala
3. Alava Alava
4. Ma'ala
5. Ma'ala
6. Ya'ala
7. Toun Toun

Spoken by Neta Elkayam
Music by Amit Hai Cohen and Neta Elkayam
Inspired by Jewish women's voices
at the Arénas camp, Marseille

MUSICIANS

Tal Ayalon - Trumpet
Ada Rabinovitch - Harp
Dan Ostrowsky - Bass Saxophone
Eliel Lavi - Violin
Hilki Arslan - Percussion
Eliel Lavi - Percussion
Michael Eisenstein - Bassoon
Idit Mouton - French Horn
Yossef Aboumaria, Avi Cohen - Guiding Voice
Amit Hai Cohen - Programming, Synthesizer, Guitars

Recorded by Amit Hai Cohen

at Estimotei Hai Studio, Jerusalem

Additional recording and mixing by

Amit Hai Cohen in New Orleans

Mastered by Joe Cusack at Voyager Mastering,

New Orleans, March 2024

Language consultation:

Lazar Malkuf, Ghadi Bouchabb, Hamza Khalfi,

Youssef Abdour, Rabbat El Mezouza

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Gali Hershkov, Haim El Hershkov, Karni Ha-Mor

The El Hershkovs, Amit Cohen, and Chagol Toubian

Our boys Hag and Gal Moshe

In memory of Herta and Paul Amirani

With the support of Keren Tarkut

and our dear followers



ARÉNAS

NETA ELKAYAM

Arénas is a contemporary reimaging of North African Jewish music, where traditional Moroccan textures meet electronics, horns, and sampling. Shaped by migration, memory, and the energy of the diaspora, the album draws on the artistic worlds of Neta Elkayam and Amit Hai Cohen, alongside influences from New Orleans. Across seven extended tracks, Arénas unfolds as an immersive, trance-like listening experience.

Music remembers What history forgets

Arénas takes its name from the Arénas transit camp in Marseille, where thousands of North African Jewish families once paused between the world they had left and the unknown ahead. Years later, Elkayam encountered, in archives in Jerusalem, rare reel-to-reel recordings made in the camp by folklorist Prof. Yissakhar Ben-Ami. These tapes captured women's voices, songs of death and life, fragments of migration, hums, broken melodies, and crying babies.

Echoing her grandmother's birthplace in Tinghir, Elkayam developed an intimate dialogue with this material, writing lyrics through cyclic structures and repetition. In collaboration with musical producer Amit Hai Cohen, new music took shape through a blend of electronic and acoustic instrumentation.

Both trace their family roots to Amazigh villages in Morocco, and this shared lineage runs through the album as an ongoing inquiry, a listening process moving between memory, distance, and transformation.

This process of imagined dialogue led to Arénas, transforming oral traditions into a contemporary sonic creation.

Neta Elkayam is an internationally acclaimed singer and multidisciplinary artist working with her North African Jewish roots through a contemporary, diasporic lens. Moving between Morocco, Jerusalem, and New Orleans, she creates a musical language that bridges geographies, histories, and identities.

Drawing from Andalusian, Chaabi, and Amazigh traditions, and singing in Moroccan Arabic, she centers a female voice within an evolving practice. *Arénas* is her first project focusing on Amazigh musical traditions from the Atlas Mountains.

Artist Amit Hai Cohen, producer and composer of *Arénas*, draws on the traditions he and Neta grew up with in the Moroccan Jewish community, developing a fluid sonic language that blends synthesizers, sampling, beats with bandirs, and New Orleans influenced horns, placing Neta Elkayam's powerful voice at the center while shaping a renewed, personal approach to their shared roots.

ARÉNAS

With Lyrics by Neta Elkayam
Music by Amit Hai Cohen and Neta Elkayam

Musicians: Tal Avraham • Trumpet, Ada Ragimov • Harp, Dan Oestreicher • Bass
Saxophone, Elad Levi • Violin, Hillel Amsalem • Percussion, Eilon Elikam • Percussion,
Michael Roessler • Bassoon, Idit Mintzer • French Horn, Yosef Abehsera, Avi Cohen •
Backing Vocals, Amit Hai Cohen • Programming, Keyboards, Guitars

Recorded and produced by Amit Hai Cohen • Additional recordings and final mix by
Amit Hai Cohen in New Orleans • Mastered by Joe Causey Voyager Mastering



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Onstage

In recent years, Arénas was performed as an electronic set with trumpeter Tal Avraham. Now based in New Orleans, the project expands into a live ensemble, joined by drummer Peter Varnado, bassist Martin Masakowski, and saxophonist Chloe White, each deeply rooted in the city's musical landscape.

The city's rhythmic language seeps into the music, subtly reshaping its phrasing, energy, and flow. In this meeting of influences, Arénas moves beyond its recorded form, unfolding as a refined, evolving performance shaped in real time by the artists who inhabit it.



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