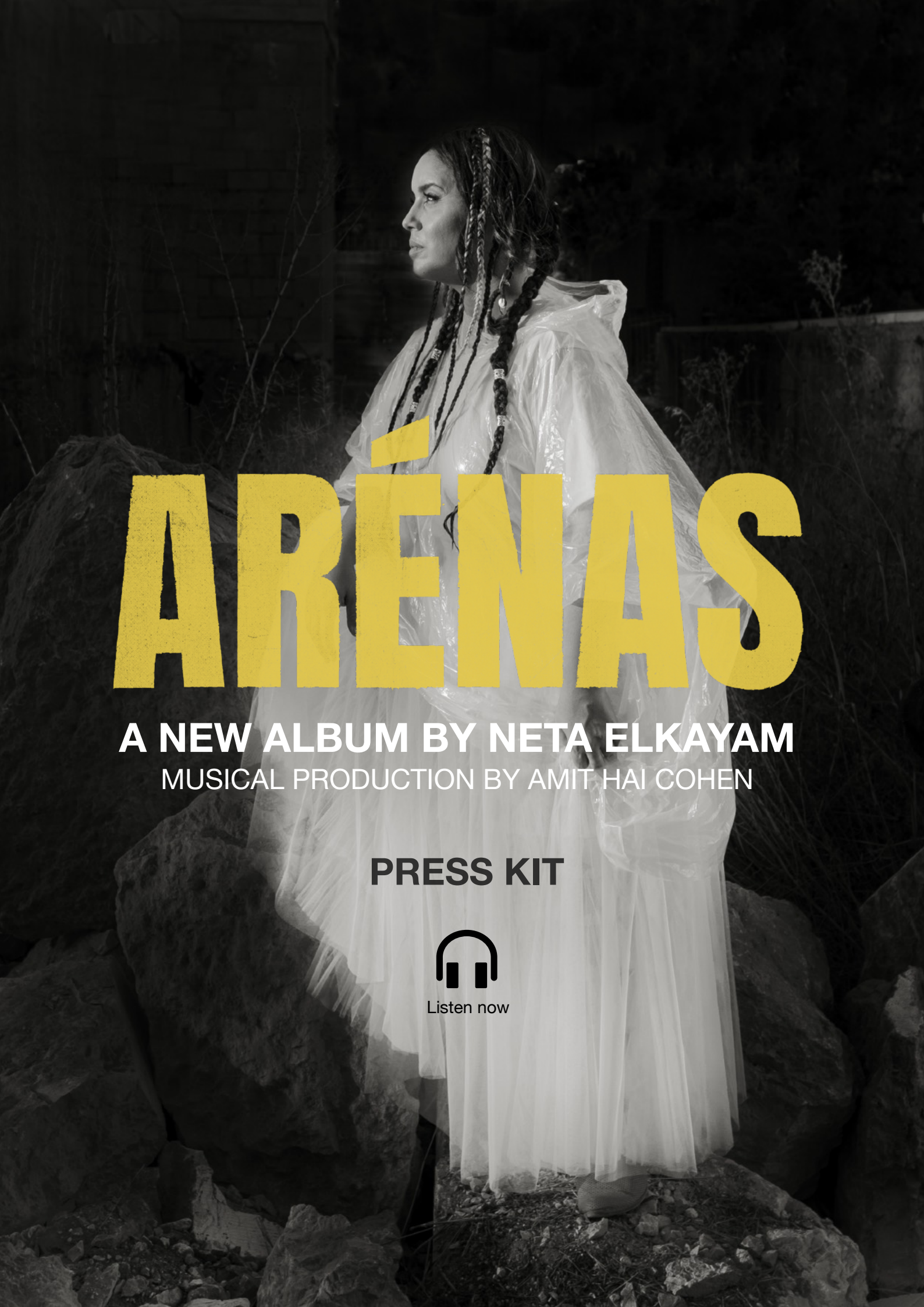


A black and white photograph of Neta Elkayam standing in a rocky, outdoor environment. She is wearing a long, flowing white dress made of plastic, with her hair styled in multiple braids. The background is dark and textured with rocks and some sparse vegetation.

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 Tale Ya Im
3. Hava Hava
4. Hava Hava
5. Ha Hava
6. Ya Hava
7. Ha Hava

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 Arziel - Trompet
Ada Razinsky - Harp
Dan Ostreicher - Bass Saxophone
Eli Lavi - Violin
Hilal Arziel - Percussion
Eli Lavi - Percussion
Michael Elan - Bassoon
Idit Hersh - French Horn
Yael Abutbul - Saxophone
Amit Hai Cohen - Programming, Synthesizer, Drums

Recorded by Amit Hai Cohen
at Estimote HAI Studio, Jerusalem
Additional recordings and mixing by
Amit Hai Cohen in New Orleans
Mastered by Joe Green in Voyager Mastering,
New Orleans, March 2024

Language consultation:
Lazar Hachouf, Ghadi Bouchouh, Hamza Khafif,
Yael Abutbul, Hachouf El Hachouf

Cover photo: Amit Elkayam
Graphic design: Ofir Hersh

WITH THANKS TO

Prof. Yissakhar Ben-Amir and his family
Idit P. Avidan, Hachouf Abutbul, Hachouf Hachouf
Gali Hachouf, Hachouf El Hachouf, Hachouf El Hachouf
The Hachouf, Amit Cohen, and Chagol Hachouf
Our boys Hachouf and Hachouf

In memory of Hachouf Ben-Amir and his family

With the support of Keren Talbot
and our dear followers



Arénas is a contemporary reimagining 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

Echoing her grandmother's birthplace in Tinghir, Morocco Elkayam developed an intimate dialogue with her ancestral memory, writing lyrics through cyclic structures and repetition, and choosing her mother tongue—Moroccan Arabic—as the language of her art. In close collaboration with musical producer Amit Hai Cohen, the music was co-written and composed, taking 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.

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 rare reel-to-reel recordings made in the camp in archives in Jerusalem. Recorded by folklorist Prof. Yissakhar Ben-Amir, these tapes captured women's voices, songs of death and life, fragments of migration, hums, broken melodies, and crying babies.

"Just before the fall," Neta explains, "Not here, not there—a temporary pause between past and future, a kind of vacuum. I found refuge in the transit camp 'Arénas' in Marseille... a trembling sentence, a voice—continued to echo in my head, creating an avalanche of new words. This is how the Arénas music project was born."

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 synths, sampling, beats with bendirs, 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

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

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



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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