

# Etran Finatawa (Niger)

## -Desert Crossroads-

**Niger** west-african country, today one of the poorest countries in the world. However rich in culture as the region has always been a crossroad between arab culture from the north and african cultures from the south: There are eleven different ethnic groups living in Niger: farmers as pastoralists. Among them the tuareg people and the wodaabe people, both groups are nomadic groups, herding their cattle, their camels, sheep and goat in wide sahelian savanna.

**The band is a formation of tuaregs and wodaabe.** They established in january 2004. It is the first group at all with wodaabe people making modern music. Etran Finatawa - literally the stars of tradition - was born as a group of 10 musiciens who want to bring the two rich nomad cultures together, profit one of the other and to create a new music-style: **Nomad's blues**.

The tour group consists of 6-8 musicians. Wodaabe and Tuaregs share the same regions for living, but their music is very different: Wodaabe sing in a traditional matter, they put traditional costumes and make-up on. They do not use any instruments but sing in a multivocal way while they dance in slow motion. Their dance, their costumes and their rhythm is unique in the world.

Tuareg people have always used instruments, violins and drums to animate their songs and dances. Since the seventies the guitar has found its way in tuareg music. This style is called **Ichumar** and is a part of Etran Finatawa's repertoire.

Etran Finatawa combines the two rich cultures: Their songs are in two languages, tuareg language (tamasheck) and Wodaabe language (fulfulde). The band instrumentalizes the polyphonic songs of the wodaabe people by means of traditional percussion like calabashes and tende, a traditional tuareg drum. The rhythm is given by a guitar. The polyphonic choir of wodaabe singers gives a special note to their music. Handclapping and the rich percussion leads the songs, invite to dance. The group has two main singers. Their melodies, their rythms, their voices create a sound picture of the sahelian grasslands, the desert. Their songs talk about nomad's life, isolation and liberty, they talk about happy days, and love and festivities as well as about bad days, droughts, poverty and exode. The repertory of the group contains about 30 songs.

All the songs are animated on stage by traditional dances. The band performed all over Niger, several times in the French Cultural Center in the capital Niamey. They were invited to 2005 edition of the desert music festival in Timbuktu/Mali and to the festival of desert music in Erfoud/Marocco in Mai 2005. During the summer 2005 they toured in Europe.

A new album was recorded with the well known technician and musician Chris Birkett for the World Music Network London. It was released in spring 2006.

CONCERTS 2005: Essakane/Timbuktu/Mali - Féstival des musiques du désert in Rissani - Moussem de Tan-Tan (morokko) – european tour (Afrikafestival/Hertme, World Music Festival Oron le Châtel, Buskers Festival Bern & Neuchatel)

#### TOUR 2006:

May 26th Germany Ossenbeck Hofanlage	June 16th Geneva "Fête de la Musique"
May 28th Netherlands Dunya Festival	June 18th; Amsterdam Roots Festival
May 30th UK Bath Fringe Festival	June 19th Münster, Afrikakooperative
June 1st-4th Italy Pennabilli Artisti in Piazza	June 29th London, Gala Al Madad Foundation
June 8th Berlin Café Zapata	July 29th UK WOMAD Festival Reading
June 14th Lausanne Esprit-Frappeur	August 25th Ireland World Cultures Festival
June 15th Lausanne Radio Suisse romande	Dublin Dun Laoghaire.

#### RELEASES

"Introducing Etran Finatawa" INTRO105CD, produced by World Music Network London Sommer 2005, released spring 2006

"Tissiway Fidjo", producedt by Etran Finatawa, Niger 2005

"TegeDEMât", live-recording from june 2004 @ french-nigerian clutural center Niamey-Niger

"Isserien", Ghalitane Khamidoune and Etran N'guefan, 2003 Niamey, produced by Ghalitane Khamidoune