

The History of Rock Music: 1995-2001

Drum'n'bass, trip-hop, glitch music

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Africa

(These are excerpts from my book ["A History of Rock and Dance Music"](#))

North Africa

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Morocco's gnawa music is a kind of folk music that originated among the Gnawas, descendants of black slaves. It retains central-African characteristics such as propulsive syncopated beats and pentatonic melodies, and employs instruments such as the sintir lute and the karkabas castanets, besides the human voice. The music usually accompanies ceremonies of healing based on creating an atmosphere of trance. The cult (which is probably related to the voodoo of Haiti and the macumba of Brazil) is centered in the city of Essaouira. A distinguished gnawa musician is Maleem Mahmoud Ghania, who collaborated with jazz giant Pharoah Sanders on **Trance of Seven Colors** (1994).

[Hassan Hakmoun](#) (1) plays the sintir lute and concocts fusion tracks of trancey gnawa, lilting rock and USA dance music on albums such as **Trance** (1993).

Maleem Abdelah Ghania, a virtuoso of the Moroccan guimbri guitar, released the trancey **Invocation** (2000).

Egyptian percussionist [Hossam Ramzy](#) (1) drew from the rituals of Arabian Bedouin tribes and from the belly-dance rhythms of the Middle East for **Source of Fire** (1995).

With **Sudaniyat** (1997) Sudanese singer-songwriter [Rasha](#) (1) concocted a mishmash of jazz, pop, reggae and USA dance music that achieved pan-ethnic pathos in the tracks arranged with an orchestra of violins, accordion, saxophones, oud and percussion.

Black Africa

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Mali remained the leading scene of Africa in the 1990s.

Malian guitarist [Djelimady \(or Jalimadi\) Toukara](#) of the Super Rail Band developed a style that evokes the sound of the kora harp, the balafon xylophone and the ngoni lute.

[Habib Koite'](#) (1), who had played guitar in the band Bamada (*Cigarette A Bana*) since 1990, fused griot philosophy, the trancey folk music of the desert (he plays the guitar like a ngoni lute) and the blues jamming of the forest on **Muso Ko** (1995).

[Issa Bagayogo](#) updated the traditions of Mali to the age of electronic dance music (house, techno, hip-hop, dub) on **Sya** (1998) and **Timbuktu** (2002).

Mali's female singer-songwriter [Oumou Sangare](#) (1) single-handedly revolutionized African music with **Ko Sira** (1993), devoted to feminist issues from the perspective of a young African woman, sung in a majestic register, and accompanied by danceable music for violin, lute and percussion.

Mali's [Lobi Traore'](#) (1) bridged distant ages on **Bambara Blues** (1991) and **Bamako** (1994) by harking back to the original feeling of the blues while adopting the burning guitar riffs of hard-rock and underpinning them with frantic ceremonial percussion.

Mali's [Rokia Traore'](#) (1) expressed her anguish in a gentle tone on **Wanita** (2000) over hypnotic rhythmic patterns based on the kora harp, the ngoni lute and the balafon xylophone, but rather neutral in terms of ethnic origin.

Originally from Mali but formed in an Algerian refugee camp, [Tinariwen](#), a desert-blues band of Tuareg nomads with electric guitars, were the main musicians to emerge from the first "Festival au Desert" that was held in January 2001 at Tin Essako in the Sahara of northeastern Mali. **The Radio Tisdas Sessions** (2002), **Amassakoul/ Traveller** (2004) and **Aman Iman/ Water is Life** (2007) documented the music they had been playing since the mid 1980s.

Jean-Marie Ahanda's [Les Tetes Brulees](#) took Cameroon's music into the punk age, with a provocative attitude and a demented and energetic sound. **Hot Heads** (1991) offered ancient bikutsi rhythms of the rain forest replacing the balafon xylophone with the electric guitars of rock music.

Senegalese vocalist [Baaba Maal](#) (1) mixed traditional African instruments with the western aesthetics on **Baayo** (1991).

Ghana's percussionist [Kwaku Kwaakye Obeng](#) (1) delivered the imposing, intricate and hypnotic polyrhythmic maelstroms of **Awakening** (1998).

Raised in Europe, fluent in the musical traditions of the Middle East and of African-Americans, Congolese vocalist Marie Daulne founded [Zap](#)

[Mama](#) (1), an all-female a-cappella group, to sing tunes inspired by the music of the world, such as on **Adventures in Afropea I** (1993).

Madagascar's [Tarika](#) (1) is led by female vocalist Hanitra Rasoanaivo who is on a musicological as well as sociopolitical mission to rediscover the roots of her land on albums such as the bleak (but nevertheless rhythmically upbeat) concept **Son Egal** (1997).

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