



ZAZU

# ORIENTAL POEMS

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## A musical and poetic journey

*« Tales tell us the story of a magical spring at the center of a great fire... »  
The flames lick the words, caress the notes, and the magic happens. No steep slopes, no tumultuous torrents, no dark gorges... only the light of soft, calm, slow, almost introverted music. Music inspired by the East, calling for thought, reflection and travel... (Jeff Fleury, journal quotidien Jurassien)*

# SYNOPSIS

## IN A FEW WORDS...

**Zzhr (Julien Monti and Olivier Nussbaum)** set to music and song a selection of the finest texts by poets of Eastern culture. For this new project, "Résonance III", they have chosen to collaborate with the excellent Egyptian musician **Ihab Radwan** and the voice of renowned Swiss actor **Claude Thébert**. Music and poetry combine with sensitivity and finesse to share with the public the beauty of this oriental culture in a spirit of openness, sharing and tolerance.

### Original Music

Olivier Nussbaum et Julien Monti

### Conception

Julien Monti, Olivier Nussbaum, Ihab Radwan

## ARTISTS

### *Julien Monti*

Composition, transverse flute: bass flute and contrabass, fujara

### *Olivier Nussbaum*

Composition, archiluth, ukulele bass

### *Ihab Radwan*

Voice, oud

### *Claude Thébert*

Voice over

## TECHNICIENS

### *Joran Hegi*

Light engineer

### *Matthias Babey*

Sound engineer

## CREATION AND PERFORMANCES 2023

The premiere and subsequent performances were a great success with an enthusiastic audience (see testimonials)...

### Tournée 2025

Tour 2025

Spring (May-June) 2025

Festivals 2025

July to August 2025

# Zzhr

Z'har means "Chance" in Berber. A sound, a wish that became "Zzhr": journey, sand, sun, night in a tent, marching to the incessant tread of sheep, camels and sacred cows. The horizon is vast, the silence is filled with music... Zzhr Trio is all this, and their legendary hospitality and openness to others are expressed through welcoming other artists and sharing with audiences, sources of inspiration.

Julien Monti and Olivier Nussbaum have been on the road together for twenty years, making music together and sharing a dozen or so creations. They continue to experiment and blend artistic disciplines, instruments and cultures. Julien - quarter-tone transverse flute, bass transverse flute and double bass - also plays the bansuri (Indian flute) and fujara (Slovak shepherd's flute). Olivier - sarode (North Indian instrument), oud (Arab lute) and archlute strings - resonates in concert with his accomplice. Since 2022, they have welcomed Ihab Radwan - vocals and oud (Arabic lute) - to form a new trio, a meeting between East and West.

The compositions and improvisations of the three musicians blend the spicy flavors of the East (North African, Indian and Arab-Persian music) with the aromatic herbs of the West.

Gourmet musicians have been sharing their feast for several years: Khaled Arman (Afghanistan), Kamal Hors (Morocco), Noredine El Mratti (Morocco), Redouane Haribe (Morocco), Ken Zuckerman (USA), Claude Gastaldin (France), Sylvain Fournier (Switzerland), Luca Carangelo (Switzerland).

Zzhr takes us on a journey to an otherworldly place, rich in unexpected encounters, improbable discoveries and genuine emotions.

*texte d'Anouk Ortlieb*



# Oriental Poems

## EAST - WEST

### A MUSICAL AND POETIC CREATION

For this new **Zzhr** creation, the two Neuchâtel artists **Julien Monti** and **Olivier Nussbaum** chose to collaborate with the excellent Egyptian musician **Ihab Radwan** and the voice-over of renowned Swiss actor **Claude Thébert**. Together, they set to music and voice (vocals and voice-over) a selection of the finest texts by the most important poets of Eastern culture, such as :

- **Abdel El-Kader**, *Algeria 1808 -1883*
- **Abdel Malek Haghzaf**, *Morocco 1952*
- **Imru U'Al-Qays**, *Saudi Arabia early 6th century*
- **Kahlil Jibran**, *Lebanon 1883 - 1931*
- **Mahmod Darwish**, *Palestine 1941 - 2008*
- **Nizar Qabbani**, *Syria 1923 - 1998*
- **Sala Jahine**, *Egypt 1930 - 1986*

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#### Mahmoud Darwish (Palestine 1941-2008)

*« Un jour je m'assoierai sur le trottoir, le trottoir de l'étrangère. Je n'étais pas un narcisse, bien que défendant mon image. Dans les miroirs. As-tu jamais été là, l'étranger ?*

*Cinq siècles passés et achevés, et notre rupture demeure là, inaboutie et entre nous les lettres, toujours, et les guerres n'ont pas modifié les jardins de ma Grenade.*

*Certains jours je passe par ses lunes et je frotte d'un citron mon désir. Enlace-moi que je renaisse des parfums d'un soleil, d'un fleuve sur tes épaules, et de pieds qui égratignent le soir et il verse des larmes de lait à la nuit du poème...»*

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Based on the different texts chosen, the two composers wrote music and created atmospheres inspired by the spirit of each text. They wanted to transpose the different feelings and emotions of the poems into sound and music, to create the dynamic and dramaturgy of the show. The texts are sung or recited by **Ihab Radwan** in the author's original language. A translation, recorded by **Claude Thébert** and broadcast as a voice-over, punctuates the musical moments and forms the common thread running through the show. **Zzhr** is an encounter between East and West, in a spirit of openness, sharing and tolerance.

# Important events

- 2013** Creation at Theater « du Concert » in Neuchâtel and tour of Switzerland, guest Khaled Arman (Afghanistan)
- 2014** Creation at Theater du Concert « **Zzhr 4tet** », registration live performance of Zzhr's first CD and Swiss tour, guest star **Khaled Arman** (Afghanistan)
- 2014 - 2018** Various concerts in Switzerland
- 2019** Collaboration between the Zzhr and Nafas collectives (Moroccan musicians) concerts in Switzerland
- 2019 - 2020** **Zzhr Duet**, various concerts in Switzerland
- 2020** Creation between collectives **Zzhr** and **Nafas** of the show "Le curieux pouvoir des fables". Performances moved to 2021 due to Covid-19 epidemic
- 2021 - 2022** **Zzhr Duet**, various concerts in Switzerland
- 2023** Creation «**Oriental Poems**» in the theater « la Tarentule » et concerts in Switzerland with **Ihab Radwan**



# Testimonials

30.4.2023 - St-Aubin

Weird, weird,  
This breath of the flute  
That takes me beyond words.  
And now I'm singing in Arabic  
With a heart that beats  
In unison with the world.  
Transported, jostled, turned upside down,  
By three musicians  
Who open wide  
The gates of Heaven  
Weird, weird...

Michelle

4.5.2023 - Delémont

Beautiful moments "Résonances III, poèmes d'Orient". A beautiful, expressive journey, soft and enveloped in sensuality... Words dressed in poetry, vibrated, reasoned and resonated, arousing strong emotions throughout the body .... à fleur de peau .... The spoken and sung voices took us to colorful places .... Last but not least, the rich musical creations with their varied hues and rhythms often held my breath, recalling memories of Life or Death... The complicity between the musicians delighted me, as did their singularity, their expressiveness set in gold and silver .... Thanks again for these intense moments....

Monique Marie Juliette Probst

4.5.2023 - Delémont

You've given us an incredible nugget, an intimate journey colored by music and texts as beautiful as they are intriguing, and even more magical through the kindness and friendship that unite three exceptional musicians. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Catherine Lachat

4.5.2023 - Delémont

Thank you for the wonderful humanist interlude... what a pleasure to listen to you and to see you so involved... The journey entered through the most beautiful door, that of the heart! Many thanks to you all!

Misou

4.5.2023 - Delémont

ZZHR is a highly accomplished show, an enchanting journey with a thousand flavors of the Orient. The three musician-poets tell their stories, in words as well as in notes, sharing in all sincerity, without ever over-acting, leaving room for the most subtle timbres, as well as for silence. A privileged moment...

Alain Tissot, compositeur et batteur

30.4.2023 - St-Aubin

What a discovery... I was expecting a very sonorous and probably poetic event, and that's exactly what fueled all my sensations that evening. Julien and his comparses gave us a real show with their different instruments, oud, archlute, bass ukulele and flutes, incredible in their exoticism, size and sound. Each musician gave us the best of his or her instruments, it was agile, just right, so enjoyable. Yes, I may be exaggerating, but I'm not, because the readings of poetic texts associated with this musical creation enchanted me to the depths... and this pleasure comes back to me intact just by writing these few lines. Many thanks to ZZHR, I'll be back!

Jean-Baptiste Vial

28.4.2023 - St-Aubin

Music full of poetry, breathes, fragility, sublimated by the obvious complicity between these three musicians who know how to create an intimate space, conducive to introspection, dreams and inspiration.

Michel Faragalli, guitariste, compositeur

4.5.2023 - Delémont

ZZHR takes us on a mystical journey, with notes of oriental flavors distilled with finesse by a trio of surprising accomplices, a delicious moment that I enjoyed with relish.

Philippe Z, musicien, éducateur

**Read more testimonials on the Zzhr website !**

# Les musiciens

## Julien Monti

*composer - transverse flutes - contrabass flutes - ethnic flutes*



A breath... of flute, music and passion takes Julien Monti from interpretation to improvisation, composition and creation. He has staged numerous shows, collaborated with a host of musicians and written for various formations ranging from duos to orchestras, as well as for theater, dance, cinema, short films and documentaries. With his transverse flute, his wide range of world flutes and the atmospheres imbued by his travels, he expresses a multitude of colors and sounds that lead him to share his music with other musicians in both traditional and modern music.

## Olivier Nussbaum *composer - archluth, Bass Yukulele*



Over the course of his musical career, Olivier Nussbaum has collaborated with a number of jazz formations ranging from duos to big bands, and on over twenty multimedia creations. Whether in Switzerland or abroad (France, Italy, Belgium, Germany, Austria, England, Poland, Canada, Cuba, Colombia), on stage or in the studio, he has had the pleasure of playing alongside exceptional musicians. Since 2013, he has been passionate about sarod and Hindustani music (northern India). He is fortunate to be able to study the complexity and depth of this art with Ken Zuckerman, disciple for over thirty years of the master and sarodist Ali Akbar Khan, and with Partho Sarothy, Ravi Shankar's most renowned disciple.

## Ihab Radwan

*oud - voice*



Ihab Radwan studied classical music at the Cairo Conservatory from the age of 5. After a brilliant musical career in Egypt, he settled in France. A soloist and composer, he collaborated with Hugues de Courson as artistic director and oud player on the Mozart l'Egyptien project, a CD that has sold 3 million copies worldwide. He works with Michel Godard, Anne Pacey, Ricardo Ribeiro, Natasa Mirkovic, Jarrod Cagwin, Guillemette Laurens, Toine Thys, Monica Passos, Helsinki Baroque Orchestra, Orchestre de chambre de Paris and many other inspiring artists around the world.

# Technicians

**Joran Hegi** *Lighting engineer*



Stage manager for fifteen years at the Théâtre du Passage in Neuchâtel. Joran Hegi founded the company Idée FX. His specialty: stage pyrotechnics. Indoor fireworks, jets of flame, sprays of sparks and explosions hold no secrets for this 35-year-old Neuchâtel native. Joran Hegi embarked on this adventure to satisfy his curiosity. There are many opportunities in the field of stage pyrotechnics. For over 20 years, Joran has been building up solid experience as a stage manager in theater, opera and many other performing arts projects.

**Matthias Yannis Babey** *Sound engineer*



Independent and curious by nature, he developed a particular interest in music from an early age. He began learning classical guitar at the Conservatoire de Musique Neuchâteloise in Denis Battais' class. His passion for the performing arts led him to study as a Techniscéniste at the Manufacture in Lausanne, and to complete a three-year apprenticeship at the Théâtre du Passage in Neuchâtel. His first steps in the technical world came at the Hors tribu festival and the Théâtre des mascarons over 10 years ago. His much-appreciated skills led him to become technical director of various companies and festivals. In 2020, he also founded Babey Tech, a small show technology company.

# Collaboration

**Claude Thébert** *Actor, voice over*



Born in 1947, Claude Thébert trained as an actor at the Grotowsky School. He became a permanent actor with the Théâtre Populaire Romand in the 1970s. Until 1985, he took part in over 40 shows in Switzerland, France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Tunisia and Mexico, performing in both classic and contemporary plays. He moved to Geneva in 1985 and worked as a freelance actor, performing in Switzerland, France and Belgium with a number of directors. He founded the Théâtre du Sentier with Anne-Marie Delbart and Gilles Lambert in 1993, and since 1998 has been giving public readings in the street, cafés, bookshops, libraries, art galleries, museums, schools, theaters, cellars, parks, etc.



For more information on ZZHR's past and future projects, please visit the following websites :

**ZZHR website**

[www.zzhr.ch](http://www.zzhr.ch)

Web page of

**Résonance III**

*(Project description, audio demo  
and project file)*

[www.zzhr.ch/resonancesIII](http://www.zzhr.ch/resonancesIII)

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