

## Tinariwen – Emmaar (2014)

Written by bluesever  
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1. *Toumast Tinja* 2. *Chaghaybou* 3. *Arhegh Danagh* 4. *Timadrit In Sahara* 5. *Imdiwan Ahi Sigdim* 6. *Tahalamot* 7. *Sendad Eghlalan* 8. *Imdiwanin ahi Tifhamam* 9. *Koud Edhaz Emin* 10. *Emajer* 11. *Aghregh Medin* Ibrahim Ag Alhabib - Guitar, Vocals Abdallah Ag Alhousseyni - Clapping, Guitar, Vocals Elaga Ag Hamid - Guitar, Vocals (Background), Clapping Fats Kaplin - Fiddle, Pedal Steel Guitar Alhassane Ag Touhami - Guitar, Vocals, Clapping Fats Kaplin - Fiddle, Pedal Steel Guitar Josh Klinghoffer – Guitar Mike Sweeney - Guitar Eyadou Ag Leche - Bass, Guitars, Vocals, Clapping Saul Williams - Spoken Word

Challenging circumstances are nothing new to the Kel Tamashek (Tuareg) band Tinariwen. After all, most of their members had been Libyan military-trained rebel fighters engaged in active revolt against the Malian government before the Tamanrasset Accords in 1991. Beginning in 2012, real danger is ever present in northern Mali -- due to the incursion of Islamist militias -- for the Tuareg people and to musicians in particular. So much so, many, including Tinariwen, have fled the country. One of their members, Abdallah Ag Lamida, was even kidnapped, though he has since been released. Tinariwen was forced to exchange one desert -- the Sahara -- for another in Joshua Tree National Park in the United States in order to record *Emmaar* (without Ag Lamida, who was freed after recording began). Once more produced by Patrick Votan, the sound here retains its "desert blues" heart but is also more expansive -- there's no need for alarm, really. The traditional interlocking guitar interplay involves more drones as lead lines snake underneath them, and there is more reverb in this mix. All of the material was written by leader Ibrahim Ag Alhabib or his bandmembers. Exile, anger, and displacement populate the songs on *Emmaar*. Multi-instrumentalist Fats Kaplin adds his spiraling fiddle to "Imdiwanin Ahi Tifhamamone" and pedal steel to the militant opener "Toumast Tinja" (that also features guitar from Josh Klinghoffer and a spoken intro by Saul Williams), and the atmospheric dirge "Sendad Eghlalan." Percussionist Amar Chaoui helps out on the stinging "Chaghaybou" and five other tracks, adding a sense of more dynamic urgency to balance the more drone-centric approach. "Emajer," with guest guitarist Matt Sweeney, is a different tack for Tinariwen. Its vibe is more American Southwest (which isn't so strange since this is a nomadic band after all). But Ag Alhabib's lyric and melody are pure African folk song, reflecting loss and longing, as the rolling percussion, voices, and guitars wind around one in

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multiple melodies underscoring the emotion. The interwoven acoustic guitars on closer "Aghregh Medin (Hassan's Song)" offer a staggered minor-key blues. They highlight the disillusionment in the lyric "... I no longer believe in unity/I will only believe in it again if/Those opinions serve a common ideal/That of the people from which they emanate." The different textures and timbres at work on Emmaar reveal Tinariwen's evolution; one derived from the need to grow musically, as well as respond to adversity with creativity. ---Thom Jurek, Rovi

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