

## Cheb Mami - Meli Meli (1999)

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1. Meli Meli 2. Alache Alik 3. Bledi 4. Rani Maak El Youm 5. H'Rabti 6. Hada Ch'Hal 7. Hatachi 8. Bekatni 9. Cheikh 10. Azwaw 2 11. Parisien Du Nord 12. Marseillais du Nord 13. Au Pays Des Merveilles 14. Azwaw

Rai in the 1980s was Algeria's punk and rap, a music of cultural revolution and youthful defiance. The many "Chebs" (cheb roughly means "the young") played a raw music, usually stripped down to voices; cheesy, cheap synthesizers; and drum machines, heavy on the bass and full of bad attitude. But Chebs grow up, make money, and become more mainstream. Cheb Mami was there at the beginning and has followed this growth pattern. Gone is the rough edge and in its place is a smooth sophistication, a more worldly blend of pop and folk music from Africa and Europe. Meli Meli is as much Paris as Oran, as much New York as Algiers. Mami's blend of hip-hop and rai has made him a hit maker in France and a symbol of wealth and success back home. Slick production and high energy dominate this music; it's global pop now. While the lyrics may speak of the streets of Paris, the sound is no longer from the streets.

--Louis Gibson, Editorial Review

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