

## **SSAHHA – Bio**

**SSAHHA** is a North African ensemble led by Moroccan pianist, percussionist and composer **Amino Belyamani**. He and his ensemble of masterful musicians create melancholic and festive melodies accompanied by hypnotic North African grooves. Amino tunes his pianos according to alternative tuning systems, as opposed to Western equal temperament, creating a unique sound both for the piano and the band. Their debut album *Ummi*, was released in May 2011 and has gotten radio play all over the globe. The record has been listed as the top 10 favorite albums of 2011 by WFMU. *Ummi* was featured on PopMatters and Pri's The World. SSAHHA is currently working on their second album with a special collaboration between Amino Belyamani and Brahim Fribgane.

Born and raised in Casablanca, Morocco, Amino Belyamani began playing the piano by the age of six. Throughout his childhood and adolescence, he participated in many national and international piano competitions and received several awards and first prizes from renowned international pianists such as France Clidat. Before even graduating from high school, he had acted the lead role in a short movie directed by Lahcen Zinoun entitled *Le Piano*, where he performed as the lead piano player with Morocco's national philharmonic orchestra. After a couple of years spent in France, Belyamani left for the United States to absorb improvisational musical forms at the California Institute of the Arts.

Amino is a founding member of **AXIS TRIO** and **DAWN OF MIDI** wherein he composes, performs, and records original music. Axis Trio's second album *Anthem*, which was entirely composed by Amino, was voted 4th greatest jazz album of 2010 by Jazzit Magazine. Dawn of Midi released their debut album *First* in 2010 and a live EP in 2011 both receiving raving reviews from acclaimed media all over the world. Dawn of Midi received a CMA grant in 2011 to perform a multi-media concert piece entitled *Kashmir*, which was premiered in Porto, Portugal in November 2011. Dawn of Midi is currently about to release a third album of exciting new material on Thirsty Ear Recordings in the spring.

As well as being a pianist, Amino plays traditional Moroccan folk percussion and Ghanaian drums. He has also composed music for both instrumental and electro-acoustic traditions. Amino has recorded original compositions on four consecutive jazz compilations at the prestigious Capitol Records under the EMI record label.

Amino's music reflects the diversity of his interests, which usually translates into a blend of complex african rhythms, arabic melodies, western classical music, and jazz. Amino has performed with Albert "Tootie" Heath, Joe La Barbera, Darek Oles, Vinny Golia, Alfred Ladzekpo, Houman Pourmehdi, Hamid el Kasri, Brahim Fribgane, Hassan Hakmoun, Dimi Mint Abba, Charlie Haden and many others. Amino is currently living in New York City.