

# A blend of tradition and the contemporary



Music has always been a part of the rich Lebanese culture and has played a very important role in many religious traditions. The beautiful rhythm of Arabic tunes mixed with peculiar characteristics of gypsy music in the country proved to be a great blend which resulted to a rich production of intensity that captivates listeners.

The characteristic soothing rhythm and wild beats made Lebanese music known around the world. Traditional Lebanese music incorporates instruments such as the oud, the derbake and the ney. These instruments are still being incorporated to pop music that the new generation is enjoying today.

The traditional music of Lebanon is usually sung in either Lebanese or Egyptian language. Aside from this, musicians, artists, singers etc, differ on the way they incorporate music to their individual sound. The artists differ in so many ways. Some artists were known to differ in their music because of their Lebanese dialects. Most are distinct because of their style, their sound and instruments.

Very few Lebanese musicians try to remain loyal to the traditional music which is called Jabali (of the mountains). One of which is Mohammed El Helani more popularly known as Assi Helani, who is a major music force in the Middle East since the 1990's. He is a strong musician and follower of the traditional music like mawall and dabke.

Dabke, which is usually presented during important and joyous occasions such as weddings, family parties and competitions. This is a very energetic music which usually leaves the audience 'stomping their feet'-which is the literal meaning of Dabke.

Pop music on the other hand is not a new fancy among the Lebanese audience. The growing influence of the western culture made it's way not only on Lebanese every day living but also on it's music. Although western pop music is very distinct from Lebanese pop music because it fuses pop melodies and it's pop-Arabic roots at the same time. The pop music of Lebanon also focuses on the melodramatic melodies and sad states of mind.

Nancy Nabil Ajram is also a popular singer among the Lebanese people. A multi-platinum folk artist, Ajram is considered to be one of the most important superstars ranking 3rd among the best selling female singers of Lebanon. Her style is incorporating the traditional Lebanese music with and infusion of Western culture. Her formula proved to be very potent since most of her followers are the young and old alike of the generation.