

ABSTRACT FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The main goal of the project is achieving new interpretations of the rich and stylistically diverse musical production created in **Cairo since 2011**, i.e. from the so-called The January 25 revolution that led to the end of Husni Mubarak's longstanding regime and rapid changes on Egyptian music stages. Hence, **political activism** and **cultural change** are a kind of common binding of the project. The choice of the **Cairo scene**, or actually a couple of music scenes operating in this huge and vibrant metropolis, is well thought-out. The capital of Egypt has been the centre of Arab popular culture since the 1950s, and today new generations of artists born during the rule of Sadat and Mubarak, i.e. since the beginning of the 1970s, cultivate richness of musical styles. This musical melting pot consists of, for example, contemporary electronic music in the forms of *mahraganat* and *electro shaabi*, hip-hop, rock, various reinterpretations of the Arabic music canon (e.g. Eskenderella Band), but also avant-garde artists with international ambitions (e.g. Maurice Louca) and very creative female singers (e.g. Dina El-Wedidi, Youssra El-Hawary and Maryam Saleh). Mass and the most popular pop genres are also very important for this project, definitely under-researched as of yet. The ideological diversity of the Cairo artists will be reflected, for example the fact that some musicians of the *shaabi* ("urban folk") and *shababiyya* (current Arab pop) genres strongly support the policy of the President of Egypt (since 2014), Abd al-Fattah al-Sisi, in current political, religious and educational matters, while other artists express deep criticism of political and religious elites, both Muslim and Christian (Coptic).

The project starts from **textual analysis** rooted in Arabic studies, Middle Eastern studies and knowledge of the Egyptian dialect of Arabic by the Research Team. Nevertheless, philological knowledge is only a starting point and during research it will be methodologically expanded to include Bachtin's understanding of **dialogic** as well as employing the category of **intertextuality**, which seems particularly useful for analysing musical works in a broad sense, i.e. both their textual layers, but also **sound of Cairene productions and its sonic features**. A very important aspect of the project is two to three months **field research** in the Greater Cairo metropolitan area, enabling direct contact with musicians, managers and creators of dynamic cultural institutions (e.g. Room Art Space and El Sawy Culturewheel), as well as listeners of specific music genres. This element will also allow to examine the **everyday impact of music** and **social background** which shapes artists. The importance of the proposed field research brings the project closer to **ethnomusicology**, which has recently inspired creative ferment in researching Arabic music. The meaning of music will be also analysed in the context of class divisions and economic grievances, religion, ethnicity, Egyptian and Arab nationalism, and gender issues.

Research on contemporary Arabic music is developing impressively, however, this scientific achievement in many respects still seems modest and inconsistent. This project seeks to expand it, offering methodological coherence and breadth of scope, as well as looking at very diversified music genres, represented on Cairo scenes. The main innovative result of the project will be a peer-reviewed monograph, which is planned to be published by a renowned European publishing house (e.g. Routledge, Brill, Edinburgh University Press). In addition, the research team plans to submit at least two texts to leading international scientific journals (e.g. "Middle East Journal of Culture and Communication", "Ethnomusicology", "Journal of Popular Music Studies" etc.), as well as Arabic periodicals on popular culture (e.g. "Ma3azef").