

The history of **Wust El Balad Band**

In 1999, two guys got together, formed a band, joined by 6 others, and started the dream. That is the basic story behind the Wust El Balad band.

Eight talented guys from all across the country joined together in Downtown, Cairo, forming one of the most successful bands in Egypt now. Coming from different musical backgrounds, each guy brought his own flavour to the group. Their story is as compelling as music itself.

Beginning of the Dream

The story began when Hany Adel, guitarist and vocalist and Ahmed Omran, Oud player and vocalist, formed Al Far Al Roumadi or The Grey Rat Band. The idea of this name was to recount the stories both heard and witnessed by the small rat that sneaks into many houses. To fulfill the dream, combining a diversity of sounds, the two began to look for more musicians.

Playing at Ahawi, Hany and Omran made several acquaintances , Ismail Fawzy, Guitarist and vocalist and Ihab Abdel Hamid – percussionist were next to join. The addition of base guitarist Ahmed Omar, guitarist Asaad Nessim and percussionist Mohammed Gamal Aldin, gave Wust El Balad a more rounded and eclectic sound, counterbalanced by the unique traditional oriental voice of Adham El Said, that added to Wust El Balad the missing spice.

They did not attain their fame and popularity easily – certainly, not on a silver platter. They started rehearsing and performing together - with hardly any financial resources - giving many free performances before they started to make some money as a band. They used to pay for everything and sometimes even persuading and pleading with the owners of the venues to allow them to play.

Their first appearance was at the Opera House in the small theatre, jamming with Sameh Alazab's band, Nass Gedida or New People with only four songs.

It was Sameh Alazab, who suggested the name

Wust El Balad to represent a more inner and intimate meaning.

Their first appearance as **Wust El Balad Band** was at Al Mashrabeya Gallery, followed by their first ‘profitable’ performance at the Berlitz Language Centre, where they each made L.E. 30.

Since then, **Wust El Balad Band** has become a regular performer at most galleries, cultural centers, bars and sometimes special events and hotels.

Their vision was to reach the average person that can not afford listening to their music or seeing them perform in bars or galleries. They were the first band to invade the streets of Cairo, – experiencing the most sensational audience amidst amazing concerts, playing in Al-Alfi Street to the local community during the French festival Les Francais aiment l'Egypte - and later traveled throughout Egypt.

In collaboration with Goethe Cultural Institute, the mayor of Stuttgart invited

Wust El Balad Band to perform in Germany; to their amazement a thrilling audience of 10,000 was present.

Another outstanding performance was when **Wust El Balad Band** participated in the Centennial Celebration of Heliopolis, Cairo sponsored by the First Lady of Egypt, Suzan Mubarak. The residents of Heliopolis swarmed the venue.

Whether playing at Al Qala' a Festival at the Citadel or at the Cairo Jazz Club, a great magnetic energy is to be noticed and felt between the band members and the audience, who always commence to sing and sway to the music, dancing and clapping their hands to the soft rhythm and fantastic beat.

Recently, **Wust El Balad Band** has signed a contract with **Star Gate Music Production Co.** to produce their first Music Album and shooting their first Music Video named **Arabily** directed by Tarek Alarian.

Adham El Said

Born on April 6, 1969

Inspired by his grandmother's love for village songs, Adham brings the Traditional Oriental sense to the group, counterbalancing the dominant Western influence. He perfects singing 'Mawals' which fascinates the audience, both Foreigners and Egyptians.



Ahmed Omran

Born on November 15, 1977

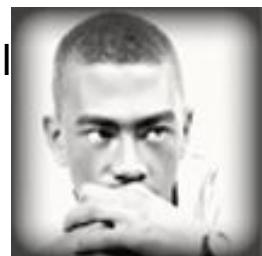
He is one of the founders of the Group. He is considered one of the best Oud players. Omran is the only member in the band who has an academic musical background. He also plays the Flute and composes few of the songs.



Mohammed Gamal El Din

Born on February 10, 1982

With a family background of musicians, he wanted to pursue the same career - his grandfather being one of the famous composers in Egypt. Mizo lightens the stage with his outstanding performance on the Percussion. He plays sensational music as a duo with Bob.



Ahmed Omar

Born on September 1977 ,28

Born in Egypt to an Eritrean father, certainly affected his sense of music. He plays Base Guitar. Being overwhelmed by music, Omar resigned from his former job as a German teacher. His "Eritrea" melody reflects a true sense of imagination and creativity.



Hany Adel

Born on September 8, 1976

He is one of the two founders of the Group. Besides composing few of the songs, Hany's performance is a whole show in itself. His lively Guitar playing combined with his sensitive voice bring energy to the band.



Ismail Fawzy

Born on April 8, 1978

Ismail's talent and attitude add joyful taste to the band. He is a Computer Science graduate. He also composes few of the songs. He pays great attention to the lyrics. He is a singer who believes in what he sings. His favourite song, *Magnoun*, is pure evidence.



Ehab Abd El Hameed

Born on November 1976 ,6

Ehab began his real career with Wust el Balad band. He is a Law graduate. Bob was the first to play the Cajon – a famous Spanish instrument. You can never miss the enthusiasm in his performance. Bob together with Mizo form a great Percussion duo in Egypt.



Asaad Nessim

Born on November 14, 1964

Asaad started playing the Piano for over 6 years, before figuring out that Spanish guitar is his main destiny. He plays with such concentration and a unique technique, thus hypnotizing the audience with his solo performance.



