

El Tanbura

El Tanbura are a collective of veteran Egyptian master musicians, singers, fishermen and philosophers. For nearly twenty years the group have been custodians to some of Egypt's oldest folk music from their home in Port Said, the Mediterranean gateway to the Suez Canal. Band members dress in an eclectic mix of gallibiyas and Levis with Gucci sunglasses, Fez and Nike caps. Their music is driven by the seductive call of the Simsimiyya - an ancient lyre dating back to the times of the Pharaohs, cautiously revered both for its mesmerising properties and occult origins in ancient exorcism rituals.

El Tanbura's recent album *Between the desert and the sea* received acclaimed reviews on release in the UK. Recorded in Cairo, the disc comprises an enchanting acoustic mix of folk melodies and Sufi verses, led by the captivating sound of the Simsimiyya and underpinned by driving Arabian grooves.



Photo Credit: Gareth Blake

The Band showcased at WOMEX 2006 and have played major European festivals including WOMAD, Forde Folk Festival, Tollwood, and Festival Mudiál. Activities for 2008 include a new international CD *Friends of Bamboute* and a collaboration with One Giant Leap on the album and film *What about me?*

"Their mix of enchanting folk melodies and spiritual Sufi verse is mesmerizing" ****
The Times

"Beautiful love songs, Sufi-inspired religious songs and ebullient folk songs"
**** **London Evening Standard**

"El Tanbura have been playing the music of their native Port Said since the late 80s and, with the release of *Between the Desert and the Sea*, it seems that their time has finally come"
**** **Songlines Top of the World CD**

"El Tanbura mix chanting vocals with the desert flute, the nay, and the ancient lyre, the Simsimiyya, that looks like something you'd find on a painting in a Pharaoh's tomb" **** **The Guardian**

"Sounds that have evolved through male camaraderie and the sheer physical joy of collective music-making over many centuries"
The Telegraph

"The group's music is the spirit of celebration, of magic, of dance, and reverie... utterly entrancing" **The Independent**

"They croon the region's old songs of love, pain, exile and resistance..."Between the desert and the sea" is a good calling card to the world" **fRoots**

"The band's charm and appeal lies in a mixture of the sacred and the profane. They are streetwise characters, yet consummate musicians. They bewitch the audience with devotional chanting and then break the spell with some exuberant, laddish dancing" **** **Financial Times**

"Master musicians, singers and fishermen who make a terrific racket"
Time Out