



MARIEM HASSAN

SHOUKA, the Thorn in the heart of the Sahrawi

Mariem Hassan is back with a mature album, designed and dedicated to her people. After more than four years fighting the consequences of her disease, the singer reflects the array of issues determining her daily existence without really living.

“*Shouka*”, the central theme of the album, is a complete new experience in Sahrawi music. Mariem has published a new musical work to remove the thorn that all Sahrawi carry in their hearts, caused by the speech **Felipe González** gave on 14th of November in 1976 during a visit in one of the four refugee camps in the Algerian Hamada.

In a masterful way she presents nine answers to nine statements by making it up in a cantata. *Shouka* runs through the whole range of scales and rhythms of the Haul, the unique Sahrawi music. The answers in Hassania of Mariem to Felipe González are written from the initial recognition until the last explosion of rage and defencelessness exposed to irony and disregard by the poet and writer, **Lamin Allal** with the right feeling in the most suitable moment.

Mariem, who currently resides in Sabadell (Barcelona), travels regularly to the refugee camps where an important part of her family lives, her mother and several of her brothers. But she cannot travel to the territories occupied by Morocco, which inhabits the rest of the family. For the one and the others Mariem composed songs.

For her mother the tender “*Alu Ummi*” in form of a telephone conversation. For her younger son

“*Salem*” a joyful song full of hope after having surmounted all the diseases of his childhood.

For those who have to submit under the yoke of the usurper she wrote two songs. A hear-heartbreaking song for all the girls battered and abused by the invader “*Tefla Madlouma*”. And a tribute to the



most resistant Sahrawi quarter in Aaiun, “*Maatal-la*”, that for sure very soon will be heard in its streets.

In “*Azzagafa*” (the culture), the song that opens the CD, she asks

all companions and artists not to give up the dual purpose of keeping alive the thread that unites the tradition and fighting the enemy with their art. She also dedicated a song to her former intimus and guitarist, called by his name “*Baba Salama*”, who died of leukemia in 2005.

And, of course, a handful of traditional songs appear, without losing its roots, with renewed vigor, like the wedding song, medej or just memories of the beautiful places of the Sahara, inaccessible today.

The roots position are the solid hands of **Vadiya Mint El Hanevi**, percussionist, dancer, unparalleled jaleadora and chorista, **Lamgaifri Brahim**, the guitarist, and Mariem herself. With them the Haul is secured and was completed by the Senegalese guitarist, **Malick Diaw**, the Spanish **Kepa Osés** and **Hugo Westerdahl**, bass, **Josemi Sánchez**, guitar, **Jaime Muñoz**, flutes, the Iranians **Behnam Samani**, daff and tonbak and **Davood Varzideh**, ney and the Cuban-Haitian **Mel Seme**, percussionist.

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