

OUM

Moroccan of Saharan origin, OUM is immediately striking with her impressive blend of power and sensitivity. Through her sultry voice, she explores the diversity of Moroccan music that she colours with soul, Gnawa and Hassani rhythms. With her new project Zarabi she weaves into her music her encounters, her roots and the memory of the Moroccan people.

Oum's career started in her native Morocco with the release of her two first albums Lik'Oum (2009) and Sweerty (2012). Now a star in her own country she has collaborated with several well-known local artists and is a judge on the Moroccan version of the TV show The Voice. In April 2013 she released Soul of Morocco in France which received critical acclaim from French and international media. She is a singer-songwriter whose songs reflect her wide cultural experience. She is influenced by the Gnawa and Hassani rhythms of her Saharan origins but also by the soul and jazz that she grew up listening to. Since then she has played all over Europe, the Arab World and even in Canada. In October 2014, she presented Soul of Morocco in WOMEX at Santiago-de-Compostella which really set off her international career allowing her to release the album in Germany and to play in prestigious festivals around Europe and the world.

ZARABI. Her new album Zarabi was released in France on September 22nd 2015 via MDC/harmonia mundi. Recorded in Morocco in the desert of M'Hamid El Ghizlane, this recording is rooted in the very particular environment of the Sahara. Backed up by an atypical but finely balanced quartet (oud, doublebass, percussions & trumpet), OUM really wanted to mark her plural identity and to show her attachment to local arts and traditions while remaining open to modernity and outside influences. This new project Zarabi has already been presented at the London African Music Festival and in Paris at the Café de la Danse (sold-out). It confirms OUM as one of the most important female artists of her generation in the Arab world.

OUM Born in 1978 in Casablanca, her full name is Oum el Ghait Benessahraoui - Oum is the first word of the phrase "Oum el Ghait", which means "the mother of deliverance". This name was formerly given to girls born in the desert during a day or night of rainy weather. OUM spent her childhood in Marrakech, and there developed her talents for painting and singing. At age fourteen, the singer's taste for jazz and black music led her to join a gospel choir where she quickly became one of the soloists. At the end of high school in 1997, OUM entered the National School of Architecture in Rabat and studied there for six years. In 2003 she made the decision to focus on singing.