

Grab your Mic and Sing some *Cairokee* at AUC

By: Lana Elsehemi

On May 17th 2024, The American University of Cairo staged two of Egypt's more influential artists, the rock-pop band **Cairokee** and rapper **Marwan Pablo**. Their concert, "**El Mahatta**" (The Station), blended together different music styles and reflected the sentiment of Egyptians through their music. The night was a seamless blend of hip-hop, alternative rock, and raw energy, leaving the audience in awe and a celebration of music, culture, and the power of live performance.

Rap Prince Kicks off the Night

The night was set in motion by the trailblazing rapper known for his sharp lyricism and unique fusion of trap and traditional Egyptian sounds. From the moment Pablo took the stage, the crowd roared, setting the tone for an unforgettable night. His presence, as always, was commanding, and the energy was infectious. If you didn't know the lyrics, you were definitely screaming something and delivering hit after hit from his critically acclaimed albums, such as "**El Malek**" (The King) and "**Mabrouk**" (Congratulations). He set a reminder of Egypt's hip-hop scene, using his platform to bring attention to issues such as personal freedom and social commentary while maintaining the strong connection that so many Egyptians have to their roots.

Cairokee: Where Music Meets Meaning

An iconic Egyptian rock band has made a significant mark on the Middle Eastern music scene, not just through its infectious sound but also through its deeply resonant lyrics and commitment to social activism. The band could be described as a mirror to the times in which it exists, reflecting the sentiment of all Egyptian people.

Their performance was nothing short of exceptional. Lead singer Amir Eid's charismatic stage presence and emotional depth were vital to seamlessly transitioning from Marwan Pablo's energetic rap set to the more introspective yet equally powerful rock anthems. Their set included some of their most notable songs, such as "**Ethbat Makaanak**" (Stand Your Ground), "**Sout El-Horeya**" (The Voice of Freedom), and "**Telk Qadeya**" (Different Cases). The band's ability to fuse alternative rock with modern Egyptian themes, tackling issues like social justice, identity, and freedom, resonated strongly with the fans in attendance. Each song felt like an invitation to think deeply and reflect on society's challenges while enjoying the raw energy of their music.

One of the most notable aspects of Cairokee's music is its lyrical focus on social justice, political freedom, and the struggles of everyday people. Their songs often mirror the frustrations and hopes of the masses, particularly in Egypt. Tracks like "Ethbat Makaanak" (Stand Your Ground) encourage listeners to hold fast to their beliefs and fight for their rights in the face of adversity, especially during periods of political unrest. "Sout El-Horeya" (The Voice of Freedom) demands the right to speak out and resist oppressive systems. "Telk Qadeya" (Different Cases) is a powerful and emotional piece that delves into the struggles of the Palestinian people. The song highlights themes of resistance, injustice, and the enduring spirit of those fighting for their homeland and identity. Through its evocative lyrics, it serves as a critique of oppression and a call for solidarity with Palestine.

The band excelled at maintaining momentum, balancing powerful anthems with more emotional, quieter moments. The synergy between the band and the audience was undeniable, with the crowd's voices harmonizing with the music, creating an atmosphere of collective unity. The stage itself illuminated the mood, and Cairokee paid attention to every little detail, ensuring the audience had the experience they were waiting for.

The Fusion of Genres

At the concert's end, Marwan Pablo joined Cairokee on stage for a surprise collaboration, merging his rap verses with their anthemic rock sound. The performance was a powerful reminder of how music, regardless of genre, can bring people together and create something new, a big message both artists share. The blending of rap and rock worked surprisingly well, as both artists shared a common passion for conveying strong social messages through music. The two genres—hip-hop and rock—are rarely seen together on the same stage in Egypt, so this collaboration felt fresh and innovative, bringing in a diverse crowd united in their admiration for both artists, transcending the boundaries between genres.

The concert left a lasting impression on all who attended, providing a unique experience of Egypt's modern music scene. It stood as a perfect example of how different genres can not only coexist but thrive off one another. Whether you're a hip-hop head, a rock enthusiast, or just a fan of great music, this concert was a must-see event that captured the essence of contemporary Egyptian culture.