

Sabah

“The music I make is the kind of music that is inclusive for everyone.”

Jeanette Gergis Al Feghali, famously known as Sabah, was a Lebanese singer and actress born in 1927 in Beirut. Considered to be one of the divas of the Arab music world, Sabah was notorious for her extravagant style, controversial career and personal life.

At age 13, Sabah released her first song that earned her the attention of Lebanese-Egyptian film producer and actress Assia Dagher, who promptly signed Sabah for three films. The first of these, *El-Qalb Louh Wahid*, ‘*The Heart Has Its Reasons*’ (1945), shot her into stardom. From this point on, she became known by her character’s name in the film, Sabah, meaning ‘morning’ in Arabic, and adopted it formally as her stage name.

Sabah began her career in singing and acting roles in films and musicals, and co-starred alongside celebrities such as Egyptian singer and actor Abdel Halim Hafez. She worked with legendary composers, including Mohammed Abdel Wahab and Riyad Al Sunbati, who also assisted her with vocal training.

Her unique voice and glamorous style made Sabah one of the top singers and actresses in Lebanon and Egypt. She was fluent in a variety of singing styles but was particularly specialised in a Lebanese folkloric music genre known as *mawwal*.

Sabah received many awards throughout her life and was honoured and cherished by leaders of the Arab world. By the time of her death in 2014, her expansive artistic repertoire comprised of at least 25 musical plays, over 80 films and more than 3,000 songs.



DID YOU KNOW?

Sabah was one of the first Arabic singers to perform at some of the world’s most famous concert venues such as the Olympia Hall in Paris and the Sydney Opera House.

FUN FACT

Sabah’s most famous nickname, Al Shahroura, meaning ‘singing bird’, was inspired by her uncle; a folk poet whose pen name was Shahrour Al Wadi, ‘Songbird of The Valley’.

MUSICAL TERM

Mawwal: A traditional singing form in colloquial Arabic music and poetry.

