

Samira Tawfiq

“A true artist is like a footprint that no one can copy.”

Samira Ghastin Karimona, famously known as Samira Tawfiq, was a Lebanese singer and actor born in 1935 in Syria. She launched her career in Jordan where she first became known for singing in Bedouin dialects.

Samira received musical mentorship from Lebanese musician Tawfiq El Baylouni who encouraged her and taught her the *tawashih* Arabic musical form. She also worked at one of Jordan's national radio stations where she was invited to sing Bedouin songs.

Samira's fame rose in the Gulf region with her hits; *Maskin Ya Qalbi Yama Tlaawat* (My Poor Heart How Often You Have Suffered), and *Beei Al Jamal Ya Ali* (Sell the Camels O'Ali), both of which were composed by the popular musician Farid El Atrache.

Her acting career began in the 1960s when she starred in the hit movie, *Mawlid Al Rasoul* (The Birth of the Prophet). Samira went on to act in over 15 films including; *A Bride from Damascus*, *A Bedu in Paris*, and *Days in London*.

In 1973, Samira was among several exclusive artists selected to perform at the Sydney Opera House's opening ceremony which was attended by Queen Elizabeth II. Over the course of her career, Samira received recognition and honorary medals worldwide and was appointed Honorary President of the Syndicate of Professional Artists in Lebanon.



DID YOU KNOW?

Samira gained popularity in Jordan after singing patriotic songs such as *Diritna al-Urduniya* (Our Jordanian Homeland) and *Urdun al-Quffiya al-Hamra* (Jordan of the Red Arabian Headdress).

FUN FACT

Samira Tawfiq's stage name was inspired by Lebanese composer Tawfiq El Baylouni who encouraged her to pursue singing.

MUSICAL TERM

Tawashih: A poetic form of music and singing in classical Arabic that originated in *Al-Andalus* (Medieval Islamic Spain).

