



for **GROWTH**

a monthly series

**THE MAGIC OF
MUSIC, MOVIES &
MORE...**

APRIL | 2025



Oud.
Instrument de musique à cordes.
L'oud, instrument de musique à cordes,
propre du Proche-Orient à la fin du
Moyen Âge.

The **music, movie, and television landscape in the Middle East** has undergone a remarkable transformation over the past few decades, driven by **cultural shifts, technological advances, and rising creative freedom.**



In **2022**, the MENA music industry was valued at approximately **\$200 million**.

**2024**

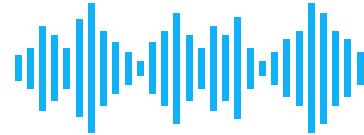
The market saw a 22.8% year-over-year growth, making it **the fastest-growing music market globally** for the second time in three years.

2025 projection

Revenue in the **digital music** market is projected to **reach \$701.5 million**, with streaming services accounting for the majority.

2027 Forecast

The **total market value** is expected to increase to \$300 million, with streaming projected to grow by \$100 million.



(Statista)

**Growth Forecast**

The **Middle East's cinema market** is projected to generate approximately **\$1.66 billion** in revenue by the end of **2024**.

The cinema industry is expected to expand at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.41%, reaching around **\$3.44 billion by 2033**.

**Box Office Performance**

Box office revenues in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region are anticipated to reach \$1.3 billion in 2024.

(GlobeNewswire, Statista, PwC)

In the MENA region, the **TV and video market** is projected to generate approximately **\$13.45 billion** in revenue by **2025**.

**Smart TV Segment**

The Middle East and Africa (MEA) **smart TV market** reached a revenue of \$9.56 billion in 2024 and is expected to **grow at a CAGR of 17.4% from 2025 to 2030**.

Overall Television Market

The MEA **television market** generated a revenue of \$22.37 billion in 2021 and is anticipated to grow at a **CAGR of 11.3% from 2022 to 2028**.

Grand View Research

In this month's edition let's look at the booming Music Industry in the Middle East

We will follow it up with the Movies & more in the upcoming editions...



The **World of Music** in the Middle East

The Middle Eastern **music scene** is **vibrant**, featuring a **mix of local and global influences**, including **hip-hop, electronic, Khaleeji**, and experimental **indie sounds**.

Social media, technology, and cross-border collaborations are evolving the music landscape, showcasing a combination of **traditional influences, global styles, and innovative local creativity**.



Here are some **key music trends** shaping the region:

Trend 1

BLEND OF TRADITIONAL SOUNDS WITH MODERN RHYTHMS

Trend 2

UNSTOPPABLE RISE OF HIP-HOP AND RAP

Trend 3

ELECTRONIC MUSIC AND DJ CULTURE TAKES OVER

Trend 4

SOCIAL MEDIA & STREAMING PLATFORMS REWRITE THE RULES

Trend 5

HER VOICE, HER STAGE

Trend 6

GLOBAL COLLABORATIONS HIT THE RIGHT NOTES

Trend 7

EXPERIMENTAL MUSIC AND INDIE ARTISTS BREAK THE MOLD

Trend 8

GULF MUSIC (KHALEEJI) STEPS INTO THE GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT

Trend 9

BOOMING SCENE OF MUSIC FESTS AND LIVE PERFORMANCES

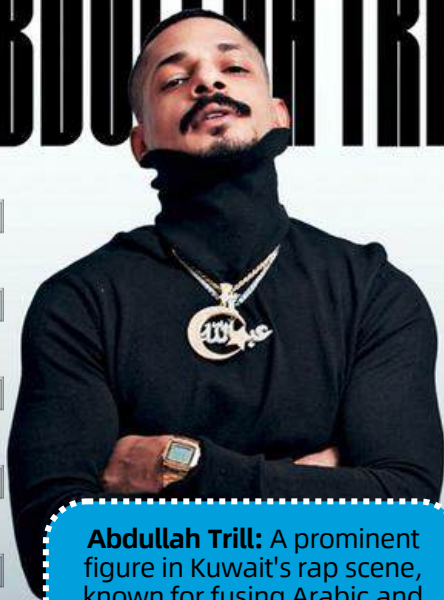
Trend 1

Blend of traditional sounds with modern rhythms

Middle Eastern artists **blend traditional Arabic music with contemporary genres** such as pop, electronic, hip-hop, and trap.

Instruments like the oud, qanun, and nay are fused with modern beats, appealing to diverse age groups.

ABDULLAH TRILL



Abdullah Trill: A prominent figure in Kuwait's rap scene, known for fusing Arabic and English in his music, delivering impactful beats that reflect Kuwaiti culture.



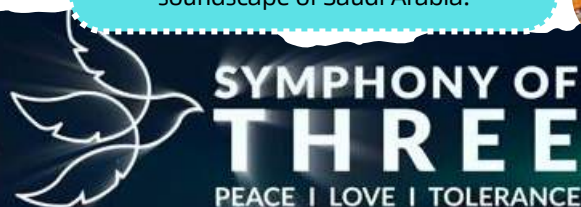
Arabic pop stars like **Amr Diab** and **Nancy Ajram** incorporate modern production styles while keeping elements of traditional melodies, appealing to a broad audience.



MDLBEAST: A music platform and festival that showcases artists blending traditional Saudi music with modern genres like electronic and hip-hop, redefining the soundscape of Saudi Arabia.



Sarah Nabil: A Bahraini music producer who blends Khaleeji grooves with hip-hop and R&B, creating music that resonates with both local and global audiences.



Abu Dhabi Festival: An annual event that commissions works blending traditional and modern music, such as the "**Symphony of Three**" by Ihab Darwish, celebrating unity and peace.

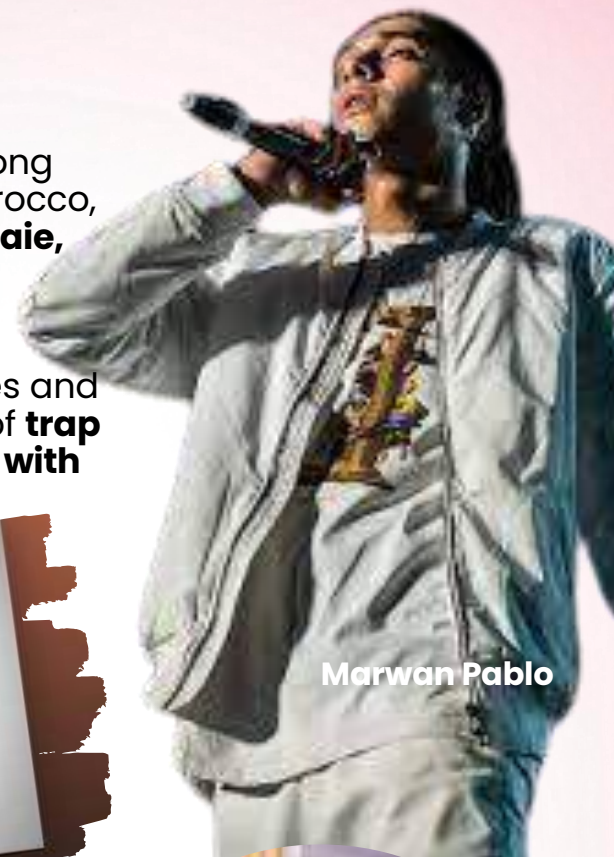


Trend 2

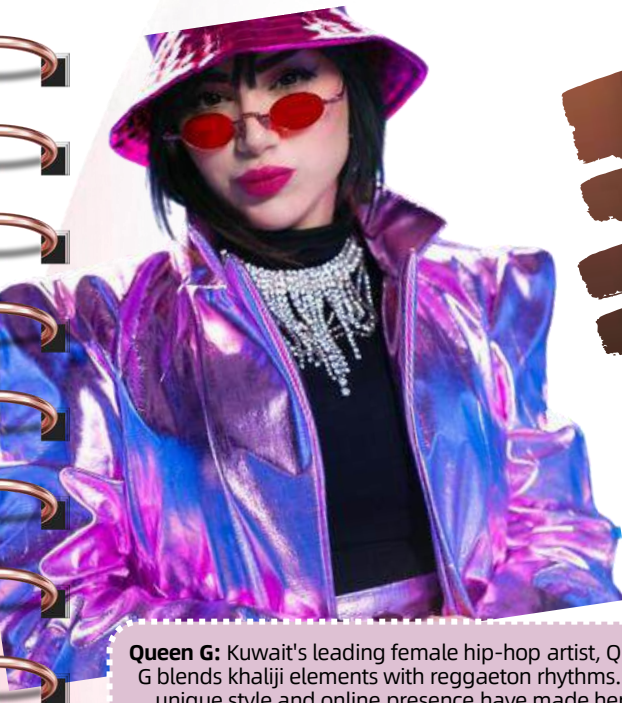
Rise of local Hip-Hop and Rap

Hip-hop and rap are increasingly popular among youth in Egypt, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia, and Morocco, with artists like **Wegz**, **Soolking**, **Moayad Al Nefae**, and **Marwan Pablo** rising to fame.

These genres provide a platform for **social commentary** on issues like economic struggles and identity. Additionally, the regional adaptation of **trap music features high-energy beats combined with Arabic lyrics and themes**.



Marwan Pablo



Queen G: Kuwait's leading female hip-hop artist, Queen G blends khaliji elements with reggaeton rhythms. Her unique style and online presence have made her a prominent figure in Kuwait's hip-hop scene



BLVXB: A Saudi rapper whose music combines softness and precision, offering a melancholic counterpoint to traditional rap. He emphasizes honesty and aims to represent Saudi voices on a global stage.



Asayel Slay: A Saudi female rapper known for her track "Girl of Mecca," which celebrates Saudi women. Her work has sparked conversations about women's roles in Saudi society and the hip-hop scene.



SOLE DXB


Sole DXB: An annual cultural festival in Dubai that combines street culture, hip-hop, fashion, and art. It has become a hub for regional hip-hop talent and creative expression.

Trend 3

Electronic Music and DJ Culture takes over

The Middle East's electronic music scene is thriving, particularly in cities like Dubai, Beirut, and Cairo. It features internationally recognized **DJs such as DJ Snake and Nora En Pure.**

Major festivals like Sole DXB, MDL Beast Soundstorm, and DXB Music Festival attract large audiences, showcasing EDM. **Local artists blend techno, house, and traditional Arabic rhythms, establishing a unique niche in the global electronic music landscape.**



DJ Aseel is a prominent figure in the GCC's electronic music and DJ scene, renowned for blending traditional Arabic music with contemporary electronic beats. Born in Iraq, he began his career in 2007 and has since become one of the most decorated DJs in the Arab Emirates.


**Cosmicat (Nouf Sufyani)**

Recognized as Saudi Arabia's first female DJ and producer, Cosmicat blends electronic beats with Middle Eastern influences. She has performed at major festivals, including MDLBEAST Soundstorm, and is a trailblazer for women in the region's music scene.



DJ Bliss (Marwan Parham Al Awadhi)

An Emirati DJ, producer, and TV personality, DJ Bliss is known for his dynamic performances and contributions to the UAE's music industry. He has collaborated with international artists and was featured on the Netflix show "Dubai Bling."

Groove on the Grass (Dubai)

This homegrown festival is known for its eclectic mix of electronic music, art, and wellness activities. It provides a platform for both international headliners and regional talent.

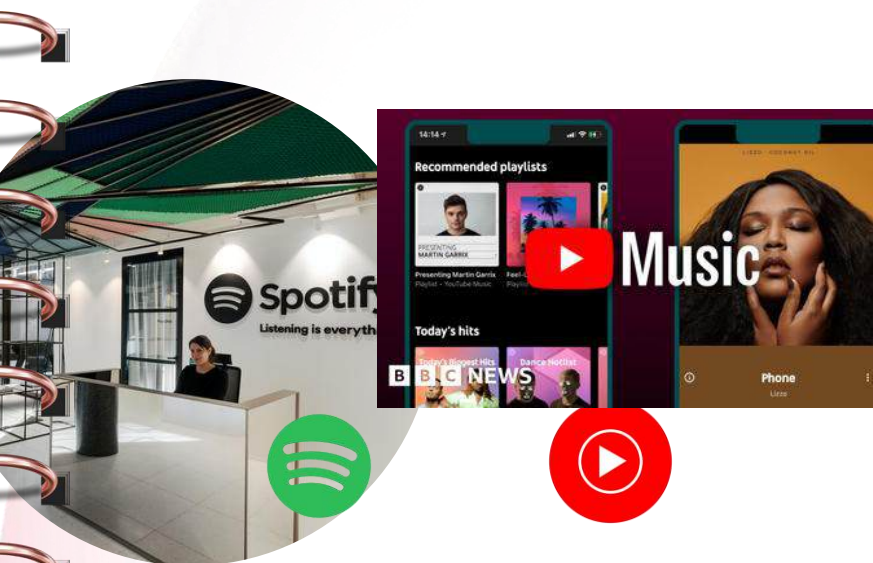
Trend 4

Social Media & Streaming Platforms rewrite the rules

Social media platforms like **TikTok**, **YouTube**, and Instagram significantly influence music consumption and discovery, with viral songs rapidly ascending local charts.

Artists leverage these platforms to reach global audiences.

Additionally, streaming services such as **Anghami**, **Spotify**, and **Apple Music** are essential for promoting music for both emerging and established artists.



Global platforms like **Spotify** and **YouTube Music** have seen increased adoption in the GCC, offering artists access to international audiences. These platforms provide features such as curated playlists and algorithm-driven recommendations, which help local artists gain exposure beyond their immediate geography.



Platforms like **TikTok** and **Instagram** have become pivotal for emerging GCC artists to showcase their talent and connect with fans. Short-form videos and reels enable musicians to share snippets of their work, behind-the-scenes content, and engage with a broader audience.

The ultimate music experience with Anghami Plus

Anghami

As the first legal music streaming platform in the Arab world, Anghami has played a crucial role in providing GCC artists with a platform to distribute their music. It offers tools for artists to upload tracks, analyze listener data, and monetize their content, thereby supporting independent musicians in the region.

Trend 5

Her Voice, Her Stage

More women in the Middle East are **breaking stereotypes** in traditionally male-dominated music genres like hip-hop, rock, and electronic. Artists such as **Ghalia Benali**, **Faouzia**, **Asayel**, and **Souad Massi** are blending Arabic sounds with global influences.


Their music addresses **themes of empowerment, equality, and identity**, resonating with audiences seeking change.



A Kuwaiti musician and conceptual artist, **Fatima Al Qadiri** is renowned for her experimental electronic music. Her work often explores themes of identity and cultural critique, positioning her as a significant figure in the global electronic music landscape.



Tam Tam (KSA) is known for her soulful voice and fusion of Western and Middle Eastern musical elements. Her songs often address themes of identity and empowerment, making her a prominent voice in the region's alternative music scene.

A large background image of a woman with curly hair, wearing a dark patterned vest over a dark top, singing into a microphone on stage.

Ghalia Benali (Tunisia): Known for her mesmerizing voice and storytelling, Ghalia combines Arabic classical music with jazz, flamenco, and contemporary styles, making her a cultural bridge between the Arab world and Europe.

Trend 6

Global Collaborations hit the right notes

Middle Eastern artists are collaborating with **international musicians** to create unique, globally appealing tracks. **Huda Kattan is facilitating music collaborations**, while Egyptian trap artist Wegz gains international recognition.

Artists like **Massari** and **Mahmood** are also introducing Middle Eastern sounds to mainstream Western markets.

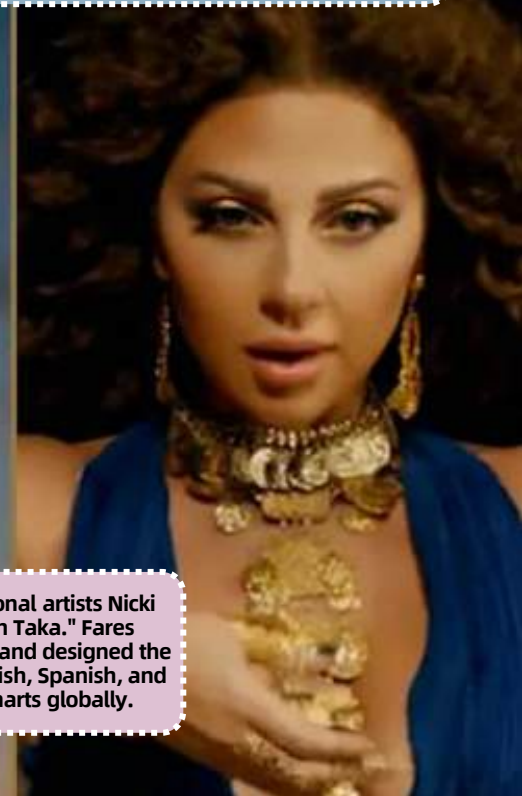
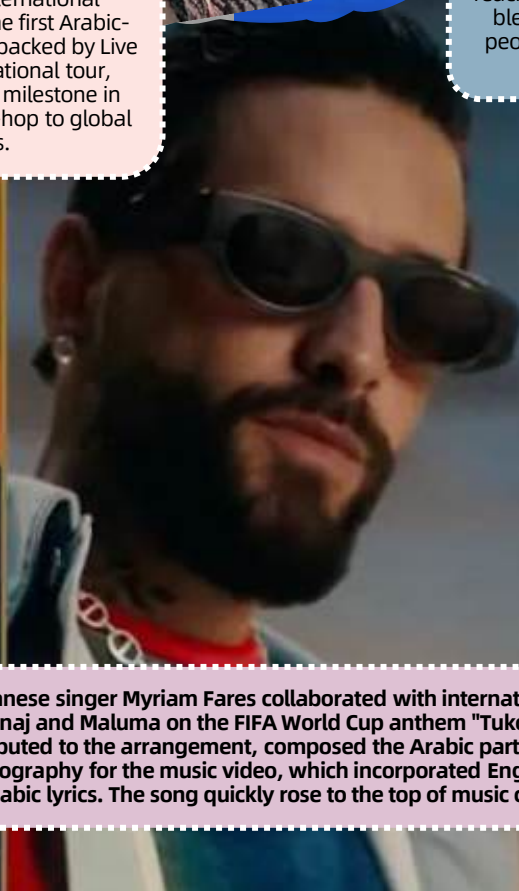
French Montana (Morocco/USA)

Born Karim Kharbouch in Morocco, French Montana is a Moroccan-American rapper who has collaborated with numerous American artists, including Swae Lee and Drake. His hit "Unforgettable" showcases his ability to blend Arabic musical elements with mainstream hip-hop.



Mohamed Ramadan, a prominent Egyptian actor and singer, has significantly expanded his musical reach through various international collaborations, blending Arabic music with global genres, with people such as American rapper Future, Massari, Gims and Afro B

Wegz is a prominent Egyptian rapper who has gained international recognition. He was the first Arabic-language singer to be backed by Live Nation for an international tour, marking a significant milestone in bringing Egyptian hip-hop to global audiences.



Lebanese singer Myriam Fares collaborated with international artists Nicki Minaj and Maluma on the FIFA World Cup anthem "Tukoh Taka." Fares contributed to the arrangement, composed the Arabic part, and designed the choreography for the music video, which incorporated English, Spanish, and Arabic lyrics. The song quickly rose to the top of music charts globally.

Trend 7

Experimental Music and Indie Artists break the mold

The Middle East's indie music scene is expanding with **experimental artists gaining traction**, particularly in Lebanon, Jordan, and Egypt.

These musicians are known for defying **mainstream sounds** and exploring genres like indie rock, jazz, folk, and psychedelic music. Indie artists are often found performing at smaller, underground venues, festivals, or alternative art spaces, with growing appreciation for non-mainstream sounds.



Mishaal Tamer (Saudi Arabia): A rising star, Tamer blends indie pop with Middle Eastern influences, reflecting the evolving music scene in Saudi Arabia.



Beirut & Beyond International Music Festival
 - Beirut, Lebanon
 This festival is renowned for promoting independent Arab artists and has featured performances by Yasmine Hamdan and other regional talents.



Yasmine Hamdan: A pioneering figure in Arabic indie music, Hamdan blends traditional Middle Eastern melodies with electronic and indie pop elements, creating a distinctive soundscape.



Cairokee: Blending rock with Egyptian folk music, Cairokee's politically charged lyrics have made them a voice for youth and change in Egypt

Trend 8

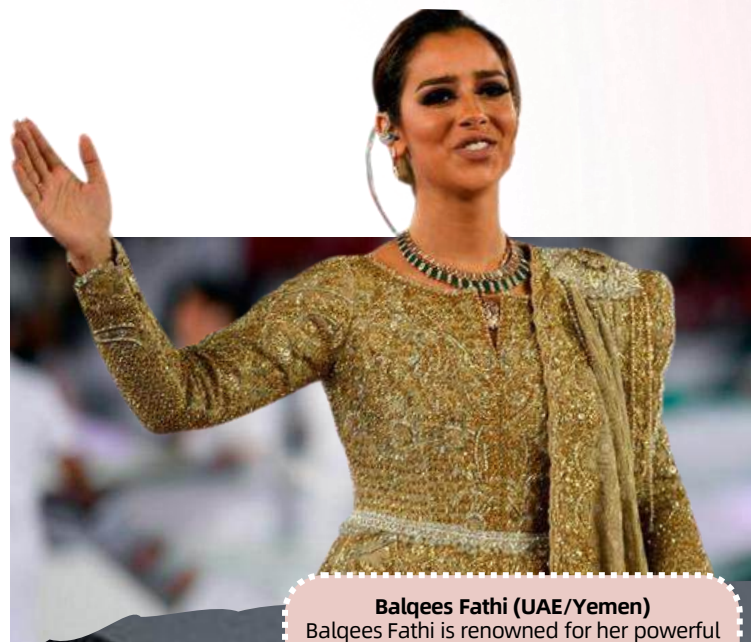
Gulf Music (Khaleeji) steps into the global spotlight

Khaleeji music, which originates from the Gulf countries, is **gaining wider recognition across the Middle East and beyond**. Characterized by its distinctive rhythm and use of traditional instruments like the tabla and oud, **this genre is becoming increasingly influential in pop music**.

Artists like **Balqees Fathi and Ahlam** are **blending Khaleeji sounds with modern pop elements**, creating a fusion that is both contemporary and rooted in heritage.

**Ahlam Al Shamsi (UAE)**

Often referred to as the "Queen of Khaleeji Music," Ahlam Al Shamsi has been instrumental in bringing Khaleeji music to a wider audience. Her performances showcase a blend of traditional Gulf music with modern influences, captivating fans across the Arab world.

**Balqees Fathi (UAE/Yemen)**

Balqees Fathi is renowned for her powerful vocals and her ability to merge classical Khaleeji melodies with modern pop elements. Her music resonates with a broad audience, bridging traditional Gulf sounds with contemporary styles.

**Fahad Al Kubaisi (Qatar)**

Fahad Al Kubaisi has significantly contributed to the evolution of Khaleeji music by incorporating electronic production and global music styles. His work showcases the genre's versatility and emotional depth.

**Hussain Al Jassmi (UAE)**

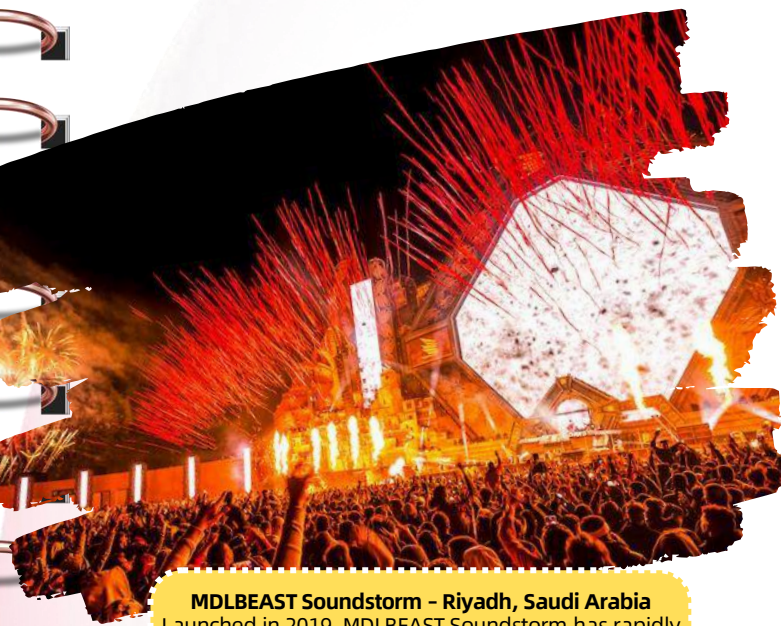
Hussain Al Jassmi is celebrated for his genre-defying approach, seamlessly integrating traditional Khaleeji beats with elements of jazz, soul, and funk. His innovative style has garnered him international acclaim.

Trend 9

Booming scene of Music Fests and Live Performances

The Middle East is becoming a **hot spot for music festivals, concerts, and live performances**. Cities like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Riyadh have become key destinations for international artists and festivals attracting the likes of Cold Play, Ed Sheeran, etc.

Events like RedFestDXB, MDL Beast in Saudi Arabia, and Beirut & Beyond festival bring international and regional talent together, **fostering a dynamic and interactive music culture**.

**MDLBEAST Soundstorm - Riyadh, Saudi Arabia**

Launched in 2019, MDLBEAST Soundstorm has rapidly become one of the world's largest music festivals.

Held annually in Riyadh, it features a blend of international superstars and regional talents across multiple stages, drawing hundreds of thousands of attendees.

**RedFestDXB - Dubai, UAE**

Organized by Virgin Radio Dubai, RedFestDXB is an annual music festival that brings international pop, rock, and EDM artists to the stage. It's a significant event in the UAE's music calendar, attracting diverse audiences.

**Untold Dubai - Dubai, UAE**

Originally from Romania, the Untold Festival made its Middle East debut in Dubai, featuring a lineup of global DJs and performers. The festival is known for its immersive experiences and grand productions.

Mind-the-Gap

Here is a snapshot of the generational mindsets to help better connect with them...



GEN ALPHA (2012 onwards)

The Screen-First Generation

- Preferred Genres: Kids' music, upbeat pop, TikTok snippets, YouTube themes, AI-generated remixes.
- Listening Habits: Smart speakers, tablets, YouTube Kids, and music integrated in games/apps.
- Cultural Connection: Developing taste but already influenced by algorithmic curation and social media.



GEN Z (1997 - 2012)

The Digital Natives

- Preferred Genres: Trap, drill, rap (both Arabic & English), lo-fi, experimental beats, and TikTok hits.
- Listening Habits: TikTok, SoundCloud, Apple Music, and Reels. Highly visual and trend-driven.
- Cultural Connection: Proudly local yet globally influenced; prefer authentic, socially aware lyrics.



GEN Y (1981 - 1996)

The Global Explorers

- Preferred Genres: Arabic pop, indie, EDM, hip-hop, K-pop, Western chart hits.
- Listening Habits: Heavy use of Anghami, Spotify, YouTube, and Instagram music.
- Cultural Connection: Value identity, expression, and regional pride in local indie artists and Arabic-English fusions.



GEN X (1965 - 1980)

The Bridge Generation

- Preferred Genres: Mix of classic Arabic, Western rock/pop (e.g., The Beatles, Queen), early Arabic pop.
- Listening Habits: CD players, satellite TV music channels, now adapted to streaming platforms.
- Cultural Connection: Balances tradition with early globalization; open to fusion styles.



BABY BOOMERS (1946 - 1964)

The Golden Era Fans

- Preferred Genres: Classic Arabic music, Tarab, traditional folk, Umm Kulthum, Fairuz, Abdel Halim Hafez.
- Listening Habits: Radio, cassette tapes, vinyl, and increasingly YouTube for nostalgia.
- Cultural Connection: Strong emotional ties to national identity, poetry, and the golden age of Arabic music.

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