

تسليم و تسليم

# THE HANDOVER

(SUBLIME FREQUENCIES)

ALY EISSA (EG) - OUD    AYMAN ASFOUR (EG) - VIOLIN  
JONAS CAMBIEN (BE/NO) - KEYBOARDS



*There is, and has been, a prevailing orthodoxy permeating the Egyptian musical hierarchy that would render this spectacular piece as scandalous. But let us remember that over the past 100 years, Said Darwish, Mohamed Abdel Wahab, Halim El Dabh, Ahmad Adaweya, and the modern Mahraganat movement have all experienced their fair share of scandal and opposition. Music must always be pushed forward - it may not always succeed as revelatory, but in this particular case, it does. Much like the venerable magic carpet, the Handover slowly builds to escort you into its swirling, ascending expression of the psychedelic, eventually descending, step by step, back to earth, landing as a wondrous spaceship with wide open doors inviting us inside for repeat listening. Perhaps this should have been happening in Egyptian music 50 years ago but it's here right now, and that's what matters. We are often asked an impossible question to answer: "What constitutes a Sublime Frequencies release?" For the moment, we can point to this record as the answer to that question.*

- Alan Bishop/Sublime Frequencies  
(March 2024)

In The Handover, Aly Eissa, Ayman Asfour and Jonas Cambien explore the common and uncommon senses of Egypt's ritual music. It is clear that Aly Eissa's original composition is deeply rooted in Egyptian and Arabic traditions. At the same time, this band is one of the most progressive coming out of Egypt today. This is in big part thanks to Eissa, who has proven time and again to be not only an extremely skillful composer, but also a real visionary, combining tradition with modern experimentation.

A performance by The Handover is typically one stretch without break: a long build-up that lasts for the duration of the concert. Towards the end of the performance, all the tension is released in an exuberant, joyful climax, when wild improvisations are driven forward on top of exciting dance-rhythms from rural Egypt. The Handover elegantly combines the delicacy of classical Arabic music, the raw expressiveness of Egypt's countryside music, and the spontaneity of free improvisation, carefully obliterating the artificial separation between acoustic and electronic instruments. Despite the remarkable absence of any percussion or drums, The

Handover is an extremely groovy band, with an ability to slow down and accelerate the tempo in almost telepathic synchronization at exactly the right moments.

Alongside the tight ensemble playing there is plenty of room for individual expression as the oud, synthesizer and violin take turns playing solos on top of repetitive riffs. Throughout the album, native Alexandrian Ayman Asfour plays the violin with breathtaking beauty, while not being afraid to make the violin buzz, squeak and rattle at times. Belgian/Norwegian keyboardist Jonas Cambien makes the synthesizer a melodic instrument in its own right, at times evoking almost classical Maqam, while in other moments it seems like he comes straight out of an Egyptian wedding. The oud forms the backbone in the composition's structure, as Aly Eissa's solos guide the listener from minimalist, meditative drones, to a compelling climax, and back to earth.

There is much more to The Handover's sound than the obvious references to Arabic and Egyptian music. The opening drone section of the album is pushed towards abstraction and even noise, and the vintage Farfisa organ gives the music a touch of 70s psychedelic rock. The repetitive riffs can be reminiscent of Embryo's experiments combining krautrock with influences from the middle-east, but the use of repetition to induce trance dates way back in Egyptian music, and is present in many rituals like Sufi and mouldid celebrations. The composed melodies on this album couldn't be possible without Eissa's deep love for this music. And what The Handover does with this composed material couldn't be possible without three strong individual voices, their love to play music together and their dedication to push the traditions forward.

The Handover debut album appears May 2024.

#### Links:

<https://the-handover.com/>

<https://www.sublimefrequencies.com/>

<https://www.instagram.com/thehandover.music>

#### Contact/booking:

[jonascambien@hotmail.com](mailto:jonascambien@hotmail.com)

[alyeissa93@gmail.com](mailto:alyeissa93@gmail.com)

