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The Voice of Egypt: Umm Kulthum, Arabic Song, and Egyptian Society in the Twentieth Century

By Virginia Danielson

University of Chicago Press. Paperback. Condition: New. 288 pages. Dimensions: 8.9in. x 6.0in. x 0.8in. Umm Kulthum, the voice of Egypt, was the most celebrated musical performer of the century in the Arab world. More than twenty years after her death, her devoted audience, drawn from all strata of Arab society, still numbers in the millions. Thanks to her skillful and pioneering use of mass media, her songs still permeate the international airwaves. In the first English-language biography of Umm Kulthum, Virginia Danielson chronicles the life of a major musical figure and the confluence of artistry, society, and creativity that characterized her remarkable career. Danielson examines the careful construction of Umm Kulthum's phenomenal popularity and success in a society that discouraged women from public performance. From childhood, her mentors honed her exceptional abilities to accord with Arab and Muslim practice, and as her stature grew, she remained attentive to her audience and the public reception of her work. Ultimately, she created from local precedents and traditions her own unique idiom and developed original song styles from both populist and neo-classical inspirations. These were enthusiastically received, heralded as crowning examples of a new, yet authentically Arab-Egyptian, culture. Danielson shows how Umm Kulthum's...



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