

# Paula Darwish

## The Country and Eastern Band

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### Biography

The Country and Eastern Band successfully fuse modern arrangements of Turkish and Kurdish folk with original songs in English. Their unique sound with its diverse eastern and western influences, relies on a careful balance of the familiar with the unknown.

With its passionate vocal deliveries, global rhythms and unique arrangements of classic pieces of traditional music from all over modern day Turkey, the music resonates with listeners all over the world.

Born in Northern England to an English mother and Jordanian father, Paula grew up listening to both "Eastern" and "Western" music. Darwish began to write her own songs and played in several bands as well as performing solo on the acoustic circuit. After some years, feeling frustrated and disappointed by the music scene, she decided to go abroad. Darwish then lived for a short while in Crete and Turkey, and fell in love with the local music.

A few years later, she applied to the London University School of Oriental and African Studies to study Turkish and Middle Eastern history. Living in London provided the opportunity to hang out in the Turkish and Kurdish music cafés of Hackney and once

again be immersed in the music she loved. Her biggest passion was for the types of music known in Turkey as halk müziği and özgün müziği and Dalston in North East London was full of bars and community centres playing this style of music. Still playing as a solo performer in the acoustic cafes of London, Paula began to add a few Turkish songs to the set and found British audiences receptive to the beautiful melodies of Anatolian folk.

During her third college year, Darwish studied at the Bosphorous University in Istanbul. On her return to London, she became a well known figure playing on the Turkish and Kurdish music scene of North London. After gaining a first class degree in Turkish, she returned to Istanbul with the intention of getting a job and starting a new band. Whilst musical opportunities were many, unable to earn enough money to survive, she was forced to return to England and start again.

Not wishing to be pigeon holed by UK audiences as solely a world music act, she created The Country & Eastern band with the idea of fusing musical styles to make Eastern music more acceptable to general UK audiences. The plan worked and together with her band she has been a regular performer on the UK scene



Paula Darwish

ever since.

Darwish signed with Berlin label Oriental Media in 2005 and released the EP "Urfa Folk Song". She performed every month for five years at Manchester's Iguana Bar before stopping to concentrate on recording the album "Do what you love" in 2008. The album was released on her own label "Purple Sheep Records" in 2009".

Regular touring & footage of gigs posted on the internet in recent years brought renewed attention from Turkey and Darwish began to refocus more on her original passion of traditional Turkish and Kurdish folk. In 2010 Darwish and the band were the subject of a TV documentary shown on National Turkish TV station TRT. Demand from fans lead to tours in Turkey in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

**Darwish is respected for her contribution to the world of global fusion as well as her work in the more traditional arena of Turkish and Kurdish folk music.**



Adam Warne

### Some Recent Concerts

**Turkey** tour 22 Sept-14th Oct 2012  
**London** Alevi Festival June 2012  
**W3 Hamburg** - May 2012  
**Sargfabrik Vienna** - May 2012  
**Bilkent Music Festival Ankara** October 2011  
**Escape from the City Festival, Salford** Oct 2011  
**Haymatlos Istanbul** June 2011  
**Vadi Cafe Ankara** June 2011  
**Seyr-I-mesel Istanbul** July 2010  
**DAYMER London** March 2011  
**London Alevi Festival** March 2011  
**Ankara** Telwe Hall July 2010  
**Musicport Fest Bridlington** 2009

*Paula Darwish - vocals, guitar*  
*Serpil Kilic - saz, vocals*  
*Lou Armer - vocals, ukelele*  
*Ric Gibbs - drums, darbuka*  
*Adam Warne - darbuka, percussion*  
*Carlos Ballester - electric guitar*  
*Pascal Paschalis - bouzouki*



Serpil Kilic

Paula Darwish & the Country and Eastern Band are based in Manchester, England  
They perform in any combo from solo to 7 piece band

### Releases

3 Anadolu Ezgisi (3 Anatolian Songs)  
**Purple Sheep Records 2011**

3 Kurdish Songs (3 Kilamen Kurdi, 3 Kürtçe ezgi)  
**Purple Sheep Records 2011**

Do what you love (yüreginin götürdüğü yere git)  
**Purple Sheep Records 2011**

Urfa Folk Song  
**Oriental Media Berlin 2006**

