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ARABIC MUSIC AND THE PIANO:

The Use of the Piano in Lebanon and Egypt During the Golden Age of Arabic Music

By

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A dissertation submitted to the

School of Graduate Studies

Rutgers, The University of New Jersey

In partial fulfillment of the requirements

For the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Graduate Program in Music

Written under the direction of

Scott Ordway

And approved by

New Brunswick, New Jersey

January, 2021

ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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During the 1930s, Egyptian and Lebanese composers began to incorporate the piano into their works. Because the piano also brought equal temperament, which is distinctly different than the tuning system used in Arab folk music, this new instrumental combination made a deep impact on the musical structure itself. The story of how the piano was introduced to the Arab World, however, is not well known.

In this dissertation, I discuss the introduction of the piano (and consequently of equal temperament) into Egyptian and Lebanese Arabic music of the 1930s–60s. I also compare Western and Arabic music theory and explore how the piano influenced the composition of Arabic music. The study is in two parts: 1) an analysis of Egyptian and Lebanese music from 1930–60 that features the piano alongside traditional Arabic instrumentalists and vocalists, and 2) a biographical study of musicians that that brought Western elements into Arabic music.

The fusion techniques developed during the period 1930–60 continue to inform compositions created by Arab musicians in the United States and elsewhere. In the

fourth chapter, I provide an overview of Arabic music in the United States in the 21st century.

My research concludes with an original composition entitled *Memories of Homs*, for Arabic ensemble and piano. The last chapter is an analysis of this work. This topic is especially meaningful for two reasons: the piano is a dominant element in my musical career, and my Syrian heritage continues to shape my overall musical experience.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to the memory of my Syrian Grandfather

Fadel Khouzam فاضل خزام

(1928–1985)

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INTRODUCTION

Since the early 20th century, the piano has played an important role in popular music throughout the Arab world. It features prominently in compositions by important artists such as Abdul Wahab (1902-1991), Zakiyya Hamdan (1920-1987), and Um Kulthum (1898-1975), among many others, and continues to be used by contemporary musicians throughout the Arab world and in diasporic communities in the United States and elsewhere.

The piano's introduction into Arabic music, though, was improbable. With its equally tempered tuning system, the Western piano does not integrate easily with the tuning system of traditional Arabic music, which divides the octave into microtones. In the early years of the 20th century, however, the piano emerged as a powerful symbol throughout the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East as Arabs sought political and cultural independence from the Ottoman Empire by means of closer integration with the West. The introduction of the piano had significant musical consequences well beyond its status as a cultural symbol, influencing both composition and performance in profound ways.

The history of this integration has not been thoroughly investigated. In this dissertation, I will explore the unlikely introduction of the piano and the subsequent transformation of musical style during the so-called "Golden Age" of Arabic popular music (ca. 1920–1960).

I will begin by outlining the main differences between Western and Arab theories of music which needed to be reconciled, to a certain degree, before the piano could fully participate in Arabic music. In the second chapter, I will provide an overview of the most important artists who actively incorporated the piano into their compositions

during the period in question. In the third chapter, I will analyze several representative works in detail, showing how musicians throughout the Arab world blended traditional Arabic theory with the Western system of pitch organization. Finally, the fusion techniques developed during the period 1920–60 continue to inform compositions created by Arab musicians in the United States and elsewhere. In the final chapter, I will provide an overview of current trends in Arab popular music as well as in concert music which draws on both Western and Arabic influences.

Background

Arabic music is handed down directly from teacher to student through the process of imitation, repetition, and mentorship. Traditional Arabic musicians consider this the best way to pass down knowledge and expertise to students (Maalouf 2002, 30). This tradition of oral transmission has served Arabic music well from its genesis and remains strong today. The introduction of written notation occurred only recently—in the last 100 years or so—and came with the desire to Westernize Arabic culture (H. Touma 1996, 297). Thus, the introduction of both the piano and music notation to the Arabic world occurred around the same time and were part of a broader desire to modernize Arabic culture through Westernization.

The Arab's 20th century desire to turn to the West was part of a long tradition of mutual exchange of ideas. During the 9th century, for example, early practitioners of Islam borrowed freely from aspects of Greek civilization (Danielson 1997, 49). Also, in the 9th century, the *Bayt al'Hikma* (Grand Library of Baghdad) was established to support the translation of books into Arabic. Most of the translated texts were Greek philosophy, medicine, architecture, logic, astronomy, and music (Danielson 1997, 50). During the 20th

century, Arabs wanted to modernize their culture by looking, as they once had, towards the West.¹

At the same time, Arabic culture has had a significant and well-documented impact on Western thought. The so-called Pythagorean tuning system existed in Egypt before Pythagoras (570 BCE- 495 BCE) brought the system to Europe following his travels in Egypt and Persia (Maalouf 2002, 35). The tuning system of early Western keyboard instruments developed from this Arabic system that Pythagoras discovered.

Arabic culture also influenced European thought during the Middle Ages via the Umayyad state of Al-Andalus on the Iberian Peninsula. The Andalusian School of Music, for example, was founded by Ziryab (789-857) around the year 850. Arabic influence on European culture continued with the further development of the Pythagorean system by Safi 'l-Din al-Urmawi (d.1294) and al-Farabi (d.950) (Maalouf 2002, 18). Some of these developments were brought to Spain by the Arabs and subsequently to northern Europe after the Reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula in the 14th century.

After the 12th century, Arabic influence over European culture steadily diminished (Rogan 2009). By the 19th century, revenue extracted from Arabic-speaking regions was used to fund education, art, music, and infrastructure throughout Europe and the Ottoman Empire, while these same regions suffered from colonial neglect. When Napoleon sent an expedition to Egypt and Syria (1798-1801) with Guillaume André Villoteau (1759-1839) as the primary musicologist, they encountered a fascinating

¹ It is important to note that the Ottomans were already looking towards the West for inspiration in modernizing their culture. This also impacted the way Arab musicians internalized Western influence.

culture whose long history of intellectual advancement and achievement had been halted almost completely by the process of colonization and occupation (Davidson 2013).

The piano was one of many Western technologies that Arabs sought to incorporate into their culture during the 19th century, symbolizing modernization and high culture (Danielson 1997). During this time, Western musical elements began to gradually creep into the Arabic world, with the violin and accordion firmly establishing roots by the beginning of the 20th century (Schumays 2019, 40). Even though the piano is one of the most popular Western instruments, the Arabs' desire to duplicate everything European did not extend to the piano at first. The violin and the accordion could be manipulated to create microtonal nuances, adding to the long and rich tradition of Arabic music without fundamentally altering it. The piano, on the other hand, could not.

To address this challenge, some instrument makers altered the piano in ways that would better serve the aesthetics of Arabic music. The first Arabic piano capable of playing microtones was invented by Lebanese pianist and composer Wadīh Sabra (1876-1952) (Schumays 2019, 40) who gained international recognition after displaying his piano at the International Cairo conference of 1932. Unfortunately, his piano design and most of his music has been lost (Farraj 2001-2018). Another Lebanese instrument builder, Abdallah Chahine (1894-1975), created the next archetype which used foot pedals to adjust the tuning (Schumays 2019, 40).

In 1973, Chahine released an album called *al-nagham al-khaled: angham min al-sharq* (*The Immortal Melody: Tunes from the East*). In this recording, the piano is used in unprecedented ways, both in its physical alteration and in its technical figurations. The piano behaves less as it would in a Western context and more like a *qanun*, a traditional

plucked-string instrument with a heterophonic texture that controls all aspects of the musical performance. Polyphonic and homophonic textures, which are the main paradigms of Western piano, are nonexistent in Chahine's music, making the piano behave in unprecedented ways. In his album, the piano is reinvented from the inside out to better serve the aesthetic needs and expectations of Arabic music.

Modifying the Arabic piano required tremendous effort but paid few dividends. For most musicians, the *qanun* was a much more accessible instrument that rendered the altered piano superfluous to the development of their music. The *qanun* is a three-string per note instrument. It could behave similarly to a piano played with sustain pedal. The *qanun* player uses a technique called *katm* (muting/muffling) in which the right hand's thumb silences the strings' ringing shortly after it is plucked. With the *qanun*, Arabic musicians did not have a good reason to embark on a costly adjustment of pianos. Chahine's piano, therefore, never gained wide acceptance.

However, the trend toward Westernization in the Arabic world continued to include owning and playing the Western piano. By the early 20th century, the unaltered piano had become a ubiquitous part of well-to-do Egyptian households (Schumays 2019, 260). So many Egyptians tried to play compositions using a traditional melodic fragment called *jins sikah* on the piano that they changed the character of the fragment itself to fit the constraints of equal temperament (Schumays 2019, 260). This is a perfect example of how the introduction of the piano changed the character of Arabic music. Playing *sikah* on the piano began to happen so often that Abdel Wahab coined the term "*sikah al'buyut*" (homemade *sikah*), to describe this new development of the *jins* that were formed in the Arab homes with pianos (Schumays 2019, 261).

The piano also transformed many other theoretical units like *jins hijaz*, which now have been universally adapted to fit the equal temperament found on the piano (Schumays 2019, 261)². The structural elements of Arabic music theory will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

In addition, the piano had a wider impact on Arabic music, influencing the way *'ud* players tuned their fourths. Today the *'ud* fourths are tuned based on the equal temperament system instead of the Pythagorean just fourths (Schumays 2019, 18). This had a wider impact on the Arabic world because the *'ud* is the basis for all Arabic theory, in the same way the piano serves as the basis of Western theory. Post-Westernized Arabic music is still microtonal, but this new adjustment in the tuning of the *'ud*'s fourths changed, although slightly, the overall world of Arabic music.

The best uses of piano in Arabic music seek to imitate the behaviors of the *qanun*. Even when the piano is unaltered for microtones, the imitation of the *qanun*'s behaviors makes the Western piano sound like an Arabic instrument. An example of this form of imitation comes from one of the most famous modern Arabic pianists is Ziad Rahbani (b.1956). In his song "*shou hal 'lyam*" (1985), Rahbani improvises an introduction to the song on an unaltered Western piano. The way he improvises follows all the behaviors of traditional *qanun* playing, making the piano sound genuinely Arabic.

² Traditional Arabic and Turkish music continues to use a smaller interval than the Western harmonic minor.

Westernization of Arabic Music

In the early 20th century, Arabic intelligentsia were taught in French and English and Western musical curricula were gradually introduced into music schools and conservatories. Western musical training was raised to the place of highest honor, with 1932 Cairo already having 25% more students learning Western music theory than their own Arabic music theory (Goldschmidt 2016). Around this period, Turkey also adopted the Roman alphabet to officially replace the Arabic alphabet. In 1923, the fall of the Ottoman Empire allowed Arabs further opportunity to seek individual national identities. After 400 years of Ottoman colonization, Arabs were free to act for themselves.³

Western influence on Arabic music led to an especially important event for the musical world that took place in Cairo 1932, the International Cairo Music Conference. Musicians from all over the world, among them Bartok, were sponsored by Arabic governments to meet in Egypt with the purpose of finding a unified Arabic musical voice (Maalouf 2002, 216). Sabra's microtonal piano was displayed at this event, catching the attention of important musicians like Umm Kulthum (1898-1975).

Sabra's altered piano did not take off because of its artistic and physical limitations. However, by the 1930s the unaltered Western piano had become an important part of Egyptian society. The popularity of the piano throughout the Middle East mirrored its widespread adoption in Europe as an essential piece of the middle-class and upper-class household (Oostrum 2012, 137). At the same time, the piano's tuning system (equal

³ Arab freedom was not granted for free by the French and English powers, who had secret pacts among themselves to gain control of strategic Arabic territories. Thus, Arab freedom came only in name, which later created a feeling of resentment and betrayal against the West. For more information on this topic, see *A Concise History of the Middle East* by Arthur Goldschmidt and Lawrence Davidson.

temperament) became an important part of the elite culture of Egypt, and subsequently, had a big impact on the decisions made at the convention.

One of those decisions focused on creating a universal musical language for the entire Arabic-speaking world. The goal was to standardize their system similar to the way Western music had been standardized (Maalouf 2002, 217). At this event, performers, composers, and musicologists fixed Arabic music to a 24-quarter note system. This was an erroneous conclusion that did not fully explain the true practice of Arabic music, but it simplified the tradition just enough to explain it theoretically (Schumays 2019, 173). This oversimplification comes from the same observation that Villoteau made during his expedition to Egypt; to Western ears, Arabic music sounds out of tune and therefore, it should be fixed to a unifying system (Oostrum 2012, 130). As Westernization took deeper roots, musical practice gradually evolved to fit that inaccurate theory.

The popularity of the Western piano in Egypt, and the universal tuning system that came with it, brought about a universal desire to standardize the Arabic tuning system, a desire seen in full display at the 1932 Cairo Convention. I will discuss the convention in more detail in the history chapter.

CHAPTER 1: THEORY

1.1 Similarities and Differences between Western and Arabic Theories

Before the piano could become an important part of fusion Arabic music that it is today, musicians needed to reconcile certain differences between the Arabic and Western ways of theorizing music and especially between conflicting tuning systems. In this chapter, I will provide an overview of Arabic music theory, showing how musicians in the early part of the 20th century forged a new musical language that could accommodate traditional Arabic musical structures as well as the Western tuning system determined by the piano.

The piano is the most effective instrument for the abstract presentation of Western musical theory. The *'ud* plays an analogous role in Arabic theory (Maalouf 2002). Both the Western and Arabic tuning systems use Pythagorean tuning as a starting point. Arabic theorists from Al'Farabi (d. 950) to Safi l-Din al-Urmawi (d. 1252) explicitly used Pythagoras' system to understand their music. In the West, Gioseffo Zarlino (1517-1590), Joseph Sauveur (1654-1716), and Jean-Philippe Rameau (1683-1764) did the same but with much different results. This is because their goals and traditions were considerably distinctive.⁴

Theoretical attempts to categorize music have not always been accurate descriptions of practice. The baroque keyboard, for example, was tuned differently depending on the musician's taste and cultural aesthetic, even though there was one leading theory attempting to represent many different practices (Schumays 2019). In a similar way,

⁴ For more information on Arabic theory and its relationship to Pythagoras, I refer the reader to Maalouf's *History of Arabic Music Theory*.

Arabic just-intonation fourths and fifths have varied throughout history and cultures and cannot be explained with perfect mathematical ratios (Schumays 2019). In Arabic music, intervals are developed with natural variation in the same way that languages develop different accents. The gradual changes of accents in a language occur subconsciously over long periods of time. In music, the same holds true: a single musician cannot change the tuning of a system (without losing his or her audience), but the change occurs gradually, naturally, and unconsciously (Schumays 2019, 164). Theorists have nevertheless attempted to explain musical practice. In Arabic music, this attempt has been done with the use of the *'ud* (Maalouf, 2002).

The *'ud* has four to six strings tuned in perfect fourth C-F-A-D-G-C. Traditionally, the F-A interval was tuned as a Pythagorean third that results from the tuning of the perfect fourths and fifths. The intervals of seconds and some thirds also derive from the Pythagorean ratios (Maalouf 2002). With Westernization and the introduction of the piano, the *'ud* traditional tuning has changed to perfect fourths.

One of the biggest differences between Arabic and Western music is that the former is a melodic practice, and the latter generally intends to organize music harmonically. In other words, Arabic music is a heterophonic tradition while Western music tends to be homophonic and polyphonic.

Arabic music is not concerned with making two or more notes sound beautifully together as harmony. Therefore, scales are free to include notes outside the Pythagorean system (Schumays 2019, 166). In other words, Arabic melodies are free to include arbitrary intervals. However, the Arabic tradition is not random, but quite the opposite. Once an interval enters the tradition, Arabic musicians are extremely precise about the exact tuning of these notes and will notice miniscule errors of a few cents in intonation

(Schumays 2019, 166).⁵ For more information on how intervals enter the tradition, I refer the reader to *Inside Arabic Music* by Shumays, Farraj.

Modern Arabic tuning has greatly been influenced by the introduction of equal-temperament instruments like the piano, as well as the adoption of Western staff notation. These two factors have gradually shifted Arabic tuning towards the 24-tone quarter-tone division of the octave.

1.2 Arabic Theory

To fully understand the impact of the piano on the ways in which Arabic musicians theorize their music, it is important to provide an overview of this theory as it existed before the advent of the piano.⁶

The *jins* (plural *ajna*) is a 3-6 note scale fragment that functions similarly to the Western tetrachord. In Western music, the common 8-note scale is created by combining two tetrachords. In contrast, an Arabic scale (*maqam*) is a combination of many different pathways of *ajnas*. *Ajnas* are combined by intervals of a quarter tone, a semitone, $\frac{3}{4}$ tone, a tone, $1\frac{1}{4}$ tone, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ tone (Schumays 2019).

⁵ Intonation in the Arab world is precise but constantly evolving. If we take the music of Umm Kulthum (1898-1975) and compare her use of the same scale between 1930s and 1960s, it reveals a gradual shift in size of the third-degree *maqam hijaz*. The influence of Western music shifted the third degree of *hijaz* closer to the Western equal temperament. And today, *hijaz* has evolved towards the semitone equal-temperament intervals found on the piano. Just as Western theory systems have evolved, from just-intonation, to well-tempered, to mean-tone, to equal-temperament – Arabic theory systems have undergone rational attempts to explain performance practice. Around the 18th century emerged the standard Arabic music theory explaining the scale as a 24-tone grouping of notes (Maalouf 2002). This theory does not accurately describe the many shade of notes found between a semitone but serves as a guide to simplify it into a memorable understanding. The 24-tone scale is in theory equal-tempered, with the octave divided equally into 24 quartertones.

⁶ For a more in-depth review of traditional Arabic music theory, I refer the reader to the book *Inside Arabic Music* by Farraj and Shumays.
Jins

There are about 24 different *ajnas* in the Arabic repertoire, with origins from all over the Arabic world, as well as Iran and Turkey. New *ajnas* have been created and incorporated into the repertoire throughout the long history of Arabic music (Racy 2003).

A *jins* is a living and evolving system, with some of the current *ajnas* entering the repertoire as early as the mid-20th century. New *ajnas* are always being created, entering the traditional repertoire through a process similar to the way language introduces new words (Schumays 2019).

The piano sound can be viewed as the introduction of a new “mood” (*jins*) from a foreign land. In this way, it is akin to a loan word that augments the traditional Arabic musical vocabulary. With the introduction of the piano and the Westernization of Arabic music during the 20th century, new *ajnas* and pathways were created as a direct nod to the West.

This phenomenon of absorbing foreign musical “moods” or “words” into the Arabic musical vocabulary is better understood if we take a closer look at what constitutes a *jins*. A *jins* can be categorized in one of four ways:

1. The mood or character: *jins* can be associated culturally with a mood, place, and time. For example, *jins rast* is associated with the feelings of pride, power, and masculinity (Schumays 2019). In addition, *jins rast* is closely tied with sacred text and chant and when employed as a secular text (S. L. Marcus 2007).
2. *Jins* can be recognized by its intervallic structure. However, the intervals differ slightly from region to region, with minor intonation changes of only a few cents. For example, the third interval of the *jins rast* is somewhere between the Western

minor third and major third. However, in Egypt, it is closer to the minor third, with the interval moving closer to the major third as we travel to Turkey. In Syria, the interval of the third is somewhere in the middle between Egypt's flatter and Turkey's sharper division (Schumays 2019).

3. Every *jins* comes with a common melodic pattern. Arabic music, since it is primarily vocal, tends to move in step motion. However, a *jins* comes with its own vocabulary and figurations. Some *jins* behave a certain way on the upper notes while others differ on the leading tone (Schumays 2019). To really appreciate and understand this phenomenon, the listener must be truly immersed in the culture.
4. The modulatory pathways: Shumays describes this using the analogy of a subway map. It is like a subway map, each *jins* can connect to other *ajnas* only at certain connecting notes or stops. A musician wishing to travel from one *jins* to another *jins* needs to find the correct connecting areas. A *maqam* is a set of several connecting *jins* that unite through an expected set of pathways.

The introduction of the piano to the Arabic world is like the creation of a new subway line. It is a new sound that functions as an addition to the overall subway map. The *maqam* repertoire is based on the collection of new and old *ajnas* modulating among themselves in a behavior described by Shumays as "pathways". Each *jins* has a unique set of pathways to modulate from, and to, other *ajnas*. A set of *jins* pathways constitute the *maqam*, which will be discussed in further detail later.

It is possible to incorporate Western musical scales into the Arabic tradition by using the four points described above. Western musical scales have all four traits for *jins*: a

character, an intervallic structure, common melodic patterns, and modulatory pathways. And therefore, they can be seen through the Arabic lens and easily absorbed into the vocabulary.

There are more than two-dozen *ajnas* in the repertoire, the nine most common of which are: *jins 'ajam*, *jins bayati*, *jins hijaz*, *jins kurd*, *jins nahawand*, *jins nikriz*, *jins rast*, *jins saba*, and *jins sikah*. Below is a brief overview of each with a brief description for use with a piano.

1.3 Jins 'Ajam

The word *'ajam* means “Persian”. This is one of the most popular Arabic *jins*, which was absorbed into the culture from a foreign land (Schumays 2019, 213). It sounds like the first tetrachord in a Western major scale, even though the historic/traditional intervals pre-Westernization were not equal-tempered but followed the Pythagorean ratios (Schumays 2019).

With the Westernization of Arabic music and the introduction of the piano, *jins 'ajam* has evolved to fit the notes found within the Western tuning of the piano, but they maintain a distinct character as melodies function differently in each tradition. Arabic music, for example, uses *'ajam* based on step motion from vocal music. Melodies in the Western major scale, on the other hand, tend to behave according to a harmonic foundation and use both step motion as well as instrumentally derived leaps and arpeggios.

There are two versions of *jins 'ajam*, a five-note and a three-note grouping.⁷

⁷ For a list of typical modulations and pathways associated with *jins 'ajam* as well as the *ajnas* below, I refer the reader to Shumays book.



Figure 1 - 5-note version *jins* 'ajam



Figure 2 - 3-note version of *jins* 'ajam

1.4 Jins Bayati

Jins bayati is practical and popular because both the tonic and the *ghammaz* (dominant) notes are found on open strings of the 'ud which makes of it a popular and easy to navigate *jins*.

Jins bayati is especially popular for *dabke* dance, folk music, and popular music. It is associated with vitality, joy, and femininity. It is also used as the opening prelude *jins* to the *Quranic* recitation.

The unaltered Western piano is incapable of performing the second note on this *jins*. However, it has not stopped musicians like Zakiyya Hamdan using this *jins* with the piano, with her song *Sulayma* as a perfect example. This song is submitted for an analysis in the third chapter.

The result of using the piano with *bayati* is pure conflict, a clash of notes between the Arabic ensemble and the disability of the piano. *Bayati* music either avoids the piano or generally uses the instrument as a percussion ensemble, with the piano rhythmically

repeating ostinato patterns avoiding the microtonal notes. This strategy is used widely by musicians incorporating the piano into Arabic music.



Figure 3 - Jins Bayati on D

1.5 Jins Hijaz

The *jins hijaz* is also a practical and popular *jins* because both the tonic and the *ghammaz* are found as open strings in the 'ud. All the notes of *jins hijaz* can also be found on the piano, with the augmented second interval between the second and third degrees.

Western composers like Tchaikovsky, Rimsky-Korsakov, Saint-Saens, Debussy, and Ravel have often used the *hijaz* sound to depict in their music the Middle Eastern sound. This is because *jins hijaz* has a unique Middle Eastern sound that can be notated and performed within the Western tradition. This sound is nicknamed the Hollywood Hijaz.



Figure 4 - Jins hijaz on D

1.6 Jins Kurd

Both the tonic and the *ghammaz* on *jins kurd* are found as open strings in the 'ud. *Jins kurd* can also be played on the piano. The flexibility of use with the piano and its Western tuning has made of *kurd* an extensively popular *jins* in today's popular Arabic music.

There are many examples in Arabic music where *jins bayati* and *jins kurd* interact with each other. Both *ajnas* share their tonic, *ghammaz* and their third interval. The only difference is a slight change in intonation on the second interval.

When analyzing fusion music with piano, I had a hard time at first picking up the difference. Western ears are not used to catching such a slightly difference in pitch, and one can easily dismiss the changes as being one and the same. The use of piano in Zakiyya Hamndan's "*Sulayma*" sounds *jins kurd*, even when the song is on *jins bayati*. This is because the piano cannot play the microtones of *jins bayati*, resulting in the piano sounding *jins kurd* instead.⁸



Figure 5 - Jins Kurd on D

⁸ The western ear disregards the tiny microtonal differences as wrong intonations.

1.7 Jins Nahawand

Jins nahawand has the same intervallic structure as the first tetrachord in a Western minor scale. Like jins 'ajam, jins nahawand also went through a transformation after the introduction of the piano and Westernization of Arabic music.

The traditional tuning of *nahawand* was based on the division of the strings according to Pythagoras, but Westernization changed the to fit in with the modern piano (Schumays 2019). In its original form, *jins nahawand* followed the Pythagorean 3rd, which is slightly lower than the current Western equal-temperament third (Schumays 2019).

The motion between major and minor is quite common in Western music. However, this same motion between *nahawand* and 'ajam is unusual in the Arabic world (Schumays 2019). *Nahawand* is a particularly popular *jins* with Arabic composers who play the piano.



Figure 6 - Jins Nahawand on C

1.8 Jins Nikriz

Jins hijaz and *jins nikriz* both have a stereotypically “Middle Eastern” sound because of the augmented 2nd interval. However, they differ in the place in which this interval occurs. *Hijaz'* augmented 2nd is found between the second and third degrees. In *jins nikriz*, the augmented 2nd interval is found between the 3rd and the 4th degrees. Both *jins hijaz* and *nikriz* evolved to fit the notes found on the piano.



Figure 7 - Jins Nikriz

1.9 Jins Rast

Jins rast is one of the most popular *ajnas* in the Arabic repertoire. Its popularity has created a richness of modulating pathways unrivaled by any *jins*. This is because so many musicians have used this *jins* in so many ways, the tradition has absorbed many of their pathways into its repertoire. In other words, *jins rast* has the most connecting, or modulating possibilities in the whole *maqam* world.

At the same time, *jins rast* is among the most difficult to translate to the piano since its most characteristic interval, the microtonal third degree, cannot be reproduced by that instrument.

Melodies in *jins rast* are associated with grand, celebratory moods. It is the *jins* used for the *adhan*, the Muslim call to prayer, evoking pride, power, soundness of mind, and masculinity.



Figure 8 - Jins Rast on C

1.10 Jins Saba

All the intervals in *jins saba* are very close to each other, creating a mood associated with sadness and mourning (Schumays 2019). The tonic is usually D4, with the *ghammaz* on the 3rd degree scale and the 6th degree scale.



Figure 9 - Jins Saba on D

1.11 Jins Sikah

Of all the most common *jins* explored in this chapter, *jins sikah* is the only one that tonicizes a quartertone note. The tonic, therefore, is an instable sound, and exceedingly difficult to combine with a piano.



Figure 10 - Jins Sikah on E half Flat

1.12 Arabic Maqam vs. Western Scales

Scales are the basis of most Western music. They are the foundation to counterpoint, harmony, and other ways of conceiving of musical structure. Critically, the scale's Arabic counterpart—the *maqam*—is *not* a primary aspect of Arabic music (Schumays 2019). Arabic melodies come together not through a combination of *maqamat*, but through the combination of tetrachord-like *jins* (Schumays 2019, 200). Traditional Arabic

music has no harmony or polyphony, and when it appears in the repertoire, it is best analyzed and understood using *ajnas*. Modulation in Western music is based on the interaction and movement of scales. In Arabic music, modulation between *maqamat* is rare (Schumays 2019). Instead, most Arabic music explores the world of a single *maqam* with modulations among *ajnas*.

There are dozens of *maqamat* (*maqam* plural) in the Arabic repertoire, each consisting of their own unarticulated mood and sets of *jins* pathways. Melodic movement within phrases in the *maqam* are most often done in stepwise motion, this is because Arabic scales are built upon a set of *jins* which behave in a melodic manner (S. L. Marcus 1989, 368). Certain *maqamat* have melodic leaps that are habitually associated to them. For example, *maqam rast* often tends to leap from the tonic to the third degree, omitting the second degree (S. L. Marcus 1989, 487).

A *maqam* is not only a “mode” in the sense of a Western scale, it is a complex system of *ajnas* that together create a map of anticipated modulations (S. L. Marcus 1989, 438). As mentioned before, it is a much different concept from the Western understanding of a musical scale. In Arabic music, the *maqam* follows a map of small note-grouping called *jins* rather than the large grouping of 8 notes in Western music. Unlike Western musical scales, *maqamat* do not change names with the introduction of new notes (*jins*), as long as those notes are part of the overall *maqam* map of *jins* (Schumays 2019).

The piano and Western influence altered the real meaning of *maqam*. In some circles today, the *maqam* is inaccurately explained as a scale or mode. Instead, it is a set of pathways constituted by *ajnas*.⁹

⁹ In other words, the modern description of the *maqam* is based on western influence and understanding of music. However, this is not an accurate description of the *maqam*. The *maqam* system is not a mode because it does not function as a Western mode. Instead, it is a set of pathways roughly equivalent to the Galant style as explained by Robert Gjerdingen: a set of pathways.

For example, the pathways in *maqam kurd* include *jins nahawand*, *jins hijaz*, and *jins rast*. *Jins 'ajam* and *jins bayati* are also part of *maqam kurd*. Music using *jins kurd*, *jins nahawand*, and *jins rast* is most certainly in *maqam kurd*.¹⁰

If the music begins to highlight *jins nahawand*, *rast*, *nikriz*, and *hijazkar*, there is an addition of two *ajnas* outside of the *maqam* system of *kurd*, creating a pathway more commonly associated with *maqam hijaz* (S. L. Marcus 1989, 368). Therefore, a modulation from one *maqam* to another. Although modulations to other *maqam* are uncommon, modulations within a particular *maqam* through the set pathways of *ajnas* are at the core of Arabic music (Schumays 2019).¹¹

When the piano is present in fusion Arabic songs, *jins* modulation in the *maqam* system is the use of the piano itself. The piano's own flavor, mood, or character behaves as a new *jins* to the overall *maqam* system. There are, however, ways in which the piano fits more naturally into the *maqam* world, and that is when the piano behaves like the *qanun*.

1.13 The piano and the qanun

The *qanun* is perhaps the closest cousin to the piano in the Arabic world. The piano can best fit into the Arabic ensemble when it strives to imitate the sounds and behaviors of the *qanun*.

The modern *qanun* has been influenced by the piano: its modern use, for example, has 78 strings organized by a set of two and three strings per note. The addition of levers also coincided with the Westernization of the Arab world. The levers in the modern *qanun*

¹⁰ For a visual representation of these pathways, see *Inside Arabic Music*, p. 402.

¹¹ For a visual representation of these pathways, see *Inside Arabic Music*, p. 396.

create a fixed tuning, like the piano, which restricts the instrument from performing a significant number of microtones. Not unlike the piano, Arabic musicians find the *qanun* to be limiting, as it lacks the number of tuning levers to produce genuine Arabic renditions (Racy 2003). Each note has four levers, which divides the instrument in a sort of equal temperament incapable of performing all the subtleties in Arabic music.

The *qanun* sits on the lap of the performer. The musician uses their fingers to pluck the strings with a metal strap and a turtle-shell tip on the index finger. The *qanun*'s sound has a dry and aggressive attack with a quick decay. The nature of its sounds invites the performer to ornament and repeat notes to elongate the decaying sound of a note. The best pianistic imitations of the *qanun* take full advantage of this fact.

There are many examples of piano playing with exquisite behavior imitation of the *qanun*. An excellent example of this pianistic use comes from Assi al'Rahbani (1923-1986) song "*shu hal-iyyam*" (1984). The piano in this example is left unmodified in its Western tuning, but because of the way it behaves, the instrument sounds native to Arabic music.

Lebanese composer and piano builder Abdallah Chahine (1894-1975) created a piano with levers, allowing the instrument to play microtonal notes. The link between his Arabic piano and the *qanun* are even stronger because he made the Western piano capable of playing quarter notes. Chahine showed off his own piano invention by performing and recording the Arabic piano in the 1973 album *Al-nagham al-khaled: angham min al-sharq*.

This is a perfect example of how the piano can beautifully fit into Arabic music through imitation of the *qanun*. In this recording, the sounds of the piano very nearly approximate that of the *qanun*. Since many of the *jins* discussed previously have evolved

to fit directly with the Western tuning system in the piano, with a precise *qanun* imitation, the piano performance has the capability to sound genuinely Arabic.

Conversely, the *qanun* can also imitate the behaviors and sound of a piano and there is now a robust tradition of performing Western classical music on the *qanun*. Firas Zreik has recorded some of Bach Preludes and Fugues and arrangements of Bach's cello suits for the *qanun* at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Konstantinos Glynos has arranged, performed, and recorded many of the Bach's cellos suits for *qanun*. After all, in the 20th century the *qanun* became a well-tempered instrument, but one not divided by semitones like baroque keyboards but divided by quartertones.¹²

1.14 Improvisation

Improvisation is at the core of instrumental and vocal Arabic music (Schumays 2019, 334). Traditional musicians rarely play or sing the same melody twice the same way, always adding ornaments and new *jins* pathways to the pre-existing melodic material.

Many of the greatest secular vocal improvisers learned the art from a mastery of *tajwid*, the practice of chanting verses from the *Quran* a cappella. Both Umm Kulthum and Abdel Wahab and Zakiyya Hamdann mastered this art form before embarking on a secular career (Danielson 1997). This is a highly ornamented art that uses *maqam* and *ajnas* modulation as its melodic and improvisatory foundation.

Taqsim is the art of improvisation for instrumental music. It is intrinsically connected to vocal improvisation and *Quranic* recitation. *Taqsim* improvisations follows the form of

¹² Here is a link to a performance of J.S. Bach on the qanun. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NXIJZFoSnY8>

storytelling, with the beginning introducing characters or moods that culminate on a climax and finally end with a cadence (Schumays 2019). Most instrumental improvisation sets the mood for the vocalist, and therefore *taqsims* are situated most of the time at the beginning of songs. *Taqsim* also appears between verses as they serve to give short breaks to the singer.

The one time that Umm Kulthum used the piano in her music¹³, the piano followed the expected format of a *taqsim*, as at the beginning of a song and interludes while Kulthum rested her voice. It follows that most times when the piano appears in Arabic music, it plays the most significant role at the beginning of songs as an introduction to the singing, or between verses. The purpose of the piano is to set the mood for the singer with a *taqsim*.

1.15 Music notation

Since the beginning of the Westernization of the Arab world in the 20th century, notation has played an increasingly important role in Arabic music (H. Touma 1996). Arabic musical notation is taken from the same framework of Western notation. All the symbols found in Western notation, and their meaning are basically the same in Arabic notation. In other words, Arabs borrowed almost every aspect of Western musical notation, adding new symbols to expressed ideas that are uniquely Arabic, like microtonal nuances (Maalouf 2002).

Below is a diagram showing how microtonal notes are expressed in Arabic notation. This notation implies an equal temperament of 24 quarter tones, but as I mentioned before, the actual microtonal pitches vary depending on place, time, and culture.

¹³ In 1965, Umm Kulthum used the piano on the *qasida* “*araka ‘asiyya al-dam’i*” composed by Riyad Sunbati.



Figure 11 - Arabic Music Notation in ascending microtonal frequency order

1.16 Conclusion

Arabic and Western music are clearly distinct from each other. They have unique sounds, systems, and aesthetics. Arabic music is a heterophonic tradition, while Western music is based on homophony and polyphony. At a first glance, Arabic music and Western music seem to be irreconcilable. They differ on basic principles of theoretical procedures and distinct performance practices. The piano, which is the instrument used for rationalizing Western music theory, is unable to play the microtonal intricacies of *maqam*, the building block of Arabic music. Western music is based on equal temperament, with every Western musician using a universal tuning system. Arab music does not have a universal tuning system, it varies depending on the region and its people. Arabic tuning is always changing according to aesthetics and fashions, in a similar way to the way language changes over time and location.

Western and Arabic music, however, have intermingled in both direct and indirect ways. Both traditions grew out of the same roots, with theorists from both sides expanding upon the discoveries of Pythagoras. A Western scale is roughly equivalent to a *maqam*. A Western tetrachord is roughly equivalent to a *jins*. And the behavior of *ajnas* can roughly be explained the way Robert Gjerdingen describes the phenomenon of the Western Galant Style; as a set of phrases that connect to a set of expectations (Gjerdingen 2007). In other words, the Galant Style encompasses a set of phrases that connect to

other phrases (Gjerdingen 2007) similarly to *ajnas*, which comes with a set of expectations. The collection of all possible *jins* pathways associations constitutes the *maqam*.

The piano has a hard time fitting into the Arabic ensemble. Its microtonal inflexibility disrupts the core aspect of Arabic music, the use of microtones and pitch bending. However, the piano fits well with an Arabic ensemble when it strives to imitate the behaviors of the *qanun*, an equal temperament Arabic instrument with 24 divisions to the octave. There are specific ornaments and figurations associated with the *qanun* that the piano can accurately imitate, creating instances of the piano sounding native to the Arab ensemble.

During the early part of the 20th century, the piano enjoyed tremendous popularity in Egypt. It stood as a symbol of modernity and class. Many Egyptians played famous Arabic songs at home on the piano, changing the shape of *jins*. Playing *sikah* on the piano, for example, began to happen so often that Abdel Wahab had to coin the term “*sikah al’buyut*”, which means “homemade *sikah*”. The piano also influenced many of the desires from the 1932 International Cairo Conference. At that convention, Arab musicians invited Western musicians to discuss ways to universalize their Arabic tuning system, to incorporate harmony to the *maqam*, and to build a conservatory style music education program. The piano’s popularity in the Arab world influenced the decisions and aspiration of the 1932 Cairo Conference, with Arab musicians wishing to imitate the universality of the piano’s tuning system.

CHAPTER 2: HISTORY

2.1 The Golden Age and Beyond: from Sayed Darwish to Ziad Rahbani

The Golden Age was a rich period of creativity centered around Lebanon and Egypt in the years 1920s-1960s. During this period, three primary types of musicians were active: traditionalists, fusion musicians, and Westernized musicians.

1. Fusion musicians viewed Western elements and instruments through the lens of their own Arabic tradition. They incorporated Western elements and instruments like counterpoint, harmony, and the piano to fit their own traditional understanding of *maqam*. Fusion musicians are the focus of this paper's analysis.
2. Arab traditionalists were typically based outside of major urban centers. In their eyes, rural areas were uncontaminated by foreign ideas. They avoided the strong spirit of Westernization that was prevalent in the big cities. In the next chapter I will briefly analyze several of these works to draw a distinction between fusion and traditional music.
3. Westernized musicians are composers that prioritize the Western tradition over the Arab tradition. Their music is "classical" or "jazz", or "Western popular" in the full sense of the word. They sometimes incorporate Arabic elements in their music, but they are incorporated from a purely Western perspective. Although I analyze Zakiyya Hamdan as a fusion musician, she has a few songs like "Enta Wana" in which the style completely loses its Arabic roots in favor the West. The analysis chapter ends with a view of Westernized Arabic piano composers.

For the theoretical reasons discussed in Chapter 2, including those related to tuning systems, the piano was embraced most strongly by musicians of the third type. These figures worked in the Western tradition, often incorporating Arabic elements but doing so in the context of Western tuning systems, generic conventions, and ensemble formations.

This process of attracting Western influence began many years before the Golden Age. As early as the beginning of the 19th century, Syrian-born Marun al'Naqqash (1817-1855) was working as a playwright in the French style. By the late 19th century, Egypt had an opera house to present European musicians and works, while the Western violin gradually began to replace indigenous string instruments such as the *rebab* (Schumays 2019, 3). And by the time the Ottoman Empire fell in 1923, the process of Westernizing was well underway. The fall of the empire only accelerated this trend, leading to the period of music called the Golden Age of Arabic music.

It was in this context that musicians from throughout the Arab world, Europe, and elsewhere were invited to attend the 1932 Cairo International Music Conference. Invitees included prominent composers such as Bela Bartók (1881-1945), Paul Hindemith (1895-1963), and Robert Lachmann (1892-1939). Arabic national delegations arrived from Algeria, Egypt, Iraq, Morocco, Syria, and Tunisia. Turkey was also invited and attended the conference (Danielson 1997). Questions brought up for discussion at the conference included, "Should Arab ensembles adopt the violoncello and string bass? Can the *maqamat* be harmonized? Should Arab music abolish quarter-notes?" (Danielson 1997).

The willingness of some Egyptian delegates to favor European musical practices over their own traditions alarmed several European composers (Danielson 1997). Some Arab musicians wanted to adopt the Western musical scale, abolishing the quarter tones

altogether (Danielson 1997). European musicians, by contrast, encouraged Egyptians to preserve their own indigenous heritage. This outraged certain Arabs who believed that cultural Westernization was the path for social accomplishment. (Danielson 1997, 77). It was this spirit of Westernization *as* modernization that led to the widespread adoption of the piano in Arabic popular music and cinema during the period following the 1932 Cairo conference. This corresponded with an increase in amateur piano playing among educated elites in Egypt and other Arab countries. By the 1930s, the piano was part of every wealthy Egyptian home and stood as a symbol of modernity, class, and the West (Danielson 1997).

2.2 An Overview of Golden Age Musicians

The Golden Age in Arabic music was a distinct time of artistic prosperity centered around Egypt and Lebanon during which musicians from all over the Arab world sought to expand their careers by moving to these two artistic and cultural centers (Schumays 2019, 30). The musicians described below are the mosaic that constitutes Westernized Arabic musicians working before, during, and after the Golden Age. Westernized Arabic musicians incorporated the violin, recording technology, music notation, the accordion, and the piano among other Western influences. Westernized Arab musicians before the Golden Age created the world that made the fusion music of Abdel Wahab (1902-1991) and Zakiyya Hamdan (1920-1987) possible.¹⁴

During the 19th century, various Arab musicians who were friendly to the Ottoman authorities introduced Western elements to the Arab world. Ismail Sabri (b.1854–?) was an Egyptian lawyer and musician who studied law in France. Upon returning to Egypt,

¹⁴ The Amar Foundation maintains an extensive in-depth overview of Arabic musicians. The list below is a selected few who showed an interest on the West. For a complete list that includes traditionalist musicians, visit the Amar foundation's website (AMAR Foundation 2020, artists).

he inspired a tremendous interest in everything from the West. Hafiz Ibrahim (1871-1932), for example, translated Western books such as Victor Hugo's *Les Miserables* into Arabic. Like Sabri, Ibrahim was one of the first people to aggressively push for the Westernization of Arabic culture.

In the field of music, Palestinian Antonine al-Shawwa (1868-1939) was among the first to incorporate the violin into the Arabic ensemble. By the end of the 19th century, the violin had replaced a variety of indigenous fiddles like the *kamanja*, *rababa*, and *jowza*. Unlike Golden Age musicians, Antonine Al-Shawwa's contribution to the Westernization of Arab music came from a place of friendliness to the Ottoman authorities.

Another important facet of Westernization is the way in which music in general was viewed. For centuries, Arabic music was primarily a vocal tradition; purely instrumental music disregarded as sinful by religious authorities (Maalouf 2002). Therefore, vocal music was in many ways, the only acceptable form of musical expression, with instruments used only to support the vocal line (Maalouf 2002). Amin al-Buzari (1863-1913) changed that by becoming one of the first musicians to play purely instrumental music. His instrumental music was high in demand, getting paid as much as a vocalist for his performances. This was unlike anything that was common at the time and before him, as instrumental music was never regarded to be a stand-alone art form. Amin's success could be considered as a sign that the Arab world was ready to embrace Westernization. Unlike the musicians from the Golden Age, the first wave of Arab Westernization came from a place of friendliness or neutrality towards the Ottoman rule. Musicians like Ismail Sabri, Hafiz Ibrahim and Antonine al-Shawwa, and Amin al-Buzari sought Western influence from a point of pure respect and admiration towards the West. In contrast, the second wave of Westernization characterized by the Golden Age musicians came from a desire to separate from the Ottoman rule.

The year 1905 was an important year for music in Egypt. Egypt imported their first recording technology equipment from Europe. Sayyid al-Safti (1875-1939) was one of the first *muwashshah* singers to extensively record his music as soon as the recording technology became available. His recordings are a great window to the traditional Arab music before Westernization extensively altered it in the 20th century. Early recordings already indicate a society substantially interested in Western music. Munira al-Mahdiyya (d.1965) became among the first singers to record Western opera, performing Arabic adaptations of *Tosca*, *Carmen*, and *Madame Butterfly*.

Egyptian musician Sayyid Darwish (1892-1923) embraced Westernization of Arabic music in hope of modernizing it. He is considered to be the father of modern Arabic music (H. H. Touma 1996, 792). After the death of one of the greatest Arabic lyric theater figures, Shaykh Salama Higazi (1852-1917), Darwish began to follow in Shaykh's footsteps by writing his own Arabic operettas. In 1920, he wrote an opera called *Cleopatra and Mark Anthony*, which was not successful during his lifetime, but later in 1927 was resurrected by Abdul Wahab (1902-1991).

The opera productions were heavily influenced by the West. For example, Darwish replaced the traditional Arabic ensemble with a Western-style orchestra, added a conductor, and used semitone well-tempered melodies compatible with the piano. He wrote 26 operettas, modernizing the slow, repetitive and ornamented old style of classical Arab music with light and expressive Italian flair (AMAR Foundation 2020). Many of these operatic melodies became standard repertoire in the folkloric Arabic music. Unfortunately, the scores for many of these pieces have vanished, and if there is any surviving music, it is fragmented or unreadable. Darwish was one of the first musicians to fully embrace Westernization of Arabic music, inspiring a whole

generation of Arabic musicians who followed his path. In turn, he became the father of the Golden Age. Many Egyptian musicians memorialized Darwish by recording his music, including Abdul Wahab, Umm Kulthum, and Zaki Murad (1880-1946) who stands out as one of the first to honor Darwish's music with his recordings.

Another important figure that had tremendous influence on the Golden Age is Yunis al-Qadi (b.1888-?). Yunnis al-Qadi worked with Sayyid Darwish and continued his friends' pursuit of Westernization. Yunis was a visionary who hired and promoted some of the most important musicians like Abdul Wahab and Umm Kulthum. Hiring Umm Kulthum at a time when female entertainers were seen with disdain and associated with prostitution (S. L. Marcus 2007) made Yunis a visionary who saw beyond the cultural limitations of the time. Abdel Wahab and Umm Kulthum went on to become the two most influential figures of the Golden Age.

By 1932, pianos had become popular in Egypt, with the instrument found in many of Cairo's homes. With so many people owning pianos, music schools in Cairo had a 25% greater population of students learning Western music than traditional Arabic music (Danielson 1997). Egyptian musician Kamal al-Tawil (1922-2003) is a powerful example of this trend, he attended conservatory-style music education and later became one of the most influential figures of Egypt, Minister of Education. The desire to learn Western music did not stop in Egypt. Conservatories began to open in many parts of the Arab world. Fakhi al-Baridi (b.1885-?), for example, created in 1947 the first Syrian institute for the arts and music that focused on teaching both the elements of traditional Arab music as well as Western conservatory-style training.

With all that conservatory training, Western elements like conducting and composing infiltrated Arabic music. For example, Egyptian musician Jamil 'Uways (1890-1955) used

Western musical notation to record Abdul Wahab's music. He also followed on the steps of Darwish by becoming a conductor of Umm Kulthum's orchestra. The idea of an orchestra and of a conductor was alien to Arab musicians before Darwish introduced it to Arabic music.

Westernization of Arab music also took place in the compositions of Arab musicians. Many of the most respected Golden Age musicians experimented with writing operas. Wadih Sabra (1876-1952), Zakariyya Ahmad (1896-1961), Muhammad al-Qassabgi (1892-1966), Riyad al-Sunbati (1906-1981) wrote operettas, operas, and other western genres. Their attempts caught the interest of many musicians including the legendary singer Umm Kulthum (1898-1975) who in 1942 recorded *Aida* (not to be confused with Verdi's *Aida*), an opera written by Sunbati and al-Qassabgi. Syrian singer Asmahan (1912-1944), an important figure of the Golden Age, sang one of the main roles in the operetta *Majnun Layla* by Abdul Wahab. Many of these operas were fusion music, with both Western and Arabic elements. For example, Egyptian musician Muhammad Qandil (1929-2004) played the 'ud in the 1943 opera *Aida* with Umm Kulthum as the leading role.

Golden Age musicians not only experimented with composing Western genres, many also desired to bridge the two worlds by modifying Western instruments for microtonal performance. Wadih Sabra (1876-1952) is credited for the invention of the first Arabic piano, capable of playing quartertones. He led the Lebanese committee to the 1932 Cairo convention in which he showed off his invention, which was manufactured by Pleyel in 1920 (Murice, et. al Raymond, & Dunand, 1965, p. 82). Umm Kulthum heard Sabra's piano but she was not impressed as it lacked the ability to play a variety of microtones (Schumays 2019, 40). Sabra's piano and its prototype have unfortunately been lost.

However, the spirit of his work lives on with the invention of the quarter-tone piano by Abdallah Chahine.

Lebanese composer and piano builder, Abdallah Chahine (1894-1975), continued Sabra's modifications of the piano by perfecting it and allowing for more quartertones. This was possible thanks to the addition of foot pedals that acted like levers to bend and change the pitch. His piano followed the tuning system of levers used by the *qanun*, allowing the piano to play all the notes found on the *qanun* (24 equal divisions to the octave). In 1973, Chahine showed off his piano invention by releasing an album called *Al Nagham Al Khaleb* of his own piano *taqasim* (instrumental improvisations). His piano playing very closely resembles the behavior of the *qanun*, with highly ornamented heterophony, repeated notes, and step-motion melodic figuration.

Most pianists, however, were not interested in Chahine's invention, they preferred the Western piano as it was, that is, unmodified for microtones. Lebanese musician Yahya al-Lababidi (1902-1943) was an excellent pianist and respected all over the Arabic world. He performed the standards of Western traditional musical repertoire for piano.

One of the most important figures to come out of the Golden Age is Umm Kulthum (1898-1975). She sold more than 80 million records worldwide, making her one of the best-selling musicians of all time (Danielson 1997). She is considered a national icon in Egypt and is referred to by the people as "The voice of Egypt". Like many of the greatest Arabic singers, she began her career learning how to recite the entire *Quran* by memory and she learned music in the Arabic tradition, by ear and repetition (Danielson 1997). She took an interest in Western music, learning how to read music notation, play the piano, and understand European music. Her teacher for Western music was Ibrahim Hajjaj. Although her music grows purely out of the Arabic tradition, she experimented

with the incorporation of important Western elements. In following with Darwish, she added a conductor and grew the size of the orchestra (Danielson 1997, 187). She also used the piano in one of her song arrangements *qasida* “*araka ‘asiyya al-dam’i*”, composed by Riyad Sunbati in 1965. Most importantly, she incorporated new European instruments like the cello, string bass, clarinet, saxophone, and electric guitar in many of her songs (Danielson 1997, 181).

The Golden Age led to a new generation of musicians working today. One of the most prominent fusion musicians today came from a single family of musicians. Lebanese musician Asi al-Rahbani (1923-1986) was a prominent composer and father of that family of musicians. His sons are known as the Rahbani brothers, a pair of influential musicians who, as of 2020, continue to make music and influence the Arabic music world. The piano in its unaltered form was used beautifully in Ziad Rahbani’s 1985 performance of “*shu hal-iyyam*” in which he uses *jins nahawand* on the piano behaving as a *qanun*.

In 1954, Asi married the legendary Lebanese singer Fairuz (b.1934), whose music has also been influential for musicians playing and composing fusion music. Her son, Lebanese composer Ziad Rahbani (1956-), is one of the most influential fusion musicians today. He has been called by the *Los Angeles Times* “the oriental jazz pianist” for his fusion jazz improvisations (Mroue 1988). In line with the “oriental jazz” piano, Tarek Yamani is a young jazz pianist currently working in Europe and the USA. He is influenced by the so called “oriental pianism” of Ziad Rahabani and is working today to build upon the foundation of fusion music set by the musicians from the Golden Age.

There are musicians today that continue the tradition established by musicians like Sunbati and al-Qassabgi. Lebanese musician and composer Tawufiq al-Basha (1924-

2005) composed, among other works, a *Symphony for Peace* (1986) and *Trio Concerto* for piano and string orchestra (2000). Iraqi Solhi al-Wadi (1934-2007) studied music at the Toral Academy of Music in London, later moving to Syria to direct the Damascus Conservatory. He established connections with the former Soviet Union and therefore was able to bring many Russian teachers to Damascus Conservatory, influencing a whole generation of Syrian musicians with the Russian school. Syrian composer Dia Succari (1938-2010) followed the style of French impressionists studying composition with Olivier Messiaen at the Paris Conservatory. He then moved to Syria, where he also directed the Damascus Conservatory, bringing the French school to a new generation of Arabic musicians. Dia Succari wrote extensively for the piano, notably a Syrian Suite, Preludes, Fugues, Romances, Sonatas, and other character pieces for piano.

Today, musicians like Sami Abu Shumays (b.1967) continue the tradition with performances that bring to life the music of the Golden Age musicians. With his ensemble Zikrayat, he specializes in repertory from the "Golden Age" of Egyptian music (the 1940's-60's), bringing that repertoire to life in New York City.

2.3 Conclusion

Westernization of the Arabic world is evident in the overview of musicians from this chapter. Arab musicians worked in direct or indirect ways to Westernize Arabic music and its culture. Some brought Western instruments, created Western-style conservatories, introduced Western music notation, and composed operas and symphonic works for Western orchestra. Today, the link between West and the Arab world remains strong, with the United States recently becoming one of the world's cultural centers for Arabic music. Performers like Tarek Yamani are considered predominantly Western jazz musicians, but they have brought Arabic elements from the

maqam tradition into their Western medium. This makes of musicians like him a sort of lineage from the fusion music of the Golden Age.

In this chapter, I have shown how the trend of Westernization set the stage for Zakiyya Hamdan and Abdel Wahab to use the piano with their Arabic ensembles, creating their distinctive brand of fusion music. Without the Westernization of Arabic culture, Zakiyya Hamdan and Abdul Wahab's fusion music would not have been possible. In the next chapter, I will provide in-depth analyses of representative works by these two important musicians.

CHAPTER 3: USE OF JINS AND MAQAM IN ARABIC MUSIC WITH PIANO

Abdel Wahab' and Zakiyya Hamdan's music occupies a special place in this analysis because their fusion music serves as a perfect example of the period's use of piano alongside Arabic music and Western elements like harmony and orchestration. I will start with a biographical study and then move on to an analysis of their work.

I will end the chapter with a brief mention of Arabic piano composers who worked in the Western tradition. While Arabs working as composers in the Western tradition are not the focus of this paper, their contributions are significant and worthy of mention.

3.1 Brief Historical Context

Abdel Wahab (1901–1991)

Abdel Wahab was born in 1901 in Cairo and died in the same city in 1991. He studied *'ud* with the legendary musician Al-Qasabji where he received a traditional Arabic education and began his musical studies reciting the Koran (Essam 2019). Starting in the 1930s, however, he began to incorporate Western elements like harmony, rhythm, orchestration, and counterpoint into his music, following the modernization push started by Sayyid Darwish, the so-called father of modern Arabic music. Abdel Wahab's admiration for Darwish is strong. For example: Wahab completed an operetta left unfinished by Sayyid Darwish (Levinson 1995) and included Darwish's music and portraits in many of the films he directed.

As a young man Abdel Wahab visited Paris, becoming familiarized with the French theater scene and later incorporating this knowledge as a film director in Cairo (Essam 2019). In 1933, Abdel Wahab became involved with the film industry, which in Cairo

was very well-funded and remarkably successful (Danielson 1997). All the money involved in the Egyptian film industry attracted some of the best musicians from all over the Arab world (Danielson 1997), allowing him much flexibility in his creativity. In response to this, he wrote music without regard for the performer's technical and emotional limitations. This also allowed him the luxury of experimenting with fusion elements and foreign musical instruments as the musicians available for him were capable of performing both Western and Arabic genres (Essam 2019). Musicians at Wahab's disposal were able to play in the styles of orchestral music, jazz, and Latin-American genres, in addition to their own Arabic genres. Abdel Wahab took advantage of their talent, composing music that incorporated different genres in a single song.

Abdel Wahab was not only the composer, but also the actor, director, and singer for many of his movies. In this respect, he saw himself as an extension of Darwish, wanting to continue his attempt to modernize Arabic music (Essam 2019). This view of himself becomes very clear in Abdel Wahab's 1934 Film *White Flower* when Sayyid Darwish's music is heard during the scene in which the main character (played by Wahab) comes to the realization that he wants to become a musician. This scene occurs while Wahab looks at a painting of Darwish on the wall, with his music playing in the background. The scene also incorporates a piano, a symbol of Westernization and modernization of Arabic music.

Modernization of Arabic music is prominent throughout Abdel Wahab's films. In the movie *Happy Day* (1939), there is a scene in which Abdel Wahab is singing with a full orchestra (a western element), going back and forth between the Arabic style and some sort of Western and Arabic fusion. The movie *Ghazal Al Banat* 1949 displays how the Arab world was perhaps more liberal than today, showing women on TV dancing exotic Latin-American music in short dresses and bikini tops, while men look on with great

interest. The music in this exotic scene is very well represented by Abdel Wahab, whose stereotypical fusion style is in its fullest display.

In total, Wahab wrote more than a thousand songs (Essam 2019). He also orchestrated songs by other composers, including the music of Darwish (Levinson 1995). In the 1950s Abdel Wahab left the film industry to concentrate on his singing, assuming a more serious role as a musician (Levinson 1995). In the 1960s he stopped singing altogether, but continued to compose music for other singers, including the legendary singer Umm Kulthum (Levinson 1995). The song he wrote for Umm Kulthum, “Ente Omry”, was the bestselling song of all time¹⁵ (Levinson 1995). In this song, Abdel Wahab augmented the orchestration by adding an electric guitar, an instrument that later became a common addition to the Arabic ensemble (Schumays 2019).

Zakiyya Hamdan (1920-1987)

Zakiyya Hamdan was born in 1920 in the city of Aleppo, Syria where she received musical instruction from pianist Antonie Zabita (Al-Sharif 1991), who would later become her accompanist. Her Fusion music includes an interesting blend of Arabic music with tangos, sambas, and habaneras, among other Western elements and styles.

Aleppo during this time was a cultural center where she was able to learn music from some of the best musicians in the Arab world (Al-Sharif 1991). Aleppo was full of entertainment life, with a great variety of theaters and other forms of night entertainment where Hamdan performed regularly (Mubayed 2004). Hamdan’s

¹⁵ It was a bestseller perhaps because of the nationalistic fever that was so prevalent with Nasserism. The song was in a way a symbol of national pride and identity.

popularity and respect in Aleppo grew so much that audiences nicknamed her Umm Kulthum Sham, after the legendary Egyptian singer Umm Kulthum.

Mirroring this trend, Western influence is easily found and heard in the music of Zakiyya Hamdan. For one thing, she uses the piano intensively to accompany Arabic music. In doing so, her music undoubtedly becomes a mirror of the fusion cultures of the time. The use of the piano, which is performed by Antonie Zabita, is not an imitation of the *qanun*. Instead, the piano plays in Western idiomatic ways using Western rhythms, harmonies, and melodies and with little regard for the Arabic tradition. On top of the piano's Western foundation, Hamdan sings in a typical Arabic style with all its full ornamental splendor and traditional *maqam* intervals. The fusion of these two cultures in her music creates a perfect mirror of the political and social conditions of her time and place: a blend of tradition and Westernization.

Antonie Zabita (1914-1979) was Zakiyya Hamdan's teacher and piano accompanist (Mubayed 2004). Because of his role as a pianist, he is an important figure in her life. Zabita was the organist, choirmaster, and music director of *Saint Francis of Assisi* in Aleppo (Mubayed 2004). This church contained the largest organ in the Middle East (Mubayed 2004). On the one hand he played the organ in a church, a profession for a musician that is based solely on Western culture. On the other hand, he played and accompanied folkloric Arabic musicians singing in the traditional microtonal system of *maqam* (Mubayed 2004). With mastery of both the West and Arabic music, he is perhaps one of the best examples of artists working with fusion music. Unfortunately, not much is known about him. Even in the universities and conservatories of Lebanon where he taught music, students and faculty members were unfamiliar with his name.

Fortunately, several recordings of his music survive. These include the music of Hamdan and, more recently, a set of piano improvisations published by *Voice of Beirut*

(1986)¹⁶. In these recordings, Anthony's unique approach to the piano reminds the listener of his earlier work with Hamdan for its similar pianistic figurations. The piano uses broken chords and rhythmic patterns in which the bass note goes back and forth between the tonic and the dominant while the melodic line freely improvises a melody in traditional *maqam*. Antoine is an essential part in the Western influence of Hamdan's music, and therefore a brief overview of his life will help the reader understand Hamdan's music at a much deeper level.

Antoine Zabita (1914-1979)

Zabita was born in Aleppo in 1914 into a Christian community. His father was a violinist and taught Antoine the craft of musicianship (Mubayed 2004). He was an expert in both Western and Arabic music theory, and his fusion music shows this blend of these two styles. He joined the Syrian Army Music Band where he played the clarinet and later served as their conductor (Mubayed 2004). After a French attack on the Damascus parliament on May 29, 1945, he resigned his post as the Army Band Director as protest of the French occupation (Mubayed 2004).

At night, he worked as a piano soloist in several Aleppo theaters. Later, he took the position of music director at the Aleppo's Orthodox church, which has one of the largest organs in the Arabic world. He was able to play this organ in both Western and Eastern styles. In 1948, an official radio station was opened in Aleppo where Antonine Zabita served as the director of music (Al-Sharif 1991). In 1961 he moved to Beirut with an invitation from Lebanon's Ministry of Education to work as a teacher at the Oriental Music Institute.

¹⁶ These recordings are available on YouTube. Here is one such example
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s3z3fBmRumE>

3.2 Analysis

Arabic music works much like language: words can be connected to each other in a variety of ways to mean the same thing. There are standard combinations of words, as well as those which are particular to speakers from a particular region. Similarly, Arabic music uses a combination of intonation (accents) and pathways that constitute a traditional musical grammar. Arabic music can also be viewed in much the same way that Robert Gjerdingen describes music in his 2007 book *Music in the Galant Style*. Like the Galant style, Arabic music has a set of sounds with strong associations with expectations¹⁷. Arabic musicians either satisfy, extend, or avoid those expectations.

Arab music is based on the maqam system. As we have seen earlier in this paper, the maqam is a complex map of jins pathways, with old and new ajnas that have gradually entered and left the standard repertoire of a maqam. Since ajnas are a combination of motives borrowed from different cultures, places, and time periods, the nature of Arabic music relies on the incorporation of ajnas (moods) from within and from foreign cultures.

Western influences in Arabic music are essentially newly incorporated pathways to the long tradition of *maqam*. This is a key aspect in my analysis of fusion Arabic music as I view Western sections as new *ajnas* incorporated into the Arabic language from foreign cultures.

¹⁷ Understanding the musical connection of Arabic music and the Galant style is powerful. The Galant Style includes a set of motives that come with expected associations. Arabic music works the same way, with a set of notes (or motives) that come with strong associations to other motives.

The focus of this analysis will compare expected and unexpected uses of *jins* in a *maqam*. The difficulty lies in determining how Westernization affected these expectations and norms. To do this, I will compare a single *maqam*—*nahawand*—as it is used by both traditional and fusion musicians. Since Arabic music comes from the tradition of aural transmission, analysis of this music cannot be done by looking at a score. Analysis of Arabic music is thus best achieved using time markers on a specific recording. Each example refers to a particular recording which is available via YouTube and is linked in a corresponding footnote.

Each of the following examples uses the *jins nahawand*. This *jins* has a set of expected pathways that modulate from the tonic and the *ghammaz* (dominant). These are the *nahawand* characteristics and expectations in the traditional repertoire. The span from tonic to *ghammaz* is a five-note scale that can be played on a piano. Typical modulations from the *ghammaz* occur to *jins kurd* (5), *jins hijaz* (5), and *jins bayati* (5). Other common modulations are *jins nikriz* (1), *nahawand murassa* (1) and *'ajam* (3). As we will see, the *jins nahawand* can be used in a variety of contrasting ways depending on the stylistic interests of a particular composer.

3.3.1 Nihad Najjar Abb'ud Bashir Omar Sabouni Moshe: *Qultu Lma Ghaba 'Anni*¹⁸

Below is an analysis based on the times of the recording on the YouTube video. This analysis is meant to show how different *jins* come together to form a family of note groupings called *maqam*. The *maqam* below is *nahawand* in C and there is a modulation to *maqam bayati* at minute 1:18. This modulation is categorized in this way because the *jins* associated with the music from 1:18 on do not belong to *nahawand*, creating a map of *jins*

¹⁸ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=I7lLp1igt9A>

that are better represented by *maqam bayati*. This is because *jins rast* is not part of the *maqam nahawand* family.

Time-based *Jins* Analysis

0:00 Nawahand 1	4:05 <i>Hijaz</i> 5 - relationship to <i>nahwand</i> on
0:07 <i>Kurd</i> 5	8, feeling that the music wants to bring
0:09 Nahawand 1	the music back to <i>nahwand</i> .
0:11 <i>Kurd</i> 5	4:08 Nahawand 8
0:13 Nahawand 1	4:12 Bayati 5
0:17 <i>Kurd</i> 5	4:42 <i>Hijaz</i> 5
0:27 Nahawand 1	4:54 Upper <i>Rast</i> 5/8
0:35 <i>Nahawand</i> and REPEAT	4:57 <i>Rast</i> 1
MODULATION (Maqam Bayati 5)	4:59 Bayati 5
1:09 Bayati 5	5:02 Nahawand 8
1:35 Nawanahd 8	5:05 Bayati 5
1:39 Bayati 5	5:07 Nahawand 8
1:41 <i>Hijaz</i> 8 (Bayati Shuri 5)	5:12 <i>Hijaz</i> 8
1:45 Bayati 5	5:12 Bayati Shuri 5
2:12 <i>Saba</i> 5	5:15 Bayati 5
2:28 Bayati 5	LAST SECTION (Return to <i>maqam</i>
3:06 Bayati 12	<i>nahawand</i> 8)
3:12 <i>Rast</i> 8	5:29 Nahawand 8
3:14 Bayati 5	5:54 <i>Rast</i> 8
3:38 <i>Rast</i> 8	6:18 Nahawand 8
3:44 Bayati 8 (intensifies the Bayati)	6:35 <i>Kurd</i> 5
3:47 Bayati 5	6:47 Nahawand Murassaa 1
4:01 Nahawand 8	6:53 <i>Nahawand</i> 8

7:30 Rhythm Change

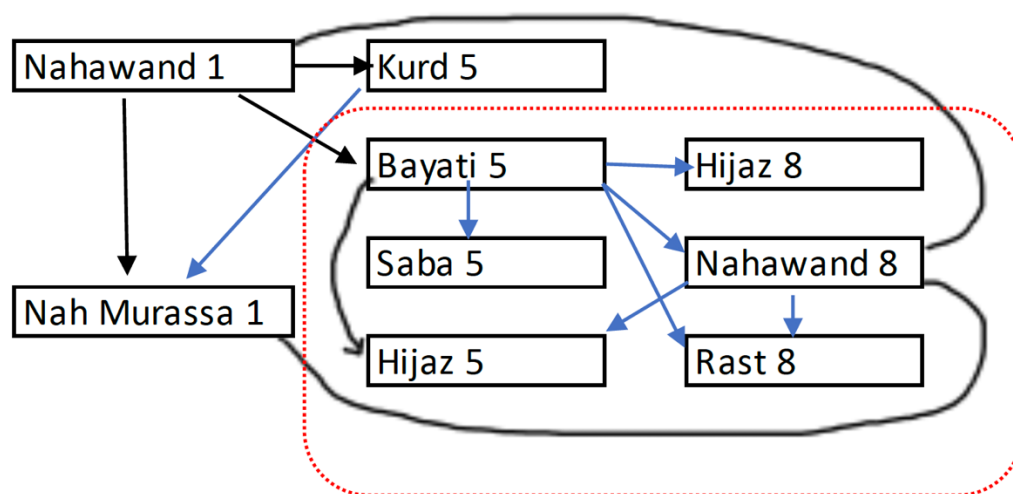
7:45 *Nahwand 1*7:37 *Kurd 5*

Figure 12 - Maqam nahawand and modulation to maqam bayati 5

Qultu Lma Ghaba 'Anni starts on *nahawand 1*, with all the expected modulations associated with *maqam nahawand*. At 1:09, the music modulates into *jins bayati 5*, a common modulation for *maqam nahawand*. However, the way in which the *ajnas* behave in this section, with the introduction of *saba*, and *rast*, create a feeling for *maqam bayati*. The modulation is not only in the *jins*, but the section goes to a completely new *maqam*. The music at 5:29 then modulates once again to to *maqam nahawand*, but it is on *nahawand 8* instead of the expected *nahawand 1*. Only at the very end the music goes back to *nahawand 1*.

3.3.2 Umm Kulthum: *Alf Lela We Lela*¹⁹

The analysis of this song starts on minute 3:12 because of the instrumental introduction. Instrumental music tends to be extraordinarily complex in its use of *maqam*. Therefore, I will concentrate my analysis on the vocal line.

Time-based Jins Analysis

0:00 Instrumental <i>Tasquim</i>	5:39 <i>Bayati</i> 5
3:12 Nahawand 1	5:45 Nahawand 8
3:43 <i>Nahawand</i> with a raise 3 rd ornament	5:47 <i>Bayati</i> 5
4:02 <i>Kurd</i> 5	5:53 Nahawand 8
4:22 Nahawand 1	5:58 Nahawand 1
4:35 <i>Kurd</i> 5	6:03 <i>Kurd</i> 5
4:50 Nahawand 1	6:06 Nahawand 8
5:03 <i>Bayati</i> 5	6:09 <i>Kurd</i> 5
5:32 <i>Ajam</i> 10 (<i>Upper Ajam</i> 7/10)	6:13 Nahawand 1

¹⁹ <https://youtu.be/sjo6ajQ6uTs>

3.3.3 Shaykh Abul-Ela Muhammad: Layali²⁰

This example of a traditional use of *nahawand* once again follow all the expectation of *maqam nahawand*. Notice how similar the set of pathways are between this example and the previous example.

Time-based Jins Analysis

0:00 Instrumental Tasqim	3:19 Kurd 5
0:31 Nahawand 8	3:23 Nahawand 1
0:34 Bayati 5	3:26 Kurd 5
0:40 Nahawand 8	3:28 nahawand 8
0:52 Nahawand 1	3:39 Bayati 5
0:55 Nahawand 8	3:40 Hijaz 5
1:19 Kurd 12	3:47 Nahawand 1
1:34 Ajam 10	4:12 Nahawand 8
1:41 Nahawand 8	4:16 Hijaz 5
1:45 Bayati 5	4:18 Bayati 5
1:48 Saba 5	4:27 Nahawand 8
1:54 Ajam 10	4:56 Bayati 5
1:57 Nahawand 8	5:22 Nahawand 1
2:20 Hijaz 5	5:24 Hijaz 5
2:22 Nahawand 1	5:27 Nahawand 1
2:57 Kurd 5	5:30 Bayati 5
3:00 Nahawand 1	5:42 Nahawand 1
Fusion Nahawand	

²⁰ <https://youtu.be/7OwR-6Iq7D4>

Below is an analysis of the same *maqam nahawand* used in fusion music. Comparing the two uses of the same *maqam* reveals the ways in which modernism and Westernization influenced the Arabic musical tradition.

3.3.4 Abdul Wahab: *Sahirtou Minhul Layali*²¹

Sahirtou is an example of the Abdul Wahab's fusion music from this period. This is an Arabic song in which the melody navigates normally through the traditional *maqam* system, but it is subtly transformed by Western influences. The Western influence in this song comes from Argentina; the music is based on a tango rhythm and a tango timbre (that is the tango's distinct sound color, and orchestration). The Arabic style is superimposed on this Argentinian dance, resulting in a tango that is unlike any other tango.

The tango rhythm is based on a 4/4 pattern with heavy emphasis on strong beats (1, 2, 3, 4), and an optional syncopation in between the first and last beat of each bar. In *Sahouri*, Abdul Wahab uses the tango rhythm throughout the entire piece, including the heavily Arabic middle section of the piece, a section that subordinates the Western influence in favor of traditional Arabic *maqam*.

The overall timbre is created by a piano, string orchestra, an accordion, a *qanun*, and a singer. The orchestration is typical for a tango, except for the addition of a *qanun* and the Arabic voice (and its Arabic ornaments).

²¹ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ENtvYHxneOU>

Time Analysis

- 0:00 Music starts on *Nahawand* or it can also be analyzed in C minor.
- 0:16 The descending notes on the vocal line C, Bb, Ab, are part of the *jins kurd* on 5. So far, the music sounds normal to both the Arabic ear as well as the Western ears. This is because *jins kurd* is an expected modulation in *maqam nahawand*. And in the Western world, the three-note motif ending on Ab fits in with the expected harmonic sequences of (iv) F minor chord (which soon go to the dominant and then back to the tonic).
- 0:20 The music continues to satisfy the expectations of both worlds. However, the way in which Arabic and Western ears perceive this section is different. The notes G, Ab, B, C are characteristic of *jins hijaz* on 5, a common modulation from *jins nahawand*. However, those same melodic notes in Western theory are part of the C harmonic minor scale. The harmony stays on a pedal dominant note G while the voice sings on *hijaz* on 5. Once again, two different worlds perfectly align themselves with their own expectations.
- 0:34 Music goes back to the tonic in western music (C minor), but the melody includes an F#. In Western music, an F# in the key of C minor is uncommon and would be heard as an ornament. However, in Arabic music, the explanation is familiar to the tradition, with *jins nahawand* and *jins nikriz* modulating among themselves while sharing their tonic note 1. This tango goes back and forth between f-natural and f-sharp, or between *nahawand* and *nikriz* on 1. There is another note that is heard around 0:46, an E natural. This is a common ornament for *nahawand* melodies going from third to the fourth degrees.

- 1:03 The singer is on *hijaz*, while the accordion is on *nahawand*. Interestingly, the melody on the accordion outlines the harmonic line i-V-i. Suddenly, the *maqam* melody is being shaped by the harmonic outline, which is an important transformation of the traditional *maqam*. *Maqam* melodies are mostly step-motion, and when there are leaps, they are most often followed by step motion. The accordion in this section plays **G, Eb, C, Eb, D, B, G, B, C**. Eight out of the nine notes are approached by and followed by leaps. Thus, the *maqam* in this section is clearly transformed by the Western influence of a harmonic outline.
- 1:14 In this dramatic section, the melody goes from *nahawand* to *'ajam*. In Arabic music, going from one to the other has a dramatic effect.
- 1:48 This whole section is on upper *'ajam*. Harmonically, the music ceases to play complete triads, favoring octaves and unisons instead. The effect is to create ambiguity in the harmonic system. This section tries to get away from harmony as it serves as a bridge to the heterophonic Arabic traditional section that comes next.
- 1:57 The music begins to bring back *nahawand* and *hijaz* with harmonies coming back more prominently, with a clearer use of dominant V going to tonic C minor.
- 2:34 The music goes back to C minor. However, the *jins* does not go back to *nahawand*. Instead, it goes to *jins nawa athar*, which usually has an upper *jins hijaz* and a lower *jins nikriz*. Even though the western ear hears the melody to be the same as the original one, the Arabic ear hears the melody differently. *Jins nahawand* sounds the same as before, however, the descending sequence makes this section

part of another *jins*, creating a variation on the expected melodic line.

- 2:37 This section ceases to use harmony, and the only Western element present is the tango rhythm, which serves as the glue of the two distinct worlds. This section is in *jins sikah baladi*, which is a distinctly Arabic *jins* with only one note playable on the piano, the G, and five micro-tonal notes that surround the center G. The music in this section is Arabic in every sense. The piano and accordion both cease to play, and the strings only play the tango rhythm on a G. The *qanun* takes over with the voice as the only instrument able to play the quarter notes of the scale.

The use of *jins sikah baladi* fits well with the rest of the *maqam* system, as its notes are essentially different intonations of *jins hijaz* and *jins sikah*²². This creates a lot of ambiguity, since *sikah* starts on a microtonal note as its root, but in this case, *sikah* has a G as its root. In addition, the illusion of *hijaz* among it make of *jins sikah baladi* an ambiguous *jins*.



Figure 13 - Jins Sikah Baladi

To western ears, this section seems like a long dominant pedal point with out-of-tune ornamented notes surrounding G. This section goes back to *nahawand* on C

²² For more information on *Jins Sikah Baladi*, read pages Pg. 252-55 and Pg. 412 on *Inside Arabic Music* by Johnny Farraj and Sami Abu Shumays.

(or 1), which in seems like a logical step in western harmony (V-i), and a logical step for *maqam* (*nahwand 1-sikah baladi 5- nahawand 1*).

Although this section is traditionally Arabic in the use of *maqam*, the rhythm is not Arabic. Arabic rhythms take full advantage of syncopation, and almost never appear in square beats. The tango rhythm continues during this section as the only representation of Western influence. Everything else is purely Arabic.

- 3:53 We hear *jins rast* on 1, which stands out since we have not yet heard it. It serves as a way to alert the listener that something different is about to happen. All these changes erase the feeling of *jins sikah baladi* to get the listener ready to return to the original material. The melody goes into *jins hijaz*, which is a *jins* connected to *maqam nahawand*. However, before Abdul Wahab gives the listener its expectations, he inserts *jins 'ajam* one more time before finally satisfying expectations with the return of the main melody on *nahawand*.
- 4:00 The music goes back to the melodic material from the pre-*jins sikah baladi* section. This is in *jins hijaz*, which serves a bridge to the *nahwand / nikriz* that represents the main melodic material. The tango timbre suddenly comes back in this section, with the western instruments returning with their own harmonies and color until the end of the song.

3.3.5 Zakiya Hamndan: *Sulayma*²³

This song can be analyzed as a minor mode in the Western tradition, but it is better served when viewed in the lens of *maqam*. It is in ABA form, with the A section leaning towards western sounds while the B section goes away from Western influence and explores the world of traditional Arabic music.

In comparing our previous analysis of traditional *nahawand* with this fusion *nahawand*, note how similar pathways are found from previously analyzed traditional music. For example, note how they all begin in *nahawand 1* and use *hijaz* and *bayati* as modulations within the original *maqam nahawand*. Note also how the Westernization of *nahawand* simplifies the pathway diversity to limit the variety to only *jins hijaz* and *jins bayati*, giving less emphasis to *maqam* variety, focusing instead on only a few *ajnas*. In other words, the richness of modulations found in the traditional *nawahand* is lost through Westernization.

Time Analysis

0:00 Although the music sets up the mood for *jins nahawand*, the chordal figuration of the piano takes away any feeling of Arabic music and plants the introduction strongly in the Western tradition. The use of the piano as an introduction to the song and later as the basis for its rhythmic movement takes the music further away from the Arabic tradition. The piano begins by playing a long A minor arpeggiated chord reminiscent to the virtuosity of Liszt, immediately settling with a rhythmic figuration on the right hand that establishes the key of A minor. The only two harmonies that are heard are the tonic and dominant chords, setting the stage firmly in A minor, or *nahawand*.

²³ <https://youtu.be/FMBaSqB2kRE>

- 0:13 Once the string instruments enter with the melody at 0:13, the piano ceases to sound stereotypically Western. This is because the piano uses the left-hand bass notes to follow along with the melody in a heterophonic texture. In contrast, a similar figuration in Western music might use the bass note to establish the root of the harmony in a homophonic texture.
- 0:28 The piano has been using the left hand to follow the melody in a sort of heterophonic texture while the right hand continues with the rhythmic figuration. Once the phrase ends, the right hand plays alone, outlining an A minor chord. So far, the music is heavily Western, with only two hints of Arabic music: the use of heterophony on the piano's left hand and orchestra and the stepwise motion of the melodic line. The phrase repeats.
- 1:14 The singer enters on *nahawand 1*, as one would expect after the long introduction. However, the way in which the melodic line moves is more Western than Arabic. The melody moves with intervallic leaps that outline the tonic and dominant chords. This is unusual in Arabic music, which tends to move in stepwise motion, avoiding leaps that outline chordal harmony.
- 1:30 The voice is now accompanied by heterophony in the orchestra, and the melodic leaps are closer to the Arabic tradition, favoring stepwise motion. In addition, the meter is uneven, which creates instability with the strong orchestral feel set up by the 4/4-meter of the introduction. The asymmetric melodic phrases are the strongest gesture toward Arabic: everything else so far is influenced by Western tradition.

- 1:40 We hear *jins hijaz 5*, which is normal for both Arabic music and Western music. For Western music, it is a harmonic minor scale. In Arabic music, it's a common modulation from *nahawand 1* and *hijaz 5*.
- 2:18 The music back on *nahawand 1*. The 4/4 meter from the piano's introduction disappears at this moment. The piano attempts to follow the typically asymmetric phrasing of Arabic melodies, but loses its rhythmic metricity on the way. The music is beginning to transition into a world closer to the tradition of Arabic music.
- 2:35 Another long and asymmetric melodic phrase on *hijaz 5*, with the piano losing its 4/4-meter feeling until the strong downbeat on 2:41. The singer makes a long descending phrase followed by what seems like an improvisatory *cadenza* accompanied by the piano.
- 3:41 After a long asymmetric phrase, the music arrives on *nahawand 1*'s original material. In Western music, this type of composition is common, and can be described as a short *cadenza*, where the soloist freely improvises until arriving at a moment where the orchestra joins in the written composition. In Mozart's concerti, after the *cadenzas* the orchestra often performs alone while the soloist takes a break. Similarly, after the asymmetric phrase, the orchestra plays in tempo, allowing the singer to take a break. Taking breaks and allowing the orchestra to perform is also a common tactic in Arabic music called *taqsim*.
- 3:42 The music continues with completely repeated material all the way until 5:19.

- 5:19 This is the beginning of a new section. If we call the preceding material “A”, this new material is “B”. There is audible change in the music as it becomes closer to the Arabic tradition. It features heterophony in favor of homophony and asymmetric phrases.
- 5:43 The singer begins the new material on *hijaz 5* while the instruments have an A minor chord. The clash between the G# in *hijaz* creates a strong dramatic tension against the root A. The piano ceases to play in this section, allowing the Arabic elements to develop the material free from the constraints of Western influence. The melodic line is purely based on *jins hijaz*, and *nahawand*, allowing the piano to enter at 6:37 to play with the Arabic ensemble while the singer rests. The *qanun* and the piano playing together in this section fits beautifully as the two instruments have many similar qualities.
- 7:06 The singer comes back on a melody in *Hijaz 5*. It is a less dramatic entrance from the beginning of the developing section as the melody does not sit on G#, but uses that note as a passing tone against the A minor harmony. At 7:19, the singer uses a C# note, bringing the taste closely to ‘*ajam*.
- 7:23 At this point, the melody goes to *kurd 5*. In the “B” section, there are more interesting *jins* changes happening, with notes outside the *nahawand* and *hijaz*. *Jins rast* makes an appearance on 7:56.
- 8:05 The piano is highlighting the notes E, A (V-i), which follows material from the “A” section. The piano is once again using the left hand as heterophony while the right hand continues the rhythmic figuration.

- 8:38 Although the music seems to go back to the original “A” material, the singer goes back to the material heard in the “B” section.
- 8:43 There are two dramatic pauses in the music. This is the first time we hear silence in the music. Then the music continues on *nahawand* and *hijaz* with attempts to bring the 4/4 meter back, while the singer pushes against that by singing an asymmetric phrase. It is a moment of strong dramatic tension. The piano then ceases to play and allows the singer to move freely in a purely asymmetric manner. During this section, the singer modulates between *kurd*, *bayati*, *nahawand*, *hijaz*, upper *nahawand*, and ‘*ajam*. The amount of tension and modulation make of this section a climactic point in the song.
- 9:36 The piano suddenly comes back to carry the melody and bring the music back to “A.”
- 9:38 The original 4/4 rhythmic material comes back at the very end. The piano ends the song as it started, with a long arpeggio in A minor, bringing the music to a close away from the *nahawand* and firmly in A minor.

3.3.5 Zakiya Hamndan: *Bolero*²⁴

The rhythm of the song is a bolero, but the melody is strictly based on the *maqam* tradition. This is a perfect example of the blend that is found between the West and the Arab world. The center note for the whole composition is the note G, and with this foundation the composition plays with the G minor scale, G major scales, *jins rast* on G,

²⁴ <https://youtu.be/86iKM6hLEBo>

jins nahawand on G, *jins hijaz* on G, and *jins 'ajam* on G. Of particular interest is the interplay between G major, G minor, and the variety of microtones in between B flat and B for the Arabic *ajnas* on G.

There are many moments of extraordinary conflict. For example: at one point, the orchestra performs a B natural while the singer performs a microtonal B flat, producing a clash of cultures that is hard not to notice.

Time Analysis

- 0:00 The music begins in G major, with the piano playing the bottom notes of the harmonies while the strings lead with the melody. There is no hint of Arabic music, with the music firmly planted in the Western tradition. Harmonies go from G major to D major dominant at 0:13, sub-dominant C major at 0:18, and back to the Tonic G major at 0:21, a typical Western harmonic progression.
- 0:38 The singer enters on *rast 1* in G, immediately creating conflict with the orchestra. The clash between the B-natural in the G major scale and the quarter-tone-B in *jins rast* is heard sometimes simultaneously. With the orchestra in G major and the singer in *jins rast*.
- 0:54 The singer continues the melody on *jins rast* while the harmonic instruments present the root and fifth of the tonic and dominant chords. Composers in Western music have for centuries played with the ambiguity of the root and fifth intervals, allowing the music to be felt in both major and minor, depending on the place of the third. In this Bolero, the use of the tonic and fifth is similar, but instead of playing with major and minor third, the interval is between major third and microtonal *jins rast* third.

- 1:10 This is a memorable moment when the music comes back to G major after the singer took us to *jins rast*. Here the singer ceased to sing, allowing the orchestra to play.
- 1:23 The singer's melody can be analyzed as being part of *jins 'ajam*, or in G major. The Arabic modulations go from *'ajam* to *kurd 3*, *hijaz*, 5 and *nikriz 1*. This modulation continues with the orchestra firmly in G major. *Jins 'ajam* fits with the orchestra well, as they both share the same notes of the scale.
- 2:12 The music once again clashes between major third and microtonal third, or G major and *jins rast*. This clash continues all the way to the end, when at 2:55 the melody matches briefly the major scale with *jins 'ajam* but quickly ends with *jins rast* against the G major chord.

This is an unusual fusion work in that fusion musicians are careful not to play a microtonal note together with a non-microtonal note. In *Bolero*, there is no regard for this separation, with the orchestra playing G major and the singer modulating on *jins rast* at the same time, creating an unusual sound for both Arabic and Western ears. This is a very experimental work in the fusion music of the time, full of tension and dissonances.

3.3.6 Zakiya Hamndan: *Ila Samra*²⁵

The piano is used as an imitation of the *qanun*, in heterophony with the melodic line, with only a few places where it plays Westernized arpeggios. The Arabic tradition is strongly present in the Western instruments used in this song. The Western orchestra

²⁵ <https://youtu.be/BW1pZMQckHk>

uses typical Arabic glissandi and play mostly in heterophonic textures. The voice is used throughout in the typical Arabic style, with step motion and the expected ornaments, pathways, and improvisations. Like many of the other selections, the form of this song is ABA, with the A section being closer to the Western tradition, and the B section being closer to the Arabic section.

Time Analysis

- 0:00 Caribbean percussion begins by themselves, with the strings joining in at 0:07 with the typical F-Bb notes highlighting the dominant and tonic chords. The melody on the strings begin on 0:10 on *nahwand 1*. The piano's entrance at 0:23 arpeggiates the Bb minor chord at the end of the melodic phrase.
- 0:30 The melody started on the strings is finished by the piano in *klangfarbenmelodie* fashion. The string melody started on *jins nahawand* is finished on the piano playing as an Arabic instrument imitating the *qanun*. This way the *klangfarbenmelodie* technique is barely noticed since the piano seamlessly fits in the Arabic style.
- 0:46 The voice enters on *jins nahawand 1*. The singer's melody stops on the note C at 0:55 and immediately jumps a tritone to Gb while the orchestra accompanies on the dominant F harmony. The tension created is not resolved as it would be in the Western tradition. Western tradition might resolve the tension directly to the tonic. Instead, the music becomes heterophonic for a moment at 1:01, with the tension elongated while the strings play the melodic line Gb, Ab, Bb (tonic), resolving the tension after a brief heterophonic moment. After the resolution, the main melodic material comes back as the singer rests until 1:21 when she reappears on *jins nahawand*.

- 1:55 The piano drops for a moment, allowing the B section to freely modulate along microtonal notes. The piano reenters at 2:20 with the orchestra, bringing the Western constrictions of intonation with it. At 2:28, the piano behaves exactly as a *qanun*, so much so that it could have been easily replaced by one without any noticeable difference. The piano uses that *qanun* motivic material as an ostinato against which the singer freely modulates among *ajnas*. The singer goes to upper *kurd* and *bayati*.
- 3:12 The music employs silence for the first time, with the piano filling some of that silence.
- 3:21 The piano ceases to play, allowing the singer to use the microtonal *jins bayati* 5.
- 3:28 The piano reappears, helping to bring the music back to *nahawand*. The use of the E natural in the Bb *nahawand* in 3:35 is a common ornament in Arabic music. The singer comes back on 3:44 using for the first time on *jins hijaz*, which is an expected modulation in Arabic music. It took 3:44 minutes to satisfy the expected modulation.
- 3:54 Singer modulates, for the first time, on *jins nikriz* 1. The piano is audible with bass notes and continues to appear at the end of phrases, as if commenting on them.
- 4:03 The E natural comes back, with the singer going back and forth between the natural fourth and the raised fourth intervals. Again, this is a common ornament in *nahawand*.

- 4:10 The music briefly modulates to F minor, creating new Western centers of F and C (tonic and dominant), which allow the Arabic music to play with new *ajnas*. This is the case with 4:18 in which the C major chord (dominant) creates a melody on the strings in '*ajam* 2.
- 4:21 There is a long descending line that ends on 4:30 with *jins nahanad* in F minor, away from the original *nahawand* in Bb minor. First at 4:20 we hear *bayati* on E natural, unusual as the tonic of *jins* is an ornamented note on the original *nahawand* in Bb. Then, the music continues its descent with *nikriz 1* in Bb. An ascending motion ends the phrase, leaving the music at *nahawnad* 5, or *nahwand* in F, or in F minor.
- 4:33 An ostinato in F is heard in the orchestra. This gives an expectation for improvisatory figures for the singer who does not satisfy those expectations. Instead, the music briefly modulates to *nahawand 1* at 5:00, returning to the ostinato F to give the singer one more chance to satisfy those strong expectations. This time, she does improvise.
- 5:10 Immediately after our expectations are met, the music changes rhythm to a fast dance, with the *doumbek* entering for the first time. The piano stays, playing in the style of the *qanun*. The music goes to *jins 'nikriz* 5. The piano at 5:28 comments on the music with a descending scale on *hijaz* in C and *nikriz* in F.
- 5:33 The singer enters on *nikriz* in F, and ornaments that *jins* all the way until 5:59, when the music suddenly stops and changes mood to slower pace.

6:13 This is an extremely powerful moment, in which the singer suddenly modulates back to *nahawand 1*. When we hear the Eb fourth interval of the *jins* for the first time in a while, the effect is powerful. It brings the music forcefully back to the original *jins*. This is, in other words, a very aggressive modulation, which works well because the music is at a standstill, requiring the listener's complete and full attention. The music goes back to *nahawand 1* at 6:21, bringing the music to a sort of recapitulation. But the A sounds so transformed by the B section that it is a different type of recapitulation. The A section has been transformed by the music.

3.3.7 Zakiya Hamndan: *Ana Men Lobnan*²⁶

The piano plays an important part in this short composition. This song can be analyzed in B flat minor or in *nahawand*. The piano and the orchestra play mostly in heterophonic and traditionally Arabic ways. The only full harmony heard in the whole piece is the B flat minor chord. Everything else is implied by the full orchestra playing heterophonically, or through brief arpeggiations by the piano with its diminished chords.

The singer moves through the full B flat minor scale, going from *nahawand1*, *kurd 5*, and upper *nahawand 8*. At 2:49, the music lands on E natural, an ornamented note that usually functions as a passing tone. There is strong tension built into this passage with the use of that ornamented note as a center. It is quickly resolved with the singer going back to *kurd 5* and *nahawand 1*.

²⁶ <https://youtu.be/E6uhb1m-ufo>

3.3.8 Zakiya Hamndan: *Enta Wana*²⁷

The bolero influence is once again strong. The rhythm is led by a traditional Caribbean percussion ensemble and the melody and harmony is led by a traditional Western orchestra, including a piano. In this example, the Arabic ensemble is completely gone with no percussion or traditional Arabic instruments.

This selection can be analyzed in purely Western terms when it comes to orchestration, harmony, counterpoint, and melodies. The song is in A minor, and it travels to the subdominant and dominant areas in the Western style. Because of this purely Western layout, I will not analyze the harmony in further detail. Instead, I offer this example to show the extent to which Zakiyya Hamdan was willing to travel away from her tradition.

It is important to note, however, that the Arabic musicians performing a Western scale in an orchestral ensemble are not accustomed to playing exactly in Western tuning, creating a blend of Western equal tempered divisions, with slightly “off” notes played microtonally. This clash of notes is a typical sound especially noticeable when Arabic orchestra musicians play Western figurations as an ensemble.

There is no hint of anything Arabic in this song. Even the singer’s melody is Westernized, with strong metric feel. The most Arabic element in the whole song is a small ornament on 2:23, but then the music goes back to the bolero rhythm, orchestration, and melody.

²⁷ https://youtu.be/HSiyMw_0ROk

3.4 Western Piano Music by Arabic Composers

There are several artists from the Arab world that have succeeded in the realm of Western classical piano music. While these musicians are not the focus of this paper, I do find it important to briefly mention some of these piano works.

3.4.1 Solhi al Wardi: *Fugue in E Minor*

The subject of this fugue has the unmistakable Arabic sound using the augmented second interval found in *jins hijaz* and *nikriz*. The fugue reminds the listener of Shostakovich, something that makes a lot of sense since most of the conservatories and music education in Syria came from Russian musicians. When I visited the Syrian national conservatory in 2002, I noticed many Russian professors who were treated with much respect and admiration by Arabic students.

The subject of the fugue is asymmetrical, something that is common in both Russian and Arabic melodies, perhaps because Arabic language itself is asymmetrical, and their melodies mirror the patterns of the native language. The melody reminds the listener of the asymmetrical phrases found in Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*.

The subject in this fugue theme is Arabic in the sense of being both rhythmically asymmetrical and melodically informed by *maqam* music. The interval of augmented second is found in the *maqam hijaz* family, which is an important interval in *Fugue in E minor* by Solhi al Wardi.

3.4.2 Solhi al Wardi: *Dance in C Minor*

The rhythm in this work "Dance" reminds the listener of *dabke*, which is the typical dance in the Arabic world. It is in 4/4 meter, but the phrasing tends to be irregular, once again influenced by the grammar of the Arabic language. The composition is a

substantial work of 5 minutes in length. In it the composer shows us melodic writing with short intervallic leaps, which is a common melodic intervallic movement in Arabic melodic writing.

3.4.3 Solhi al Wardi: *Two Piano Pieces – Moderato in F Major and Andante in D minor*

These are two short Bagatelles, each about 2 minutes long. The Arabic essence and taste are strongly heard, especially on the first bagatelle. Shostakovich's influence is also extremely strong. The polyphonic writing reminds the listener of the Russian compositional tradition, with clashing intervals and semi-romantic harmonies. But the motivic material clearly comes from the Arabic *maqam*.

3.5.4 Dia Succari: *Suite Syrienne*

Syrian composer Dia Saccuri studied composition at the Paris Conservatory with Olivier Messiaen. His music is strongly influenced by the *maqam*; however, while still being aligned with the French Western tradition. The Syrian Suite has three movements, *Nida*, *Samah*, and *Dabke*. All three movements are in the French tradition of composition, with a strong influence of *maqam*. The last movement is an especially strong work, with Arabic influences in both rhythmic melodic elements.

Through this series of analyses, I have demonstrated various ways in which Arabic materials are used differently by traditional and fusion musicians.

CHAPTER 4: CURRENT ARABIC MUSIC IN THE USA

Immigrants from all over the Arab world have settled in different parts of the United States, especially in parts of Washington DC, New Jersey, New York, Michigan, and California. Arab immigration to America began around the 1920s, with most coming from Syrian and Lebanon minority Christian populations (A. Rasmussen 1992, 64). A second wave of Arabic immigrants began to arrive in the 1960, this time from a much more diverse group of nations and cultures (A. K. Rasmussen 2000, 557). Most of the music that was recorded before the second wave was about longing, sadness, and separation. A good example of this music was recorded by New York singer Hanan Harouni (1929-2011) (A. K. Rasmussen 2000, 555).

By the 1960's, most of the Arabic music took place at nightclubs, weddings, and parties, with the belly dancer at the center of the entertainment (A. Rasmussen 1992). By this time, however, the nightclub Arabic music in the United States violated every aspect of authenticity (A. Rasmussen 1992, 70). At these nightclubs, musicians incorporated western instruments and tried to make imitations of Arabic sounds. The oboe, for example, was used to imitate the sounds of Arabic instruments like the *mijwiz* and the *mizmar* (A. Rasmussen 1992, 74). One of the most important Arabic ensembles of the time was the *Freddy Elias and his ensemble*, performing at nightclubs and weddings of the 1960s and 70s. Important recordings of this time include: *Strictly Belly Dancing* recorded by Eddy "The Shaik" Koshak (1975), and *Port Said* with Muhammed El Bakkar (1957).

The 1960 saw a relaxation of immigration quotas, allowing people from all over the Arab world to immigrate into the United States (A. Rasmussen 1992, 82). By the 1990s, Arab immigration had changed to an even more diverse form of cultural exchange, with a continuous and transnational movement between east and west (A. K. Rasmussen 2000).

It is estimated that as of 2013, the United States had a population of 1.5 million Arabs, with the community growing more than 75% since 1990 (Wang 2013). There are other Arabic organizations that estimate the population in 2013 was even higher, closer to 3.6 million Arabs in the United States (Wang 2013). According to Pew Research Center Report, in 2017 the Muslim-Arab population alone was 3.5 million (Mohamed 2018). The population growth is expected to continue. It is estimated that by 2050, the Muslim population in the United States will reach 8.1 million people (Mohamed 2018). Counting Christian Arabs into the estimates, the Arab population will reach significant numbers by 2050 (Beaulieu 2013). The highest number of Arab immigrants have come to the USA from Lebanon, Syria, Egypt, Somalia, Jordan, Morocco, and Iraq, in that order (2010 U.S. Census). Egypt and Lebanon are two Arab nations whose musicians were the focus of this paper. With a high number of Egyptians and Lebanese people in the USA, much of their traditional culture and Westernization tendencies were brought to America with them. In a way, the Golden Age of music was brought to America with them.

The Arabic population in the US is growing and thriving, and with it, its artistic culture is growing as well. Arguably, the United States today has become one of the main centers for Arabic culture in the whole world. There are many Arabic museums, foundations, orchestras, restaurants, concerts, and lectures happening on a regular basis in many parts of the United States. Universities such as UCLA, Berklee, and the College of William and Mary have programs dedicated to the study of Arabic music²⁸. The United States has become such an important cultural center for Arabic music that musicians from throughout the Arab world travel to the United States to learn Arabic music.

²⁸ UCLA - <https://nelc.ucla.edu/arabic/>

Berklee College of Music - <https://www.berklee.edu/people/simon-shaheen>

College of William and Mary - https://www.wm.edu/as/music/directory/rasmussen_a.php

Hussa Al-Hummaidhi, for example, is a young *'ud* player from Kuwait who came to the United States in 2019 to learn about Arabic music. In the Tarik Brenbrahim's 2019 *Aljazeera* documentary *Simon Shaheen, a musical journey*, Husa said she "could not find another place with rich information about Arabic music and its history". In other words, according to Husa Al-Hummaidhi, the United States is the best place in the world to study Arabic music, including the Arabic world itself.²⁹

In the following pages I give an overview of the rich Arabic culture that attracts people like Husa Al-Hummaidhi to study Arabic music in the United States. I begin with an overview of events happening in New York. Then I look at notable University professors and their programs. Finally, I conclude this section with an overview of musicians and significant commercial recordings.

New York City is one of the hot spots for Arabic music in the United States. In addition to hosting the New York Arab Orchestra, NYC is also a place where Arab musicians from all over the world are invited to perform. One of the leading organizations is the *Brooklyn Maqam Hang*, hosting each Tuesday night a different Arabic artist or ensemble. The organization is led by Brian Prunka, Marandi Hostetter, and John Murchison and they have invited musicians from all over the country and the Arab world to perform³⁰. Before the *Brooklyn Maqam Hang*, Arab music in NYC was splintered, with musicians rarely interacting with each other, and music lovers unaware of the vast diversity of Arab music happening all over the city (Adams 2020). I attended many of the weekly events hosted by *Brooklyn Maqam Hang*, each one of them a true gem.

²⁹ The complete documentary is on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74lXYhxSUpc>

³⁰ For more information visit their website at <https://brooklynmaqam.com/home>

One of their events was especially memorable. The event was held on 7/23/2019 at Sisters in Brooklyn and it was a celebration for the newly published book *Inside Arabic Music* by Farraj and Shumays (Oxford). Both authors were present and performed during the evening. Shumays played the Arabic violin and sung while Farraj led the percussion section. The concert featured an accordion player, whose instrument was modified to allow for the use of micro-tones (quartertones). While the accordion played, I opened the book to read about the instrument, which was modified in mid-20th century to play microtones with an Arabic ensembles (Schumays 2019, 34). The earliest recording of the accordion comes from Abdul Wahab in 1932 with the song *marreit 'ala beit il-habayid*, although the Turks had been using the accordion for years before Abdul Wahab. In this recording the accordion was used against an Arabic ensemble in its unmodified version, incapable of performing microtones (Schumays 2019, 34). The modified Arabic accordion gradually began to infiltrate the fabric of Arabic music, and today it is barely thought as a foreign instrument (Schumays 2019). By the time this 2019 concert in Brooklyn took place, the accordion had evolved into an Arabic instrument that seamlessly blended with the rest of the Arabic ensemble.

Many audience members came to the concert with a copy of Shumays' and Farraj's new theory book, which made me think. In the west, it is uncommon today to see the authors of a theory book bring their new philosophies to life in practice. Theory and practice in the west have, especially in the 20th century, taken steps in opposite directions. And theorists and practitioners are often different people. This has created a disconnect between music theory and practice in the west. During this performance, however, the link between theory and practice was enormously powerful, creating for the audience an atmosphere of understanding and appreciation seen only occasionally during the release of theory books.

The *Brooklyn Maqam Hang* also hosted *Eden Zane* at The Sultan Room in Brooklyn. The event took place 9/14/2019. This concert was less traditional than the previous one, part of it coming from the addition of an 88-key keyboard that performed with both western and Arabic tuning. In addition to the keyboard, there was an 'ud, a *qanun*, a violin, voice, and percussion ensemble (*riqq* or tamburine, and *Doumbek*). The Arabic ensemble performed the music of the Golden Age musicians, including Abdul Wahab and Zakiyya Hamdan.

The same exciting energy of Arabic music culture found in Brooklyn can be seen throughout the United States. Universities in the United States have shown increased interest in the music of the Arabs. Berklee College of Music in Boston, for example, recently hired one of the pioneers of American Arab music, Palestinian-American 'ud, and violin player Simon Shaheen, to develop an Arab music program³¹. He has created a rich and exciting Arabic culture that is attracting students and audiences not only from America, but from the Arab world and beyond. Simon Shaheen's amazing work has not gone unnoticed. He received an award in 1994 from the White House for his contributions to Arabic heritage in the US.

The University of California in Los Angeles hired another pioneer of Arabic music in the United States. J.C. Racy is now a distinguished professor of ethnomusicology at University of California. He is a musician and writer, whose 2003 book *Making Music in the Arab World* has gained much respect in the United States and Arabic world. The University of California in Santa Barbara has Scott Lloyd Marcus, professor of ethnomusicology. He has written many articles and books, including *the rhythmic modes*

³¹ For more information about these courses, visit Berklee's page on Simon Shaheen <https://www.berklee.edu/people/simon-shaheen>

of middle eastern music, and the book *Music in Egypt* published in 2007 by Oxford University Press. Anne Rasmussen is professor of ethnomusicology at the College of William and Mary University in Virginia. She offers many courses on Middle Eastern music, including *music cultures of the middle east*. She also leads a middle eastern music ensemble. Columbia University's Arab Music Ensemble is led by Taoufik Ben-Amor. Professor Ben-Amor has written many important articles on Arabic music, including *States of Mind: Music in Islamic Sufi rituals*, and *The Politics of Language and the Formalization of the Iraqi Maqam*.

A notable event happened in 2009 at the University of Michigan, where an experiment with an Arabic student ensemble under the direction of Michael Ibrahim went on to become one of the most important Arabic orchestras in the country, the National Arab Orchestra. The orchestra has appeared in performances all over the USA and in the Middle East. They are now based in Detroit, a vibrant center of Arabic culture. The Los Angeles Arabic Orchestra also began as a student project from the Glendale Community College, and like the National Arab Orchestra, they went on to become professional, performing all over California. There are many other Universities with extraordinary Arabic ensembles, including the ensemble *Layali Al-Sham* founded by Professor Andrea Shaheen Espinosa D.M.A. at University of Texas at El Paso.

There are many other Universities that incorporate Arabic music into their curricula. For example, Manhattan School of Music invites violinist Insia Malik on a yearly lecture about Arabic music for composition students. On 9/19/19 I attended an Arabic lecture/concert at William Paterson University (New Jersey). It was a mandatory event for all music students and was open to the public. I have never seen an Arabic concert in which audience members do not clap and dance to the beat, but it never caught my attention until I attended this event at WPU. This is because I saw a mostly non-Arabic

audience enjoy this music in a similar way Arabic people do. They clapped to the beat, dance in place, and tried to sing along when possible, even when the music was alien to their own culture. This is a testament to the power of Arabic music and the reason for the newly found interest in so many American Universities. The music is not only intellectually gratifying, but also emotionally accessible.

Professors at these universities have done a lot to make the United States a powerful cultural center for Arabic music today. Many of them have worked together in their efforts to make the United States an important place for Arabic music. Professor Simon Shaheen and J.C Racy joined hands in 1997 to create one of the most successful programs for Arabic music in the United States, the Arabic Music Retreat. It was not the first time they worked together. In 1977, they recorded one of the most important American Arab commercial recordings: *Taqasim; The Art of Improvisation in Arabic Music* and published by Lyrichord Disk Inc.

The Arabic Music Retreat takes place at the campus of Mount Holyoke College in South Hadley, Massachusetts. Eleven teachers and eighty students come together each summer for a week to learn about music theory, technique, repertoire, and history³². Some of the most influential musicians in the USA have emerged from this retreat, including many of the current musicians from the National Arab Orchestra. The influence of this retreat has caught the attention of the Arab world, with people from many parts of the Arabic world coming to learn about Arabic music at this retreat. In February 2020, Tarik Benbtahim created a film documentary for *Aljazeera* featuring the

³² For more information visit their website at <http://arabicmusicretreat.org/>.

work of Simon Shaheen and his life in the United States. The documentary beautifully displays the energy and excitement of the Arabic Music Retreat³³.

The United States has attracted and produced some of the most exciting Arab musicians today with artists that are at the forefront of the American musical culture. George Ziadeh was born and raised in Palestine, he moved to the United States in 1986 to study 'ud with Simon Shaheen. He regularly performs with *Brooklyn Maqam Hang*, and frequently is invited to perform at Columbia University. He is a lecturer, 'ud player, and singer. Layale Chaker is a New York based violinist who combines contemporary classical music, jazz, and Arabic music. She has many recordings, and her work has been recognized by the BBC and *The New York Times*. Her 2019 commercial recording *Inner Rhyme* is a perfect example of Arab music fusion with jazz. She performs regularly with her ensemble *Sarafand* with audiences from all over the world. *Inner Rhyme* is an album that beautifully combines Arabic music, Baroque ornaments, and jazzy flashy improvisations (Fonseca-Wollheim 2019). Tarek Yamani has also attracted much interest with his fusion jazz and Arabic piano. Tarek Yamani released *Peninsular* in 2017 performing on an electronic keyboard with an American jazz ensemble. The music is heavily jazz influenced with a distinct Arabic flavor. Tarek takes advantage of the microtonal keyboard and the stereotypical Arabic ornaments and beautifully combines them with a jazz ensemble. Amir Elsaaffar's 2017 recording *Rivers of Sound* combines the rich sounds of jazz, with the microtonal sounds of *maqam* music. The album includes professional musicians from both the West and the Middle East. The album is a rich combination of two worlds, it is Arabic fusion music at its best. During the Covid19 pandemic, the Arab National Orchestra was one of the first institutions in the country to record a virtual ensemble event called *A Collaboration in Isolation* (2020). The National

³³ The complete documentary is available on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=74lXYhxSUpc>

Arab Orchestra came together to perform an Arabic song called *Jayibly Salam* by Philemon Wehbi.³⁴

Arabic musicians have also had a tremendous influence on popular American culture. New York based Zafer Tawil, for example, wrote the music for the Oscar nominated film *Rachel Getting Married* starring Anne Hathaway. Arabic musicians have influenced American culture in others ways, too, with Jay-Z using an unauthorized Hamdy's song *Khosara Khosara* on his 2000 hit "Big Pimpin'."

There are also many important Arabic music ensembles in the United States. The *Aswat* Ensemble is in the San Francisco Bay Area, and it is one of the longest continuous Arab ensembles in America. The *Aswat* Ensemble focuses on traditional Arabic music with instruments such as *qanun* (trapezoidal zither), *'ud* (lute), *nay* (reed flute), *Kaman* (violin), *riqq/daff* (tambourine), *tar* and *darbukkah/tablah* (goblet drum). Led by Sami Abu Shumays, *Zikrayat* is an Arabic ensemble based in New York City. They perform the music of the Arab Golden Age, Egypt and Lebanese music from the 1940s–60s. The New York Arab Orchestra was founded by Basam Sabba, who now serves as the director of the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music is currently.

Conclusion

The United States has become one of the most important cultural centers for Arabic music in the world. People from all over the world come to the United States to learn about Arabic music, with the US being home to some of the most respected Arab performers, teachers, scholars, artists, and writers. The United States is also home to a

³⁴ To watch this performance, visit <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ydNxKKAG7BQ>

vast amount of knowledge from scholars at the cutting edge of Arabic music research, performance innovation, and performance preservation of Arabic music. The United States is also home to a variety of Arabic ensembles with a diversity of skill sets, from amateur groups performing at casual restaurant gatherings, to professional ensembles performing at the most prestigious venues in the country. Additionally, the US has many Arabic ensembles comprised of university students and professors. Some of these university ensembles have gone to become successful professional ensembles, like the Arab National Orchestra, which in 2009 began as a student experiment at the University of Michigan.

Thirty to forty years ago, it would have seemed farfetched to suggest that today the United States would become such an important cultural center for Arabic music. In the 1970s, Arabic music in the US was mostly performed by small Arab communities for occasional weddings and parties. Non-Arabs had an exceedingly small and stereotypical idea about Arabic music, a basic knowledge that barely extended to belly dancing and a few stereotypical sounds and fashion. In the 1960s, the United States saw the easing of immigration quotas from the Arabic world, resulting in a large wave of Arab immigrants settling and transforming many parts of the United States. Arabs have created a vibrant Middle Eastern culture in many parts of the United States. There are substantial areas in Paterson NJ, Brooklyn, California, and Detroit that show strong Middle Eastern influence. These areas are full of Arabic restaurants, belly dancing, music, and religious gatherings. A short walk in any of these areas will show a vast amount of people speaking Arabic and Arabic businesses with Arabic signs all over. Arabs have transformed their communities into little Middle Eastern hubs.

In the coming years, Arabic music in the US will continue to evolve and grow in influence and knowledge, with more universities interested in the theories of Arabic

music, and new populations of Arabs and non-Arabs enjoying Arabic culture. By 2050, Arabic population in the US is expected to be more than 8 million people, which will have tremendous impact on American and Arab culture. It is an exciting time for Arabic music in the United States, a vibrant place with a tremendously hopeful future ahead. With a growing population and a growing academic and cultural interest, the trend of Arabic music seen today in the United States is just a taste of what is to come: more Arab festivals, university courses, innovative artists, traditional musicians, and new audiences eager to discover and experience Arabic music.

CHAPTER 5: MEMORIES OF HOMS BY PATRICIO F MOLINA

5.1 Overview

Memories of Homs is an eight-movement work for piano, 'ud, violin, and *dirbakki* (doubbek or tabla). Each movement explores the possibilities of a *maqam*, with the piano working around the limitations of the quarter tones in Arabic music. The eight *ajnas* used in each of the movements are in order: *jins musta'ar*, *jins 'ajam*, *jins bayati*, *jins mawam hijaz*, *jins lami*, *jins nahawand*, *jins kurd*, and *jins athar*. Each of the eight movements also explores seven different rhythms in the following order: *iqa rumba* 4/4, *iqa naqakht* 7/4, *iqa'awis* 11/8, *iqa baladi* 4/4, *iqa fakhit* 20/4, *iqa' wahda* 4/4, *iqa' kosh rang* 17/8, *iqa' jurijina* 10/8. In this document, I will describe the thematic background and theoretical structure of the piece.

5.2 Theme

My life is a duality of cultures. My mother was born in Syria, and I was born in Chile. I belonged to an Arabic community in Chile, attended Arabic school, and spent most of my youth with Arabic people. At age 13, I moved to the United States where I lived with my mother's uncle in Paterson, NJ. We lived in a part of that city which is heavily populated by the Arabic community. Some of the most memorable experiences of my life were created with Arabic people. I recall the many times we danced dabke (دبكة), shared a meal with kibbe, smoked hookah / argileh (أرجيلة), and listened to Arabic music (مقامات).

On the other hand, I was born in the West and now live and study in the West. I came from Chile and later moved to New Jersey. I attended pre-college at the Universidad de Chile, received a bachelors and master's degree at the Manhattan School of Music, and

earned a DMA at Rutgers University. From the day I began to play the piano at age 3, my entire musical education has been based on the Western conservatory tradition.

In my 30 years of music education, I never came across a teacher, book, or article that talked about Arabic music. I never thought of it as a problem until I embarked on my Ph.D. research. I noticed that there is a lack of books, articles, and information on Arabic music, and the few resources I found are largely contradictory, misleading, or incorrect. How is it that a rich musical tradition encompassing thousands of years with a massive territory of cultures is accompanied by only the most basic written history and theory.

The answer is simple. Arabic music is essentially an aural tradition (Schumays 2019, 193). Except for very recent history, Arabic music has never been written down. This is because Arabic musicians have thought of music as a description of something that cannot be conceptualized through written form (Schumays 2019).

The Westernization of Arabic music has changed that. Much Arabic music today is recorded in music notation and recordings. And there are an increasing number of theorists and musicologists recording their findings about Arabic music in articles and books. The Westernization of Arabic music has set the stage for my work *Memories of Homs*.

I visited Homs, Syria, twice in my life. The first time was in the year 2000 when I was invited to perform in Jordan for the King of Jordan. After the performance, my family took me to Syria to meet, for the first time, my grandmother, cousins, uncles, and extended family. The second time I visited Homs was in 2002 after receiving an invitation to perform a Haydn piano concerto with the Damascus Symphony Orchestra at the newly opened Damascus Opera House. Both times were during the off-school

summer season in Chile, so I was able to stay with my Syrian family for an extended 3-month period. During my time in Homs, I attended a school there and made friends that showed me all over Homs. I even celebrated my birthday there, which was a huge party unlike anything I would have experienced in Chile.

Writing *Memories of Homs* was a sentimental undertaking. The city that gave me unforgettable memories, that was home to my family and friends, and that I loved and hoped to return to someday was destroyed during the 2011 Syrian Civil War. All of my friends and family, except for one, have left Homs. Some have disappeared and other have been permanently injured. In 2017, my aunt visited Homs and took pictures and videos of the few broken walls where my grandmother's house once stood.

Memories of Homs brings back my recollections of a beautiful city, with a sense of mourning for the loss of life, family, and culture that occurred during the war. Before the war, Homs was a rich place, full of life, beauty, and family. Everyone was so friendly that I didn't even know if my family's neighbors were genuine family or just friends. Today, Homs is nothing like it used to be. It is a place of death and misery. It is also a place my friends and family have left. Those who survived the war fled to various parts of the world the hope of finding a more stable and peaceful life. My grandmother is one of them, having reluctantly moved to New Jersey in 2016. I don't know if I will ever be able to go back to Homs, and it pains me to think about it. But the memories of my life there are full of beauty, happiness, and love. I will forever remember my beloved Homs through a tribute to a fallen city. A tribute to life, peace, and beauty: *Memories of Homs*.

5.3 Analysis

As we have seen previously on this paper, Arabic music is heterophonic, that is, several instruments ornament a single melody. The use of harmony and polyphony was alien to the tradition until the beginning of the 20th century. The piano, therefore, sounds most accurate to the Arabic style when it imitates the sounds of the *qanun* playing in heterophonic texture.

In this composition, I am careful to use polyphony in ways that do not aggressively disturb the traditional Arabic style. For example, there are polyphonic textures that function less as independent voices and more as echoes of the main melodic line in a sort of canonic polyphony. In this way, polyphonic textures sound closer to the Arabic heterophonic tradition.

I also construct my harmonies very carefully. I avoid the Western notion of tension on the dominant resolving to the tonic in favor of note centers based on the *maqam* system of *ghammaz* and tonic. For example, on the fifth movement, the Western ear hears the note G as the tonic and the note D as the dominant (I-V). However, in the *maqam* system, the opposite is true, the *ghammaz* is the note G while the tonic is the note D. In this movement, I play with the expectations of both worlds, with the piano “resolving” the dominant D onto a G while the ‘*ud* “resolves” the melodic line onto the tonic D. The last word is the ‘*ud*, with the note D played by the instrument alone. The ‘*ud*’s last word is a perfect example of how *Memories of Homs* avoids Western harmony in favor of the *maqam* system. A similar interplay of different expectations appears on the seventh movement.

The image displays two systems of a musical score for the Fifth Movement of 'Memories of Homs'. The first system begins at measure 45. The Violin (vln) staff has a whole rest marked *ppp*. The Flute (fl) staff contains a melodic line starting with a quarter rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with the instruction *mf improvise*. The Piano (pno) staff features a long, sustained chord in the bass clef, with a blue arrow pointing to it from a box labeled 'Tonic G'. The Bass (bck) staff has a whole rest. The second system starts at measure [45]. The Violin staff has a whole rest. The Flute staff continues the melodic line, ending with a blue arrow pointing to a note, with a box labeled 'Tonic D' below it. The Piano staff has a whole rest. The Bass staff has a whole rest.

45

vln

fl

pno

bck

ppp

mf improvise

Tonic G

[45]

vln

fl

pno

bck

Tonic D

Figure 14 – Memories of Homs - Fifth Movement

5.4 First Movement

Memories of Homs begins with an extremely uncommon *jins* in the Arabic repertoire; *jins musta'ar*.



Figure 15 - *jins musta'ar*

One of the reasons for its unpopularity is because *jins musta'ar* has as its root note as an unstable microtone. The *ghammaz* is found on the third-degree interval of the *jins* system, which is a note that can be played on the piano. *Jins musta'ar* has a more popular brother, *jins sikah*, which would have been an easier and more common choice for the first movement. They are remarkably similar, with the latter being a lot more popular in the Arabic repertoire. Both *ajnas* share the same tonic, *ghammaz*, and many secondary notes, however, in *jins musta'ar*, the third note is an augmented second. This augmented second interval creates closer imitation to what the Western ear associates as being the traditional Arabic sound, and therefore, I chose to begin the movement with the less common *jins* to give the piano a more Middle Easter sound.

Another reason I did not begin with the more popular *jins sikah* is because the piano's inability to play microtones, which results in *jins sikah* sounding Phrygian of Arabic.



Figure 16 - Phrygian sound

To create a more distinct Arabic sound, *jins musta'ar* emphasizes the augmented second interval. In *Memories of Homs*, the 'ud and the Arabic violin play the *jins musta'ar* as intended, with the raised second and its microtonal root. The piano fakes the microtonal root and takes advantage of the raised augmented second interval for that “Middle Eastern” sound.



Figure 17 – Piano's fake *jins musta'ar*

The way the piano immitates the microtonal sound is by using both E flat and E natural at the same time. In the first movement of *Memories of Homs*, the piano uses a grace note to play the root note on *jins musta'ar*. Each time the piano plays the unavailable microtonal root of the *jins*, it does so with ornaments to fake the sound of the original microtonal note. The piano never plays an E natural or an Eb alone, as this would only create a distant imitation of *jins musta'ar*. This create an ambiguous root note on the piano, which is only clarified with the accurate microtonal intonation introduced by the 'ud and violin.

The first movement begins with a slow section that turns into a dance-like rhythmic section. Arabic music often begins with improvisatory arrhythmic sections that turn into a dance. These slow sections are a form of warmup for both the audience and the musicians, allowing musicians to calm their nerves and get acquainted with the room and audience. These slow sections are often a poetic performance exploring a specific mood and are usually sad in nature. These slow sections are often followed by a dance-like rhythmic section where the percussion section enters and leads the ensemble. The

first movement of *Memories of Homs* evolves in this tradition with a fast section following the slow section.

With Rubato ♩ = 62

Violin

Oud

Piano

oumbek

Figure 18 - Slow introductory section

Rhythm in Arabic is called *iqā'*, and the form of the rhythmic section I used in this piece is called *iqā' rumba*, which is in 4/4. I decided to use this rhythm to open the work because it is an adaptation of the Latin American dance rhythm that goes by the same name. My heritage is not only Arabic, but also Latin American, which makes of this rhythm the perfect place to start *Memories of Homs*.

Figure 19 - *Iqa Rumba* on the left-hand piano

My own memories of my 2002 visit to Homs include playing Latin American music I brought from Chile. I was surprised then at how much they loved and appreciated the music of Latin America. This appreciation of Latin American music has been part of the Arabic culture for many years, *iqa rumba* became part of the Arabic music in the 1930s with a variety of musicians from the Golden Age introducing this dance to the Arabic world. Abdul Wahab and Umm Kulthum both have a good number of songs that use *iqa rumba* in their songs.

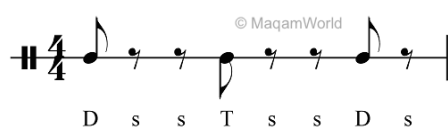


Figure 20 - Iqa Rumba 4/4

When I visited Homs, I brought with me my Latin American musical heritage. I begin the work *Memories of Homs* with *iqa' rumba* as a genuine memory of my visit to Homs: a Latin American visiting his Arabic roots.

5.5 Second Movement

The second movement is a variation of *jins 'ajam*, which is roughly equivalent to the Western major scale. However, the movement is not in *jins 'ajam* in its entirety, as there are many notes outside of the mode that serve as ornaments to the *jins 'ajam*. In other words, the movement is filled with accidentals. *Jins 'ajam* is often used with ornamented accidentals, but never goes this far. Although the melody is in the unornamented *jins 'ajam*, the accompaniment uses many accidental ornaments to bring color to the melodic line. The violin, for example, begins with the notes found in the minor Western scale, setting up the expectations for a minor mode melody from the piano. However, the piano unexpectedly comes in on *jins 'ajam*, creating a colorful blend of *jins 'ajam* on the melody accompanied by accidental ornaments.

ln

Note outside

no

p cantabile

Entire melody

p cantabile

on iins

Figure 21 – Memories of Homs - Second Movement

Rhythmically, the second movement contrasts with the preceding movement. The second movement is on popular rhythm that is often performed at a mellow tempo: *iqa nawakht* 7/4. The 'ud performs the rhythmic ground of the piece with the notes found on *jins 'ajam*.

Oud

Figure 22 - *iqa nawakht* 7/4 on the 'ud

The violin performs two decorating functions, it decorates the 'ud by filling the silences left by *iqā nawakht* and it decorates the melody by adding accidentals to *jins 'ajam*.



Figure 23 - Rhythmic dialogue between violin and 'ud

The *doumbek* appearance in the movement is extremely subtle, appearing only at the end two beats of every two measures to maintain the listener attuned to the downbeat. The phrases in the melody sometimes blur the position of the downbeat, which is reminded by the *doumbek's* appearance.



Figure 24 - Melody blurs downbeat

At the end of the movement, the piano, and the violin end on the second beat, and the 'ud end on the third beat. Only the percussion *doumbek* ends the piece on the downbeat, acting as it did throughout the whole movement, as a base and attuning method to the

downbeat.

The musical score for Figure 25 consists of four staves: Violin (Vln), Oud, Piano (Pno), and Doumbek. The piece is in 7/4 time. The Vln and Oud parts feature melodic lines with long, sweeping phrases. The Pno part provides harmonic support with chords and arpeggios. The Doumbek part features a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a final downbeat clarification at the end of the piece.

Figure 25 - Doumbek clarifies the downbeat at the end

The musical notation for Figure 26 shows a 7/4 time signature. The sequence of notes is D, s, T, D, s, T, T. The notes are written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat. The notes are labeled D, s, T, D, s, T, T. The notation includes a double bar line and a copyright notice for MaqamWorld.

Figure 26 - Iqa Nawakht 7/4

5.6 Third Movement

The third movement is in the quite common *jins bayati* which has as its interval a microtonal note. However, the piano's inability to play microtones makes it sound as if the piano is playing on *jins kurd*.

The musical notation for Figure 27 shows a *jins bayati* scale in treble clef. The scale consists of the notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, D5, E5, and F5. The notes are written on a single staff with a key signature of one flat.

Figure 27 - *jins bayati*

Like in the first movement, the piano always plays the microtonal note with an ornament, never as an E natural or an Eb alone unless they act as a passing note. This way, the microtonal note is ambiguous on the piano, which is clarified by the 'ud and violin's accurate use of microtones.

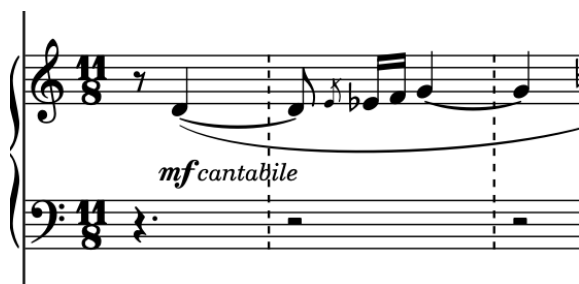


Figure 28 - Piano fakes microtonal notes

In doing so, once again, the ambiguity produced by the piano is resolved with the 'ud and the violin performing the accurate microtonal intonation. The *ghammaz* is on the fourth interval, a center that I emphasize in the movement.

The second microtonal interval does not become evident until measure six when the violin first plays a microtonal Eb. The microtonal Eb then is heard in the 'ud on measure 9, creating a true clash between the 'ud and violin against the piano. The melodic climax of the piece comes on measure 19 when the violin and the 'ud play the piano's original tune in the accurate microtonal intonation, making all the previous hints to *jins kurd* disappear.

The movement utilizes as its rhythmic base *iqa 'awis* 11/8. In this rhythmic family, it is often the case that melodies do not enter on the downbeat. In keeping with this tradition, the melody in this third movement begins on the second beat.



Figure 29 - Memories of Homs Third Movement. Piano use of *iqa 'awis*

5.7 Fourth Movement

The fourth movement is on *jins hijaz*, which is the mode that Western composers have often used to depict the Arabic sound in their music.



Figure 30 - *jins hijaz*

This is a very popular *jins* in the Arabic world, using the augmented second interval found in the notes of the piano. This movement goes together with the third movement and is played *attacca*. Together, these movements are similar to the improvisatory dance introductions I discuss above. The third movement ends with the *'ud* improvisation that sets up the dance and lively mood of the fourth movement.

The rhythm is based on the *iqa baladi* in 4/4, a very common *iqa* in the middle east vocal repertoire. There are many variations on the bass rhythm ,below.



Figure 31 - Memories of Homs - *iqa baladi* with the piano's left hand

Percussionists add countless ornaments to this basic line, creating a vast compilation of possibilities and richness of variety from this basic structure. In my composition, this rhythm in the 'ud, violin, and piano stay mostly the same throughout the whole movement, with the percussionist on the *doumbek* adding all the ornaments and rhythmic variations associated with *iqa baladi*.

Arabs hear the rhythm of the music from the percussion section. In many of the movements of *Memories of Homs*, however, the rhythm is engrained in the melodic instruments, with the *doumbek* ornamenting with other rhythms.

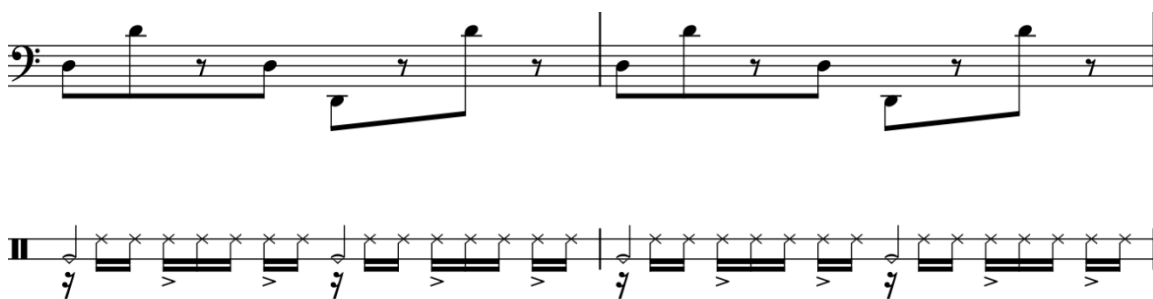


Figure 32 - Memories of Homs. Piano left hand with the *iqa baladi* and the *doumbek* playing other rhythms.

5.8 Fifth Movement

The fifth movement is contrasting to the fourth. It is mellow and lyrical, with the rhythm heard in a more subtle way. All the notes on *jins lami* are found on the piano, which on measure 2 takes the long melody started by the violin to its conclusion.



Figure 33 - *jins lami*

The piano can play on the *jins lami* accurately, with no need to fake any notes. In addition to being a melodic instrument, the piano serves as an ornament to the rhythm set by the 'ud, filling the silence left by the rhythmic pattern of *iqa fakhit* 20/4.

Figure 34 - Rhythmic interplay piano and 'ud

The piano enriches the rhythm of *iqa fakhit* with a colorful echo-like figure that is played with the left-hand D octaves. The rhythmic interplay between the 'ud and the piano creates a colorful game of timbres, with the 'ud and piano performing the same notes in an different way.

The violin on measure 5 imitates the 'ud's strong attack and rapid decay by continuing the rhythmic figuration with *pizzicato* notes.

The image shows a musical score for measures 20 through 30. The score is written for four instruments: Violin (Vln), Oud, Piano (Pno), and Doumbek. The Violin part begins in measure 20 with a whole note, then continues with a series of eighth notes in measures 21-23, marked with a 'pizz.' (pizzicato) instruction. The Oud part enters in measure 21 with a series of eighth notes, marked with a 'f' (forte) dynamic. The Piano part enters in measure 21 with a series of eighth notes, marked with a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The Doumbek part enters in measure 21 with a series of eighth notes, marked with a 'p' (piano) dynamic. The score is written in a 2/4 time signature and features a variety of rhythmic patterns, including eighth notes, sixteenth notes, and triplets.

Figure 35 - Violin and Piano interplay of rhythm. Changing Timbre

When the 'ud returns to its rhythmic figuration in measure 31, the violin plays a soft group of harmonic notes for the first time in the entire work. The airy sound of the harmonics brings a subtle and mysterious atmosphere to the end of the movement.

Figure 36 is a musical score snippet for three instruments: Violin (Vln), Oud, and Piano (Pno). The Vln staff begins at measure 31 with a melodic line featuring eighth and sixteenth notes, some beamed together. The Oud staff provides a rhythmic accompaniment with eighth and sixteenth notes. The Pno staff has a bass line starting with a piano (*pp*) dynamic, featuring eighth and sixteenth notes. Vertical dashed lines connect the staves, indicating measure boundaries.

Figure 36 - Airy sound from the violin

The movement ends with an improvisation from the 'ud, as the *iqā fakhit* ceases to play.

5.9 Sixth Movement

The sixth movement uses one of the most popular *jins* in the Arabic repertoire, *jins nahawand*.

Figure 37 shows the *jins nahawand* scale on a single staff. The scale consists of five notes: a half note (F), a quarter note (G), a quarter note (A), a half note (B), and a quarter note (C). The notes are written on a treble clef staff.

Figure 37 - *jins nahawand*

This is the *jins* I used to analyze and compare the music of traditional Arabic music and fusion music of Abdel Wahab and Zakiyya Hamdan. The notes of this *jins* are found on the piano and can be described as the first five notes of the Western minor scale.

The rhythm for this movement is *iqa wahda* 4/4. This *iqa wahda* is like *iqa rumba*, they both are in 4/4, and both have a division of 3+3+2. However, the difference lies in the formation of high pitch versus low pitch rhythmic sounds. In *iqa wahda*, the sound is divided as high pitch followed by two low pitch sounds. In contrast, *iqa rumba* has the same rhythmic value to *iqa wahda*, but its pattern consists of high pitch, low pitch, and high pitch instead of high, low, low.



Figure 38 *iqa wahda*

The movement is a fast dance. Every pitch instrument gets to play the melodic material and they pass around some of the more rhythmic elements. The instrument leading the rhythmic pattern is usually followed by another instrument echoing its value on the next eight-note. This alternation is also passed around by all the instruments.

Allegro moderato ♩ = 186

The musical score is for a piece in 4/4 time, marked 'Allegro moderato' with a tempo of 186 beats per minute. It features four staves: Violin, Oud, Piano, and Tambek. The Violin part begins with a whole rest, then enters in the third measure with a melody marked 'f'. The Oud part has a rhythmic pattern marked 'f'. The Piano part has a melody marked 'f percussive'. The Tambek part has a rhythmic pattern. The score is in 4/4 time.

Figure 39 – Piano's melody followed by the Violin

5.10 Seventh Movement

The seventh movement is the last slow movement and is located between two fast movements. It uses *jins kurd*, a mode in which all the notes are found on the piano.



Figure 40 - *jins kurd*

The piano begins in a rhythmic way, giving the 'ud and the violin the main melodic material. The piano instead accompanies them on *iqa kosh rang* 17/8. *Iqa kosh rang* is an exceedingly rare rhythmic pattern in the modern Arabic repertoire. I was attracted to it, however, for its long rhythmic phrase. Long rhythmic phrases are difficult to grasp, as

native to the Arabic world. The work started with a *jins* that does not fit the piano. However, we end in perfect harmony between all the ensemble instruments.

The rhythm is *iqa jurjina* 10/8, a rhythmic pattern that is popular in Iran and Iraq, but less popular in Egypt and Lebanon. The rhythm in this movement is the driving force, with the piano taking the lead melody with accents going against the *iqa* set by the 'ud and the violin pizzicato.

The musical score is for a piece in 10/8 time, consisting of eight measures. The instruments are Violin, Oud, Piano, and Doumbek. The Violin part is marked 'pizz.' and 'f', playing a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The Oud part is also marked 'f' and plays a similar rhythmic pattern. The Piano part is marked 'f' and plays a melodic line with accents. The Doumbek part is marked 'f' and plays a rhythmic pattern of eighth and sixteenth notes. The score is written in treble clef for Violin and Oud, and bass clef for Piano and Doumbek. The time signature is 10/8.

Figure 43 *Memories of Homs - Eight and final movement*

The rhythmic dissonance created between accents in different places creates a rich polyrhythmic structure. The melodic phrase always ends with a two-bar trill that puts the *iqa jurjina* on display. This movement is driving, a rhythmic pattern that does not let loose until the very end. The movement ends with all the instruments coming together

as one, with the accents matching the *iqa jurjina*.



Figure 44 - Rhythm agreement on *iqa jurjina*

5.12 Conclusion

Memories of Homs is a work that pays homage to Homs, a city that remains a vibrant and beautiful place in my memory. After the 2011 Syrian civil war, my grandmother's home was destroyed alongside most other buildings in the area. All the people and buildings I remember in Homs have been affected by the civil war. My family left Homs to whatever place in the world they were accepted. Not all made it. In 2019, my aunt Samar was able to travel back to Homs and to record the damage to my grandmother's home. She sent me a video of what remained from my grandmother's house: broken walls, ruins, and dust. I cried as I remember all the good memories of Homs. As I wrote this composition, I remembered the pre-war buildings in Homs, I remembered the pre-war friends in Homs, and I remembered the pre-war family in Homs. This is my own *Memories of Homs*.

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