

**Arab Music Vocabulary in Syrian Contemporary Clarinet  
Chamber Works**

by  
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A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts, The City University of New York

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in Music in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Musical Arts.

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## Abstract

### Arab Music Vocabulary in Syrian Contemporary Clarinet Chamber Works

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This dissertation examines three chamber music pieces by contemporary Syrian composers that use the clarinet, looking for different elements drawn from traditional Arab music and how they are used in a western contemporary context.

The three works studied in this dissertation are: *Qunitet* by Shafi Badreddine [Shafīʿ Badr al-Dīn] (b.1972), *Buhur* by Kareem Roustom [Karīm Rustom] (b. 1971), and *Quintet for the Damascus Festival* by Dia Succari, [Dīāʿ Sukkarī] (1938-2010).

From analysis of these works and from conversations I had with the composers, these central topics emerged: 1) how they use the *muwashshah* as a source of inspiration and 2) how they use *maqam*.

Using the *muwashshah* as a departure point, Roustom uses poetry meters in the entire piece, Badreddine only uses its general form and titles, while Succari based a number of his compositions on the main theme of a famous *muwashshah*.

While Roustom and Succari approach the *maqams* in a way that is somewhat less unconventional, Badreddine subjects them to a microscopic treatment that focuses on the qualities of a specific interval (or intervals) in a given *maqam*.

A central aim of this dissertation is to study how knowledge of Arab music affects the overall performance of these works, and to question whether these works challenge the performer differently from other western classical music works. Through this research it

became clear that such challenges do exist, and that a comprehensive performance of any musical work can only be achieved if work is put into learning the fine nuances specific to the culture from which the composer drew inspiration.

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This work is dedicated to my parents Hala Kahal and Bashar Azmeh.

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## Introduction

Being a clarinetist in a country such as Syria—where the instrument is not widely known and its use is limited to military bands<sup>1</sup>—has motivated me to search for new pieces so that my recitals and chamber music concerts might be less orthodox and more attractive. This search was also motivated by a deepening desire on my part to establish a connection between the clarinet and a still-unfamiliar Syrian public, as well as a desire to seek out Arab—and in particular Syrian—composers, whose voices have long been absent from the international music scene.

My interest in presenting new music by Arab composers goes back to the year 2000, when I left Damascus to pursue higher education in the United States. My led me to make personal contact with most, if not all, known contemporary Syrian composers. It was not long before some of them began to send me new works. In 2008, I was able to further pursue this interest by creating the Damascus Festival Chamber Players (DFCP), an entity that would gather a collective of musicians from different Arab countries who share the same passion for contemporary Arab music. Soon afterwards, the Syria Trust for Development, a non-governmental institution that supports cultural and development projects in Syria, adopted the launching of the project and offered to support it financially and logistically during its first year. The launching of the project in 2008 coincided with the Arab League's naming of Damascus as the cultural capital of the Arab world.

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<sup>1</sup> Shukry Shawqi, 1922-1989, was the first Syrian clarinetist in documented Syrian history to perform outside a military band context in the 1950's. Şamīm al-Sharīf, *Al-Mūsīqā fi Sūria*, 351.

In my capacity as Artistic Director of the DFCP, I invited four musicians—all of them known to me personally and professionally—to participate in an ensemble representing a variety of Arab nations. They are:

- Mayas Yamani (Syria), Violinist in the Qatar Symphony Orchestra;
- Wissem Ben Ammar (Tunisia), Principal Violist of the Opera de Tours, France;
- Hassan Moataz (Egypt), Associate Principal Cellist of the Qatar Symphony Orchestra and former Principal Cellist of the Cairo Symphony;
- Rami Khalife (Lebanon), Juilliard graduate and international solo pianist.

In addition to my role as Artistic Director, I played clarinet in the ensemble.

For the first edition of the project, which took the shape of a residency, I commissioned a new work from each of the following Syrian composers:

- Dia Succari (1938-2010), based in Paris until his death, and considered to be the father of Syrian classical music composers;
- Kareem Roustom (b.1971), based in Providence, Rhode Island; an active concert and film music composer;
- Zaid Jabri (b.1975), a doctoral student of Krzysztof Penderecki living in Krakow, Poland;
- Chafi Badreddin (b. 1972), a former teacher at the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus, currently living in Luxembourg.

A performance at the Damascus Opera House on March 13, 2008 marked the launch of the DFCP and the world premiere of these newly commissioned works:

- *Buhur*, by Kareem Roustom, for clarinet, violin, viola and cello;
- *Quintet*, by Chafi Badreddin, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano;
- *Quintet for the Damascus Festival*, by Dia Succari, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano;
- *In Memoriam*, by Zaid Jabri, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and tape.

In November 2008, these four works were recorded by the DFCP and released by the Syria Trust for Development in an album entitled “Syrian Contemporary Chamber Music.”

For the second edition of the project, which also took place in Damascus in the spring of 2011, I commissioned another pair of Syrian composers:

- Nouri Iskandar (b. 1938), based in Damascus;
- Rami Chahin (b. 1976), based in Oldenburg, Germany.

A performance at the Damascus Opera House on May 26, 2011 marked the premiere of these newly commissioned works:

- *Flowers Ceremony of Sadness*, by Rami Chahin, for clarinet, violin, viola and cello;
- *Oriental Miniatures*, by Nouri Iskandar, for clarinet, violin, viola and cello.

Exposure to the works of these Syrian composers and to those of other Arab composers whose music I have studied and performed over the past few years has made me aware of

a deep connection that unites these works: a dependence upon the traditional Arab musical vocabulary.

This study will focus on how elements drawn from traditional Arab music are incorporated into three of the commissioned works: *Quintet for the Damascus Festival* by Succari, *Buhur* by Roustom, and *Quintet* by Badreddine. It will examine the different techniques used to achieve this synthesis, and will analyze some of the performance obstacles specific to the traditional Arab musical vocabulary found in these works.

These three composers span two generations and represent three separate cultural and musical backgrounds. My study of their music is informed by the friendships I have developed with them and by my familiarity with their earlier works, many of which I have premiered. My connection to them affords me access to their sketches and draft copies and the opportunity to talk to them in candid and collegial circumstances. To my knowledge, this is the first scholarly work on contemporary Syrian music.

For the English spelling of Arabic words, I have followed two basic rules:

Words and names that have familiar English forms have been left unchanged; when transliteration from Arabic to English is necessary, I have followed the system used by *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*. This system may be found in the website<sup>2</sup> listed below and is also reproduced as Appendix 1 of this dissertation.

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<sup>2</sup> <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ijmes/docs/TransChart.pdf>.

For all the scores, mm. refers to the measure number, and all clarinet scores appear in their concert pitch unless noted otherwise.

## **Chapter 1: History and background**

### **I. Historical background of Western classical music in the Arab Near East**

To best understand the western classical music scene in Syria from a historical perspective, it is important to look at Turkey, Lebanon, and Egypt who played, and still play, a major role in the shaping of modern-day Syria, both politically and culturally.

#### **Turkey**

Although Turkey is not part of the Arab world, it shares with the Arab Near East a long history spanning the whole of the Ottoman Empire (1299-1923); this shared history has affected many aspects of political and cultural life in the lands it controlled. The formation of the Turkish republic in 1923 was not a declaration of independence from a colonizer, but rather a final separation from the collapsing Ottoman Empire. Turkey's godfather, Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, tirelessly sought to connect Turkey with its European neighbors to the west, and in so doing, implemented some extreme measures: the adoption of the Latin alphabet as the only official alphabet; the closing of religious schools; and the banning of Sufi practices such as the Mevlavi traditions. Beginning in 1925, traditional Turkish music—which was by then negatively associated with Ottoman traditions—was suppressed. Traditional music was taught only in a small department at the Istanbul conservatory, and played by a single radio ensemble. Musicologist Samha el-Kholy describes this curious move:

While most national cultural awakening movements are a product of a socio-political change, Turkey witnessed the opposite. Atatürk's

modernism and secularism adopted a strictly westernized direction and tried to cut all the ties with Turkey's political and cultural past.<sup>3</sup>

The suppression of traditional music was aided by an encouragement of western classical music education: Ankara's conservatory was founded in 1936, followed by the founding of conservatories in Istanbul and other cities. Opera houses were founded at the same time, and composers were encouraged to write accessible Western music that incorporated elements of Turkish music. It was during this time that a national Turkish school of composition was founded (in the western classical music sense), which was supported by Turkish radio. Most of its music programming was devoted to works from the Western classical tradition, new Turkish works composed in a western style, and arrangements of folk music; Very little airtime was given to traditional Turkish art music. In the 1960s and 70s, traditional music began to be rediscovered in Turkey, and began to take its place among the newer, westernized works. But by then the Atatürk years—the second quarter of the 20<sup>th</sup> century—had given an intense boost to the Turkish national school of composition and had launched it in a decidedly western direction. It was this school that gave the world the works of pioneers such as Adnan Saygun (1907-1991),<sup>4</sup> Cemal Resit Rey (1904-1985), Necil Kazim Eksis (1908-1999), and İlhan Usmanbaş (b. 1921), and it continues to do so to this day. The many active Turkish classical performers and composers in Turkey and abroad still draw their inspiration from it.

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<sup>3</sup> Samha el-Kholy. *al-Qawmiah Fi Mūsīqā al-Qurn al-'Ishrin*: 213.

<sup>4</sup> For more information on Adnan Saygun see *A Biography of the Turkish Composer Ahmed Adnan Saygun and a Discussion of His Violin Works* by Selim Giray.

## **Lebanon**

Lebanon was a pioneering center for Arabic culture during most of the twentieth century. Because of the openness of its capital—and coastal—city Beirut, and also because of Lebanon's historical importance as a melting pot for many civilizations, intellectual and cultural life flourished there for most of the twentieth century, even during French colonization. From 1975 to 1990, however, the country was torn apart by a devastating civil war that claimed thousands of lives and decimated its cultural life.

Until the war, scholars had regarded Beirut as being the most westernized city of the Arab Middle East, and many Lebanese and other Arab thinkers and intellectuals had found in Beirut an open and safe haven in which they could do their creative work. These were among the pioneers of the Arab nationalism movement from the beginning of the early twentieth century. Naturally, music developed under such circumstances, which led to the foundation of *Dār al-Mūsīqā* (the Music House) by the musicologist, conductor, and organ player Wadie Sabra, who had studied music in Paris before returning to Lebanon in 1910. Later, *Dār al-Mūsīqā* was supported by the government and was renamed the Lebanese National Conservatory. In 1959, The Conservatory became an autonomous national institution under the supervision of the Minister of Education. After the civil war, the Conservatory resumed its activities, was upgraded in 1995 to a national institution of higher education, and was given its current name: The Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music.

In 1999, Walid Gholmieh (1938-2011), president of the Lebanese National Conservatory, founded the Lebanese National Symphony Orchestra and the Oriental Arabic Orchestra of the Conservatory.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the profound turmoil of the civil war years, Lebanon still holds a leading position among neighboring Arab countries in terms of international music festivals, such as the Baalbeck, Beiteddine, Byblos, and al-Bustan festivals. Moreover, these festivals are frequently visited by international artists from the western classical music world. But a vibrant local classical music scene outside the frame of the aforementioned festivals has not yet developed.

Musicologist Samha al-Kholy credits the establishment of a Lebanese National school of composition to Bertrand Robillard (d. 1964)<sup>6</sup>, a French organist who taught composition at the Conservatory. Robillard encouraged his classically trained students to experiment contrapuntally with Arab music vocabularies in their more western works, as he believed that it would best suit their needs in accommodating the quartertones of Arabic *maqams*. Among the pioneers of the Lebanese classical music scene, Touffic Succar (b.1922), Boghos Gelalian (b.1927), and Tawfiq al-Basha (b. 1954) were taught by Robillard. Because of the civil war, most of the younger generation of Lebanese composers still live and work abroad. The strong ties they maintain with their homeland may be found in their musical works.

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<sup>5</sup> From the official website of the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music [www.conservatoire.org.lb](http://www.conservatoire.org.lb).

<sup>6</sup> Samha el-Kholy, *al-Qawmiah Fi Mūsīqā al-Qurn al-'Ishrin*, 222.

## Egypt

Of all Arab nations, Egypt was the first to embrace western classical music, for it was during the reign of Muhammad Ali (1769 –1849) that a marching band school was established to complement the plan for a well equipped Egyptian Army. The Cairo Opera House, established in 1869 by Muhammad Ali’s grandson Khedive Ismail, was inaugurated by a commission to Verdi, for which he wrote the opera *Aida*. While this venue, and the many visiting artists who came to perform in it, gave Egypt an early lead in the cultivation and appreciation of western classical music, opera remained for many years an adopted art form, intended mainly for the elite and for the expatriate community in Egypt. Yet western influence did encourage music amateurs among the Egyptian intellectual elite to compose, even if most of these compositions were just simple melodies for the piano, the instrument of the aristocracy, and written for informal salon gatherings.

The beginnings of a serious movement to compose in the style of western classical music began with three composers, all of whom began their music education by studying the traditional Arab music of the time: Yusef Greiss (1899-1961), Hassan Rasheed (1896-1969) and Abu Bakr Khairat (1910-1963). The latter is considered to be the grandfather of the Egyptian national school of composition and was the first to use popular Egyptian melodies in his orchestral works.<sup>7</sup> Egyptian radio, which began broadcasting in the 1930s, played a major role in exposing the Egyptian public to a variety of musics, including works from the western classical tradition. It also encouraged and supported the formation of a series of ensembles, one of which was the Egyptian Radio Orchestra. This

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<sup>7</sup> Zain Naṣṣar, *al-Mūsīqā al-Maṣria al-Mutaṭawira*, 60.

was the first classical orchestra in Egypt, and it later on became the Cairo Symphony Orchestra. The founding of this orchestra encouraged many Egyptians who had studied music abroad to return to Egypt and practice their musical creativity at home. Following the revolution of 1952 and the demise of the monarchy, the Cairo Conservatory was founded. Its graduates became performers in—and composers for—the Cairo Symphony Orchestra, the Opera Orchestra, and other musical ensembles and music institutions around the country.

While the earliest signs of an Egyptian national school of composition can be found in the works of Greiss, Rasheed, and Khairat and dated to the 1930s, their music went unnoticed by the general public until after the revolution, when the doors to artistic experimentation were opened, and Egyptian musicians received both financial and moral support from the government. Composers of all genres of music finally had orchestras that would play their works at the opera house, which then became a musical venue accessible to all Egyptians.<sup>8</sup>

Most of the first generation of westernized Egyptian composers were amateurs, and the nationalist elements in their music were informed more by enthusiasm than by a thorough musical education. Because of this, the Egyptian nationalist movement in music was different from its counterpart in Turkey. Nevertheless, this does not lessen the historic importance of those composers who paved the way for today's Egyptian national school of composition.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> For more information on the Cairo Opera House see *Khamsūn 'Aman min al-Mūsīqā wal-Opera* (Fifty years of music and opera) by Ṣaleh Abdūn.

<sup>9</sup> Samha el-Kholy, *al-Qawmiah Fi Mūsīqā al-Qurn al-'Ishrin*. 232.

## Syria

Evidence of western classical music practice in Syria dates back to the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth centuries, but the classical music scene in modern Syria cannot be understood without an understanding of the geopolitical position of Syria from its independence in 1947 until today. The earliest histories of classical music in Syria credit a Russian nobleman named Erhast Belling (dates unknown), who had been conductor of the Imperial Court of Russia in St. Petersburg until fleeing the Russian revolution in 1916. Belling took up residence in Damascus in the early 1930s and while there taught piano and violin privately to many Syrian students, among whom were Walid al-Hajjar<sup>10</sup> and Sadek Pharaon.<sup>11</sup> He also encouraged the formation of different chamber ensembles, many of which regularly performed at the Glass Hall of the Orient Palace Hotel in Damascus, as well as in private concerts.<sup>12</sup> Baron Belling, as he is mostly known, left Damascus in 1954 for Beirut, leaving behind a number of prominent students, some of whom went on to become professional musicians in Syria. More importantly, he left behind a fascination for classical music among art lovers in the elite society of Damascus that he had carefully fostered during his stay.

From a systematically pedagogical perspective, western classical music in Syria is a relatively new phenomenon dating back only to the mid-1960s, when the first children's music school was founded in Damascus and named The Arab Conservatory (later to be renamed after its founder, Solhi al-Wadi). This school endured and expanded through the

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<sup>10</sup> b.1932, pianist, novelist and composer.

<sup>11</sup> A Syrian medical doctor and amateur musician. He currently lives in Damascus and writes frequently on music and reviews concerts in local Syrian newspapers.

<sup>12</sup> Şamīm al-Sharīf, *al-Mūsīqā fi Sūria*, 2011, 679

years and gave birth to the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus in 1990, and later the Syrian National Symphony Orchestra in 1993.

Solhi al-Wadi (1934-2007) is considered to be the grandfather of western classical music in Syria. Born in Baghdad to an Iraqi father and a Jordanian mother, he began studying violin and composition at the local conservatory while attending Victoria College in Alexandria, Egypt. Later, he pursued musical studies at the Royal Academy of Music in London in 1953. Solhi al-Wadi returned to Damascus in 1960, with a goal to establish a more serious music scene in Syria. This led him to found the Arab Conservatory of Music in 1962, which he directed. The school focused on teaching western classical music to young students, with a focus on violin, piano, viola, and cello, as well as the oud - the traditional Arabic lute- and qanun, followed a few years later by other orchestral instruments. The political climate of the 1960s, 70s and 80s were favorable to al-Wadi, and he was able to bring qualified teachers from the Soviet Union to his school, a practice that has continued until the present day on account of the support Syria receives from Russia. Many of these teachers chose to settle permanently in Syria and have now become part of the classical musical scene in Syria.

In 1990, after years of bureaucratic obstacles, the Higher Institute of Music and Drama was founded, offering a bachelor's degree in music and theater. In addition to his duties as professor of western classical music history, orchestral studies and music appreciation, al-Wadi was appointed dean. As the principal conductor of the Syrian National Symphony Orchestra (SNSO), which he also founded in 1993, al-Wadi toured as a

visiting conductor around the world and took his orchestra on a number of tours, most importantly in Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Spain, Turkey, Germany, and the USA. Under his baton, the SNSO delivered the first ever opera performance to be produced in Syria: Henry Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, which was performed in 1995 at the historic Roman amphitheater of Bosra. For this achievement he was awarded the Order of Merit, Syria's highest civilian award. al-Wadi also composed a number of orchestral, chamber, and solo works; some of his most performed works are *Meditation on "Hayati inta"* by Mohammed Abd el-Wahaab for Symphony orchestra (1992), *Love Poem* for String Orchestra (1966), and *Trio* for piano, violin and cello in memory of Dmitri Shostakovich (1975).<sup>13</sup>

Though he died in 2007, his legacy lives on in the many generations of students who graduated from both schools he directed. These include Shafi Badreddine, Rami Chahin, and Zaid Jabri, some of whom will be discussed later in this dissertation. Other pupils of his continue to lead the institutions he founded: Nahel al-Halabi, a graduate of the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus, class of 2000, became Dean of the Arab Conservatory; Athil Hamdan, a graduate of the Arab Conservatory became Dean of the Higher Institute of Music, and Missak Baghboudarian, a graduate of the Higher Institute of Music (class of 1995), and a personal student of al-Wadi, became the principal conductor of the Syrian National Symphony Orchestra. These musicians are among a select few of the many professional musicians, composers, and educators whose lives were touched by al-Wadi.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Şamīm al-Sharīf, *al Mūsīqā fi Sūria (a 'lām wa tārīkh)* (Music in Syria (names and history)) 2011, 694.

<sup>14</sup> For more information on the modern musical life in Syria see *Among the Jasmine Trees: music and modernity in contemporary Syria* by Jonathan Holt Shannon.

## II. The use of the clarinet in the Arab world

The mijwiz<sup>15</sup>, kawala<sup>16</sup>, mizmar,<sup>17</sup> and the most well known and widely used of all wind instruments, the ney,<sup>18</sup> have always been present in traditional Arab music. Yet while there have always been prominent ney players in the bands of legendary traditional Arab music composers and singers such as Abdel-Wahab<sup>19</sup> and Umm Kulthum,<sup>20</sup> the oud has always been the “king” of Arabic instruments—a tradition that is not much changed to the present day. And whereas the clarinet takes center stage in many traditional Turkish and Greek ensembles, the instrument is rarely if ever found in Arabic ensembles.

With the exception of Egypt, which has long had a tradition of classical music performance, appreciation of classical music in the rest of the Arab Near-East is a relatively new phenomenon. Certain western instruments, primarily the violin and the cello, seem to have quickly been assimilated into traditional Arab music ensembles; the rest, however—the woodwind and brass families; the piano; and curiously, the viola—remain relatively unknown to the general public. And classically trained clarinetists in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq are, for the most part, confined to the orchestral repertoire. Their audience has had little if any exposure to the repertoire of solo and chamber clarinet works, save for the few recitals that have been given by a handful of local

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<sup>15</sup> A single-reed instrument consisting of two, short, bamboo reed pipes put together, commonly used in Syria and Jordan.

<sup>16</sup> An end-blown cane flute used in Arab music. It is similar to the ney but has six finger holes instead of seven.

<sup>17</sup> It generally refers to any single or double reed wind instrument. In Egypt, the term Mizmar usually refers to the conical shawm that is called Zurna in Turkey.

<sup>18</sup> An end-blown flute commonly used in Middle Eastern music. It consists of a piece of hollow cane or reed with seven finger holes.

<sup>19</sup> Mohammed Abdel-Wahab (1899-1991), a prominent 20th-century Egyptian singer and composer.

<sup>20</sup> Umm Kulthum (1898–1975), an Egyptian singer, songwriter, and actress, widely regarded as the greatest female singer in Arab music history.

clarinetists and other foreign visiting artists. It is little wonder that there are almost no works dedicated to the instrument that date prior to the 1980s, and no Arab clarinetists who have achieved any real measure of respect on the international stage. I must also note that of all the sources I have consulted regarding classical music in Egypt, there is not a single mention of a clarinet player, though a few oboists and flutists are named.<sup>21</sup>

In the last quarter of the twentieth century, there began to be more clarinetists who have either graduated from conservatories in Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, or who, as amateurs, have joined military bands in their respective countries. The presence of experienced clarinetists offered Arab composers for the first time an opportunity to experiment with the instrument. And inspired by its flexibility of sound, large dynamic range, and broad register, these composers began to produce new works, both solo and ensemble, for the clarinet.

In looking back across western clarinet repertoire, one might wonder what it might have been if had Mozart never met Stadler, or had Brahms never met Mühlfeld. Would we now have the clarinet works of Copland, Bartók, and Hindemith were it not for Benny Goodman? In like manner, albeit with totally different cultural and geographical surroundings, Arab composers developed a relationship with Arab clarinetists such as Shukry Shawqi (1922-1989) in Syria, Mohamed Hamdy (b.1951) in Egypt, Sabah Hanna Butros (b.1932), and Munir Allawerdi (b.1926) in Iraq. The music that came out of these partnerships plays a small yet important part in the world's clarinet repertoire. According to Ṣamīm al-Sharīf, Shukry Shawqi—with whom I studied while a student at the Arab

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<sup>21</sup> ‘Abdel-Ḥamīd Tawfiq Zaki, *al-Mu‘asirūn Min Ruwwād al-Mūsīqā al-‘Arabiya*.

Conservatory of Music, 1984-1989—is considered to be the pioneer of Syrian clarinet playing.<sup>23</sup> Born and raised in Damascus, Shawqi began playing the harmonica before picking up the clarinet after joining the Syrian Army Band at a young age. His enthusiasm for music, supported by Baron Erhast Belling, made him look beyond the limited repertoire of military marches and led him to study the classical music repertoire for clarinet and piano. He also drew from the vast violin-piano repertoire to make arrangements for clarinet. His dire financial situation, however, compelled him to work in local nightclubs playing for dancers, and during this period, he began to experiment with improvisation and jazz. He collaborated with some of the many German musicians who wound up in Syria after the Second World War, forming a chamber orchestra that did not survive for long when the Germans left a few years later. He then moved to Saudi Arabia where he lived for some twenty years before returning to Syria to teach at the Arab Conservatory of Music until his death in 1989.<sup>24</sup> He is known to have composed a few works for clarinet and orchestra, which were never performed.

**Appendix 2** at the end of this chapter lists all known works for clarinet (solo, chamber and orchestra) by Arab composers of the Near-East, organized in chronological order by composer's date of birth. These works are primarily by Egyptian, Syrian, Lebanese, and Jordanian composers, though there are a few works by composers from Sudan, Libya,

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<sup>23</sup> Ṣamīm al-Sharīf, *al Mūsīqā fi Sūria (a'lām wa tārikh)* (Music in Syria (names and history)), 2011, 318

<sup>24</sup> Ṣamīm al-Sharīf, *al Mūsīqā fi Sūria (a'lām wa tārikh)* (Music in Syria (names and history)), 2001, 319

Bahrain, and Palestine.<sup>25</sup> I again note that very few of these works were composed prior to 1984.<sup>26</sup>

The absence of the clarinet from the Arab music traditional ensemble (unlike nearby countries such as Turkey and Greece in which the clarinet has a prominent role) puts these works in a special historical perspective.

From a general perspective, these works vary in form, style, and the harmonic language.

What they have in common however is the use of Arab music elements in the melodic material. Most of the works I have studied and performed avoided the use of microtonality, which is considered to be one of the most unique aspects of Arab music. In my opinion, this indicates either unfamiliarity with the instrument and its capacities in producing quartertones, a limited knowledge of Arab *maqams* and the way they should be treated in western-instruments ensembles, or both.

### **III. Biographies of the composers and a brief presentation of the works covered in this study**

Arab composers writing in a western style, have frequently used elements of traditional Arab music in different ways and to different extents. This study will focus on three pieces by three Syrian composers, each with his own approach to the traditions of Arab music. All of these works were commissioned and premiered by the Damascus Festival Chamber Players, for which I serve as clarinetist and artistic director. Examples of the different use of the elements of Arab music will be explored using these works as case

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on Western classical music in Palestine see *Orientalism and Musical Mission: Palestine and the West* by Rachel Beckles Willson.

<sup>26</sup> The date of composition of *Piece*, by Abu Bakr Khairat, is not known but is thought to date to the 1950s.

studies. Below, I will introduce the reader to these composers and provide a list of their works as well as a brief description of the works chosen for this study.

**Dia Succari** [Dīā' Sukkarī] (1938-2010, Syria)

Scholars consider Dia Succari to be a pioneer among Syrian composers.<sup>27</sup> He was born in Aleppo, and began his musical training on the violin with his father, an amateur violinist who gave Dia and his brother Nejmi their first lessons. Later, he studied with Miehcel Boricenko, a Russian musician who had fled the Bolshevik revolution and taken up residence in Syria in 1921. Within a few years, the two brothers were awarded a presidential award from the Syrian government to continue their studies at the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris. It was in France that Succari began his professional musical training, studying composition and orchestral conducting with Jenin Rueff, Henri Challan, Noel Gallon, Marcel Bitsch, Robert Blot, Tony Aubin, Manuel Rosenthal, and Olivier Messiaen. After finishing his studies in Paris, Succari returned to Damascus and briefly taught harmony at the Arab Conservatory (1967-1969), but he did not find the musical scene in Syria to be amenable to his needs. He returned to France and spent the rest of his life there, teaching at institutions such as the Conservatory of St. Denis, G.Gourdet Conservatory, Conservatoire National de la Région de Paris, and the Sorbonne.

Though Succari was a dedicated pedagogue, he also composed more than sixty works, most of them for chamber ensembles. The influence of the French school of composition—and in particular that of his mentor Messiaen—is apparent in many of his

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<sup>27</sup> Ṣamīm al-Sharīf, *al Mūsīqā fi Sūria (a'lām wa tārīkh)* 2011, 710.

works. But so are elements borrowed from traditional Arab music and culture: for example, he incorporates Sufi poetry into his work *Oublie ce que tu as appris* (forget what you have learned) for narrator, voice, and small orchestra (1975); he asks for improvisations, usually known as *taqasim*, in the *Chantss d'Urnina* for clarinet and piano (1986); and he uses traditional Arabic rhythms and modes in the *Quintet for Damascus Festival* (2008). His ground-breaking work, *Efface ce que tu as écrit* (erase what you have written)—a piece for tape written and recorded in 1976 that drew elements from the earlier *Oublie ce que tu as appris*—is considered a landmark in the contemporary Arab music repertoire, combining western and eastern instruments, chants with Sufi texts and tape. Dia Succari died in Paris in 2010.

***Quintet For Damascus Festival, by Dia Succari***

This work is in three movements (18 minutes in duration): *Samah Modern, Calm* and *Princes Dance*. It was Commissioned by the Damascus Festival Chamber Players (DFCP) through the Syria Trust for Development, and received its world premiere at the Damascus Opera House by the DFCP on March 13, 2008. Since then, it has been performed several times by the DFCP in Lebanon (Beirut), Syria (Aleppo and Deir-Ezzor) and Jordan (Amman), and was released on the album “Syrian Contemporary Chamber Music” in November 2008, also by the DFCP

**Kareem Roustom** [Karīm Rustom] (b. 1971, Syria/USA)

Kareem Roustom was born in Damascus in 1971 to a Syrian father and an American mother. When Kareem was thirteen, the family moved to the United States, where he developed an interest in jazz. He earned his BA in music at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, then moved to Los Angeles, where he pursued a career as a film composer. Between graduating and relocating for a few years to Los Angeles, he returned briefly to Syria, where he heard the oud for the first time. He describes this encounter as revealing a new set of possibilities, and as leading to the discovery of his own voice. His interest in traditional Arab music encouraged him to study ethnomusicology at Tufts University, from which he graduated in 2006 with a master's degree. Now active as a concert and film composer, Roustom teaches Arab music performance at Tufts University and resides in Providence, Rhode Island.

His film music, most of which was composed for films about the Middle East—*Encounter Point*, *Amreeka*, *Budrus*, *The Mosque in Morgantown*, and *My Neighborhood*—relies heavily on traditional Arab melodies and rhythms. His concert music employs maqams and Arab rhythms, but not in conventional ways. Instead, he tends to use these forms as a point of departure, such as his use of maqam in *Letters Home* (2011), and the use of Arabic poetry meters in his chamber work *Buhur* (2008).

***Buhur* by Kareem Roustom**

This work is in three movements (19 minutes in duration): *Ramal*, *Kamel* and *Mutadarak*. It was commissioned by the Damascus Festival Chamber Players (DFCP) through the Syria Trust for Development, and received its World premiere at the Damascus Opera

House by the DFCP on March 13, 2008, in addition to other performances by the DFCP in Lebanon (Beirut), Syria (Aleppo and Deir-Ezzor) and Jordan (Amman). The piece has been recorded and released on the album “Syrian Contemporary Chamber Music” in November 2008, also by the DFCP. The piece has also been performed in the United States by the Ibis Camerata, Concord, Massachusetts; the Apple Hill Chamber Players in East Sullivan, New Hampshire; and by the Philadelphia Orchestra Chamber Players in Philadelphia.

**Shafi Badreddine** [Shafī` Badr al-Dīn] (b. 1972, Syria)

Shafi Badreedin was born in 1972 in al-Suayda` in the Syrian south, and began studying music—and in particular, the oud—at an early age. His formal studies began when he entered the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus in 1992, majoring in oud, clarinet, and music theory. During his years in music school, when he proved himself to be an accomplished oud player, Badreddine began to experiment with composition. Later, he was able to pursue this interest more seriously at the Conservatoire Supérieur de Lyon in 2002, focusing on composition and electro-acoustics. His mentors have included Daniel Gaudet, Christophe Modaut and Stéphane Borel. He has also studied orchestral conducting with Sebastian Berau in Dijon, and Carlo Jans in Luxembourg. He taught for a number of years at the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus before moving to Luxembourg, where he currently lives.

His early works *Impression I*, *Impression II*, and the *Ney Concerto*, demonstrate sharply contrasting compositional styles. *Impression I* and *II* are written in a dissonant and contemporary musical language, while the *Ney Concerto* mixes traditional Arabic

melodic lines and rhythms with conventional harmonies. His later works show a gradual departure from the conventional to the abstract and avant-garde, and a more subtle and analytical way of treating the same traditional elements that were equally found in his earlier works. His most recent works—the *Quintet*, and the *Suite* for clarinet and cello—show a unique way of treating *maqam*.

***Quintet* by Shafi Badreddine**

This work is in three movements (12 minutes in duration): *Estehlal*, *Dokah* and *Khitam Kar*. It was commissioned by the Damascus Festival Chamber Players (DFCP) through the Syria Trust for Development and received its world premiere at the Damascus Opera House by the DFCP on March 13, 2008. Additional performances by the DFCP include Lebanon (Beirut), Syria (Aleppo and Deir-Ezzor) and Jordan (Amman). The piece was released on the album “Syrian Contemporary Chamber Music” in November 2008, also by the DFCP.

## Chapter 2: The use of the *muwashshah* traditions

Traditional and folkloric music has been a source of inspiration for composers around the world for centuries. Twentieth century and contemporary classical composers have explored traditional repertoire in search of elements that would give their new works a special and unique voice. Composers such as Adnan Saygun in Turkey, Béla Bartók in Hungary, and Aaron Copland in the United States were inspired by traditional music and were, in turn, models for the next generation of composers to incorporate traditional elements into their new music.

Syrian composers of modern classical music have also experimented with the use of traditional elements in their works for at least two reasons: to make their works more accessible to audiences at home who consider classical music to be an art form imported from the West, and the belief that non-western elements will distinguish their works from those of their western colleagues.

The *muwashshahat*,<sup>28</sup> considered to be the most developed musical poetry in Arabic culture, continue to inspire composers in the Arab world. The Jordanian composer Saed Haddad has used its form in his *Muwahshah* for clarinet and piano, as has the Syrian composer Shafi Badreddine in his *Quintet*. Others have used famous *muwashshahat* melodies as a point of departure for their compositions, in particular, the Egyptian Abu

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<sup>28</sup> Plural for *muwashshah* in Arabic

Bakr Khairat and the Syrian Dia Succari. Both have based works on the melody of the famous *muwashshah* “*Lamma Bada Yatathanna*,” by al-Maslūb.<sup>29</sup> (See below, Ex.2.1) In addition to being the most celebrated musical art form of the Arabs, the *muwashshah* conjures in the Arab psyche the golden age of the Arabs in Andalusia.<sup>30</sup> This makes it an even more tempting source of inspiration for Arab composers educated in the western tradition but in search of the highest art form of their musical heritage.

Traditionally, the *muwashshah* has the following poetry structure:

- 1- *Matla'* is the opening; it is also referred to as *lazimah* or *estehlal*
- 2- *Dawr*, also referred to as *madhhab*
- 3- *Khana*, a section that is repeated after every few *dawrs*, the last of which is called the *khitam*
- 4- *Qafla*, the ending; it is usually based on the same melodic material found in the *matla'*

As a musical composition, the *muwashshah* has the following structure:

- 1- First *dawr*: the first theme
- 2- Second *dawr*: a repetition of the first *dawr* with different lyrics.
- 3- *Khaneh*: another melody with new lyrics.
- 4- The *kharija* or *khetam*: the repetition in all or part of the first *dawr*'s melody

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<sup>29</sup> Mohammad Abd al-Raḥīm al-Maslūb, Egyptian composer (1793-1928). Some scholars have attributed *Lamma Bada Yatathanna* to his compatriot Salim al-Masri

<sup>30</sup> For more information on Andalusian music see *History of Arabian Music (to the 13<sup>th</sup> century)* by Henry George Farmer.

In this Chapter I focus primarily on elements of the *muwashshah* that found their way into the works of those composers being studied here: the use of its form, rhythms and melodies.

## I. Kareem Roustom's *Buhur*

According to the composer:

The inspiration for this work came from my research into the connection of poetic meter and musical meter of the Near Eastern vocal repertoire known as the *Muwashshah*. In studying this connection, I began to see the inherent rhythmic structure of the Arabic poetry known as the ‘*urud*. These structures are derived from sixteen poetic meters known as the *buhur*,<sup>31</sup> a word that also means “seas.” Although none of the three movements are based on any specific poems, they are based on three of the sixteen *buhur*—*Ramal*, *Kamel* and *Mutadarak*—and they use the rhythmic patterns as a point of departure. The music attempts to convey the varied emotions that a typical poem in the *muwashshah* may express, albeit in a modern way. The melodic material is derived from loose interpretations of *maqam*. It is a testament to these ancient Arab poetic structures that they can still inspire the imagination to explore these “seas” well over a thousand years after their creation.<sup>32</sup>

Omar Abdel-Raḥman al-Ḥumṣī, in his book *al-Mūsīqā al-‘Arabiya*, states that poetry was central to the cultural life of pre-Islamic Arabia, and that the poets’ use of rhythm, rhyme, and meter, put them on a par with musicians. The famous Arab musician al-Farabi<sup>33</sup>, author of *Kitab al-Mūsīqā al-Kabīr (The Grand Book of Music)*, held that poetry and music originated from the same root: the balance between movement and stillness. It was customary that the poet would decide on the meter and rhyme before the writing process began. These poetic meters are based on the number of units, the combination of short

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<sup>31</sup> The correct transliteration according to IJMES table should be *buhūr*, but I will use instead the composers’ spelling *buhur* and its singular *bahr*.

<sup>32</sup> From the composer’s program notes used in the printed program of the premiere performance.

<sup>33</sup> Known as Alfarabius in Latin (878-950 ACE), a Muslim polymath, logician, musician and one of the greatest scientists and philosophers of the Islamic world in his time.

and long syllables, often across more than one word, defines the meter to which the poem belongs.

Arabic poetic meters were used in pre-Islamic times, but were first systematized in the eighth century by al-Khalil bin Ahmad al-Farahidi,<sup>34</sup> who codified that poetic meters should be based on the length of syllables. In his system, a consonant followed by a short vowel makes a short syllable, a consonant followed by a long vowel makes a long syllable, two consecutive vowels make a long syllable, and a *tanwīn*<sup>35</sup> on the last letter of a word makes the final syllable long. The *bahr*<sup>36</sup> on which a specific poem is constructed can only be identified by substituting the words of every poetry line into a sequence of short and long syllables, and by looking at the order of these syllables. It is by using the same *bahr* that a specific poem displays a consistent pulse and rhythm.<sup>37</sup>

The verb *fi'l* (“to do” in English) is always used as a reference to determine the conjugation of every word and also as a rhythmical reference consisting of a short syllable followed by a long one. In *Buhur*, Roustom used the various forms of this three-letter, two-syllable verb as a musical reference by notating a long syllable as a quarter-note and a short syllable as an eighth-note. A similar notational rule was also suggested by al-Ḥumṣī.<sup>38</sup> One can argue that in any language, a long syllable does not have to be precisely twice the length of the short syllable. This rhythmical notation technique will help identify where and how the *bahr* is used in the musical examples below.

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<sup>34</sup> More commonly known as al-Farahīdī (718–791), he was a philologist from southern Arabia.

<sup>35</sup> The addition of a vowel sound at the end of a word in the Arabic language.

<sup>36</sup> Singular in Arabic for *buhur*.

<sup>37</sup> For further reading on the rhythmical aspects of Arab poetry please refer to George Dmitri Sawa's *Rhythmic Theories and Practices in Arabic Writings to 339 AH/950 CE*.

<sup>38</sup> Omar Abdel-Raḥman al-Ḥumṣī, *al-Mūsīqā al-'arabiya*, 202

The three movements in *Buhur* are each based on a different *bahr*, or poetic meter, hence the title of the work. The composer states that the three *buhur* were chosen for the variety they provide: *al-Ramal* (the running), *al-Kamel* (the complete) and *al-Mutadarak* (the continuous).

These *buhur* can only be found in classical Arab poetry, in which each line of poetry is a *bayt*, and each half-line is a *shatr*. (See Ex. 2.8)

The use of Arabic poetry as a source of inspiration is not new, and has in fact long been used in the *muwashshahat* traditions where setting a poem to music serves to highlight the aforementioned short and long syllables. It is important to note, however, that the poetry used in the *muwashshahat* did not follow the strict rules of meters set by al-Farahidi.<sup>39</sup> In fact, the breakthrough in setting poetry for the *muwashshah* in Andalusia was the fact that it allowed the poet to break all known poetic rules. This freed the poet from the strict rules of ‘*urud*, and in turn offered new kinds of freedom to the composer in the creative process of setting these poems to music. Example 2.1 below is one of the best-known *muwashshahat*, “*Lamma Bada Yatathanna*” by Muhammed Abdel-Rahīm al-Maslūb.

lam mā ba- dā ya.ta than. nā ā mā na mā na mā na mān hub.

bī ja mā lu fa tan nā ā mā na mā na mā na mān

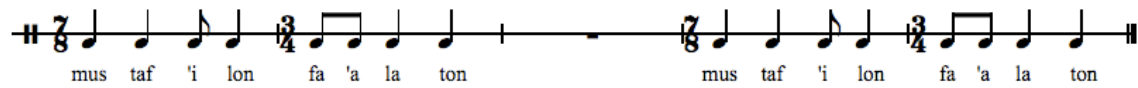
Ex. 2.1: First *Dawr* of the *muwashshah* “*Lamma Bada Yatathanna*”, The first measure is often repeated twice.

<sup>39</sup> Omar Abdel-Rahman al-Ḥumṣī, *al-Mūsīqā al-‘arabiya*, 135

Here is the first *bayt* of the poem transliterated into Roman alphabet; the long (L) and short (S) syllables:

Lam-ma ba-da yatathan-na ..... Hub-bi ja-ma-lu fa-tan-na  
 L L S L SSL L..... L L S L S S L L  
*Mus taf 'i lon, fa'a la ton.....Mus taf'i lon, fa'a la ton*

If we use Roustom's notation method to set this sequence, we end up with the following metrical pattern:



Ex. 2.2: Rhythmic transcription of "*Lamma Bada Yatathanna*"

This meter does not match any of the sixteen known poetic meters, and suggests that the poems found in *muwashshahat* did not follow the strict poetic rules set by al-Farahidi. In setting this poem to music, al-Maslūb did not follow the unit's subdivision suggested by the poetic meter; instead, he used a steady common meter in 10/8 called *Sama'i Thaqil* on which he imposed his melody, often ignoring the metric subdivisions of the poem.

The comparison below demonstrates how the rhythm of the melodic line accommodates the rhythm of the words of the poem rather than the subdivision of the poetic meter. The lower line shows how the melodic rhythmic divisions would appear had the composer strictly followed the meter of the poetry treating each short syllable as half of a long.

Ex. 2.3: Comparison between the rhythmic divisions of the melody (above), and the poetry (below)

This creates an interesting contrast between the traditions of the *muwashshah*'s poem, which often does not follow the strict rules of traditional Arabic poetry, and the melodies to which the poem is set. Thus the melody of this *muwashshah* does not strictly follow the meter of the poem, and is used rather to sing the poem as a whole.

What is innovative about *Buhur* is that it does not set poetry, yet still uses the structure of a poem to dictate the rhythm of its melodies while following the rule in which a long syllable is twice as long as a short one. This structure is often ignored in traditional *muwashshahat*. The poetic meter in *Buhur* is foremost, and the melodies are composed to fit into it. This stands in contrast with the way a *muwashshah* is traditionally composed, where there is a predominant rhythm for the music that is not only derived from the poetic meter, but also from the rhythm of the words which have more verities than just short and long syllables.

In the first movement of *Buhur*, the composer used the basic rhythm of the poetic meter of *al-Ramal*; Ex. 2.4 below illustrates its rhythmic pattern:

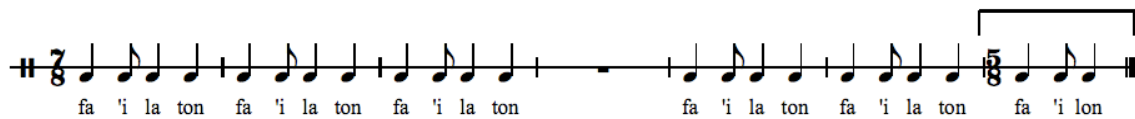
fa 'i la ton fa 'i la ton fa 'i la ton      fa 'i la ton fa 'i la ton fa 'i la ton  
*fa'i-la-ton, fa'i-la-ton, fa'i-la-ton |-----| fa'i-la-ton, fa'i-la-ton, fa'i-la-ton*  
 L SLL ,L SLL ,L SLL L      L SLL , L SLL L ,L SLL L

Ex. 2.4: *Bahr "al-Ramal"*

This basic meter of the *bahr* creates the rhythmical pulse of the movement and also shapes the structure of the movement as a whole.

In his adaptation of the poetic meters, Roustom establishes a rule that the long syllable is twice as long as the short. This rule has not been much observed in the traditional composition of *muwashshahat* where composers have often set the long syllables to extended melismatic passages.

According to al-Farahidi, the *al-Ramal* has a basic structure of six repeated *fa'ilton* with three in each *shatr*. This repetition is evident on the rhythmic level, though not necessarily on the meter of the words used, as the latter can be built on part—or more than one—of the *Fa'ilton* units. Moreover, these meters are not rigid, and are able to accommodate many variations, especially at the end of every *shatr*. One of the common variations in this *bahr*, called *Mahzūf*, is the replacement of the last *Fa'ilton* with *Fa'ilon*.<sup>40</sup>



Ex. 2.5: The use of *Mahzūf* in the second *shatr*.

Since this work primarily showcases different poetic meters, the composer opens this movement with an introductory section featuring sextuplets in the clarinet and violin, and quintuplets in the viola, giving no clear pulse save for the strong downbeats that are marked by the cello mm. 1-5, followed by a slower, non-metric chordal section,

<sup>40</sup> Omar Abdel-Rahman al-Ḥumsī, *al-Mūsīqā al-'arabiya*, 184-186

mm. 6-11. These two sections, both of which are metrically ambiguous, suggest a contrasting tapestry upon which the entrance of the featured element of the movement—the clear rhythm of *bahr Al-Ramal*—will be projected.

In the construction of this movement, the composer used the main *bahr* and its variations, as well as variations on its *Fa'ilaton* unit.

An example of variations is found in the viola at measure 12. Instead of the traditional formation of the *bahr*, however, in which there are three units in every *shatr*, we hear the viola repeating the main *Fa'ilaton* of the *bahr* 4 times (mm. 12-15) before the entrance of the cello with the first *shatr* at mm. 16. However, the viola hints at how the *bahr* is usually constructed by changing the third measure and breaking its last two long syllables *la* and *ton* into eighth notes.

10 *tr* *pizz.* *mf*  $\text{♩} = 172$

fa 'i la ton fa 'i la ton fa 'i la ton

Ex. 2.6: The viola (above) repeating the unit *Fa'ilaton* of the *bahr* (below) (mm. 12-15)

The first appearance of the *bahr*, as it is usually used in poetry, can be found in the main melody played by the cello in measure 16. The *bahr* is introduced here through one of its variations—*Mahzūf*—with a 5/8 bar at the end of the *shatr* instead of the usual 7/8.

Ex. 2.7: The use of *Mahzūf* as it appears in the cello in mmm. 16

While the composer uses the pulse of these poetic meters as his framework, he also incorporates the pauses traditionally taken between the two *shatrs*<sup>41</sup>, and the longer pauses between two consequent *bayts*. This feature appears frequently in the main melodies that carry the *buhur* of the three movements. See, for instance, the cello melody starting at measure 16, and note how he replaces poetry pauses with sustained notes in measure 19 (a 2/4 measure) and again in mm. 23-24. These pauses are a representation of the way Arabic poetry is printed on the page, where a space separates the two *shatrs*. Here, in a poem by ‘*Antara Ibn Shaddad*<sup>42</sup> from the early 7<sup>th</sup> century, is an example of how Arabic poetry looks like on the printed page:

قَدْ كُنْتُ فِيمَا مَضَى أَرْعَى جِمَالَهُمْ ..... وَالْيَوْمَ أَحْمِي حِمَاهُمْ كُلَّمَا نَكَبُوا  
 لِلَّهِ دَرُّ بَنِي عَبَسٍ لَقَدْ نَسَلُوا ..... مِنْ الْأَكَارِمِ مَا قَدْ تَنَسَلُ الْعَرَبُ  
 لَتَنْ يَعِيبُوا سَوَادِي فَهَوَ لِي نَسَبٌ ..... يَوْمَ النَّزَالِ إِذَا مَا فَاتَتِي النَّسَبُ  
 إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ يَا نَعْمَانُ أَنْ يَدِي ..... قَصِيرَةٌ عَنْكَ فَالْأَيَّامُ تَنْقَلِبُ  
 الْيَوْمَ تَعْلَمُ , يَا نَعْمَانُ , أَيَّ فَتَى ..... يَلْقَى أَخَاكَ الَّذِي غَرَّهُ الْعَصَبُ

Ex. 2.8: Arabic poetry as it looks on the page.

<sup>41</sup> For simplification purposes, I shall use *bayt(s)* and *shatr(s)* for plural of *bayt* and *shatr*.

<sup>42</sup> ‘*Antara Ibn Shaddad*, ?-525 ACE, one of the most renowned poets in pre-Islamic Arabia.

This is also the way the *buhur* are constructed; the first part is completed by the second part after a short pause, and a longer pause is expected between two consecutive *byats*. This applies not only to the way poetry is printed on the page but also to the way it is recited. The reading of the first *shatr* always creates an anticipation that can only be completed by the second *shatr*. This practice may be found in vocal forms in traditional Arab music such as the *muwashshah* and the *dawr* -The latter is considered to be the most important vocal form in Arab music and believed to have originated in Egypt in the 19<sup>th</sup> century<sup>43</sup>- in which a short musical interlude of few bars separates the two parts of a poetry line.<sup>44</sup> This can clearly be seen in *Lamma Bada Yatathanna* in example 2.1, in which the singer uses the word “*Aman*”<sup>45</sup> while singing through the interlude that separates the two *shatrs* of the poem. Here, this melodic interlude has become an essential part of the melody of the *muwashshah* as a whole.

We can also attribute Roustom’s use of pauses to his extensive study of the work of Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī,<sup>46</sup> which he documents in his thesis *A Study Of Six Improvisations On The ‘Ud By Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī*. Roustom was inspired not only by al-Sunbāṭī’s use of *maqam*, a point which I will demonstrate in chapter 3, but also by his use of pauses in his improvisations on the oud. Roustom believes that al-Sunbāṭī’s frequent pauses in his studio recordings were influenced by both Arabic poetry and Qur’anic recitations.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>43</sup> Maḥmūd al-Ajjān, *Turathuna al-Mūsīqī*, 11

<sup>44</sup> Maḥmūd al-Ajjān, *Turathuna al-Mūsīqī*, 15

<sup>45</sup> “*Aman*”, a word that means “peace” in Arabic, commonly used by singers in the Near-East for vocalization of lyric-less musical passages and for vocal improvisations.

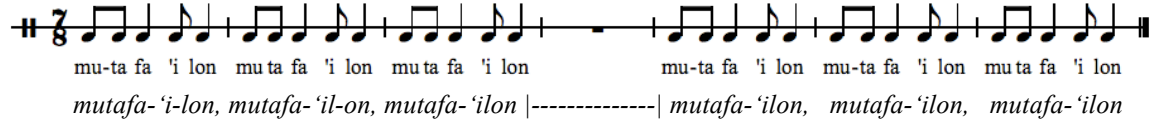
<sup>46</sup> Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī (1906-1981), Egyptian composer and oud player, best known for his collaboration with the legendary Egyptian singer Umm Kulthūm.

<sup>47</sup> Roustom, Kareem, *A Study of six improvisations on the ‘Ud by Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī*, 63

Table 2.1 below shows how the first movement incorporates the general form of a poem written in *bahr al-Ramal*:

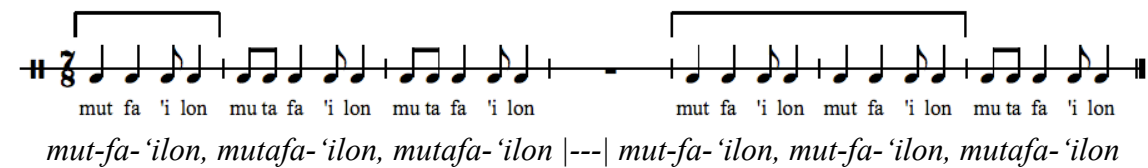
<b>Table 2.1: The relation to poetry in Roustom's first movement</b>		
<b>Measures</b>	<b>Function in Relation to Poetic Form</b>	<b>Instrument</b>
1-5	First introduction with no clear pulse and no relation to the poetic meter	all
6-11	Second introduction in slower tempo and no relation to the poetic meter	all
12-14	First appearance of the <i>fa'ilaton</i> motive. It is an irregular presentation as it repeats 4 times	viola
16-18	First <i>shatr</i> using the <i>Mahzūf</i> variation	cello and viola
19	Small pause between the two <i>shatrs</i>	
20-22	Second <i>shatr</i> using the <i>Mahzūf</i> variation	cello and viola
23-24	Longer pause before proceeding to the next <i>bayt</i>	
25-27	First <i>shatr</i> in the <i>Mahzūf</i> variation	cello and viola
28-29	An unexpected longer-yet-rhythmical pause imitating an instrumental cadence	all
30-32	Second <i>shatr</i> in the <i>Mahzūf</i> variation	cello
33-34	Long pause before the next <i>bayt</i>	
35-37	A <i>shatr</i> in unison that ends abruptly with the return to the viola line of measure 12, also repeating the unit 4 times (This <i>shatr</i> never meets its other half)	clarinet and cello
38-41	Second appearance of the irregular four-times-repeat of the <i>fa'ilaton</i> motive	viola
42-47	A <i>bayt</i> made of two <i>shatrs</i> connected without a pause, using a variation of the <i>bahr</i> called <i>Majzū'</i> in which there is a reduction of the rhythmical value in the <i>shatr</i> with every repeat of the main rhythmical motif <i>fa'ilaton, fi'laton, fi'lon, fa'ilaton, fa'ilaton, fi'lon</i>	cello
48	Pause in the <i>bahr</i> while the clarinet, violin and viola create a contrasting 3/8 pulse to be imposed on top of the cello line in the following section	
49-52	Another appearance of an irregular <i>shatr</i> in which the rhythmical unit is repeated 4 times. This appearance stands in sharp contrast with the 3/8 pulse created by the clarinet, violin and viola	cello
53-70	Return of the material found in the first introduction	
71-77	Return of the slow chordal progression found in the second introduction	

As its title indicates, the second movement is based on the *bahr Al-Kamel*, with the following meter:



Ex. 2.9: The *bahr "al-Kamel"*

The composer, however, chose for this movement a specific version of the *bahr* that offers him a variety of subdivisions within the 7/8 unit, interchanging a quarter note with two eights notes.



Ex. 2.10: Variety of the 7/8 unit in *al-Kamel*

The movement opens with the cello playing a quotation from transcribed solo oud improvisations by Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī.<sup>48</sup> Two bars later the melody is picked up by the viola while the cello plays the role of the drone holding down G as the root of the *maqam*; this will be explained in chapter 3 when I discuss the role of *maqams* in the piece.

Even though this section is in 3/4 and 4/4 meter, there is no clear pulse; beaming notes across the bar lines contributes to the ambiguity. Starting at measure 6, the clarinet and violin create a rhythmical pattern that gets compressed with time, further stressing the absence of pulse. The instruments start playing almost identical motives separated by a quarter note in measure 6, a gap that gets reduced to an eighth by the third beat of

<sup>48</sup> Roustom's interest in al-Sunbāṭī's improvisation is well documented in his master's degree thesis, *A Study of six improvisations on the oud by Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī*

measure 7, then finally into a sixteenth by the second beat of measure 9. These rather chaotic gestures get resolved through an elaborate, three-measures-long statement in unison by all the instruments, resembling a final cadence of an oud player finishing his introductory improvisations before the first *bayt* is to be sung.

After this “instrumental” introduction, the poem starts. We can clearly follow in Table 2.1 above how every part of the first movement corresponds in one way or another to a poem written in the same *bahr*. The melodic materials in the second movement are used in a similar fashion, divided into two *shatrs* with the appropriate pauses and with longer pauses between the second *shatr* and the following first *shatr* of the following *bayt*.

The first appearance of the *bahr* is in the clarinet in measure 13. For his melody, the composer uses the exact rhythm that his version of the *Al-Kamel* provides.



Ex. 2.11: The first appearance of *al-Kamel* in the clarinet, mm. 13

The only variation to the poetry meter found in this is the *Maqtū'*, which substitutes the last unit of the *shatr*, *mutafa-'ilon*, with a shorter unit *mut-fa'lon*. This can be found in the clarinet melody in measure 37 and measure 67.



Ex. 2.12: The use of *Maqtū'* in the clarinet at the end of a *shatr* (mm. 35-37), followed by a musical rest mm. 38-39

The composer breaks his pauses rule (a short pause between the two *shatrs* and a longer pause between two *bayts*) on two occasions. This happens either by deleting the pause

altogether and connecting the two *shatrs*, or by introducing a short non-poetic instrumental section that serves as a pause between two *shatrs*. This is evident in the following examples in the clarinet in measure 32:

Ex. 2.13: An elimination of the pause at measure 35 in the clarinet.

Table 2.2 below demonstrates how the composer took the form of a poem and imposed it on the structure of the movement.

Table 2.2: The relation to poetry in Roustom's second movement		
Measures	Function in Relation to Poetic Form	Instrument
1-6	First introduction with no clear pulse and no relation to the poetic meter, quotations from oud improvisations by Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī	cello and viola
6-9	Second introduction, more agitated with a time compression feature between the clarinet and the violin; no relation to the <i>bahr</i>	all
10-12	A closing statement imitating the ending of an instrumental introduction before the start of the poem; still no relation to the <i>bahr</i>	all
13-15	First <i>shatr</i> using <i>Al-Kamel</i>	clarinet and cello
16	Small Pause between the two <i>shatrs</i>	
17-19	Second <i>shatr</i>	clarinet and cello
20-21	Longer pause before proceeding to the next <i>bayt</i>	
22-24	First <i>shatr</i>	clarinet and cello
25	Small Pause between the two <i>shatrs</i>	
26-28	Second <i>shatr</i>	clarinet and cello

Table 2.2 continued		
29-31	Long pause before the next <i>bayt</i>	
32-37	A <i>bayt</i> made of two <i>shatrs</i> ; the pause between the two is eliminated here; the second <i>shatr</i> is in the <i>Maqtū</i> ' variation	clarinet
38-39	Longer pause before proceeding to the next <i>bayt</i>	
40-45	A full <i>bayt</i> made of two <i>shatrs</i> without a pause	clarinet
45	At the end of the preceding <i>bayt</i> , the composer substitutes the expected long pause between two <i>bayts</i> with just a comma	
46-48	First <i>shatr</i>	clarinet
49-50	A longer than usual pause between the two <i>shatrs</i>	
51-53	Second <i>shatr</i>	clarinet
54-55	A pause similar in length to the previous pause	
56-58	An additional <i>shatr</i> ending with a short pause (fermata)	clarinet
59-64	A contrasting section with no clear pulse, no use of the <i>bahr</i> ; this can be looked at as an instrumental separation section between two independent <i>shatrs</i>	all
65-67	Another independent <i>shatr</i> that completes the <i>shatr</i> of mm. 56-58; this <i>shatr</i> uses the <i>Maqtū</i> variation	
68-69	A closing statement imitating an <i>ad libitum</i> unison among all accompanying instruments	violin, viola and cello
70-72	First <i>shatr</i> (first appearance by the violin)	violin
73-74	Pause between the two <i>shatrs</i>	
75-77	Second <i>shatr</i>	violin
77	An unexpected short pause	
78-81	An additional irregular <i>shatr</i> that does not follow any of the <i>bahr</i> standard variation by repeating the <i>mutafa- 'ilon</i> unit four times instead of three	all
82-89	Another poetry-less section that incorporates the same material found in the introductory section (mm. 6-9)	all
90-92	First <i>shatr</i>	violin and cello
93	One 4/4 bar pause between the two <i>shatrs</i> , which becomes standard for the rest of the movement	
94-96	Second <i>shatr</i>	violin and cello
97	Pause between the two <i>bayts</i> , also one 4/4 bar in length	
98-100	First <i>shatr</i>	violin and cello
101	Pause between the two <i>shatrs</i> , also one 4/4 bar in length	
102-104	Second <i>shatr</i>	violin and cello

As we can see from the table above and of all the three movements, this one is the closest in form to a poem. The structure of the movement clearly depicts poetry recitation on the same *bahr*.

The third movement is based on the *bahr Al-Mutadarak* with the following meter:

fa 'i lon    fa 'i lon    fa 'i lon    fa 'i lon                      fa 'i lon    fa 'i lon    fa 'i lon    fa 'i lon

*fa- 'ilon, fa- 'ilon, fa- 'ilon, fa- 'ilon* |-----| *fa- 'ilon, fa- 'ilon, fa- 'ilon, fa- 'ilon*

Ex. 2.14: The *bahr* “*al-Mutadarak*”

The structure of this movement contrasts to the preceding movements in its not so strict observation of the poetic meter rules. This is can be largely attributed to the repetitive nature of the chosen meter for the movement *al-Mutadarek*, which consists of repeated measures in 5/8 meter. The composer does present the *bahr* in it entirety a few times, but later in the movement he departs from that, using the main unit of the 5/8 metric pattern as his departure point while rarely observing the *bahr* in its full length.

At the opening of the movement (see Ex. 2.15 below), both violin and viola clearly state the rhythm of the first *shatr* of the *bahr*. Our full sense of the pulse, however, remains incomplete. This is due to the syncopated rhythmic line in the cello which adheres to the 5/8 time signature, but executes a different set of subdivisions (mm.2,4,7). Later on, this unit of the *bahr* and its variation will become the prominent division.

Clarinet in B $\flat$

Violin I

Viola

Cello

$\text{♩} = 138$

*f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

*tenuto* *tenuto* *tenuto*

Ex. 2.15: Opening of the third movement, mm. 1-8

Here the composer deviates from his previous way of dealing with the pauses between the *shatrs*. In the first two movements, the pauses are filled mostly with sustained chords. In the third movement, however, these pauses are replaced by rhythmically active gestures that correspond to the fast and energetic nature of the movement as a whole; (see Ex. 2.15, measure 6).

While mm. 2-10 set out a clear statement of the *bahr* (with its two *shatrs* and pauses), the composer immediately thwarts any expectation of symmetry by adding a third *shatr* in measure 14. The only appearance of the full *bahr*, with its balanced pair of *shatrs* and appropriate pauses, can be found in the melody played by the clarinet beginning measure 21; (see Ex. 2.16 below). The only variation is the use of sixteenth-notes as grace notes on the beat (mm. 22-24, 30).

Clarinet

Cl.

Ex. 2.16: Full *bahr* in the clarinet, mm. 21-30

Starting in measure 189, the composer manipulates the subdivisions of the *bahr*'s 5/8 meter to create a tapestry of mixed 5/8 meters. The clarinet, violin, and cello have different pulses within the measure.

Ex. 2.17: Subdivisions of the 5/8 meter in all voices

The composer uses a poetic variation of the *bahr* called *Mashṭūr* in which a *bayt* is cut in half<sup>49</sup>. Measures 92-96 shown in example 2.18 demonstrates how both *shatrs* (mm.92-93 and mm.94-95) are now only two measures each, and how they are separated by a one-bar pause using a rest in the clarinet and sixteenth notes in the strings similar to the way the pause was played at the opening of the movement (Ex. 2.15).

<sup>49</sup> Omar Abdel-Raḥman al-Ḥumṣī, *al-Mūsīqā al-'arabiya*, 194

Ex. 2.18: The use of the *Mashtur* variation at mm. 92-97

In measure 200, the composer also applies one of the standard poetic permutations of the *bahr*: omitting the second syllable of the basic unit and converting *fa-i-lon* to *fa-lon*.

This technique is called *al-Khubn* and it reduces the meter of the unit from the 5/8 pulse into a contrasting 8/8.

Ex. 2.19: Rhythmic and poetic divisions of *al-Khubn*

Roustom inserts this change, beginning measure 200, in a fashion that is similar to the way it is used in poetry; (see Ex. 2.20). Here he uses it to showcase a contrast with the rest of the movement, both with the change of meter and the scoring for strings only.

It is important to note that all this section in 8/8 uses *al-Khubn* without any pauses and repeats it 4 times (mm. 200-215).

The image shows a musical score for measures 199 and 200. The score is for four instruments: B♭ Clarinet (B♭ Cl.), Violin I (Vln. I), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vlc.).  
 - At measure 199, the key signature changes to one flat (B♭) and the time signature changes to 5/8.  
 - At measure 200, the time signature changes to 8/8.  
 - The B♭ Clarinet part consists of rests in both measures.  
 - Violin I plays a melodic line starting in measure 199 with a forte (ff) dynamic. In measure 200, it continues with a melodic line.  
 - Viola and Violoncello play accompaniment. In measure 199, they play with a forte (f) dynamic. In measure 200, they play with a forte (ff) dynamic and a 'ben marcato' (marked) articulation.  
 - The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 2.20: The use of *al-Khubn* in the third movement beginning at measure 200, which stands in contrast with the 5/8 meter of the movement.

The last appearance of a clear statement of the *bahr*—this time in a melodic fashion without a pause and with an additional *shatr*—starts in the cello at measure 263 with a standard *shatr* in four bars, followed by two *shatrs* in the violin in measure 267 which are also played without a pause. This reminds us of the first unconventional appearance of the *bahr* in the opening of the movement where it is introduced in a purely rhythmical fashion in three *shatrs* with pauses. This compression of time leads the movement to an eleven-bar finale that draws its musical elements from the fast and energetic material found in the pauses of the introduction of the movement.

Table 2.3 shows the sequence of transformations of the poetic meter in the third movement:

<b>Measures</b>	<b>Function in Relation to Poetic Form</b>	<b>Instrument</b>
2-5	First <i>shatr</i>	strings
6	Small pause between the two <i>shatrs</i> using sixteenth notes	strings
7-10	Second <i>shatr</i>	strings
11-13	Longer pause before proceeding to the next poetry line, also using sixteenth notes	strings
14-17	A variation on a <i>shatr</i> using different pulses within each measure.	strings
18-20	Another Long pause before the next <i>bayt</i> , with the use of glissando.	strings
21-24	First <i>shatr</i> with added ornaments	clarinet
25-26	Small pause between the two <i>shatrs</i> using a held note and a pause in the clarinet. Juxtaposed to sixteenth notes in the violin and a variation of the motif <i>fa- 'ilon</i> in the viola and cello	all
27-30	Second <i>shatr</i> with ornaments	clarinet
31-68	No clear use of the <i>bahr</i> , but an obvious use of the main motif <i>fa- 'ilon</i>	all
69-75	A compressed version of the <i>bahr</i> in which each <i>shatr</i> is three bars and no use of poetic pause	clarinet
76-91	No clear use of the <i>bahr</i> , but an obvious use of the main motif <i>fa- 'ilon</i>	strings
92-93	First <i>shatr</i> in the <i>Mashṭūr</i> variation in which each <i>shatr</i> is cut in half	clarinet
94	Small pause between the two <i>shatrs</i> , also using the <i>Mashṭūr</i> which made the poetic pause only one measure long using sixteenth notes in the strings and a rest in the clarinet	all
95-96	Second <i>shatr</i> in the <i>Mashṭūr</i> variation	clarinet
97	Another small pause substituting what is expected to be a longer pause between the two <i>shatrs</i> . Also using the variation <i>Mashṭūr</i> using sixteenth notes in the strings and a rest in the clarinet	all
98-199	No clear use of the <i>bahr</i> , but an obvious use of the main motif <i>fa- 'ilon</i>	all
200-216	A section in the string using <i>al-Khubn</i> variation	strings
217-262	No clear use of the <i>bahr</i> , an obvious use of the main motif <i>fa- 'ilon</i>	all
263-266	<i>Shatr</i> with added ornaments	cello
267-274	Two <i>shatrs</i> played without pause	violin
275-285	No use of the <i>fa- 'ilon</i> in this closing section	

## II. Shafi Badreddine's *Quintet*

While the title of Badreddine's composition *Quintet* does not indicate much about the form of the piece, the titles of its three movements, which are to be played continuously, clearly suggest the form from which the composer drew his inspiration. The first and last movements of the work are titled *Estehlal* and *Khetam-Kar*, both of which refer to different sections of a *muwashshah*. *Estehlal*, or *Matla'*, which means "beginning," is the name usually given to the first *khana* in the *muwashshah*; *Khitam*, meaning "the closing," is the name usually given to the last *khana*.

It is also significant that the name of the last movement is not simply *Khitam* but *Khitam-Kar*, which refers to the *maqam* used in the movement—*Hijaz-Kar*, in which *Kar* refers to the chromatic movement starting on the lowered second degree, passing by the tonic and the raised seventh degree, and returning to the tonic. The middle movement, *Dokah*, does not refer to a section in a *muwashshah*, but rather is the Persian word for the second degree in the musical scale D on which the tonality of the movement is based.

In my conversation with Badreddine, the composer explained his use of form:

For me, structure is the most important [element] as it controls how the piece is created. In fact, I do believe that composition is all about structure. To be able to compose you have to understand structure, which requires analytical skills. When I was commissioned, you told me that you wanted something that would sound oriental, a request that did not matter much for me, as I believe this comes naturally. I took the *muwashshah* as a point of departure [since it has a] form similar to the one found in the

Western *lied*: ABA. This is why I ended up with three connected movements.<sup>50</sup>

The references to the *muwashshah* in *Quintet* are found in the names of the first and last movements and also through the similarities of the sections that give the piece its A-B-A' structure so similar to that of a *muwashshah*. The similarities between *Estehlal* and *Khetam-Kar* (the A & A' sections) are demonstrated in the contrast of both of these movements with the much slower middle movement. In addition, the similarity is shown by the use of the *jins Hijaz* in both of these movements: *Hijaz* in the first and *Hijaz-Kar* in the last.

Though Badreddine used the *muwashshah* as a point of departure, he did not incorporate traditional melodies from any known *muwashshah*; instead, he used *Quintet* as a vehicle to showcase a wide variety of influences from the Syrian folkloric tradition, the most important of which is his use of *maqam*, especially in the middle movement.

### III. Dia Succari's *Quintet for the Damascus Festival*

There are two distinct styles of writing in this three-movement quintet. The first and third movements draw heavily upon the elements of traditional Arab music, while the middle movement belongs to the French school, and in particular to the style of Fauré. The composer nevertheless includes elements of *maqam* in the melodic writing throughout.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> From a conversation with the composer in Damascus on December 14<sup>th</sup> 2009

<sup>52</sup> See chapter 3 for the discussion on *maqam*.

In his program notes, the composer states that the first movement is based on a melodic motif inspired by traditional singing and constructed on an irregular rhythmic pulse of 11/8, divided into groups of 3+3+2+3.

According to al-Ḥumṣī, the only Arab music meter in 11/8 is *al-Fajr*, which has a 3/8 + 4/4 divisions. He also notes that no *muwashshah* with that meter has been found<sup>53</sup>, though there are few *muwashshahat* in an 11/4 meter called *al-‘uīṣ*.

The *muwashshah's* influence in the first movement of *Quintet For The Damascus Festival* is found in the melodic motif, which is shown below as it appears in the piano (mm.3-5).

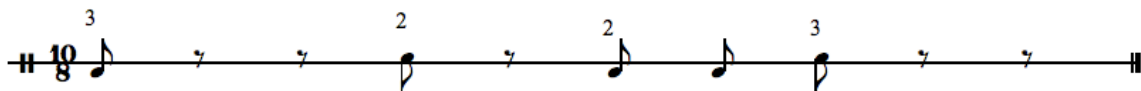
Ex. 2.21: Main melodic motif of the first movement in the piano's right hand, mm. 3-10

I believe that this material is based on one of the most well known melodic lines in Arab culture, *Lamma Bada Yatathanna*. (See Ex. 2.1). In fact, Succari has used it many times in his previous compositions, such as in *Au palais du temps* for flute and Harp and the

<sup>53</sup> Omar Abdel-Rahman al-Ḥumṣī *al-Mūsīqā al-‘arabiya*, 104

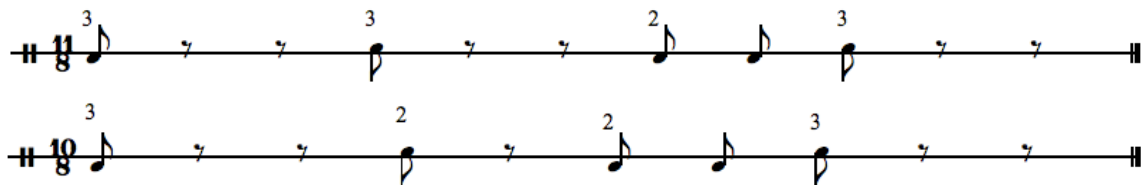
movement *Passion* from his ensemble piece *Oublie ce que tu as appris*. His frequent use of this line demonstrates his fascination with the *muwashshahat* traditions and *Lamma Bada Yatathanna* in particular. This *muwashshah*, being among the best known in the genre, has been used in many classical music works by Arab composers such as the Egyptian Abu Bakr Khairat.<sup>54</sup>

The original melody of *Lamma Bada Yatathanna* (Ex. 2.1) is in a 10/8 meter called *Sama'i Thaql*, with a (3+2+2+3) subdivisions.



Ex. 2.22: *Sama'i Thaql*

The 11/8 time signature of Succari's first movement lends itself easily to the melodic motif that was inspired by the *muwashshah's* melody. This is done by adding an eighth note to the second group of the subdivision so it becomes 3+3+2+3 instead of the traditional 3+2+2+3 subdivisions of *Sama'i Thaql*.



Ex. 2.23: Succari's 11/8 meter (above) and *Sama'i Thaql* (below)

In Succari's work the main theme is in 6 measures, while the main melody of the *muwashshah* is in either four or five measures, depending whether the first measure is repeated or not (see Ex.2.1).

<sup>54</sup> Samha el-Kholy, *al-Qawmiah Fi Mūsīqā al-Qurn al-'Ishrīn*, 241

Ex. 2.24 below is a comparison between the first two measures of the main melody of the first movement of his *Quintet for the Damascus Festival* and the main melody of the original *muwashshah* using the five measure version of the latter with the repeated first measure.

Ex. 2.24: The original *muwashshah* (above): mm. 3-4 from the quintet (below)

From the perspective of structure it is clear that the first measure is repeated, as in the original melody. The composer has also kept the *maqam* of the *muwashshah*, *Nahawand* on C, while using only the descending version of it, which does not raise the seventh degree (contrary to the B natural in the original).

Ex. 2.25: *Maqam Nahawand on C*

Finally, the upbeat of the original melody has not been retained. It is important also to notice that the additional eighth that Succari added to his time signature does not much change the overall shape of the melody.

There is no clear connection between the third bar of the *muwashshah* and the third and fourth bars of the main theme in *Quintet*. For the middle measure of the *muwashshah*,

Succari has inserted two measures, the second of which functions as a musical rest with no harmonic movement.

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It contains the lyrics "mā na mā na mā na mān hub" with a measure rest indicated by a vertical line. The piano accompaniment is in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats. It features complex rhythmic patterns, including a 3+2+3 time signature, and a measure rest in the bass line.

Ex. 2.26: The third measure of the *muwashshah* (above); Quintet mm. 5-6 (below)

Succari squeezes the harmonic function of the last two measures of the *muwashshah* into the last measure of his melody. The B natural in Succari's last measure shows us his connection to the full *maqam* of *Nahawand* (both ascending and descending).

The image shows a musical score for a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line is in a single staff with a treble clef and a key signature of two flats. It contains the lyrics "bī ja mā lu fa tan nā ā mā na mā na mā na mān lam". The piano accompaniment is in two staves (treble and bass clefs) with a key signature of two flats. It features complex rhythmic patterns, including a 3+3+2+3 time signature, and a measure rest in the bass line.

Ex. 2.27: The 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> measures of the *Muwsashshah* (above); Quintet mm. 7-8 (below)

To further demonstrate the connection between the main theme of the first movement and that of *Lamma Bada Yatathanna*, it is important to note that Succari's fascination with the *muwashshah* as a form, and the *muwashshah* "*Lama Bada Yatathanna*" in particular can be traced back to many of his earlier works. In fact, we can see two earlier uses of the melody and variations of it in the thirteenth movement, *Passion*, from his work *Oublie ce*

*que tu as appris* which he composed in 1975. Example 2.34 below is how the melody appears in the qanun part:



Ex. 2.28: Early traces of *Lamma bada Yatathanna* form the qanun part of Succari's early work *Oublie ce que tu as appris* mm. 3-7

This melody is obviously the origin of that found in the quintet. Though these melodies are in two different time signatures and keys (here in *Nahawand* on D), the similarity between them is unmistakable. The main difference is the lack of a raised seventh; the additional eighth note does not much change the melodic material from the earlier version composed in 1975.

The pulse of the melody in the movement *Passion*, whose time signature is 10/8 divided into 3+3+2+2, has a similar division of that of the quintet (overlooking the additional eighth note at the end of the latter). As has been demonstrated above in Ex. 2.31, both remind us of *Sama'i Thaqil*, which has different subdivisions (3+2+2+3).

It is in this work that we find the origins of Succari's treatment of the main theme found in the quintet. The main theme is five measures long. The first two are almost identical to the first two measures in the quintet. The third, fourth, and fifth measures are drawn closer to the original *muwashshah* with two main differences: the shift of the barlines so that the upbeat becomes the downbeat, and the lack of the raised seventh.

Another use of *Lamma Bada Yatathanna*'s main theme can be found in Succari's 1989 work *Au palais du temps*. Here, the composer adopts the melody of the *muwashshah* (this time in *Nahawand* on F) almost without change save for the following: the melody is shifted by one eighth note, changing its pulse and the feeling. It is no longer an upbeat, and this dramatically changes how the melody works against its traditional meter of the *Sama'i Thaqil*. Example 2.35 below shows this:

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The first staff starts with a treble clef, a key signature of three flats (F major/D minor), and a mezzo-forte (mf) dynamic marking. The melody consists of eighth and sixteenth notes. The second staff continues the melody with similar rhythmic patterns. The third staff concludes the phrase with a fermata over the final note and the instruction 'Cédez ----' below it.

Ex. 2.29: The main theme of *Lamma Bada Yatathanna* as it appears in *Au palais du temps* mm. 3-7

In both *Passion* and *Au palais du temps*, the composer suggests the 3+3+2+2 division, instead of the traditional divisions of the *Sama'i Thaqil*, to accommodate his decision to include the upbeat in the measure.

## Chapter 2 Conclusion

Based on the observations on the three pieces by Roustom, Badreddine and Succari, it is clear that Roustom, Badreddine and Succari, all used elements of the *muwashshah* as a departure point. Roustom uses poetry meters used to a certain degree in the *muwashshahat* in the entire piece, Badreddine only uses its general form and titles, while Succari based a number of his compositions (including the first movement of his *Quintet for the Damascus Festival*) on the main theme of one of the most celebrated *muwashshah*: *Lamma Bada Yatathanna*.

### Chapter 3: The use of *maqam*

*Maqam* [*maqām*] is a system of pitch organization and melodic modes used in traditional Arab music, whether “composed” in the western sense or improvised. *Maqams* can be realized with either vocal or instrumental music and do not include a rhythmic component. Some of the *maqams* used in Arab music can be compared to known western modes and scales: *Nahawand* to the minor, *Ajam* to the major and *Hijaz* to harmonic minor starting on the 5<sup>th</sup> degree, to name just a few. These similarities and differences have been at the center of the debate over the well-tempered Arab scale ever since it was brought into the spotlight during the first congress on Arab music in Cairo in 1932.<sup>55</sup> It is also important to note that modulations in *maqam* theory follow a similar fashion found in western classical music where it is common that a composer modulates between different keys and tonalities based on their proximity to each other, though following known rules and practices.

*Maqam* theory is considered to be the quintessential aspect of much traditional music of eastern cultures, and is known under different names such as *Makam* in Turkey, *Mugam* in Azerbaijan, *Shash Maqom* in Uzbekistan, and *Muqam* in Uyghur music. Using *maqam* theory in a polyphonic musical language is a recent phenomenon and still stirs heated debates between the advocates of pure traditional use of *maqam* on one side, and those who feel the necessity to experiment with these *maqams*, especially the challenge of harmonizing the quartertones present in certain *maqams*, on the other. The two leading

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<sup>55</sup> For more information on the Cairo Arab Music Congress debate over the well-tempered Arab scale see *al-mūsīqa fī sūriya* by Adnan Bin-Dhurayl and “The Interface between Theory and Practice: Intonation in Arab Music.” *Asian Music* by Scott L. Marcus.

figures in the latter camp were Aziz el-Shawan (1916-1993) in Egypt, and Solhi al-Wadi (1934-2007) in Syria.<sup>56</sup> While it is common for contemporary Arab composers to incorporate some aspects of *maqam* into their melodic lines, only a few have experimented with the harmonization of *maqams*, especially those *maqams* with quartertones. The Egyptian Abu-Bakr Khairat and the Syrians Nouri Iskandar and Dia Succari are among the latter group.

It is important to mention that a *maqam* is usually made up from two main *ajnas* (plural for *jins*)<sup>57</sup>, which is usually a terachord) called lower and upper *jins*. Usually different *maqams* are grouped in families according to their mutual lower *jins*.<sup>58</sup>

In this chapter, I will look closely at how different *maqams/ajnas* are used in the three compositions of Roustom, Badreddine and Succari.

### **I. Kareem Roustom's *Buhur***

In Chapter Two, I showed how the different *buhur* were used to build the rhythms of the main melodies in the three movements. What makes these melodies truly “Arabic” in flavor, however, is the use of the different *maqams*.

The first movement of *Buhur* starts with a C, D $\flat$ , E, G chord, which does not give the listener a clue as to either the key or the *maqam*. This is followed by a chord progression

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<sup>56</sup> Ayman Hilal, *In 'ām al-Anghām*. 122.

<sup>57</sup> I will use *jins(s)* for plural for simplification.

<sup>58</sup> For further reading about *maqam*, I found *The Music of the Arabs* by Habib Touma and *Al-Mūsīqā al-'Arabīa* (Arab Music) by Omar Abdel-Rahman al-Ḥumṣī, to be very informative.

in the strings and clarinet. The *jins Hijaz* on C (C, D $\flat$ , E, F) is suggested when the clarinet enters in measure 12 with a descending gesture outlining the first three notes of that *jins* including the characteristic augmented second interval (E-D $\flat$ ). This is supported in the viola by a rhythmic figure that articulates C on the downbeat of every measure.

Ex. 3.1: The clarinet hints at the *jins Hijaz* on C, while the viola plays a C on each downbeat

When the cello's melody is introduced in measure 16, still supported by the same repeated pattern in the viola, we realize that the *maqam* is *Hijaz-kar* in C, in which the clarinet presents the first *jins* (C, D $\flat$ , E, F) and the cello the second *jins* (G, A $\flat$ , B, C). It is important here to note an ambiguity between two of the *maqams*: *Hijaz-kar* in C and the *Nahawand* in C. This ambiguity comes from the alternation between D and D $\flat$  (see ex 3.2 below). In addition, the composer uses freely the *Hijaz-kar* quality on the two *jins(s)* with his introduction of the F $\sharp$  in measures 27 and 35, which shifts the tonic back and forth between that of the first *jins* (C) to that of the second *jins* (G).

Ex. 3.2: Ambiguity between D and D $\flat$  in mm. 17-18 in the cello (above), and *Hijaz-kar* on C in the middle, and *Nahawand* on C below

The chord progression found in mm. 7-11 appears again towards the end of the movement with an added bar in the clarinet that introduces the  $A\frac{1}{2}b$ .<sup>60</sup>

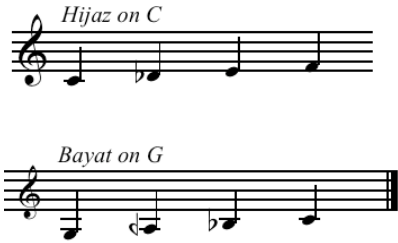
The image displays two systems of musical notation for a string quartet and clarinet. The top system covers measures 7-11, and the bottom system covers measures 72-77. Each system includes staves for Clarinet, Violin, Viola, and Violoncello. The Clarinet part in the bottom system features an additional bar with a half-flat symbol ( $A\frac{1}{2}b$ ).

Ex. 3.3: Chord progression mm.7-11 (above) and its repeat with the an extra bar mm. 72-77 (below)

This new pitch does not belong to the seven notes that form the *maqam Hijaz-kar*, but introduces the next movement which is in *Bayat* on G, which includes the  $A\frac{1}{2}b$ . It is important to note that in *Hijaz-kar*, one traditionally encounters a modulation to the *jins Rast* on the fourth degree (F, G,  $A\frac{1}{2}b$ , B $\flat$ ). A clear example is the *Taqasim* by Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī on *Hijaz-kar* on D where he modulates to *Rast* on G.<sup>61</sup> In *Buhur*, the  $A\frac{1}{2}b$  is foreshadowing a modulation that never comes, while still introducing the *jins* of the movement to follow, which is *Bayat* on G (G,  $A\frac{1}{2}b$ , B $\flat$ , C).

<sup>60</sup> All these symbols are used to express a half-flat:  $\frac{1}{2}b$ ,  $\flat$ ,  $\flat$

<sup>61</sup> Kareem Roustom, *A study of six improvisations on the 'ūd by Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī*. 95.



Ex. 3.4: The *jins Hijaz* on C above, and *jins Bayat* on G below

The second movement begins with the cello playing a loose transcription of an oud *taqasim* in *Bayat* on G (G, A $\frac{1}{2}$ b, Bb, C) by Riyād al-Sunbātī. *Taqasim* are one of the principal improvisatory, unaccompanied instrumental genres of Arabic and Turkish classical music.<sup>62</sup> They are usually non-metric. The thematic materials for the rest of the movement do not use this theme as a point of departure, but rather include new thematic material in the same *maqam* with a precise interpretation of the meter *al-Kamel*.

Though the movement is built on *Bayat* on G, some modulations are found. In measure 32, for example, there is a modulation to *Rast* on C (C, D, E $\frac{1}{2}$ b, F) accompanied by rhythmic variation in the accompaniment in the same 7/8 meter.

In this movement, the *Bayat* is present with its quartertones. The composer avoids the easy practice of “harmonizing” the quartertones using octaves or open fifths.<sup>63</sup> Instead, he uses the pitch collection that belongs to both his original *Bayat* on G, as well as some of its modulations: *Ajam*<sup>64</sup> on Eb in measure 70 (Eb, F, G, Ab),<sup>65</sup> as well as *Hijaz* on G in


<sup>62</sup> For more information on *Taqasim* see "Ottoman Sources on the Development of the Taksim." *Yearbook for Traditional Music* by Walter Feldman.

<sup>63</sup> Samha al-Khouli describes this as a common practice found among contemporary Arab composers using quartertones in their more westernized music, imitating the way *maqamic* improvisations are accompanied by a drone that holds the root and occasionally the fifth. *al-qawmia fi mūsīqa al-qurn al-'ishrīn*, 245.

<sup>64</sup> A *maqam* similar to the Major

measure 65 (G, A $\flat$ , B, C) to work out his harmonies. All of these modulations are found in traditional oud improvisations. Example 3.4 below is a map of the basic modulations of the second movement of *Buhur*.

Measure nos.	1-31	32-42	43-45	46-55	56-64	65-69	70-74	75-104
<i>Maqam</i>	<i>Bayat G</i>	<i>Rast C</i>	<i>Kurd G</i>	<i>Bayat G</i>	<i>Hijaz C</i>	<i>Hijaz G</i>	<i>Ajam E<math>\flat</math></i>	<i>Bayat G</i>



Ex. 3.5: Modulation map of the second movement

This movement clearly shows the influence on Roustom of Riyāḍ al-Sunbātī's *taqasim*. Roustom's modulations in this movement are nearly identical to al-Sunbati's solo oud *taqasim* in Bayat.<sup>65</sup>

The *jins* used in the third movement, *Kurd* on A (A, B $\flat$ , C, D), provides the composer with the possibility of placing tetrachords on top of each other to create an ambiguity between *Kurd* on A and the key of D minor. The four opening measures show us that the mode has all the pitches found in the first *jins* of the *maqam Kurd* on A.

<sup>65</sup> It is traditionally common to modulate to *Ajam* on the 6<sup>th</sup> degree in a piece on *maqam Bayat*. In addition, this is what the composer himself noticed in analyzing one of Sunbati's improvisations on the same *maqam* in his *Study of six improvisations on the 'ūd by Riyāḍ al-Sunbātī*, 108.

<sup>66</sup> Kareem Roustom, *A study of six improvisations on the 'ūd by Riyad al-Sunbati*, 108.

The image shows the opening measures of a movement for Violin I, Viola, and Cello. The Violin I part starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic. The Viola and Cello parts also start with a forte (*f*) dynamic, followed by a piano (*p*) dynamic. Below the staves, a melodic line is shown in D natural minor, with a bracket indicating the *Kurd on A* section.

Ex. 3.6: Opening measures of the movement (above), and D natural minor and *jins Kurd* on A (below)

Though the dominant *maqam* of this movement is *Kurd* on A (especially the first *jins*), the composer's use of the *maqam* is not as conventional as in the first two movements.

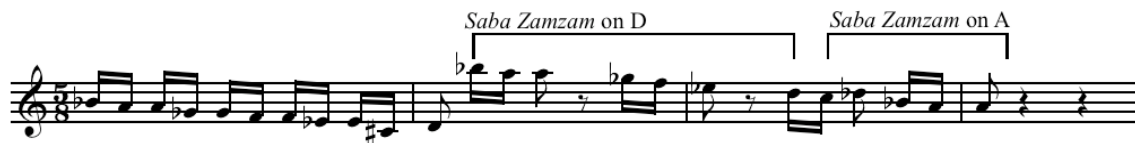
Mapping out his use of *maqam* in the third movement, therefore, proved difficult.

Roustorm seems to be comfortable simultaneously superimposing different *maqams* in a melodic line. See, for example, mm. 91-96 in the clarinet where *Saba-zamzam* on D and *Hijaz-kar* on D are combined (Ex. 3.6 below).

The image shows the clarinet melody from mm. 91-96. The melody is in D natural minor and is characterized by the simultaneous use of *Hijaz-Kar* on D and *Saba-Zamzam* on D. The melody is shown in two staves, with brackets indicating the *Hijaz-Kar* and *Saba-Zamzam* sections.

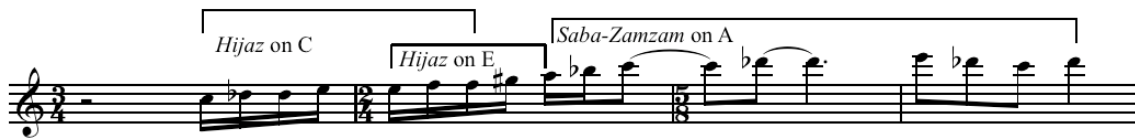
Ex. 3.7: The clarinet melody mm. 91-96 (above) and *maqams Saba Zamzam* on D and *Hijaz-kar* on D (below)

In Ex. 3.6, we see the first three notes in the clarinet B $\flat$ -C $\sharp$ -D, which belong to the upper *jins* of *Hijaz-kar* on D, combined with *Saba Zamzam* on D through the introduction of G $\flat$  in measure 93. The same kind of pairing appears again in the clarinet mm. 102-103, where the composer combines *Saba Zamzam* on D together with *Saba Zamzam* on A in the same descending scale.



Ex. 3.8: The use of *Saba Zamzam* on D and *Saba Zamzam* on A in the clarinet at mm.102-103

Yet another example can be found in the clarinet where in the ascending scale at measure 127, the composer combines *Hijaz* on C, *Hijaz* on E with *Saba Zamzam* on A: the pitches C, D $\flat$ , E, F belong to *Hijaz* on C, the pitches E, F, G $\sharp$ , A belong to *Hijaz* on E, and the pitches A, B $\flat$ , C, D $\flat$ , and E (starting on the second beat of measure 128), identify *Saba Zamzam* on A.



Ex. 3.9: Several *jins* in one melodic line in the clarinet, mm.127

It is important to note that Roustom is consistent in his use of the different *jins(s)* as points of departure, and that these *maqams* are presented at the beginning of each movement. This is not to suggest that the *jins/maqam* is established right from the beginning of every movement, however; rather, the composer prepares the listener by presenting the most important notes of the *maqam* used.

Traditional Arab music (both vocal and instrumental) often begins with short *taqasim* by a solo instrument to establish the home *jins*. This is exactly how Roustom begins his middle movement. The first and third movements, however, give the impression that the *maqam* used is not revealed until the melodic material begins. Yet if we look closely at the opening measures of the first and third movements, we find that the composer does indeed present the pitches of the *jins*, albeit aligned vertically.

Table 3.1 below shows how in each of these movements, the composer presents the pitches of the first *jins* of his opening *maqam* in the first measure.

Movement	Ramal (first)	Kamel (second)	Mutadarak (third)
Pitches found in the first measure	C, D $\flat$ , E, G, A $\flat$	F, G, A $\frac{1}{2}\flat$ , B $\flat$	A, B $\flat$ , C, D
Opening <i>jins</i>	<i>Hijaz</i> (C, D $\flat$ , E, F)	<i>Bayat</i> (G, A $\frac{1}{2}\flat$ , B $\flat$ , C)	<i>Kurd</i> (A, B $\flat$ , C, D)
The way this looks in the score			

## II. Shafi Badreddine's *Quintet*

While Roustom's use of *maqam* is melodic and can be easily identified in his score, Badreddine incorporates *maqams* into his *Quintet* vertically, and as a result, they are rarely stated clearly. Before examining his use of *maqam* in the **first movement** *Estehlal*, it is important to understand how the movement was constructed.

The necessary cues to help us understand how the movement was constructed as a whole are found on beat one, measure one of the piano (see Ex. 3.9). This first measure contains the following pitches E $\flat$ , A, C, D, A $\flat$ . The two tritones E $\flat$ -A, and D-A $\flat$  are immediately recognizable.



Ex. 3.10: Badreddine's first measure of the first movement (piano)

In this first movement, Badreddine treats every tritone as a unit. The two units E $\flat$ -A and D-A $\flat$  are complete, while C still awaits its F $\sharp$  before becoming a third unit. Badreddine uses this technique of completing all six tritones to introduce the remaining seven pitches. Throughout the movement, he continues to introduce the remaining seven pitches either by having them appear at once as a complete tritone unit, or in a sequential manner where one pitch is introduced independently only to be completed by its tritone later on in the movement in either the same instrument or by any other instrument of the ensemble.

Table 3.2 below shows how the pitch palette unfolds throughout the course of the movement.

Measure no.	Tritones	Instrument
1	Two tritone-units in the piano E $\flat$ -A, D-A $\flat$ . C is also introduced waiting for an F $\sharp$ to become a unit.	piano
9-10	F $\sharp$ appears in the piano, and is reinforced three beats later in the viola, completing the C-F $\sharp$ unit.	piano, viola
10	Two new pitches G-C $\square$ appear as a new tritone unit	viola
11	A new pitch is introduced: E (needs a B $\flat$ to be complete)	clarinet
13	A new pitch is introduced: F (needs a B to be complete)	clarinet
27	A new pitch B $\flat$ appears completing the E-B $\flat$ unit	viola
31	Last missing pitch B finally appears completing the F-B unit	clarinet

During this process, and before all the pitches are introduced, the composer begins to highlight another important interval, the minor third, whose role is to introduce us to the *maqam* of this movement.

If we take the minor third, C $\sharp$ -E for example, and lower the lower note half a step down, we end up with the augmented second that is characteristic of the *jins Hijaz*.



Ex. 3.11: Connection between a minor third and *Hijaz*

Badreddine does not use the *Hijaz* in a typical melodic fashion: rather, he draws from it an identifying motif that infuses the sound of *Hijaz* throughout most of the second half of the movement (yet before completing the twelve pitches). Table 3.3 below shows how the lower note of a minor third is lowered half a step throughout the movement.

<b>Table 3.3: The use of minor thirds throughout the movement</b>		
<b>Measure no.</b>	<b>The appearance of minor thirds</b>	<b>Instruments</b>
16	The piano prepares for the minor third by establishing A as a pedal tone.	piano RH (right hand)
18	Minor third in the piano resolved by the viola	piano RH-violata
19	Minor third in the piano resolved by the cello	piano RH-cello
19	Minor third in the clarinet resolved by the piano	clarinet-piano LH
21	First appearance of a self-resolved minor third in the piano	piano RH
21	A self-resolved minor third in the clarinet	clarinet
21	A self-resolved minor third in the piano	piano LH
21	First appearances of a minor third that does not resolve	viola
22	Minor third in the piano and repeated by the violin before resolving in the piano	piano RH-violin-piano LH
22	The same previous minor third is repeated in the cello and resolved in the piano	cello-piano LH
23	Four self-resolved minor thirds, two in the clarinet and two in the violin	clarinet, violin
23	A minor third that does not resolve properly in the clarinet	clarinet
27-29	A series of minor thirds that do not meet their resolution	all
30	Minor third in the clarinet resolved by the piano	clarinet-piano LH
30	Minor third in the clarinet resolved by the cello	clarinet-cello
31	A self-resolved minor third in the cello	cello
31	A minor third in the viola resolved in the clarinet	viola-clarinet
34	Minor thirds that are not waiting to be resolved as they are played aleatorically	all

Example 3.11 shows measures 18-19 and how the A from a minor third in the piano is resolved downwards a half-step in the viola, and how the A from a minor third in the clarinet resolves downwards a half-step in the piano.

The image displays a musical score for four instruments: Viola, Piano, Clarinet, and Piano. It is divided into two systems. The first system consists of a Viola staff (top) and a Piano staff (bottom). The second system consists of a Clarinet staff (top) and a Piano staff (bottom). In the first system, an arrow points from a note in the Piano staff to a note in the Viola staff, indicating a minor third interval. In the second system, an arrow points from a note in the Piano staff to a note in the Clarinet staff, also indicating a minor third interval. The Piano staff in the second system shows a descending half-step in the lower note of the interval.

Ex. 3.12: Minor thirds with the lower note descending a half-step in another instrument. mm.18 (above), mm. 19 (below)

After establishing the connection between the minor third and *Hijaz*, and after all the twelve pitches have been introduced, the composer liberates himself from resolving the minor thirds “properly.” This can be seen in measures 27-29, before becoming more prominent in the aleatoric section in measure 34. This free section, which the composer described as being inspired by the Arabic language, marks the beginning of the deconstruction of the minor third-*Hijaz* connection in preparation for what can be described as a recapitulation with a reversed gesture in the piano (inwards this time vs. outwards in the opening bar).

Badreddine uses a G-C fourth to end the movement. Both pitches play a role in the *maqam* modulation towards the next movement (*Bayat* on D). C is the seventh and G is the fourth in *Bayat* on D. Traditionally, the fourth of the *Bayat* is referred to as the *Ghammaz* and functions as the Dominant.

Badreddine used two methods in the creation of the movement; one is the use of tritone to expand his pitch palette, and the other is his introduction of the *jins Hijaz* with the minor thirds. The application of these two seemingly distant methods might seem strange, but in

fact, there is a strong connection between the tritone and the maqam *Hijaz-kar* that I will demonstrate in the following example:

*Hijaz-Kar on C*

The diagram shows a musical staff with a treble clef. The notes are C, D $\flat$ , E, F, G, A $\flat$ , B, C. Above the staff, three brackets are labeled: 'first Jins' (C-D $\flat$ -E-F), 'al-bu'd al-wasel' (F-G), and 'second Jins' (G-A $\flat$ -B-C). Below the staff, two brackets are labeled 'm3' (minor third), one under C-D $\flat$  and one under A $\flat$ -B. Two brackets are labeled 'TT' (tritone), one under D $\flat$ -G and one under F-G.

Ex. 3.13: *Hijaz-kar* on C: C, D $\flat$ , E, F, G, A $\flat$ , B, C.

This *maqam*, like many others, is constructed from two *jins(s)*, (C-D $\flat$ -E-F) and (G-A $\flat$ -B-C), connected with what is called *al-bu'd al-wasel* (the connecting interval) F-G.

On the one hand, we can see clearly the two minor thirds, though re-spelled enharmonically as augmented seconds, (D $\flat$ -E and A $\flat$ -B) and, with their half-step resolutions towards C and G, respectively, how they function in the *maqam*. On the other hand, D $\flat$ , which is the tritone of the starting note of the second *jins*, has a *maqamic* function. The use of this tritone (D $\flat$ -G), with the chromatic movement B-C-D $\flat$ , and especially above the high C of the second *jins*, is what gives the *Hijaz-kar* its unique color. The composer uses this feature of the *Hijaz-kar* motives to connect the first and last movements.

The title of the second movement *Dokah* ("second degree" in Farsi), suggests that the tonic of the movement is D. We realize only later that it is in *Bayat* on D. The *jins* is revealed very slowly (and in great contrast to the way Roustom reveals his modes right from the opening bar of each movement).

The *jins* builds slowly, starting with F in the clarinet in measure 44 (the second bar of the movement). This note functions as the third of the *jins*, but still we don't know how and where it fits. In measure 48 we find a descending gesture in the cello (F-E $\frac{1}{2}$ b). This descending gesture, which feels as if it is presenting part of the mode, is emphasized even further by the clarinet (mm. 49-50) and again in measure 53 so that it almost gives the impression that the movement is in the *jins Sikah* on E $\frac{1}{2}$ b.

The image displays musical notation for Example 3.14. It consists of four measures of music for Clarinet and Violoncello, and a separate line for 'Sikah on E-half-b'.  
 - Measure 44: Clarinet plays F4, Violoncello is silent.  
 - Measure 48: Clarinet is silent, Violoncello plays a descending line F4-E4.  
 - Measure 49-50: Clarinet plays a descending line F4-E4, Violoncello is silent.  
 - Measure 53: Clarinet plays a descending line F4-E4, Violoncello is silent.  
 Below the measures is a single line of music for 'Sikah on E-half-b' showing a descending line F4-E4.

Ex. 3.14: Suggestions of the *Sikah* on E $\frac{1}{2}$ b by the cello and clarinet (above) and the *jins* itself (below)

It is only when we hear the arrival of D in the violin in measure 54 and the reconfirmation of D in the left hand of the piano in measure 56 that we realize the *jins* is in fact *Bayat* on D.

Badreddine does not seem to be concerned with the clear statement of any *jins/maqam* in a conventional linear-melodic fashion—instead, he employs them on an almost microscopic level. As we saw in the first movement, he introduces other *jins(s)* as a temporary sonic effect. An example may be found in mm. 43-48 where we can find the following pitches: A, F $\sharp$  (played as harmonics on the piano strings), G, B $\flat$  with an arrow indicating that it is lower than a natural B in the cello, D, A $\flat$ , F-higher $\sharp$  (also with an

arrow in the clarinet). By re-arranging these pitches we find that we do have a natural *Hijaz-kar* on G: G, A $\flat$ , B $\sharp$ , C, D, E $\flat$ , F $\sharp$ , G<sup>67</sup>, in which he uses natural intervals. This *maqam* is used for sonic effect only and does not last long.

The musical score for 'Dokah' is in 3/4 time and marked 'large' with a tempo of quarter note = 40. It features five staves: B♭ Clarinet, Violin, Viola, Violoncello, and Piano. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and one flat (Bb). The score begins at measure 43. The B♭ Clarinet part starts with a *pp* dynamic and a melodic line. The Violin part has a *pp* dynamic and a melodic line with a *pizz.* marking. The Viola part has a *p* dynamic and a melodic line with a *pizz.* marking. The Violoncello part has a *p* dynamic and a melodic line with a *pizz.* marking. The Piano part has a *pp* dynamic and a harmonic accompaniment with fingerings 2 and 3 indicated. The score ends with 'Rea. 2'.

Ex. 3.15: The presentation of the *maqam* using natural intervals. mm. 43-47

The presence of both *Hijaz-kar* on G and the C $\sharp$  as its tritone interval in measure 45 in the piano establishes a connection with the two outer movements, which also use *Hijaz-kar*.

Immediately following the completion of the first *jins* of *Bayat* on D (D, E $\frac{1}{2}\flat$ , F, G), the composer starts to unfold the second *jins* of the *Bayat* (including the usual notes

<sup>67</sup> Lowering the B and raising the A $\flat$  is commonly called *Hijaz-gharib*.

A, B $\flat$ , C, D). But there are traces of Syriac church music here, evident from the use of the B $\natural$  in the clarinet in measure 57<sup>68</sup>.



Ex. 3.16: Difference between the traditional *Bayat* and the *Bayat* used in Syriac music

This Syriac influence becomes even more apparent beginning at measure 65 where we see the *Bayat* on D with the B $\frac{1}{2}\flat$ , which is known as *maqam Qadmoyo* in Syriac church music but also sounds similar to the ascending version of *maqam Husayni* in Arab music traditions. This Syriac *Bayat* however does not last long and gets diluted by measure 72.



Ex. 3.17: The use of Syriac *Bayat* in the clarinet at mm. 65 (above); ascending *maqam Husayni* on D (below)

Up to this point in the movement (mm. 89), the composer has established the *maqam* clearly by swinging back and forth between the two *jins(s)* which are connected by what is called the connecting interval G-A (*al-bu'd alwasel*) (Ex. 3.15)

<sup>68</sup> Such use can be found in the *Beth-Gazo* (The Treasury of Chants), which contains up to 2500 different compositions of Syriac church music, out of which about 700 or so survive. In 1992 the Syrian composer Nouri Iskandar released a notated *Beth-Gazo*.

The appearance of E $\natural$  in the clarinet in measure 90 comes as a surprise, since it does not belong to the *Bayat* on D, and does not have a coherent relation to the note that precedes it, which is an E $\flat$ . In fact, this very untraditional modulation takes us from *Bayat* on D to *Saba* on C.

In like manner to the way the composer slowly presents his opening *jins* of the movement, so does he slowly present the motive F $\flat$ -E $\flat$  in mm. 91-93. Only in measure 94 does he reveal the full *jins*, which is a descending *Saba* on C (F $\flat$ , E $\flat$ , D $\flat$ , C).

Yet the realization that we are in *Saba* does not last long, given that only three measures later the clarinet brings us back to *Bayat* with another unconventional figure in the second half of measure 97 (D $\flat$  via C towards D $\natural$ ). It is this figure that brings us back to *Bayat* in measure 97. It is important to note that while the piano sounds the tonic for *Saba* on C on that same measure, C becomes the seventh of *Bayat* on D to which it resolves eventually three bars later giving the sense of final arrival.

The image shows a musical score for Clarinet and Piano (LH) in 4/4 time. The score is divided into two systems. The first system covers measures 95-96, and the second system covers measures 97-101. The Clarinet part (top staff) starts with a descending scale in measure 95, followed by a trill in measure 96, and another trill in measure 97. The Piano part (bottom staff) features a descending scale in measure 95, a trill in measure 96, and a trill in measure 97. The modulation begins in measure 95, as indicated by the text 'modulation begins here' above the Clarinet staff. The score includes various musical notations such as trills, slurs, and dynamic markings.

Ex. 3.18: *Maqamic* modulation, *Saba* on C at mm.95-96, *Bayat* on D mm.97-101

The movement starts by trying to find the color of *Bayat*, and once it finds it, it shines even further with the use of Syriac influences. *Saba* on C, which is used to provide the

contrast with the *Bayat*, is introduced and concluded with the use of unconventional microtonal intervals (both in the clarinet) before *Bayat* shines again in the last five measures of the movement. The final chord of the movement (C, G $\flat$ , F, A, D, G) combines the tetrachords used in harmonizing both *Bayat* on D (D, G, C, F) and the *Saba* on D this time (D, G $\flat$ , C, F) at the same time in addition to the A with its unique augmented second that characterizes the second half of the *maqam Saba*. Example 3.18 below is a map of the movement:

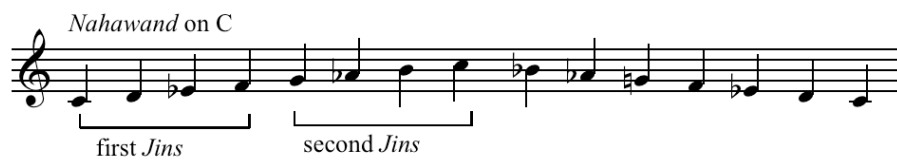
Bar #	43-64	65-68	69-89	90-96	97-101
<i>Jins</i> used	<i>Bayat</i> on D	<i>Husayni</i> on D	<i>Bayat</i> on D	<i>Saba</i> on C	<i>Bayat</i> on D



### III. Dia Succari's *Quintet for the Damascus Festival*

Succari's most elaborate use of *maqam* in his quintet for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano is found in the first movement. His approach to the *maqamic* development in this movement is largely influenced by the traditional melody he uses as its basis, as well as the sonata form in which this movement is expressed.

In Chapter Two I showed that Succari's main melody of the first movement is loosely based on the melody of the *muwashshah Lamma Bada Yatathanna*. Succari's melody, making its first appearance in the piano at measure 3 is also in *Nahawand* on C. One characteristic of this *maqam* is the raised seventh degree like that of the harmonic minor. In the first appearance of the melody, however, the raised seventh is postponed until measure 8, giving the impression that the movement is in the natural minor. Though the descending *Nahawand* is similar to a natural minor, the introduction of the raised seventh degree (B $\natural$ ) in the piano, confirms the association with the *maqam* of the *muwashshah*.



Ex. 3.22: *Nahawand* on C

Example 3.22 below illustrates the melody as it appears in the piano mm. 3-10, and shows in particular how the B $\flat$  is used throughout until B $\natural$  appears in measure 8.

The image displays a piano score for measures 3-10 of 'Quintet for the Damascus Festival'. The score is written for piano (Pno.) and consists of four systems of music. The first system (measures 3-4) shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system (measures 5-6) features a complex rhythmic pattern with a 3:2+3 time signature. The third system (measures 7-8) continues the complex rhythmic pattern with a 3:3+2:3 time signature. The fourth system (measures 9-10) shows a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. A blue arrow points to a specific note in measure 8 of the third system.

Ex. 3.23, mm. 3-10, piano: *Quintet for the Damascus Festival*

When the ensemble in the following measures repeats the melody, it retains this structure, postponing the raised seventh until measure 16 in the violin. At the end of both statements of the melody, the tonic C is emphasized and always preceded by the raised seventh. In the second ensemble repeat, however, the composer makes his first modulation by establishing C to be the 6th degree of the next tonality, which can be looked at as both in E $\flat$  Major and *Ajam* on E $\flat$ .

Violin

Violoncello

Cl.

*Ajam on Eb*

Ex. 3.24: mm. 17-21 (above), *Ajam on Eb* (below)

This modulation is common in western classical music (to the related major), and is also common in Arabic *maqam* theory: The decending *Nahawand* contains the *jins* of *Ajam* on its 3rd degree. The new *jins* does not last long, however, and we return through a sequence to the original *Nahawand* on C at measure 27. The composer does not use the raised seventh in his new melody at measure 27 until the middle of measure 29 in what can be described as a *qafla*, or “ending”. Such an ending is usually played in unison in traditional Arab music ensembles. (There is a similar use of the *qafla* in Roustom's second movement of *Buhur*.) Succari uses a new *maqam* known as *Nawa Athar* on C for his *qafla*.

30

*Cédez ----*

*Nawa Athar on C*

*Nakriz*

*Hijaz*

Ex. 3.25: *Qafla* in the ensemble at measure 30 using *Nawa Athar*

In *maqam* theory, this modulation from *Nahawand* on C to *Nawa Athar* on C is also common since both share the same upper *jins* of *Hijaz*. The composer began this transition on the upper *jins* making his way down to a new lower *jins*: *Nakriz*. This results in the arrival of a new *maqam*: *Nawa-Athar*.

In the harmonization of the new *maqam*, however, Succari does not feel apparently bound by the new tonality, since he introduces a B $\flat$  in the rhythmic pattern of the piano in close proximity to the B $\natural$  in the clarinet at measure 32; (Ex. 3.26 below).

Ex. 3.26: B $\flat$  in the left hand of the piano against the B $\natural$  in the clarinet at measure 32

In mm. 33-40, there is a kind of an improvisatory section for the clarinet and violin over a C drone. The *maqam* is introduced clearly in the three moving instruments: the piano in measure 33, the violin in measure 36, and the clarinet in measure 37. This seemingly conventional use of the *maqam* ends in an unusual way in measure 39. The cello ends the improvisation in *Nawa Athar* on C by establishing the raised seventh (B $\sharp$ ) as the new tonic, which is immediately confirmed by the other instruments of the ensemble at measure 40.

Ex. 3.27: *Nawa Athar* in the cello ending in a new tonic B $\sharp$ , mm.39-40

This resolution to the 7th degree is unconventional in Arab music traditions. The new tonic (B) gives the impression that we are in the *jins* of *Saba Zamzam* on B, while it actually marks the beginning of the development section in *Nahawand* on B.

The development section begins in measure 41, followed by the first statement of the main theme—*Nahawand* on B—in the clarinet at measure 42.

But the raised seventh (A♯) appears in the violin and the viola, while the clarinet melody retains the A♮; the composer thus floats between using pitches from both ascending and descending *Nahawand* on a vertical fashion and not just in the melodic line. Subsequent modulations of the main motif of the main theme occur throughout the ensemble in the development.

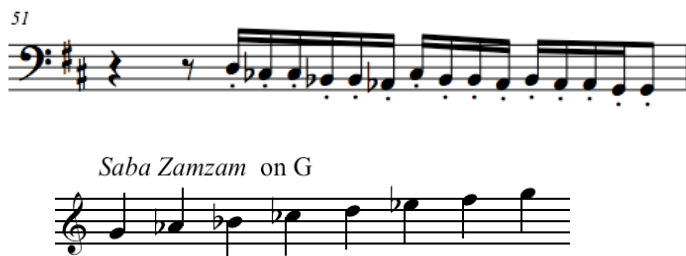


*Nakriz* on G which functions here as the dominant key that would bring us back in the recapitulation to the home key/*maqam* on C.



Ex. 3.29: *Maqam Nakriz* in G

However, the last repetition of the melodic motive -the one shown in Table 3.4- is in the cello in measure 51, and indicates a modulation that is very common in *maqam* theory, which is the transition between *Hijaz* to *Saba Zamzam* in the same key (here *Saba Zamzam* on G).



Ex. 3.30: Cello motif in *Saba Zamzam* on G

The composer continues his development section using other unconventional explorations of the *maqams* in the improvisatory section beginning at measure 53. This section enjoys improvisational qualities due to two things: the absence of a clearly defined pulse within the large 6/4 meter; and the drone created by the instruments in the ensemble. This drone is created by the viola playing an open fifth (G/D) as the base, supported by less conventional drones by the violin and cello, both playing pitches from *Hijaz* on G itself. The piano plays arpeggios that combine the pitches of two *jins* at once: the second *jins* of a *Hijaz-kar* on G and a *Saba Zamzam* on G.

Ex. 3.31: An ostinato in the piano combining the notes of two *jins(s)* mm.54 (above); the two *jins(s)* used (below)

At measure 55 the clarinet floats above this tapestry in a *maqam* similar to *Hijaz-kar* on G but with a raised 4th degree (C#). This creates an interesting tritone interval with the tonic of the *maqam* C#-G.

Ex. 3.32: The use of a modified *Hijaz-kar* in the clarinet in measure 54

This is repeated a measure later with a more conventional *maqam* combining both *Saba Zamzam* and *Hijaz*, similar to the piano .

The other important difference is the change of the little bridge that Succari used in his exposition (measure 6), Here, in measure 66 of the recapitulation, the same melodic material appears in what seems to be an exact repetition (with the obvious change of instrumentation) but the motif is repeated in a different *jins* (*Saba Zamzam* on G in the clarinet).



Ex. 3.36: *Saba Zamzam* on G in the clarinet at measure 66

*Nahawand* on C returns at measure 67. The same *qafla* (i.e., ending) is also in the *maqam* of *Nawa Athar*. One might argue that the remaining measures of the movement (mm. 70-74) can be thought about as part of *Nahawand* on C or rather a continuation of the *Nawa Athar* on C, but since there is neither F or F#, it is hard to judge. This does not really matter, however, since the movement has reached an end and is not related *maqamically* to any next movement.

Below is a *maqam* map for Succari's first movement

<b>Table 3.5: Maqam map for Succari's first movement</b>		
Measure #	<i>Maqam</i>	Notes
	<b>EXPOSITION</b>	
1-10	<i>Nahawand</i> on C	B $\sharp$ (raised 7th degree) only introduced beginning at mm. 8
11-18	<i>Nahawand</i> on C	B $\sharp$ only introduced beginning at mm. 16
19-26	<i>Ajam</i> on Eb	
27-29	<i>Nahawand</i> on C	No seventh degree until mm. 29
30	<i>Nawa-Athar</i> on C	
31-32	<i>Nawa-Athar</i> on C	B $\flat$ and B $\sharp$ in the same measure in different instruments
33-40	<i>Nawa-Athar</i> on C	Unconventional ending on the raised 7th degree on mm. 40
	<b>DEVELOPMENT</b>	
41-43	<i>Nahawand</i> on B	
44-45	<i>Nahawand</i> on A	
46-47	<i>Hijaz</i> on C $\sharp$	
48	<i>Hijaz</i> on B	
49-50	<i>Hijaz</i> on G	
51-52	<i>Saba Zamzam</i> on G	
53-54	Combination of <i>Hijaz-kar</i> and <i>Saba Zamzam</i> on G (in the piano)	
55	<i>Hijaz-kar</i> with a raised 4th degree in the clarinet	
56	Combination <i>Hijaz</i> on D and <i>Saba-Zamzam</i> on G in the clarinet	
57-59	Combination of pitches from <i>Hijaz-kar</i> on D and <i>Hijaz</i> on G in the cello	
	<b>RECAPITULATION</b>	
60-65	<i>Nahawand</i> in C	The raised 7th enters earlier than the exposition (M 64)
66	<i>Saba-Zamzam</i> on G	
67-68	<i>Nahawand</i> on C	
69	<i>Nawa-Athar</i> on C	
70-75	<i>Nahawand</i> on C	

**Chapter 3 Conclusion:**

None of the three composers treat *maqam* in a conventional—that is, purely monophonic—way. These movements are filled with *maqamic* flavor, mostly set in vertical fashion in which the notes of the *maqam* are there not only to create Arab-sounding melodies, but also to color each movement as a whole and to create the harmonies. While Roustom and Succari approach the *maqams* in a way that is somewhat more conventional, Badreddine subjects them to a microscopic treatment that focuses on the qualities of a specific interval (or intervals) in a given *maqam*.

## Chapter 4: Performance aspects

These works offer a challenge to the performers unfamiliar with the idioms of Arab, and specifically Syrian music.

I will be discussing the challenges from two main perspectives: the clarinetist's use of quartertones and the finding of an appropriate sound quality, and the challenge of understanding, identifying, and projecting the references to traditional Arab music for the classically trained ensemble.

### I. The clarinet writing

#### A. The use of quartertones

The clarinet writing in these three works is quite conventional: there are no multi-phonics, slap-tonguing, or other extended techniques often found in modern compositions. The unconventional aspect is the use of quartertones, which are prominently featured in the middle movements of both Roustom's and Badreddine's works. I should note that quartertones are not rare in works by contemporary western composers, but in the context of these pieces, their use is largely informed by the way they function in the *maqam*.

One should keep in mind that while these quartertones are written in western musical notation, they are not equal-tempered, and the performer needs to remember at all times that quartertones should be approached according to where they fall in the *maqam* used,

very much similar to the way a violinist would finger a G $\flat$  and an F $\sharp$  in slightly different places. This is where the quartertone challenge really comes into play, making someone who is familiar with basic *maqam* theory much more comfortable in finding the right pitches for these notes.

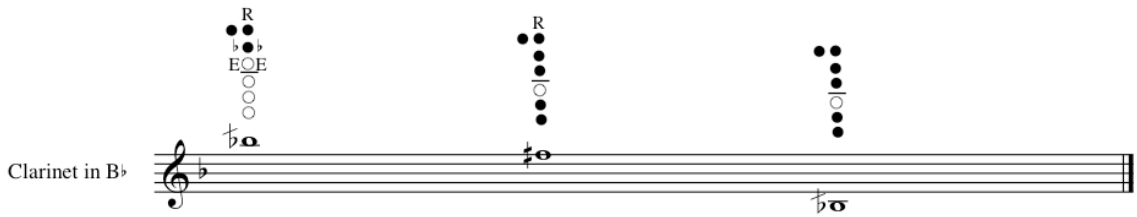
This can be partially solved by consulting the detailed instructions from the composers on how to find these pitches. The first page in Roustom's score contains detailed information on how to locate the pitches, as well as suggested fingerings for the clarinetist.

$\flat$  Neutral tones can be found on a string instrument by locating the half way point of minor third (i.e. G to B $\flat$ ). The distance in cents of a minor third is 300 cents. The half way point would be 150 cents which would give an exact B $\lessdot$ . The desired pitch in movement II is approximately 15 cents below this point. (B $\flat$  + 35 cents).

↓ Indicates a point where a unified entrance should be made after a section of rubato phrases.

^ A short extension of the held note or rest. Shorter than the standard fermata sign.

Suggested Clarinet fingerings:



Clarinet in B $\flat$

Ex. 4.0: first page of Roustom's score with instructions on how to play the quartertones

The clarinetist is clearly expected to locate these pitches, either by means of alternate fingerings, embouchure, or both.

In Roustom's and Badreddine's works, the quartertones are related to the *maqams* used.







Ex. 4.5: E $\frac{1}{2}$ b $\flat$  mm. 32-34 in the Clarino register

The other E $\frac{1}{2}$ b $\flat$ s are found in the lower chalumeau register in measures 75 and 103.



Ex. 4.6: E $\frac{1}{2}$ b $\flat$  in the lower Chalumeau register mm.75-77

These low E $\frac{1}{2}$ b $\flat$ s were eventually changed to E $\flat$  in the second edition of the score after some revisions that Roustom and I did before the score was submitted to the Philadelphia Orchestra Chamber Music Players, who performed the work in January 2010. This change was necessary due to the difficulty of playing this low pitch, as both neighboring tones, written F and F $\sharp$ , involve closing all the holes which rules out the possibility of using any half-covered holes, a technique normally used to slightly bring a pitch down<sup>69</sup>. The other option would be to use an extreme open mouthpiece to pitch bend down a written F $\sharp$  to get the right tone; such mouthpieces, however, are not often used in classical music. Even though there is no reed instrument in the Arab music tradition that can reach a low concert E $\flat$ , it is important to mention that the ney, for example, would not have a similar problem, given that a professional ney player always carries a number of instruments of different lengths so as to accommodate the different *maqams*.

<sup>69</sup> Using half-added keys is not really a possibility since the pads of the keys either fully seal the hole or they don't.

Badreddine's middle movement uses only a few quartertones in the clarinet, mainly the  $E\frac{1}{2}b$  in both the clarino and the chalumeau registers (mm. 53, 66, 68, 79-85, 89, 98-99), and  $B\frac{1}{2}b$  in mm. 65-67 and  $D\frac{1}{2}b$  in mm. 94-96.

Each of these pitches can easily be played on the instrument, and they indicate a considerable familiarity with the instrument on the part of the composer. Badreddine, in fact, is himself an accomplished clarinetist, having received formal training on the instrument at the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus (in addition to his primary focus on the oud).

In addition to the *maqam*-related intonation of these pitches, what is problematic from the perspective of a classical clarinetist is how some of these quartertones are placed in a contemporary context in addition to the unconventional use of *maqamic* modulations. In mm. 65-69 for example, the use of the  $B\frac{1}{2}b$  in the clarinet melody indicates a use of *maqam Husayni* (referred to as *Qadmoyo* in ancient Syriac church music).



Ex. 4.7: *Maqam Husayni* in the clarinet introducing  $B\frac{1}{2}b$  and  $E\frac{1}{2}b$  in measure 65

The  $B\sharp$  that comes at bar 69, however, is meant to be tuned to the standards of western classical music, and it must be tuned sharp enough to indicate that we are no longer in *maqam Husayni*.

Another example is the use of  $D\frac{1}{2}b$ , followed one measure later by a  $D\sharp$  in measure 96-97. This also requires the performer to adjust his intonation so that the distinction is

clearly made between the two pitches, and that the modulation from *Saba* on C back to *Bayat* on D is unmistakable.

The image shows two staves of musical notation. The top staff is labeled 'Clarinet' and the bottom staff is labeled 'Cl.'. Both staves are in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Clarinet staff contains a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, ending with a trill marked with a '5'. The Cl. staff contains a bass line with eighth and sixteenth notes, including a triplet marked with a '3' and a trill marked with a '5'.

Ex. 4.8: D $\frac{1}{2}\flat$  in measure 96 followed by D $\sharp$  in measure 97

One last example (Ex. 3.14 of the previous chapter) is the use of two pitches that belong to the natural *maqam Hijaz-kar* on G: F $\sharp$  in the clarinet in mm. 4 (with an upwards pointing arrow, indicating that the pitch should be intoned more sharp than normal), and the B $\sharp$  in the cello (with an arrow pointing downwards) in mm.2. It is necessary for the performer to know exactly how these pitches function in context in order to play them correctly, since the *maqam* is not presented here in a traditional melodic horizontal fashion, but rather in a vertical way as a sonic effect.

## B. The sound quality

The sound of the clarinet can be discussed in terms of the tone quality (intensity, brightness, color) and the use of vibrato and pitch bending. While a work such as the Mozart clarinet concerto requires a bright, transparent, and straight tone, other types of music such as Near Eastern, Turkish, Greek, and Klezmer require the player to play with vibrato, and to use glissandi and embellishments as he/she sees fit.

In my performances of these three works, I use a variety of sounds to reflect the musical language being expressed by the composer. Other members of the ensemble would also

vary between a classical sound and a more relaxed and embellished sound. In all three works, the clarinet player has to make a decision about the sound quality appropriate to the overall performance. Since there is no clarinet in a traditional Arab music ensemble, I had no actual model upon which to base my sound projection and quality, so I found myself using the sound of another wind instrument, an instrument that plays an important role in Arab music traditions, the ney.

The ney's main sound characteristics include a soft and airy tone in the lower register, and a bright, clear sound in the upper registers. Players of the ney tend to make extensive use of vibrato and glissandi, and they freely exploit the ease with which the instrument can bend pitches.

During a conversation with Roustom in March 2009, I asked him about the sound quality he had in mind for the clarinet:

**Kinan Azmeh:** After playing the recording of *Buhur* to different people, a question kept recurring to me about the sound quality I produced—which was described as more airy than the traditional sound—and whether that was by request from the composer. I know that you did not ask for this directly, but were you thinking of guiding me in that direction?

**Kareem Roustom:** You are right, I did not ask for that. But I knew that when you will take a phrase in *Bayat*, you would color it with your own way, which reflects the culture that you and I come from, while someone else will do it differently. I am happy to bring that aspect of Arab music in my concert music, the aspect of giving more room for interpretation. I enjoy watching this freedom being used as

long as the performers know what they want to do, otherwise they can just play what is on the page.

It certainly seemed normal—and perhaps even expected—for me to play the melodies in Roustom's middle movement (mm. 13-29) or Badreddine's melodies of the middle movement (mm. 65, 79) with embellishments, glissandi, and a whispery tone. This was in sharp contrast to the tone I produced elsewhere in the same movements; places where the musical language used does not lend itself to such improvisatory aspects.

Succari's work, on the other hand, is more consistent in its musical language. The melodies in the clarinet follow a western, romantic style of writing, albeit in a modal fashion. The *maqams* used, mostly accompanied by thick harmonic writing in the strings and piano, do not give the clarinetist much room to bend pitches or add other embellishments. The only exception is the section where Succari suggests adding an improvised, unaccompanied cadenza at measure 86 which can take the shape of real *taqasim* on a given *jins/maqam*. In this specific case, the performer decides what musical vocabulary is going to be used in the cadenza as in the cadenzas found in the classical repertoire, where the performer uses motifs and keys used in the movement.

## **II. The treatment of instruments in the ensemble**

In looking through the contemporary chamber music works of Syrian composers over the past fifty years (works such as those by Solhi al-Wadi, Nuri al-Ruheibany, and Walid Hajjar), one observes the almost total absence of the use of traditional instruments such as the ney, the oud, and the qanun. This is largely because most Arab composers of

western classical music have considered traditional instruments to be underdeveloped and less accommodating to their newly learned harmonic language, and the result has been an increasing unfamiliarity with the capabilities of these instruments. Another reason for the avoidance of traditional instruments is the fact that few traditional players are trained to read scores, and fewer still are trained in new-music techniques.

This situation started to change in Syria following the establishment of the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus, which required its traditional instrument students to study western classical music theory and repertoire in addition to their traditional music training. Likewise, the western instrument players were also compelled to study Arab music theory and history. As a result, the Institute has fostered a generation of musicians who play a wide range of instruments, and who feel equally comfortable in both traditions.

Some composers have combined both traditional and western instruments in chamber music works such as Dia Succari's *Oublie ce que tu as écrit*, composed in 1975 and scored for narrator, voice, piano, flute, qanun and ney. These experiments remained few and are rarely performed. Some composers have written concertos for traditional instruments and orchestra. These have been, however, more a vehicle with which to showcase the instrument and the skill of the player than a true attempt to combine the different instruments and their acoustical abilities in the context of an ensemble. The *Oud Concerto* of Nouri Iskandar, and the *Ney Concerto* by Shafi Badreddine are good examples: in both concertos, sequences of traditional improvisation played by an

unaccompanied solo instrument alternate with orchestral passages in which the soloist does not play.

In the three works commissioned by the DFCP, the composers took a slightly different approach. The works were not scored for traditional instruments; instead the composers chose instruments with the necessary flexibility to function in both the western classical tradition and the Arab music tradition. The exception to this, of course, is the piano. As for the violin, viola, and cello, these instruments are frequently used in traditional instrumental music formations, as well as in ensembles that accompany traditional singers. And the clarinet enjoys a rich Turkish and Greek repertoire, and is known for being one of the most flexible woodwind instruments in terms of its color, pitch, and dynamics.

These three works offer a variety of musical styles and sources of inspiration. I have already discussed Arab music elements found in the structure of these works, their melodies and rhythms, as well as their use of *maqam*. There are other aspects of the Arab musical tradition that found their way into these works, and which affect how the instruments of the ensemble must be treated. It is necessary to identify and discuss these aspects if these pieces are to be properly performed.

#### **A. References to traditional Arab instruments:**

In measure 16 of Badreddine's *Quintet*, the piano plays what appears to be a series of gestures that have no specific pulse and which do not seem to be related to the time signature. These gestures mimic a tradition of oud players, who, as they play a traditional

*taqsim*, strike the appropriate bass note here and there, but in no specific rhythmic order—this bass note is just to remind the listener of the *maqam* being used. We can compare this with a line of al-Sunbati's *taqsim* to see how these base notes are placed.

Ex. 4.9 is the passage from *Quintet* just mentioned:

Ex. 4.9: Bass notes in the piano at measure 16 inspired by *Taqsim* on oud.

Ex. 4.10 below is a transcription from al-Sunbati *taqsim* in nahawand.<sup>70</sup>

Ex. 4.10: Excerpt from *al-Sunbātī* improvisation in *Nahawand* on C

Another representation of traditional instruments occurs in Badreddine's second movement (see Ex. 4.11 below). Here the piano is made to imitate the sound of a qanun: the player strums the piano strings directly while depressing the sustain pedal. The

<sup>70</sup> Roustom, Kareem. *A Study of Six Improvisations on the 'ūd by Riyād al-Sunbātī*, 71

harmonics from the open strings produce a sound that is similar to the harmonics produced by the qanun, which has its strings open and sustained at all times.

The image shows a musical score for piano, labeled 'Pno.' on the left. It consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The music starts at measure 43, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic. The upper staff features a melodic line with a fermata over the first measure, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff has a similar melodic line. The lower staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes. There are markings for '2' and '3' above the first and second measures respectively, and a '3' above the third measure. A 'rit.' marking is present below the first measure, and a '♯' symbol is below the second measure.

Ex. 4.11: The piano imitates a qanun; middle movement, measure 43

Qanun-like glissandi are also heard on the piano strings at mm. 95-97.

The image shows a musical score for piano, labeled 'Pno.' on the left. It consists of three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate bass staff. The key signature has one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The music starts at measure 95, marked with a piano (*pp*) dynamic and a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The upper staff features a glissando (indicated by a line with a diamond) over the first two measures, followed by a triplet of eighth notes. The middle staff has a similar glissando. The lower staff contains a rhythmic accompaniment with a triplet of eighth notes. There are markings for '3' above the first and second measures respectively, and a '3' above the third measure. A 'large' marking with a quarter note equal to 40 is present above the third measure. A 'pp' dynamic marking is present below the third measure.

Ex. 4.12: The piano as qanun; middle movement, mm. 95-97

## B. References to traditional Arab ensemble playing

Traditional Arab music is largely monophonic, and instrumental music tends to be highly embellished and ornamented. It is common to hear a traditional ensemble playing the same melodic line in unison while each player adds his own flavors of vibrato, glissandi, and ornaments.

In Roustom's second movement, there are a few references to the traditional Arabic ensemble way of playing. Measure 12 is one such place, but not knowing the composer's intentions, it proved very difficult to rehearse and play as written. It was only after realizing that the purpose of this section was to imitate a typical phrase-ending (*qafla*) in a traditional ensemble in which each player ends a unison section with his own tempo and feel that we were able to play this passage satisfactorily. Roustom indicates exactly how far apart the sixty-fourth figures should be in measure 12, but we found in rehearsal that the intended effect could only be achieved if the measure was simplified and played *ad libitum*, and without concern for the perfect alignment of these figures.

Ex. 4.13: Imitation of *qafla* in the ensemble at measures 11,12

To make sense of this passage, we “extracted” and rehearsed the original unison phrase of mm. 11-12, and then played it *ad libitum* while observing the descending *maqam* and adding ornaments along the way. Ex. 4.14 is the simplified version of the phrase:



Ex. 4.14: A simplified rendition of the original melody

Players who are unfamiliar with Arab music practice would probably devote a lot of time to perfect such an ending. The irony, of course, is that it is not meant to sound “in sync” to begin with.

The largely monophonic nature of traditional Arab music, from which these composers drew inspiration, lends itself easily to ornaments and embellishments. From a performance practice perspective, one needs to ask whether a performer should play an Arab melody presented in a western-classical context with added embellishments, or whether he/she should simply stick to the printed score. In my experience as a clarinetist, I have often wondered, for example, whether I should swing the "jazzy" parts of the Copland Clarinet Concerto or not. In my opinion this is largely personal and depends on each and every performer. It also depends on how much effort is the performer willing to put into investigating the background of a certain composer or musical language.

Below I shall present two examples of how ornaments are added to some of the melodies. My two examples come from comparing what can be heard in the studio recording of the DFCP with its Arab members with what is printed in the score. This comparison shall also be supported by the more conservative live recording of the work by the all-American Ibis Camerata, who gave the work its US premiere in Concord, Massachusetts on March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2009.

During a conversation with Kareem Roustom, I asked him how he felt about his music being played differently from one group to another. His response was: “I don’t look at my works differently than other composers’ works. I believe that all works, even those that are more restricted in terms of performance practice, such as Beethoven, still carry that freedom of interpretation, and that is the best part of being a composer and listening to the same piece of music being performed by different groups. Of course, with more contemporary music that incorporates more aleatoric elements, the final outcome is going to be even more different.”

Below are comparative examples of melodic lines from the printed score and the recording by the DFCP.

Ex 4.15 shows the opening cello line of the 2<sup>nd</sup> movement *Kamel*.

The score clearly specifies accents, grace-notes, and dynamics, and shows exactly how it was played by the Ibis Camerata.

Ex. 4.15: Opening cello line of Roustom's middle movement as it is played by the Ibis Camerata

In the DFCP recording, however, an additional trill on the  $A^{1/2\flat}$  and an idiomatic tuning of the both the  $A^{1/2\flat}$  and the  $E^{1/2\flat}$  are clearly heard. The arrows in Ex. 4.16 below show the location and the direction of these inflections.



Ex. 4.16: Opening cello line of Roustom's middle movement as it is played by the DFCP

I believe that Egyptian cellist Hassan Moataz, being a traditional Arab music performer (in addition to his classical music training), understood the *maqamic* nature of the movement (*Bayat* on G). Therefore, the  $\frac{1}{2}\flat$  2<sup>nd</sup> degree in this *maqam* needed to be lowered more than just half the distance between G and A $\flat$ , and the 6<sup>th</sup> degree needed to be little bit higher.

Ex. 4.17 shows the violin part in measures 90-92 in the second movement *Al-Kamel*.

This is how it appears in the score and how it can be heard on the Ibis Camerata live Recording (4'50''):



Ex. 4.17: Violin line of Roustom's middle movement at measure 90 as it is played by the Ibis Camerata

Ex.4.18 below illustrates how it sounds in the DFCP studio recording (5'04'').



Ex. 4.18: Violin line of Roustom's middle movement at measure 90 as it is played by the DFCP

One can easily notice the liberty with which Syrian violinist Mayas Yamani interpreted these three measures by adding trills, grace notes, glissandos and embellishments. This approach to notated music is a standard practice in Arabic traditional music.

### C. The use of improvisation

There are also many references to improvisation in Roustom's work. Of them, the clearest is the opening of the middle movement, which is a quotation from al-Sunbati's *taqasim*.



Ex. 4.19: Quotation (in the cello) from al-Sunbati at the beginning of Roustom's middle movement

To project the improvisatory quality of this passage, the performer would have to play the line in a very free manner, and not necessarily in tempo.

Yet another passage with a highly improvisatory feeling is found in mm. 182-98 of the third movement, in which the solo viola has a lyrical, almost relaxed line that weaves in and out of the agitated and complex rhythms being played by the cello and first violin.

Ex. 4.16 below shows mm. 184-88 of this passage.

The image shows a musical score for three instruments: Violin I (Vln. I), Viola (Vla.), and Violoncello (Vlc.). The music is in 5/8 time. The Violin I part consists of sixteenth-note patterns that shift their starting point within the 5/8 bar across measures, creating a complex rhythmic texture. A 'cresc.' (crescendo) marking is present under the first two measures. The Viola part features a more melodic line with some slurs and rests. The Violoncello part has a steady accompaniment of sixteenth notes, also marked with 'cresc.'.

Ex. 4.20: A complex rhythmic tapestry in the cello and violin accompanying a freer viola line

Clearly visible in this example are the different metric divisions in the violin and cello parts: as they execute sixteenth-note figures at different places within the 5/8 bar, they create the impression of multiple downbeats. In great contrast to this furious rhythmic accompaniment, the viola melody meanders about and rarely—if ever—marks a downbeat.

It is important to note that rhythmic complexity of this sort is not typical of most Arab music of the Middle East, where 3/4, 4/4, 3/8, 6/8 and 10/8 are the meters most commonly used, and polyrhythms are rare. Moreover, the melodic material in traditional music usually emphasizes the meter used and rarely employs syncopation. Though these complex rhythmical patterns are not common in Arab music, the juxtaposition of the rhythmically independent viola line with the rhythmically complex tapestry can be compared to a free improvisation of a melodic instrument over a rhythmical accompaniment of two percussion instruments or more, often found in traditional Arab music.

In Succari's quintet, the improvisatory aspects appear in fragmented forms in the first movement. They are evident in the approach to the triplet figures in the exchange

between violin and clarinet in mm. 35-39, where the soloistic descending figures are accompanied by a constant drone (both melodic and rhythmic) in the remaining instruments, the purpose of which is to confirm the tonic of the *maqam* (in this case, C). These descending triplets remind us of the famous opening of Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*.

The image shows a musical score for measures 35-39. The top staff is for the Violin (V.), the middle for Alto (A.), and the bottom for Violoncello (Vc.). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). In measure 35, the violin begins with a melodic line consisting of descending triplets. This line continues through measures 36, 37, 38, and 39. The alto and cello parts provide a constant drone accompaniment, consisting of sustained chords in the same key signature.

Ex. 4.21: An improvised melodic line in the violin over a drone by the strings, measure 35

The other concrete reference to improvisation in Succari's work is the optional improvisation section for the clarinet in measure 86 of the third movement. This is, in fact, the only real opportunity for improvisation to be found in these three works.

\* La Clarinette peut intercaler une Cadence ou une improvisation après la mesure 85, puis reprendre à la mesure 86.

The image shows a musical score for measure 85. The top staff is for Clarinet (Cl.), the middle for Violin (V.), Alto (A.), and Violoncello (Vc.), and the bottom for Piano (P.). The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The clarinet part in measure 85 features a melodic line with a cadence or improvisation section marked with an asterisk (\*). The other instruments (V., A., Vc., P.) provide a drone accompaniment, consisting of sustained chords in the same key signature.

Ex. 4.22: An optional Improvisation section in the clarinet (transposed) in measure 85

**Chapter 4 Conclusion:**

Do these works challenge the performer differently from other western classical music works? From what I have discussed in chapters 2 and 3, and the observations found in chapter 4, it is clear that such challenges do exist. However, it is by no means limited to western musicians learning Arabic-music influenced works, but rather it includes any musical work that has specific traditional nuances not necessarily expressed in the score as it is understood from a western musical perspective. Classically trained musicians spend years learning scales, and how to play in tune and being faithful to the printed score. I do believe that a performer can approach any other musical work only if the same amount of work is put into learning the fine nuances specific to the culture from which the composer drew inspiration

## Appendix 1: Transliteration system

This system is used by *The International Journal of Middle East Studies*<sup>71</sup>

IJMES TRANSLITERATION SYSTEM FOR ARABIC, PERSIAN, AND TURKISH														
C														
A = Arabic, P = Persian, OT = Ottoman Turkish, MT = Modern Turkish														
	A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT		A	P	OT	MT
ا				—	ا	z	z	z	z	ا	k	k or g	k or fi	k or n
ب	b	b	b	b or p	ب	—	zh	j	j				ory	ory
پ	—	p	p	p	پ	s	s	s	s				or	or
ت	t	t	t	t	ث	sh	sh			ك	—	g	g	g
ث	th	s	s	s	س				s	ل	l	l	l	l
ج	j	j	c	c	ح				z	م	m	m	m	m
چ	—	ch	ç	ç	ط				t	ن	n	n	n	n
ح				h	ظ				z	ه	h	h	h <sup>1</sup>	h <sup>1</sup>
خ	kh	kh	h	h	ع				—	و	w	v or u	v	v
د	d	d	d	d	غ	gh	gh	g or	g or	ي	y	y	y	y
ذ	dh	z	z	z	ف	f	f	f	f	ا <sup>2</sup>	a <sup>2</sup>			
ر	r	r	r	r	ق	q	q		k	ا <sup>3</sup>	a <sup>3</sup>			

<sup>1</sup> When h is not final. <sup>2</sup> In construct state: at. <sup>3</sup> For the article, al- and -l-.

ARABIC AND PERSIAN		OTTOMAN AND MODERN TURKISH	
Long l or	ل	}	words of Arabic and Persian origin only
	و		
	ي		
Doubled	ئى	iy (nal form)	iy (nal form)
	ئو	uw (nal form)	uvv
Diphthongs	او	au or aw	ev
	اي	ai or ay	ey
Short	ا	a	a or e
	و	u	u or ü / o or ö
	ي	i	i or i

For Ottoman Turkish, authors may either transliterate or use the modern Turkish orthography.

<sup>71</sup> <http://web.gc.cuny.edu/ijmes/docs/TransChart.pdf>.

## Appendix 2: Clarinet works by Arab composers

**Abu Bakr Khairat** (1910-1963, Egypt)

- *Piece*, for clarinet and piano

**Gamal Abdel-Rahim** (1924-1988, Egypt)

- *Soliloquy*, for unaccompanied solo clarinet, 1984

**Solhi al-Wadi** (1934-2007, Iraq/Syria)

- *Two Sonatas*, lost, 1962
- *Minus five*, for solo clarinet, 1999

**Nouri Iskandar** (b. 1938, Syria)

- *Oriental miniatures*, for clarinet, violin, viola and cello, 2011

**Ahmed Essyad** (b. 1938, Morocco/France)

- *Itto*, for bass clarinet, 2005
- *L'Écllosion du corps*, for clarinet and marimba, 2005
- *Touda*, for clarinet and cello, 2005
- *Tia aït mas*, for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and double-bass, 2005

**Dia Succari** (1938-2010, Syria)

- *Chants d'Urnina*, for clarinet and Piano, 1986
- *Kelleriade*, for clarinet and piano, 1992
- *Instants d'Argile*, for clarinet and piano, 1995
- *Les trois clarinettes*, for three clarinets, 1995
- *Piece*, for clarinet and choir, 2003
- *Parole des abîme au soleil*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2005

- *Paroles de l'arbre au vent*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2005
- *Paroles du matin à la rose*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2005
- *Quintet for Damascus festival*, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and Piano, 2008

**Nuri Ruheibani** (b. 1940, Syria)

- *Nocturne*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2005

**Ahmed Al-Saedi** (1947, Egypt)

- *Taqasseem*, for clarinet and string orchestra, 1995

**Ali Osman** (b. 1958, Sudan)

- *Aria*, for clarinet and piano, 1983
- *Five little pieces*, for clarinet and piano, 1983
- *Invention*, clarinet, piano, 1983
- *Mawal masri - Egyptian mawal*, for clarinet and piano, 1983
- *Quintet*, flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, bassoon, 1984
- *Almurdoom*, for flute, clarinet, and piano, 1995
- *Trio*, for piano, clarinet, and cello, 2000

**Karim Haddad** (b.1962, Lebanon)

- *Des ciels gris de cristal*, for alto flute, clarinet, violin and cello, 1992
- *No one to speak their names (now that they are gone)*, for two bass clarinets, string trio, and electronics, 2003
- *Tal vez tenemos tiempo*, for double-bass flute, double-bass clarinet, horn, cello, and electronics, 2004

**Esam al-Jowder** (b. 1962, Bahrain)

- *Trio*, for clarinet, cello, and piano, 2007

- *Fantasy*, for clarinet and string orchestra, 2008
- *The spirit, the last hope*, for clarinet and string orchestra, 2011

**Abdalla el-Masri** (b. 1962, Lebanon)

- *Quintet*, for clarinet, harp, violin, viola, and cello, 1986
- *Three moods*, for E-flat clarinet, clarinet, bass clarinet, and basset horn, 1988
- *In Arabic mood I*, for flute, clarinet, and bassoon, 1986

**Sherif Mohie el-Din** (b.1964, Egypt)

- *Tasa'ulat*, for unaccompanied solo clarinet, 1996
- *A moment in sonata context*, for clarinet and string quartet, 1998

**Houtaf Khoury** (b. 1967, Libya)

- *Trio*, for clarinet, viola, and piano, 1996
- *Le temps des rêves, concerto*, for clarinet and strings, 2005
- *Gardens of love*, for clarinet and string quartet or orchestra, 2009

**Ahmed Madkour** (b.1967, Egypt)

- *Trio in three movements*, for Oboe, Clarinet, and Bassoon, 1990
- *Three pieces*, for Clarinet solo, 1991

**Hassan Taha** (b. 1969, Syria)

- *Sufi hymn*, for clarinet, piano, and choir, 2003
- *Three pieces*, for clarinet and cello, 2003
- *Samaii chromatic*, for clarinet, horn, oud, cello and piano, 2004
- *Der würfelspieler*, for voice, bass-clarinet, santur, zarb, and viola, 2011

**Samir Odeh-Tamimi** (b.1970, Palestine/Israel)

- *Ahinnu II*, for flute/piccolo, oboe, clarinet/bass clarinet, percussion, violin, viola, and cello, 2002
- *Shattila*, for clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, 2004/2005
- *Philaki*, for flute, clarinet, 2 horns, violin, viola, and cello, 2009

**Nahla Mattar** (b. 1971, Egypt)

- *Three*, for cello, bass clarinet, and piano, 2008

**Kareem Roustom** (b. 1971, Syria/USA)

- *Buhur*, for clarinet, violin, viola, and cello, 2008
- *Abu jameel's daughter*, for narrator, flute, clarinet, violin, viola, and cello, 2011
- *Letters home*, for clarinet and cello, 2011

**Shafi Badreddine** (b. 1972, Syria)

- *Impression I*, for flute, clarinet, bassoon, violin, and cello, 1996
- *Impression II*, for flute, clarinet, bassoon, violin, and cello, 1997
- *Fantasy*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2000
- *Suite*, for clarinet and cello, 2003
- *Quintet*, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and Piano, 2008

**Fouad Fakhouri** (b. 1972, Jordan)

- *Gargoyle*, for alto flute/Piccolo, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, contrabassoon, bass-trombone/sand paper, pianoforte/amplified harpsichord, 1998

**Saed Haddad** (b. 1972, Jordan)

- *Muwashshah*, for clarinet and piano, 2001
- *Le contredésir*, for clarinet, French horn, and cello, 2004

- *Kontra-Gewalt*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2010
- *Intimate*, for bass clarinet, viola and percussion, 2011
- *In memoriam Escher (2)*, for solo clarinet, 2011

**Bassam Halaka** (b. 1977, Egypt)

- *Elegy*, for clarinet, bassoon, and piano, 2004
- *The mummy*, for flute, oboe, clarinet, French horn, and bassoon, 2004
- *Asphalt's womb*, octet for clarinet, bassoon, horn, piano, violin, viola, cello, double-bass, and video, 2008

**Amr Okba**, (b 1972, Egypt)

- *Instability*, for flute, clarinet, violin, cello, and piano, 2003

**Mohamed Saad Basha** (b. 1972, Egypt)

- *Aragoz – puppet*, for flute, oboe (plus ney ad libitum), clarinet, and bassoon, 2004
- *El-Sabr gameel*, for kawala, rabab, qanoun, riq, clarinet, violin, viola, and cello, 2006

**Ramz Sabry Samy** (b. 1973, Egypt)

- *Little suite*, for flute, oboe, clarinet, and bassoon, 1998
- *Vortex*, for E-flat clarinet, 2 clarinets, and bass clarinet, 2000
- *A dot in the beginning*, flute, clarinet, violin, cello, 2005
- *Three glimpses*, for clarinet, violin, and cello, 2005

**Zaid jabri** (b. 1975, Syria)

- *Trio bayat*, for clarinet, violin and cello, 1999
- *Trio for Vilon*, for clarinet and piano, 2004
- *Concerto*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2004

- *Trio*, for clarinet, violin and piano, 2004
- *Oriente grosso*, for clarinet, cello, and orchestra, 2004
- *Quintet*, for clarinet and string quartet, 2006
- *Song without words*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2008
- *In memoriam*, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and tape, 2008

**Jean Tamzejian** (b. 1975, Syria)

- *Nocturne*, for clarinet and piano, 1997

**Kinan Azmeh** (b. 1976, Syria)

- *November 22<sup>nd</sup>*, for clarinet and string orchestra, 2007
- *Walls and towers*, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello, tape, and video, 2010
- *Fantasy in three characters*, for clarinet, voice, and orchestra, 2010

**Iyad Mohammed** (b.1976, Jordan/Germany)

- *Metamorphosen*, for clarinet and piano, 2000
- *Erforscht*, for flute, clarinet, cello, and piano, 2001
- *Fibonacci cycles*, for clarinet, cello, piano, and marimba, 2002

**Waël al-Nabulsy** (b.1976, Syria)

- *Moses fantasy*, for clarinet and piano, 1999

**Rami Shahin** (b.1976, Syria)

- *Qassyoun mountain*, for clarinet, violin, and piano, 2004
- *A wing of sadness*, for clarinet and viola, 2007
- *Flowers ceremony of sadness*, for clarinet, violin, viola and cello, 2011

**Garo Avesian** (b. 1979, Lebanon)

- *Sonatine*, for clarinet and piano, 2002

**Suheib Samman** (b. 1982, Syria)

- *Scherzo*, for Clarinet and piano, 2000

**Bushra el-Turk** (b. 1982, Lebanon/UK)

- *The elephant's tooth (a prologue)*, for clarinet and wind orchestra, 2008
- *Dramaticule II (a story from Gaza) a nopera in 2 acts*, for clarinet, cello and piano, 2009

**Mohammed Fairouz** (b.1985, Egypt/US)

- *Litany*, for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, and double bass, 2007
- *Tahwidah*, for clarinet and soprano, 2008
- *Ka-las*, for clarinet and viola, 2009
- *Unwritten*, for soprano, flute, clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano, 2010
- *Ughnia't Mariam*, for two clarinets, 2010
- *AdZel*, for two clarinets, 2011
- *Tahrir*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2011

### Appendix 3: Dia Succari list of works

- *Suite*, for violin and piano, 1964
- *Roubayates*, for mezzo-soprano and small orchestra, 1965
- *Suite Syrienne*, for piano, 1965
- *Fugue No. 1*, for string orchestra, 1966
- *L'étincelle du silex (Sact El Zind)*, for chamber orchestra, 1967
- *Prière du matin*, for ney and piano, 1968
- *Étude*, for chamber orchestra, 1968
- *Splendeurs oubliée*, for orchestra, 1969
- *Yakza*, for middle-eastern ensemble and small orchestra, 1970
- *Aleph lam mim*, for violin, viola, cello and piano, 1970
- *Cahier des légendes*, for piano, 1974
- *Album d'après le folklore*, for violin and piano, 1974
- *Clair présage*, for piano, 1974
- *La nuit du destin*, for piano, 1975
- *Oublie ce que tu as appris*, for narrator, voice and small orchestra, 1975
- *Efface ce que tu as écrit*, for tape, 1976
- *Fugue No.3*, for string orchestra, 1977
- *Duo*, for violin and cello, 1977
- *Baal et anat*, for string orchestra, 1979
- *Lorsque le matin parut un peu de jour*, for violin and orchestra, 1980
- *Et la nuit se dissipa comme de la fumée*, for flute, 1981

- *Trio*, for violin, cello and piano, 1982
- *Sin*, for flute, 1984
- *Sonata*, for piano, 1985
- *Couleurs d'automne*, for alto saxophone and piano, 1985
- *Chants d'Urnina*, for clarinet and piano, 1986
- *La dame de feu*, for various beginner ensembles, 1986
- *Il est raconté*, for alto saxophone and piano, 1987
- *Sur l'étang*, for Celtic harp, 1987
- *Sonnerie et fête*, for beginners orchestra, 1987
- *Légende slave*, for alto saxophone and piano, 1988
- *Chanson de Diana*, for Celtic harp, 1988
- *Rêve*, for Celtic harp and piano, 1988
- *Evocation médiévale*, for beginners' orchestra, 1988
- *Vents des sables*, for orchestra, 1989
- *Quand le soleil couchant disparut*, for flute and piano, 1989
- *Au palais du temps*, for flute and piano, 1989
- *Charmeur des sables*, for oboe and piano, 1990
- *L'arbre aux oranges*, for Celtic harp, 1990
- *Sourire de lune*, for harp, 1990
- *Variation sur une chanson populaire*, for Piano, 1990
- *Feuilles en automne*, for harp, 1990
- *Choral*, for trumpet and piano, 1991
- *Aigle triste*, for trumpet and piano, 1991

- *Kelleriade*, for clarinet and piano, 1992
- *Improvisations and dance*, for violin and piano, 1992
- *Sultane de Damas*, for violin and piano, 1992
- *Sonata No.2*, for piano, 1993
- *Fleur d'un songe*, for alto saxophone and piano, 1993
- *Ode a la nuit tombée*, for piano, 1994
- *A la mémoire de G.Gourdet*, for cello and piano, 1994
- *Prélude pour E*, for piano, 1994
- *Sous le regard de la lune*, for piano, 1995
- *Petit valse*, for flute and piano, 1995
- *Prélude*, for flute and piano, 1995
- *Instants d'Argile*, for clarinet and piano, 1995
- *Sonatina*, for violin and piano, 1995
- *Les trois clarinettes*, for three clarinets, 1995
- *L'Enfant Prince De La Ville Verte*, for children's voices and piano, 1995
- *Sonatina*, for piano, 1997
- *Romance no.1*, for piano, 1997
- *Romance no.2*, for piano, 1997
- *La pluie qu'ont versée les étoiles*, for children's voices and piano, 1997
- *Diadème, Suite No.1*, for children's voices and piano, 1998
- *Noces au krak des chevaliers*, for trumpet and piano, 1998
- *Clarté d'avril*, for trumpet and piano, 1998
- *Fugue no.2 for piano*, 1998

- *Diadème, suite no.2*, for children's voices and piano, 1999
- *Image d'antiquité*, for cello and piano, 1999
- *Fantasy for piano*, 2004
- *Pièce*, for clarinet and choir, 2003
- *Parole des abime au soleil*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2005
- *Paroles de l'arbre au vent*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2005
- *Paroles du matin à la rose*, for clarinet and orchestra, 2005
- *Quintet for damascus festival*, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello and piano, 2008

## Appendix 4: Kareem Roustom list of works

- *Variations on Longa Shahnaz*, for clarinet, piano, 2 violins, viola, and cello, 2002
- *Sama'i Hijazkar*, for oud, violin, and frame drum, 2003
- *Sama'i Nahawand*, for ney, oud, qanun, hand percussion, and strings, 2005
- *Hot tea, mint & olives*, for children's choir and piano, 2007
- *That which is adorned*, for mezzo-soprano, violin, viola, and cello, 2007
- *Amar es combatir*, for alto, viola, and piano, 2007
- *Suite from "Encounter Point,"* for clarinet, oud, percussion, violin, and cello, 2007
- *Upon eastern breezes*, for clarinet, oud, hand percussion, violin, cello, and orchestra, 2007
- *Buhur*, for clarinet, violin, viola, and cello, 2008
- *Three klezmer dances*, for violin, tambourine, and strings, 2008
- *Resonances*, for Arabic violin, cello, hand percussion, and string quartet, 2009
- *The son of man*, oratorio for trumpet, percussion, soloists (soprano, mezzo-soprano, alto, tenor & bass-baritone), and organ, 2011
- *Abu jameel's daughter*, for narrator, flute, clarinet, violin, viola, and cello, 2011
- *Letters home*, for clarinet and viola, 2011

## Appendix 5: Shafi Badreddine list of works

- *Impression I*, for flute, clarinet, bassoon, violin, and cello, 1996
- *Impression II*, for flute, clarinet, bassoon, violin, and cello 1997
- *Chanson du nord*, for ney, string orchestra, and percussion, 1997
- *Ya wared*, for choir, 1998
- *Dance de cimetièrre*, for flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, violin, cello, and percussion, 1999
- *Joufiya*, for trumpet and orchestra, 1999-2000
- *Fantasy*, for clarinet, string orchestra, and percussion, 2000-2001
- *Ney concerto*, for ney and orchestra, 2001
- *String quartet*, for 2 violins, viola, and cello 2003
- *Duo*, for clarinet and cello, 2003
- *Sabayat*, for violin and piano, 2004
- *Mawlawiya*, for Orchestra, 2004
- *Étude*, for tape, 2004
- *Rituelles sacrées*, for flute, oud, tabla, ensemble, and electronics, 2005
- *Transformation*, for violin and ensemble, 2005- 2006
- *Le vent*, for tape, 2006
- *Ertejal, maqam-spectre*, for ney, qanun, oud, and ensemble, 2007
- *Quintet*, for clarinet, violin, viola, cello, and piano, 2008
- *A...Sama*, for cello and piano, 2008
- *Fractal*, for violin and orchestra, 2008

- *Shams*, for string orchestra and percussion, 2008
- *Éspace double*, for piano and double orchestra 2009
- *Ombra*, for violin solo and ensemble, 2009-2010
- *Étude modale*, for piano, 2010

## Appendix 6: Conversation with Kareem Roustom

Conducted in English in New York, 26 March 2009.

**Kinan Azmeh:** Historians have always tried to put composers into groups and to give them titles such as *Les Six*, *The Second Viennese School*, *The Mighty Five*, etc. Do you think we can do this with contemporary Syrian composers? Is there such a thing today as a Syrian school of composition? And if so, would you belong to it?

**Kareem Roustom:** For a start, it is hard for me to say that I belong to a certain musical school of thought, as I have not conducted a conventional composition education. My undergraduate study was in music business and guitar performance, and my masters was in ethnomusicology. During my graduate work, I did take a number of composition lessons, but I was older, and I did not like the way the lessons took place. Neither did I like the façade of the new music scene. I was turned off by the way the new music concerts were organized—cramping all sorts of new pieces together in one program. I did not feel I belonged there. Moreover, the lack of performance possibilities at Tufts University made me feel even farther apart from that scene where composers already have very few possibilities to have their works performed. Had I gone to New England Conservatory, things would have been different.

For my graduate studies, I applied to Ethnomusicology programs at Tufts, SOAS<sup>72</sup> and UCLA; Tufts was where I ended up going purely for logistical reasons. Honestly, I went back to school to get a degree mainly so that I can teach. Of course, I learned a great deal being there, but despite my degree, I still feel outside the system of

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<sup>72</sup> School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London.

traditional concert music composition. During my graduate studies in the summer, I took half a dozen lessons with the well-known Michael Gandolfi, who introduced me to pitch series, pitch classes, and to the music of Milton Babbitt and Donald Martino. This is something that stayed with me. Now I am coming back to it and applying it to my more tonal music. Furthermore, I am applying it to my modal writing using the Arabic *maqams* by arranging the notes of a single *maqam* into different series and vectors.

Although I studied a bit here and a bit there, I still don't know if I belong anywhere, It might be easier for someone from the outside to classify my work.

**K.A.:** Then what about belonging to a Syrian school? Is there anything Syrian in your music? Can one even ask such a question while keeping in mind that most Syrian composers have either studied in or are currently living in the West?

**K.R.:** It is not that I woke up one day and found myself, or even decided to be Syrian. I will preface this by comparing myself to other composers. There are, as you know, many self-loathing Arabs. And there are even more self-loathing Arab musicians who, for some reason, have renounced everything Arab. They even go as far as to say that if you are relying on *maqams* then this is a weakness and not original. Some of them also argue that if you take that out of the music then there is nothing left. I am not a self-loathing Arab. My mother is American and my father is Syrian. I grew up in Syria until I was thirteen and then we moved to America, and that was difficult. At first you do everything you can to assimilate and hide your identity because you are a stranger. Not until my senior year in high school did I begin discovering music, and it was then that I found a way out of this oppressive teenage society. Through music I discovered jazz and spent lots of time trying to compose on guitar, but eventually I felt that the music did not

ultimately speak to me on a really deep level. Also, in a jazz gig you get lots of what one can call *head cutting*. This is when someone says: *Do you know this song? We are going to play it really fast in this weird key*, and if you cannot improvise on *Giant Steps*,<sup>73</sup> you don't play jazz. I found this mentality to be really off-putting and I did not want to be part of it.

Along this journey, I began discovering film music. I began to write for film and I won a scholarship to go to Los Angeles and work with a TV composer. I stayed there for about five years and I learned a lot, but I felt in that world too, that I began to lose my identity as far as who I was, because you have to write something in every single style, and that way your demo-reel sounds like anything: a lousy copy of rap, a weak copy of country, etc. I made a conscious decision to leave that world and focus on my own music.

While I was in Los Angeles I started going frequently to UCLA's Arab Music Ensemble. And on a trip to Syria, before I moved to Los Angeles, I discovered the *oud* and really began getting into Arab music. Ultimately, what it means to have a Syrian element in my music is about reconnecting with a childhood that was cut short. It is something that is very basic and foundational ... it is about identity. Whether it is fair that because I was born there I can claim more right to that music than somebody who was not and wants to use it, I don't know, that's a different argument.

This is a topic that often comes up in Ethnomusicology—the notion of authenticity. After all what is authenticity? Unless you come from a remote village which you have never left in your life, singing traditional songs, then that's another issue. But in Damascus for instance, you get exposed to the Beatles, Elvis Presley, and all other types of music. Scholars, and certainly those in ethnomusicological circles, really want to

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<sup>73</sup> The title track of the 1959 album by John Coltrane.

impose that on you: “he is from such and such place, so he must be fantastic.” In a recent concert in Boston, they put in the program “Oud Virtuoso,” as if my Syrian heritage would grant me such title; I try not to pretend to be something I am not. For me, the Syrian element is a longing for something that I lost, and I know that I can’t go back. Of course, all this is in addition to loving the music itself.

Think about Khalil Gibran.<sup>74</sup> I only bring him up because of his ability to survive. If you read biographies of him, the thing that you realize is that people wanted to see something in him; people wanted to see a mystical quality ... the mystery of the Orient. He was smart enough to say “this is how I am going to succeed in a racist society, this is how I am going to get out of the ghetto”—even as he moved to the slums of Boston. I am not saying that he was insincere with his work, he was pushed into that role and he accepted it, and he was able to succeed. And I am sure that this story will be in tune with what the other composers are going to tell you. I am sure that Zaid Jabri, for example, was singled out because he is exotic—he is the “other”—and people want to compartmentalize.

**K.A.:** But also one should remember that what is exotic to one culture may not carry that same quality in another. In fact, in a recent concert in Kiev, Ukraine, I was labeled as the “Clarinetist from New York,” and I was told that they did this because New York, for them, is far more exotic than Damascus. Obviously, people label you for different reasons.

**K.R.:** This is not something to be taken lightly as it influences all of us. Most of the work I get is from people who are more interested in my background than my actual music. With film work it is the same story, most of the films I got were Arab-related.

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<sup>74</sup> A Lebanese American artist, poet, and writer (1883 –1931)

**K.A.:** If I may follow on your idea of authenticity, don't you think it has such a grand emotional value as well? Is studying Indian music, for example, with an average teacher in India is more enlightening than doing the same with a master in New York?

**K.R.:** I remember attending a faculty pre-concert lecture at UCLA by a great sitar player. Someone asked him whether it is necessary to go to India to study sitar, and his answer was: "look, is that going to make you a better sitar player? Not necessarily. But if you are going to study Beethoven, then I think you should go to Vienna to see what he saw and try to understand what he took in. See the forests that he walked through and the rivers he heard. I think it informs what you do." I believe that one's music is certainly influenced by his surroundings. My old jazz teacher used to say that a Boston fast tempo piece is a New York medium. Of course, where you are and where you grew up influences what you do. As to whether you need to go to Syria to study harmony and counterpoint—of course not. But to study oud or ney, it would still make a lot of sense.

**K.A.:** When you present your more Orient-sounding works to a western audience, what is the biggest obstacle? Do you consider the lack of reference in the ears of a new audience to be problematic? And as long as you maneuver between different musical genres, do you take into consideration which one to choose when you get a commission from a western group—an American ensemble or orchestra, for example?

**K.R.:** When you perform in public, you always have the opportunity to talk and to give a little background. But when it comes to composition, it is quite different. Had *Buhur*, for example, been commissioned by a completely western group of musicians; I would not have written the middle movement. There are practical idiomatic considerations that you have to take when writing for a particular group. In the work for

the Philadelphia Orchestra for instance, I wrote quartertones for the oboes, flutes and trumpets. The thing about it was that at the rehearsal I was able to approach the trumpet players and say “can you pull out the valve and let me hear it, just to make sure you have the right distance?” and they were very cooperative; the fingering worked for the flute players so they got it right; but for some reason, with the principal oboist, they said “don’t go talk to him, you can’t approach him, just leave him alone!” When I asked the assistant if I can hear how it sounds, he had this horrified look and was not cooperative at all.

There are going to be obstacles for sure within the musicians themselves, and how they are viewing this. The other practical considerations are related to how many rehearsals you are going to give the piece, also if you wrote fingerings for the quarter tones; will they spend the time to tune them properly? Will the conductor even know how it is supposed to sound even if you write 45 cents above or below? Are they really going to put a tuner up there and tune them? These practical considerations are important especially in how you put the score together. The first arrangement I did for the Philadelphia Orchestra was that of a *muwashshah* in 13/4 meter. But because I left it in 13/4, the conductor did not know how to conduct it. I could have easily divided it into twos and threes but I wanted to be faithful to where this music came from, because if the whole notion was to present Arab music to a new audience, then you want at least to try to get an idea what an orchestra in the Middle East would do with this same music.

I am still developing my language, where it is going to be in five years, I don’t know. When I met Shafi Badreddine in Damascus, he welcomed me with a funny comment, he said “I heard your music on your website. Don’t you have anything without

percussion?” Maybe it was because the trio for strings and mezzo-soprano he was referring to had some Arabic percussive elements in the string writing. These elements are things I am interested in. If you look at any composer, there are always common elements. While some composers like Vaughan Williams kept writing in the same style and using the same elements—there are others like Stravinsky who went through different periods with very distinguished different styles. After all, you cannot control what references people will find in a piece of music. Someone came to me after my film screening last night and told me that my music reminded him of Piazzolla! And of course, that was only because I had an accordion in the score. It did not make any difference that the accordionist was playing in Arabic modes with quartertones. I am sure it is always going to be the case that the amateur listener might hear something that is quite different from what an expert or scholar will pick up from the very same piece of music.

**K.A.:** Do you depend on the traditional heritage of your background in forming your musical vocabulary, whether it is modal writing using the *maqams*, or the musicality of the Arabic language itself, as in the case of your work *Buhur*? Is there a national identity that your music carries? And if so, how does it manifest itself in your work? Does it interest you to be described as someone who writes in the “Arabic” style? Is it your goal to affirm your identity as an Arab-American by juxtaposing the *maqams* with western orchestral writing?

**K.R.:** I don’t think about it much; I just do it because it is what interests me. Why don’t I decide all of a sudden to start using the polyrhythmic patterns of African music? Simply, because I don’t feel that much connection with it yet, so I would be an outsider. Ultimately it just comes down for longing, yearning, and memories. In a way similar to

Marcel Proust's book *À la recherche du temps perdu* (In Search of Lost Time); It begins with him eating the madeleine, through which he remembers his childhood. It is a similar experience when I use these familiar elements; a taste that brings back all these memories. But do I think that this makes me a Syrian-American composer? The fact of the matter is that on an artistic level, this is something I am genuinely and sincerely interested in; on a making-a-living level, which most composers don't like to talk about, it helps me because I am not just another composer the same way you are not just another clarinetist. We are in a highly competitive world, and if it is to your benefit, and you are sincere about it, then why not? It is not like I am using it. When it comes to real applications then yes, on my website it says "Syrian-born composer," and it also says that I am musically bilingual. This is what I do for film and commercial work because that's how these people think. Whether there is going to be a spillover on how I approach concert music, I have to wait and see. I think it is starting to happen as I am starting to question why there should be a line between arranging work, film work and concert music work.

**K.A.:** Some people say that in film music, you may end up writing music you don't want to write. This also applies to concert music as well: having to deal with a different set of limitations such as instrumentation, players, length, etc. How do you deal with all these limitations?

**K. R.:** I will give you an example. In my latest film score, *Amreeka*, I tried to create something that is interesting and original, but in the end they were so in love with the music that had already been composed that they used it as a temporary score, so I had to write something that sounded like that. It pushes you to write something you may

never write on your own, and that's fine. You are hired to do a job, and I don't think that a film score is the right platform to pour out your artistic statements anyway; you are there artistically to serve the drama on the screen. At the same time, it is such stressful work: the producer is stressed out and the director is stressed out because they don't know what the music process is. And there is this constant talk about budget and money. You end up just wanting to write something that will make them happy so you can be done with it. When I did my apprenticeship with Mike Post—who has over thirty years of TV work experience behind him—he told me: “You have to like what you write, but they (the producers) have to love it.” Do the director or the producer know what is the best musical solution? Probably not always, but they might have some insightful ideas. When I write film music I don't have the burden of wanting it be the best thing I ever write.

But at the same time, I am seeing the spillover between my film music and concert music happening in strange situations. When I was writing a string arrangement for a pop song, I found myself preoccupied with the producer's comments about making the violin writing thicker. As a concert music composer, I end up spending so much time writing counter-melodies, modulations, and other complicated techniques, but in the end, all it needed was a cello and a viola doubling the violins down the octave. This triggered in me the idea of writing a new piece titled *Variations on an Orientalist pop song*. When I write a concert piece, I do spend a fair amount of time planning things out, pitch patterns, lots of pen and paper and sketches, while in film music you head straight to the computer because of the lack of time. But yes, slowly these borders are disappearing. But it is fair to say that in almost everything I do, Arabic elements and especially near eastern music elements are present.

**K.A.:** Contemporary music in the Arab world in general and in Syria in particular, where do you see it going?

**K.R.:** I am not sure I am the right person to ask, but based on my observation of how my work and those works by my colleagues were received during the DFCP concerts and residency, I can answer this by stating that I believe that this is a supply and demand thing. Obviously, the Syrian contemporary music scene is quite small, people are curious and they would want to see more of that. As long as there is support for it in terms of infrastructure (conservatories, venues) as well as financially from both governmental and non-governmental organizations, then people will be interested. People have always been interested in having artists from their home country, especially in the Middle East, someone they can be proud of. Part of that is due to an inferiority complex with the West. I believe that the Syrian audience will be more interested in listening to contemporary music by Syrian artists more than a concert of Italian Arias performed by foreigners.

**K.A.:** Contemporary music is struggling everywhere in the world, but Syria seems to be having a renaissance, musically speaking; do you have any thoughts on that?

**K.R.:** I don't know how you gauge this: is it through media interest or public attendance? For example, I was asked in the press conference why there was no oud in the DFCP ensemble—the oud being the king of Arab musical instruments. I wanted to answer by saying that in the middle movement of *Buhur*, I used some elements from an improvisation by the famous oud player Riyād al-Sunbātī, and that the piece honors the musical world of the oud. In fact, when you check the manuscript you will not find the clarinet part, as the piece was originally conceived for oud and string quartet, but it was

changed for clarinet and string trio as I realized that I, being a medium level oud player, would not be able to play those complicated parts! Some other people—Zaid Jabri for example—would not have liked such an answer; he is one of those who think that contemporary Arab music should stay away from traditional Arab music elements.

**K.A.:** I find Zaid’s take on this to be particularly interesting as he uses the *maqam Bayat* on D in most of his works. You can find this in *Oriente Grosso, the Clarinet Concerto*, as well as in *In memoriam*. But in any case, most occidental composers approaching the so-called “Oriental sound” seek that by using augmented-seconds and drones; as an “Oriental” composer yourself, do you try to avoid these clichés?

**K.R.:** I actually do use these “clichés,” but I thicken them to make them sound interesting. If you want an example we can talk about the first movement, which is written in *Hijaz Kar*. Obviously the melody in the cello reflects that specific sound of the augmented second, but what about the accompaniment? What about the clarinet part? Does it have that obvious *Hijaz Kar* quality into it?

**K.A.:** One reviewer attracted my attention by the way he commented about the first movement; he said that it drew some elements from the Jewish tradition. Here is another cliché, the moment a clarinet melody appears with an augmented second with a slight use of vibrato, the listener associates it directly with Eastern European music or Klezmer. Which is even more emphasized by the absence of the clarinet from traditional Arab music.

**K.R.:** Well, the movement is in *Hijaz Kar*, but even when you say this very few people actually understand what that means, usually associating the mode with its seven notes. In my case, I took all the main seven pitches from the *maqam* in addition to other

chromatic pitches that were found in the melody of the *muwashshah* “*Zarani el-Mahboub*” which is in a *Hijaz Kar*. The main pitches are C, Db, E, F, G, Ab, B. and the “additional” ones were: D-natural, Bb, Gb. I used all these pitches in my harmonic language. It is important to mention that the traditional *Hijaz Kar* is usually in C and that was what I used in this movement. It really depends on what *maqam* theories you subscribe to, but I personally think of any *maqam* as a complete body with all its possible modulations.

*Maqam* theories, historically speaking were based on the range of the oud which has a limited number of octaves. Each pitch at every octave has a different name: the middle C is called *Kurdan*, the C octave above is *Jawab Kurdan*, etc. *Zarani el Mahboub* for example begins on the upper octave, so the *Hijaz Kar* starts on the upper octave and finds its way down. It begins with C, D, E-flat, and in this upper octave you have *Nahawand* which has the quality of the Minor, but in the lower octave traditionally there is no D-natural. And along that melody comes a G-flat, A-natural, this made me realize that I have a bigger chromatic pool to work with and still be within this *Hijaz*. That’s why I am not afraid to deal with a *maqam* that features this clichéd augmented second.

On the other hand, I try to avoid using the *Darbuka*,<sup>75</sup> in contrast with many western composers who depend on that instrument to showcase the “Arab” flavor. I think the key is not to be obvious when it comes to sounding “Orientalist.” I find it quite annoying when people immediately go to the lowbrow elements of Arab music and think this is what should be brought to art music. Why don’t they go to the incredible refinement, the heritage, and the history of Arabic art music? If you want to present art

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<sup>75</sup> A percussion instrument of the Middle East.

music then you should draw your borrowed vocabulary from the highest elements of that other culture, especially when this culture is underrepresented or misrepresented.

**K.A.:** Why are most Syrian composers in exile?

**K.R.:** We moved when I was young, so it was not my choice. But if I would look for an answer, it would be in the lack of infrastructure to stay and survive. I think the educational facilities may not be up to the level, plus the means of making a living. I guess if you need to stay there then you have to end up writing commercial music and pop songs. Composers won't be able to survive by writing symphonies in a small country with one or even two orchestras. How often are they going to program their pieces? This is also a question that you can ask in other small countries as well. Jean Sibelius was in a small country, but one with a rich tradition of orchestras, ballets, etc. Again, it is all about the infrastructure and support. I do wonder how someone like Shafi Badreddine makes a living. It is a limited audience in a very limited market, especially when they don't try to perform outside the capital city. I think it is a question that you should direct to Dia Succari, who belongs to the older generation.

**K.A.:** Do you believe in the imitation of traditional instruments using western ones? And if so, why can't we find works for purely traditional instruments formations using western contemporary vocabulary?

**K.R.:** There are a few trials using the ney, qanun, or the oud in a contemporary sounding world, such as the oud concertos by Saed Haddad and Nouri Iskandar, and the *Ney concerto* by Shafi Badreddine. First, there are the technical problems that come with having to balance the delicate sound of a *qanun* or an oud with a symphony orchestra. These were solved by new ways of writings as well as through the use of technology

(microphones etc.). But the real obstacle lies in the fact that many who master Arab traditional instruments are either not familiar with contemporary writing or not interested in it. When I try to find violinists here in the US for an Arab music recording session, I find myself limited in how many people can read these scores perfectly yet still know how to tune a quarter tone properly.

**K.A.:** After playing the recording of *Buhur* to different people, I was asked frequently if the sound quality I produced (which was described as more airy than the traditional sound) was by a request from the composer. I know that you did not ask this directly, but were you thinking of directing me in that direction?

**K.R.:** I did not ask for that, but I knew that when you take a phrase in *Bayat*, you color it your own way, while someone else will do it differently. I am happy to bring that aspect of Arab music in my concert music, the aspect of giving more room for interpretation. I enjoy watching this freedom being used as long as the performers know what they want to do; otherwise they can just play what is on the page.

**K.A.:** We talked earlier about the lack of reference in the audience, and the problems it creates. This also applies to the performers, the lack of reference exists not only on the level of tuning a quartertone properly, but also finds its way into the chamber music-making aspect of your work. In the second movement of *Buhur*, there are few references to the traditional Arabic ensemble. For example, it took us lots of rehearsal time to play measure 12 of the second movement as written, only to discover later that your intention was to imitate a typical Arab music phrase-ending performed by a traditional ensemble in which each player ends on his own. Another group from another background may not be able to make such an informed decision.

From the performance perspective, is there any difference between an Arab ensemble, such as the DFCP, and any other western ensemble when it comes to approaching works with Arab music vocabulary?

**K.R.:** I think you should listen to the US premiere of the work that was done by the all-American Ibis Camerata. It was lots of fun to rehearse with them. I had to help them tune some of the quartertones, but in the end the performance was fine. I enjoyed listening to my music being performed in a different way. Even in the DFCP recording, you can tell who plays Arab music and who does not by the way they approach the quartertones; While Hassan Moataz (cello) and Maias Yamani (violin) had no difficulty doing so, Wissem Ben Ammar (viola) was not very much at ease with it; I learned later that he does not play Arab music at all.

I don't look at my works differently than other composers' works. I believe that all works, even those that are more restricted in terms of performance-practice, such as Beethoven, they still carry that freedom of interpretation, and that is the best part of being a composer and listening to the same piece of music being performed by different groups. Of course, with more contemporary music that incorporates more aleatoric elements, the final outcome is going to be even more different.

## Appendix7: Conversation with Shafi Badreddine

Conducted in Arabic in Damascus, 26 Dec. 2010.

Translated from Arabic by Kinan Azmeh.

**Kinan Azmeh:** Is there a Syrian school of composition, and do you belong to it?

**Shafi Badreddine:** Even though it is too early to judge, I do believe that one is beginning to take shape, and it includes the other three composers on the DFCP album, in addition to a few others such as Hassan Taha, Nouri Iskandar, and Jean Tamzajian. In my opinion, these composers share an intellectual drive towards modernity in some sense. I personally look at this as a cultural radicalism, especially when you look at what is being programmed—on the Syrian musical scene in particular, and in the Arab music scene in general—in both traditional Arab and western classical music. With classical music, Syrian musicians rarely program works that date after 1850. In Arab music, we are stuck with *samaiis* and *muwashshahat* and Umm Kulthum. This is not so bad since it only reflects the ignorance of the existence of newer music. Yet this is why it is important to celebrate these existing composers since they—and I am one of them—at least aim towards modernity and try to break with the familiar, the traditional, and the overused. In the mean time, these composers have their own visions about the use of local elements. Personally, I consider myself lucky to be carrying this culture because it contains a “sonic matter” that is still untapped and from which much can still be learned.

In any case, nationalism in western classical music has always been used loosely, though we can always identify the German and French schools. Mostly the French is about harmony and color, while the German is about counterpoint and development.

Obviously, today there is so much more interaction between all the different schools thanks to globalization, and contemporary composers have a much larger color palette at their disposal.

Is there a national Syrian contemporary school of composition? I guess it is too early to judge that, as it all depends on what kind of effect these composers would have on the music of Syria and if it will create a continuum for a new generation of composers. Yet I am confident that even with the relatively small output of these composers, they will still have an impact on the Syrian music scene.

It is not objective, however, to put me in the same group with someone like Dia Succari, who is two generations older than I am. In this recording, for example (the DFCP's Syrian Contemporary Chamber Music), the differences, whether technical or conceptual, between the works of the three younger composers (Roustop, Jabri, and myself) and the work of Succari are noticeable. I have personally heard works by Succari that were more contemporary sounding by far than the quintet which he composed in 2008 for this CD. And we should not forget that being in Paris during "les nuits folles" certainly had an impact upon him. I guess it is also only natural to start off radically and then to become more tame as you go. When I heard the works of Nouri Iskandar, I was amazed at how new his musical language was, especially his string trio. Now Nouri is writing more accessible works; he even lectures me about how my works are too contemporary, difficult, and inaccessible!

Because Succari and I belong to different generations, I feel more connection with Nouri's music. I have studied many more of his works than Dia's, since his works are not often performed in Syria and are not available on record.

**K.A.:** Most Syrian composers are currently living abroad, including you. Why is this? And does this cancel the concept of a Syrian composition movement?

**S.B.** I don't think identity is really about where you are geographically; rather, it is about the culture you carry and project. When the *Nieuw Ensemble* in Amsterdam performed one of my works, I was introduced as a composer of a dual culture. Though I grew up in Syria and have lived here most of my life, I also lived in Luxembourg for a while, and during that crucial period of my life when I was learning and maturing. I certainly took in that culture as well. So I do feel a certain cultural duality, though with more emphasis given to my mother culture. My second culture is about the skills I learned. I went to Europe to perfect my skills, but I already knew what I wanted to express and what vocabulary I wanted to use even before I arrived.

As to why most Syrian composers are abroad, I would say that being outside gives you more opportunity to present your works. For instance, I stayed three years in Damascus without being able to present a single concert. Secondly, in Europe for example, you are at the heart of musical action. How many works can you hear live in Damascus? I am afraid it is almost dead culturally. I don't think it is purely an economic question since things are not much easier abroad, but you get the feeling that there is a standard level that you are competing with, a high level that challenges you to improve your tools. Besides the fact that if you want to survive as a musician in Syria, you might end up playing behind a belly dancer in some nightclub! In any case, I don't see this as a problem. History is full of people who made breakthroughs in science, literature, and the arts, and who were mobile. Mobility is the thing that allows you to explore more of life than if you stay in one place.

**K.A.:** You live both in Luxembourg and in Syria. What is Syrian—if you agree there is such a thing—about your works? Is it about using elements from Arabic or Syrian music? Or does it not matter? (I note, for instance, how many Arab composers use *Bayat* on D, as if it were the signature of Arab classical music.) And need I say that in the ears of western audiences, the augmented second is associated with the East. What are the Arab/Syrian elements you use? And do you care if the audience/performers recognize them?

**S.B.** There has been a sudden boost in the enthusiasm about Syrian composers recently among researchers, and this question comes up very often. I think there is always a misunderstanding about this. First and foremost, I am writing music using a language that can be understood by many people and in many different ways. Inserting local elements does not preoccupy me, these come naturally as I truly feel lucky to be able to understand and use these cultural vocabularies creatively. I am convinced that had Mozart been eating *Mujaddara*,<sup>76</sup> it would have found its way into his music. I don't think you have much power over it: Kareem Roustom grew up in the United States, but this Arab culture found its way into his music through the language and the music he heard at home.

**K.A.:** Is the use of Arab music elements in your more contemporary sounding works about confirming your identity, especially when you are abroad?

**S.B.:** This is personal, and has lots to do with my individual background. I will say that I became a musician by chance. I grew up in a village that considered itself lucky to have a school. I used to come back from school to take the sheep out into the fields,

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<sup>76</sup> *Mujaddara* is a popular dish throughout the Arab world, and is generally made using brown lentils and rice.

but I differed from other shepherds by taking my oud with me instead of the common ney. I started playing oud by myself; therefore my first exposure was to local folk music from the village. And then due to some political tendencies in the family I started listening to Marcel Khalife<sup>77</sup> and to political songs. My interest in classical traditional Arab music came quite late. When I began my studies at the Higher Institute of Music in Damascus, I did not know what the words counterpoint and harmony meant.

Having said all this, I don't think of it as an emotional connection, but rather a deliberate one. The only thing that changed from my time as a shepherd is the fact that my skills improved in expressing the same basic emotions.

**K.A.:** Since western classical music is a recent phenomenon in Syria, contemporary composers are writing contemporary music (in the sense of western classical music) with no historic precedence. How do you look at the fact that we started immediately with the contemporary?

**S.B.:** This also has a personal side. When I started composing, I did not know there was something called contemporary. We did not even use that word, we used the word "modern," and the most "modern" works we knew were those of Shostakovich.

While I agree that a French composition student in the same classroom has a richer classical music heritage, which he did not compose; a heritage that I can also claim as I tried to get exposed to these classical works as much as I could.

Obviously when this guy goes to the composition class he is trying to write in a contemporary style, because that is the only possible way. In theory class, you learn how

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<sup>77</sup> Lebanese oud player, singer and composer (b. 1950). Famous for his political songs in which he sets the poetry of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish to music.

to write works in the Baroque, Classical, and Romantic styles, while composition class is all about the creative process, which can be only new and contemporary.

When I began composing I did not know the differences between all of these—and I was not too preoccupied by it. I liked both the tonal writing in my *Ney Concerto* and the atonal sounds of my *Impression*. In turn, the *Ney Concerto* was very different from my earlier *Song from the Euphrates*. In the former, it was all about showcasing the instrument and the skill of the player. It did include *maqamic* changes that are not common on one instrument, especially in the speed that I wanted, which required the changing of embouchure and half-coverage of the seven holes. I was inspired by the ney as an instrument and I wanted something that suits the familiarity of the ney sound in the ears of the audience as well. I also had to accommodate the orchestra, which meant that I would not write in *Sikah*—the *maqam* of my *Song from the Euphrates*. I think I “burned lots of phases”<sup>78</sup> by just trying things out without having any solid references.

**K.A.:** Composers and performers are able to “burn such phases,” but what about the Syrian audience, who are not exposed to the standard repertoire, but now are being exposed to contemporary sounding works? Do you feel the pressure of writing in two styles, the accessible and the avant-garde? How do you expect the Syrian audience to appreciate your avant-garde works if their ears are not familiar with nor trained to appreciate classical music of the common practice period?

**S.B.:** I used to feel that pressure but not anymore. It is important for me to remember that when I was a student in Damascus, I was very excited about an orchestration assignment that Hameed al-Basri, who taught Arab music theory and

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<sup>78</sup> By “burning phases” Badreddine means that he made big leaps without going through the standard progression of education.

history, asked us to do. The assignment was to orchestrate a *muwashshah*. I loved it in the beginning since it was a revelation to hear all these different colors accompanying a very familiar melody. I kept that enthusiasm all the way until my *Ney Concerto*, when I realized that it does not work for me and that the process felt to me like forcing a Bedouin to wear a bowtie! This was even more apparent to me after a concert in France where we presented these orchestrated *muwashshahat*. The reaction we got from our French colleagues was interesting: they described it as being a strange, romantic musical language. I realized later that what these audiences heard was a strange melody—due to the use of quartertones—accompanied by a primitive, romantic harmonic language; we were not following strict classical rules due to the *maqamic* nature of these melodies. It is then that I realized that the harmony I had studied was all about chords, and not about function. And this is when I realized that my harmonic language comes from the scales and modes used. That is why I found contemporary music with all its sub-categories, especially spectral music, very suitable to present my music.

**K.A.:** Would it be accurate to state that the harmonic language found in your works comes from the *maqams* you use? Do you think that the spectral concept solves the problem of harmonizing the quartertone?

**SB:** I don't think there is a problem to solve at all to begin with. Harmony derives from the scales used, and that is the same principle used in classical music. I can simplify it by saying that if you look at the *maqam* vertically, you will find all the harmonies you need. Ligetti also inspired me by his use of micro-polyphony, namely his chamber concerto, in which the same melody repeats in different speeds, rhythms and sometimes registers. I used the same technique in my *Maqam-spectre* piece, where I used the Arabic

language as a departure point using its rhythmical shape. I have also found inspiration in Berio's use of the market sounds as a source of melodic and contrapuntal inspiration.

**K.A.:** How do you want your performer/audience to relate to the Arab elements in your works?

**S.B.:** I certainly want the performer to know they exist. I think a good performer is one who analyses what he/she sees. This is the main difference between an outstanding performer and one who is equally skilled, but who plays the score perfectly without having thoroughly studied it. In my opinion, the elements of personal cultural search and curiosity play a huge part in achieving a moving yet thoughtful performance of a work. And sometimes, when I am attending rehearsals, I feel the need to interfere so as to point the performers in the right direction. Some of the musical elements are self-explanatory, but some others need assistance. Unfortunately, all of the information needed to perform a work properly cannot be expressed by the limited notation system we have in our hands; the musical page is never enough regardless of the musical language used. This is why it is interesting for us as composers to attend—at least—the dress rehearsal of the work. Usually it is the case that the world premiere of a given work only reaches 70% of what the work has to offer. We play Beethoven very well now because it took us all these years to understand him and his music.

In any case, I am convinced that every performer's background comes across naturally when he/she plays. It was interesting for me to witness the rehearsals of my piece *Quintet* with the DFCP and seeing how only after all these rehearsals, and especially during the recording session, when the work started to unveil itself to the

players and how you as performers started to see things using the analysis and your cultural references.

**K.A.:** Your *Quintet* was the least accessible work of all those we played during the DFCP residency of 2008. It is not a work that easily gives up its secrets in a first reading—and you were the composer who attended the most rehearsals. What was the biggest obstacle in watching the rehearsals and the recording session(s)? And had it been another group, would you have had a different set of worries?

**S.B.:** Honestly, I considered this project (The DFCP residency) to be mine as well, so I was personally involved. I know the problems of my work because it was hard to write. It is a complicated work that depends largely on motivic development in a micro-timing fashion. That's why I was trying to be as helpful as possible by being available during the rehearsals. I remember that you tried several times to stop me from conducting the ensemble unconsciously, but it was always very hard for me to know that I could help by showing everyone how things should sound, but had to hold myself from doing it as I also wanted you to discover the work equally on your own. Had this work been commissioned by another ensemble it might have been a different work, the fact that I knew who these players were made me much more at ease. I knew you, Mayas, and Hassan, but my main problem was the piano: I am someone who does not believe in the well-tempered quartertone.<sup>79</sup> That's why in the second movement, which uses microtones extensively, I tried to find these natural tones inside the Piano and to stay away from the “adjusted” scales of the keys. Obviously, It made me feel much more comfortable knowing that the players have a solid background in Arab music. In addition, being a

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<sup>79</sup> Well-tempered in this context refers to adjusted quarter-tones, a theory that places the quarter tone exactly in the middle of two pitches, an adjustment which was made in order to simplify the Arab *maqams*.

clarinetist myself was extremely helpful, as I knew all the possibilities of the instrument. When I wrote for the NIEUW ensemble, for example—while I did not make any compromises in my musical language—I had to play for them to demonstrate what I wanted to hear, especially in relation to quartertones and phrasing. I believe that I went even further in terms of the musical complexity with the DFCP because I knew the capacity of the players and their understanding of this shared musical heritage.

**K.A.:** Kareem Roustom, when I asked him for his impressions of his works when performed by someone who does not know their musical background, said that he likes how different the same work can sound when played by different performers. This is a notion that is very much in keeping with traditional Arab music practice—the notion that the performer has the freedom to improvise. Are you trying to limit this freedom by writing so many details into the score?

**B.S.:** Kareem and I have something in common in that we write simple things and then trust the performer to add the embellishments. However, in this work in particular i.e., the *Quintet*, it is my desire that the performer play exactly what is on the page, so that cultural references are no longer necessary. I am less radical than Hassan Taha when it comes to the composer having the final word, but in this work I wanted to be very precise and I gave only a little room for freedom in the aleatoric passage in the first movement.

**K.A.:** How do you approach the composition process? Do you begin by setting a specific goal such as time or length, or do you start with a larger framework or concept?

**S.B.:** My first concern is in finding the concept, or the large idea of the work; then I make a plan. I always try to stick to the plan but I don't take it as something sacred.

There is always the question, after you start working, as to whether it is you who is leading, or whether it is the work that goes off in its own direction. You start with a line and then you end up in a dead-end road, so you let yourself follow the work that you created, and this is exciting. This is what happened in many sections of this piece.

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