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## PROJECT

### The Traditional Art Repertoire of Baghdad: Tradition and Change

The Iraqi maqam is a complex vocal art tradition integral to the culture of Baghdad and to other urban centres of Iraq. In the traditional environment, its performance is a social practice that is intimately linked to different aspects of secular life and to religious representations. In its musical and social aspects, it is related to a common Islamic core that extends up to Central Asia, Kashmir and Chinese Turkistan.

The Iraqi maqam represents one of the most important genres in the country's musical culture and is certainly one of the oldest living vocal art repertoires of modern urban Iraq. This tradition has developed masters, performers, disciples, specialists and circles of knowledgeable amateurs. In the considered view of genuine connoisseurs, this art repertoire is in immediate danger. More than in any other period of the last century, the recent decade exposed the repertoire to great loss and change.

The aim of this project is to produce a book that examines the Iraqi maqam tradition of Baghdad and its relation to society, focusing on the evolution of its changes in the 20th century and at the beginning of the 21st century. It aims to cover all standard topics essential to Iraqi research in musicology, to Iraqi maqam students, performers and amateurs. It will also treat non-traditional topics relevant to modern research, such as the study of performance practice.

Under the current circumstances of war and given the evident danger of loss and violent change, realising this work is a matter of cultural urgency.

#### Recommended Reading

Hassan, Scheherazade Qassim. *Les instruments de musique en Irak et leur rôle dans la société traditionnelle*. Paris: Mouton, 1980 (Cahiers de l'Homme).

-. "Iraq: Art Music and Folk Traditions." *The New Grove Dictionary for Music and Musicians*, edited by Stanley Sadie. London: Macmillan, 2001.

-. "Tradition et modernisme: Le cas de la musique arabe au Proche-Orient." *L'Homme. Revue française d'anthropologie*. Paris, 2004.

-. "Terminology, Concepts and Classification on the Vocal Art Repertoire in Iraq." *Acts of the Samarkand Colloquium*, Maqam Study Group,

The International Council for Traditional Music. Tashkent and Berlin, in press.

## Unity in Diversity. Interplay of Differences, Union of Structure and Shared Values in the Iraqi Maqam

This presentation sketches some of the aspects of a larger project in progress that aims at a comprehensive description and analysis of a particular sophisticated domain of vocal expression of Iraq al maqam al Iraqī. The project focuses on this art as it is essentially practised in Baghdad, the city that retained a central position in the country with its maqam secular school between mid 19th to the end of the 20th centuries. This tradition, based on erudition and skills, is considered as one of the oldest in the larger region, with roots in the Islamic 10th century Baghdad. It continues today under certain stress, loss and societal changes; it is subject to political schemes and a natural tendency towards shifts of patterns.

By reason of its geographical position Iraq has always been a centre in which concepts, ideas and practice of the Arab West and the Islamic East met. This is also true for the concept of maqam. Elsewhere in the Arab world, maqam denotes modal structure, its organisation and the way it is used, while in the non Arab Islamic world the term refers primarily to genre, repertoire and performance. In Iraq, the semantic scope of the term covers both, whether through theory, verbalisation, by implication or by habit. The different realities and levels that the term covers, which have been a source of confusion, are inherent to its hierarchical musical realities that appears differently in practice and in theory. Besides the different levels of definition known theoretically, the Iraqi maqam represents an urban genre with a substantial repertoire based on at least two forms structured differently, probably indicators of different layers or origins.

I have chosen to present three elements that focus on one specific subject: the diversity within unity. I intend to show how this old music as a byproduct of society functions as a synthetic work of cultural and social cohesion and includes all ethnic, religious and social groups by representing them through musical categories, genres, structure, melodies, style, poetry and performance. My overall argument is that it is the systemic, organic and social diversity, which is in the structure and the practice of the Iraqi maqam that brings together musical elements representing diverse populations living in Iraq.

This model of diversity and unity is centuries old and comes from Islamic empires that tended towards fostering respect and inclusiveness for ethnic and social differences and articulating them on a common ground of social context, formal structure and musical contents. This model persisted throughout the 20th century in the modern state of Iraq. Will it disintegrate now with the political changes and schemes of ethnicity introduced after the 1991 war and much crystallized by the American invasion?

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PUBLICATIONS FROM THE FELLOW LIBRARY

Hassan, Scheherazade (Cairo,2004)

Archeology of literature : tracing the old in the new

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Alif ; 24

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=1623362024>

Hassan, Scheherazade (Antony,2004)

Musique et anthropologie

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=669191957>

L' homme ; 171-172 (Juillet/Décembre 2004)

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=669191957>

Hassan, Scheherazade (2002)

Musical instruments in the Arab world

<https://kxp.k1oplus.de/DB=9.663/PPNSET?PPN=86795308X>

Hassan, Scheherazade (2002)

The Iraqi Maqam and its transmission

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Choix de la musique et de la représentation irakiennes au Congrès du Caire

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