

PRESERVING ARAB MUSICAL CULTURE IN A WESTERN-DOMINATED WORLD; ISSUES IN MUSIC EDUCATION

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In this symposium participants will present position papers, research findings, and instructional materials relating to various aspects of the problem posed above. It has been observed that:

Children in Arab schools during recess are observed listening to popular music; the text is Arabic but the musical style is more Western than Arab.

The most popular instrument in many Arab communities is the organ- not the oud or the canoun.

Young Arab musicians excel in the playing of Western instruments and even those who play Arab music believe that they should first learn to play in a Western style.

Alongside these phenomena there exists a strong belief on the part of Arab musicians and music educators that a preservation of Arab musical culture is a crucial aspect in the preservation of their own, and their pupils' cultural identity.

How do Arab musicians deal with the need to preserve Arab musical culture without rejecting the inspiration they draw from Western musical culture?

Can Arab children be educated to be sensitive to the stylistic nuances of traditional Arab music in the age of globalization?

After a brief introduction by the convener of the symposium the following papers will be presented:

- Music Education, Can It Reverse Cultural Assimilation? Yes It Can!
Mr. Joseph Ouda
- Teaching the Ma'qam in the Schools
Mira Azar
- "The Teacher as Cultural Outsider" - Reflections of a Dutch Musician Teaching in Palestine
Fabienne van Eck
- "The Dilemma of Arab Musicians" - A Narrative Study of Four Arab Musicians' Struggle to Balance Their Need to Preserve Traditional Arab Musical Style While Being Attracted to Various Aspects of Western Music
Mohammad Khalaf
- Meeting of Musical Styles that Might Preserve the Authenticity of Arab Music
Professor Taiseer Elias

**MUSIC EDUCATION CAN IT REVERSE CULTURAL
ASSIMILATION? YES, IT CAN!**

J. Ouda

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Jerusalem, Israel

In light of the influence that the features of Western music exert over listeners world wide, research conducted in 2011 investigated the sensitivity of 4th- and 5th- grade Israeli Arab children to characteristic features of Arab music and their identification with music that is faithful to this musical style.

In this presentation I will focus on the influence that music education in the schools can have on:

- Ability to recognize changes in musical patterns that contain micro-tones
- Openness to and preference for authentic performances of folklore which preserve the micro-tone
- Ability to accurately perform examples from Arab folklore that contain micro- tones

Findings of the study showed that music education improves, though only slightly, the aural ability to hear differences of a microtone

However, music education had a strong, statistically significant, effect on openness to the musical style, manifested by a preference for an authentic performance which contained the micro-tone

Music education also had a significant effect on the children's singing ability.

Although the percentage of children who sang with accuracy the songs containing micro-tones was low (10 % of all the children tested), almost all the children in this group were pupils who received musical instruction in their schools.

An additional important finding relates to the fact that children who did not receive music lessons had lower scores in 5th grade than the children in 4th grade, suggesting that in the absence of music education musical abilities not only do not develop but in fact decline.

TEACHING THE MA'QAM IN THE SCHOOLS

M. Azar

Sabrine Foundation of the Arts - Palestinian Authority, Ramle Conservatory and Orthodox High School, Ramle, Israel

The maq'am plays a central role in traditional Arab music.

The role of the ma'qam can be compared to the pivotal position that harmony holds in Western music.

Consequently, sensitivity to the ma'qam is crucial for the performance, creation, and appreciation of Arab music.

It is therefore imperative that music education in the Arab sector place the study of the ma'qam (along with the study of rhythmic modes- misan-, improvisation, and the relationship between text and music) at the center of the curriculum.

Children need to become aurally sensitive to the nuances of each maq'am (being able to identify the ma'qam when listening to songs and instrumental compositions and perform them accurately when singing vocally) as well as become aware of and respond to the special emotional, culturally based association that each maq'am has.

In the presentation I will give an overview of a curriculum designed for upper grades to meet these needs. This will include a presentation of sequential order of topics, a representative sample of methodological suggestions, and a repertoire of songs and instrumental pieces for listening activities. A few excerpts of pupils working according to this curriculum will be included in the presentation.

**THE TEACHER AS CULTURAL OUTSIDER - REFLECTIONS OF A
DUTCH MUSICIAN TEACHING IN PALESTINE**

F. Van Eck

Musicians without Borders, The Netherlands

As a Western-music trained musician traveling to and working in (post)conflict areas, I had to learn how to contribute without imposing my own musical culture on the people I met. I had to learn how to approach the music and culture with complete openness and sensitivity. In this paper, I will present my own journey from merely having goodwill and being open to new experiences to reaching a level of critical understanding.

I have focused on finding ways to work in different cultural settings while simultaneously respecting and encouraging the use of local music. But it is not up to me to decide what this local music is.

In 2006, I gave my first music workshop to children from a completely different culture from mine.

Since that workshop, I have given hundreds of music workshops to Palestinians, Jordanians, and Iraqis. I'm aware that I will never be able to feel Arabic music in a way that my workshop participants experience the music. And even more, because of my different cultural background and my attempts to be culturally sensitive, I am always in danger of making an inappropriate decision for the workshop participants as to what music they should use. For example, in my attempts to encourage the use of traditional Arabic music, I might offend participants that are more interested in Western music.

I hope some of my thoughts, experiences and questions can help those working with groups outside their own culture by encouraging the respectful incorporation of local culture.

THE DILEMMA OF ARAB MUSICIANS

M. M. Khalaf

Alkendi Conservatory, Jatt, Israel

In this presentation I will discuss the results of a narrative study that examined the views of performers and composers who work in the classical Arab musical style but are influenced by the surrounding Western musical culture around them.

The main issues that were raised by the musicians include: 1- How they deal with Western musical influence. 2- Whether they perceive this influence as a problematic issue? 3- What happens to their identity in the face of the Western influence? What makes musicians and musicologists perceive the Western influence as a threat the integrity of the modal system?

It appears that there is a trend amongst Arab musicians in the 21-century of incorporating Western elements into their musical language even when they not aware of this.

My study revealed a phenomena I call the "Western Latent Concept" according to which Arab musicians [performers and composers] present their eastern musical materials in their improvisation, composition and performance with reference to Western elements like: Harmony, Contra point and technical virtuosity.

I will discuss some attitudes that see the influence of Western music as problematic and other views that consider the interaction of the two cultures as beneficial to the development and flowering of Arab art music. In the framework of the study the participating musicians were asked to create an improvisation on the spot and then discuss whether they felt that their playing showed the influence of Western music. During the presentation excerpts from these improvisations will be used as illustration.

**MEETING OF MUSICAL STYLES THAT MIGHT PRESERVE THE
AUTHENTICITY OF ARAB MUSIC - DISCUSSION OF MUSICAL
WORKS THAT ALLOW BOTH ARAB AND WESTERN STYLES
AUTONOMY**

T. Elias

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Jerusalem, Israel

It is the natural course of events that artists are inspired by a multiplicity of sources and absorb influences from cultures other than their own.

Some of these influences may actually endanger the integrity or possibly the survival of non-Western cultures. Other interactions can enrich each, without violating the core values or characteristics, of either culture.

In this presentation I will focus on the experience of performing works by composers working in the Western tradition who have shown deep respect and appreciation for Arab musical culture.

In the works created by these composers Arab music is not used as an "interesting" "spice" - but rather the composers strove to attain a synthesis that keeps intact the values and essential characteristics of both cultures.

The experience of performing these works is enriching to me as an artist and, rather than undermining the authenticity of Arab art music, it enriches it.