

An aerial photograph of a village built on a rocky, hilly landscape. The houses are constructed from light-colored stone or concrete with red-tiled roofs. The surrounding area is covered in dense green trees and shrubs. A prominent white rectangular box is overlaid on the center of the image, containing the title text in orange and green colors.

# Middle Eastern Rhythms and the democratization of Gender roles

## Identity and mission

- Bridging the connection between my background as a jazz drummer and Lebanese heritage through well-known and beloved Lebanese folk tunes, an original composition and “jazz” heavily improvised melodic vehicle.
- Encourage artists and audiences to delve and mine the resources which they possess, to bring forth a new way of perceiving themselves and thereby changing their story as a citizen of the world
- Every child’s potential is equal, regardless of gender

# Towards a paradigm shift, informed through gender inclusion...

- Artistic expression provides a vehicle for opinion. Whoever's voice will and can be heard has the potential towards validation and influence over its environment.
- I used folk tunes performed and made famous by a respected and most well-known Lebanese vocalist Fairuz. These serves as a vehicle to open the dialogue of females expanding their roles to that of an instrumentalist. Hers was an example of empowerment to both sexes!
- Democracy and equality of gender roles in the arts reflected in creative equality between instrumentation and each musical voice in the ensemble.
- Could the inclusion of female musicians and artists in modern culture in Arab countries contribute to the awareness and social movement towards equality amongst the sexes? A good start perhaps?...

## Plan of Action

**OBJECTIVE:** to create and develop an inter-generational conversation regarding the inclusion of the female presence in the arts, predominantly in the Middle-East. To challenge gender/identity stereotypes relating to ability, roles and cultural significance in the Lebanese, Middle East and global Arab diaspora.

# Women Percussion History

- Lupishiau - considered the first percussionist in ancient Middle Eastern cultures. There was a time in our history when the primary percussionists and drummers were women. The first named drummer in history was a Mesopotamian priestess named Lipushiau. She lived in the city-state of Ur in 2380 BC
- “In every ancient Mediterranean civilization... studied, it was a goddess who transmitted to humans the gift of making music.”



# Nassam Alayna Al'Hawa ("The Air Breezed Upon Us")

- Ziad Rahbani, Fairuz - gave voice to the cultural fracture of civilians created by the Lebanese Civil War in the 1970s
- Iqa-combination of Maqsoum and Wehde,
- C# Kurd (Phrygian) scale (C# D# E F# G# A B)
- Irtijal (plural: Irtijalat) or Mawwal (plural: Mawaweel)



# Notated Rhythmic skeleton (Iqa)

The image displays a musical score for nine different Iqa rhythms, each on a separate staff. The notation uses a simplified system of notes and rests to represent the rhythmic skeleton. The rhythms and their time signatures are as follows:

- Waḥda Basīta**: 2/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note followed by a half note.
- Ayyūb**: 2/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, and a quarter rest.
- Karachī**: 2/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, and a quarter note.
- Al-Tā'er or Al-Dārij**: 3/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note.
- Masmūdi Şaghīr or Maqsūm**: 4/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter note.
- Waḥda Kabīra or Malfūf**: 4/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, and a quarter rest.
- Sheftetelli**: 4/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter rest.
- El-Zaffa**: 4/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter note, and a quarter rest.
- Şa'īdi**: 4/4 time signature. The notation shows a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, a quarter note, a quarter rest, a quarter note, and a quarter rest.

# Michel Merhej Baklouk rhythm chart

**1- Maqsoom 2/4**

First style;								Second style; 2/4							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
D	T	S	T	D	S	T	S	D	S	T	S	D	T	S	T
R	R	_	L	R	_	L	_	R	_	L	_	R	R	_	L

**2- MASMOUDI SAGHIR: 2/4**

First style:								Second style; 2/4							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
D	D	S	T	D	S	T	S	D	D	T	T	D	tt	T	tt
R	R	_	L	R	_	L	_	R	R	L	L	R	R	R	L

**3-SAIIDI: 2/4**

First style:								Second style: 2/4							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
D	T	S	D	D	S	T	S	D	tt	T	D	D	tt	T	S
R	L	_	R	R	_	L	_	R	R	L	R	R	L	R	_

**5-CLASSIC WEHDE : 4/4**

First style: 4/4				Second Style: 4/4			
1	2	3	4	1	2	3	4
D	(st)	S	T	D	(s)taka	taka	T
R	R	_	L	R	R	L	R



# Beit Kassab (original composition)

- The layering of harmonies and rhythmic interplay
- G Melodic minor starting on fifth degree as improvisatory foundation
- “Agitation”esque Tony Williams intro solo – 1960s Miles Davis Quintet
- Collaboration amongst all instruments involved (an approach usually shunned in traditional Middle Eastern music)




# Sa'alouni El Nass ("The People Asked Me")

- Ziad Rahbani; Fairuz
- A hybrid between Masmoudi and Maqsoum rhythmic themes
- Call and response alternating with main melody, composed from:  
(implies the "dialogue between the traditional and progressive" in a narrativistic context...)
- Locrian scale - improvisation; Lami scale (Iraqi) (eg. D Eb F G Ab Bb C)
- <https://youtu.be/XSH0liXO7BI>



# Notated Rhythmic skeleton (Iqa)



The image displays six lines of handwritten musical notation, each representing a different Iqa rhythm. Each line is written on a five-line staff with a double bar line at the beginning, indicating the start of the rhythmic pattern. The notation uses various note values and rests to represent the rhythm.

الصوفيان

النواري

الزفة

الروميا الكبيرة

المثلث العراقي

القصيد-الجزائر

# Drum Music

The exchange of melodic ideas/input intersecting with that of Paul Motian's

- Call and response alternating between Paul's and my melodies (based on the Turkish Kavijar scale: C D Eb F Gb A Bb C)
- Homage to the guitar saxophone drum format - substituting laouto for guitar



SOURCE: 1979 LE VOYAGE PAUL MOTIAN TRIO ECM 1138  
SOURCE: 1985 'JACK OF CLUBS' PAUL MOTIAN SOULNOTE 1124

# DRUM MUSIC

*Paul Motian*

MEDIUM TEMPO

The musical notation consists of six staves of music. The first two staves are in 5/4 time and feature eighth and sixteenth notes with various accidentals (sharps, flats, naturals) and articulation marks like accents and slurs. The third staff continues with eighth notes and includes a fermata. The fourth and fifth staves feature triplet rhythms, indicated by a '3' in a circle below the notes. The sixth staff continues with eighth notes and includes a fermata. The notation is written in black ink on a white background.

C, D, E<sup>b</sup>, F, G<sup>b</sup>, A, B<sup>b</sup>, C

## Into The Future

- Further study towards history, importance and repertoire of female inclusion in the arts of the Middle East
- YouTube channel
- Awareness and travel to Lebanon, Palestine, Jordan...taking the concept further, tours

# Credits

Thank-you:

Layth Sidiq (violin/voice), Vasilis Kostas (laouto), Alber Baseel (auxiliary percussion), Benjamin Jephtha (double bass), Noé Zagroun (piano), Alex Johnston (tenor saxophone \*Drum Music), Liz Teutsch (engineer)

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# Bibliography/Resources

Layne Redmond “When The Drummers Were Women”

maqamworld.com (website)

“Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt” (documentary) – ‘the Word is most important, an abstraction’.

“Classical Riqq Technique”, Michel Merhej Baklouk, 2018; private materials and exercises.

Mahmoud Fadl: The Drummers of the Nile in Town, Cairosonic - performed by Mahmoud

Fadl, 1955-, Salamat (Piranha, 2003), 57 min

“Of Drums And Damsels: Women’s Performance In Ancient Israel” Carol L. Meyers, The Biblical Archaeologist, University of Chicago, JSTOR, Vol. 54 No.1, (Mar 1991) p16-27