



(LAS 7198, formerly released as LLST 7186 and LLST 7198)

Music of the Near East Arab Music

Performers: Professors in the Institute of Arabic Music, Cairo

Kanun: Hassen Ashmawy

Oud: Ahmed El Rashedy

Nai: Farouk Amin Zayed, and Madgy El Ashmawy, and Wadie El Sayed and other leading soloists from the Institute of Arabic Music, Cairo.

One of the four major areas in which Pan-Islamic classical traditions of music survive and flourish is Egypt. Iran upholds the Persian school, while North Africa is the center of the Andalusian (Moorish) school. Turkey nourishes yet another distinct school. But Egypt has been the stronghold of Arab music, dating back to the ninth and tenth centuries, when great musical scholars of the Middle East combined Greek, Persian, and Arab concepts and established systems for the formation of scales.

For those wishing to know more about Pan-Islamic music, the following books can be recommended: *Music Cultures of the Pacific, The Near-East, and Asia* by William P. Malm (Prentice-Hall); *The Music of Islam* by H.G. Farmer, Ch. XI of *Ancient and Oriental Music* By E. Wellesz (Oxford University Press).

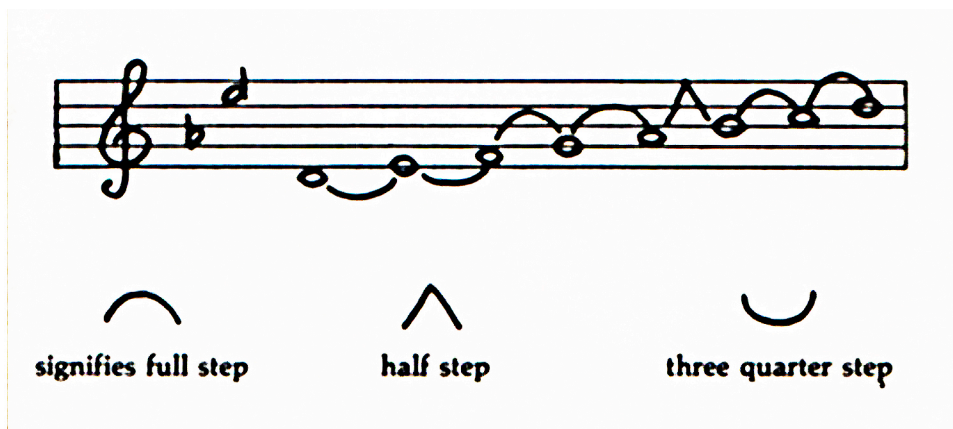
Much of the folk music is vocal. But the instruments used in Arab music have a long history and are interesting in themselves. A common instrument is the *argul*, which is actually a double clarinet, consisting of two cylindrical pipes, each having a single free reed. Parallel melodies may be played on the two pipes, or one pipe may be a drone. Also prominent in Egyptian musical history is the *kanun*, a harp, which is played on the knees of the player. Its strings are plucked by small whalebones or quills fixed by rings to the first and middle finger of each

hand. The *oud* (or *ud*) is a lute which is plucked and has 8 to 12 strings. The *tabl* designates most types of drums; the *nai* or *nay* is a Persian reed pipe or end-blown flute. The *rebab* is a violin with four strings tuned to a high pitch. The most popular instrument is the *tambourine*, which accents the exciting beat of Arab music, frequently augmented by hand-claps.

TRACKS 1-4, Folk Songs:

The four folk songs presented are from Upper Egypt, the home of ancient Egyptian culture. Egyptian folk songs are usually in Saba mode, and such instruments as the *rebab*, *argul*, *tabl*, and *oud* are used in accompaniment.

Saba Mode:



1. *Ya Saide* (“Night”)

Oh, night!

How worthy you are to my eyes!

Ya saide, oh, my noble lady,

With lighted candles:

You are the sister of Hassan

sister of Husain

daughter of our noble mother.

Oh, many times we dared

And God permitted us to leave our village.

We brought our children to sing

Sweet words to the pagans and the Muslims.

The daughters of Imam, our religious leader.

2. *Yallel Baladna* (The Night in Our Village”)

All the loved ones are here,

And none is absent.
God will always bless him
Who stays late at night.

Oh, the night is our dominion
That makes her children happy.
Oh, night of the loved ones,
Don't forget my share of happiness!
Oh, night for the lovely ones
Don't ever bring morning!
But there, already comes the dawn,
And the morning pigeons start to fly.

Oh, bride with silver bracelets
Bring your bridegroom gifts
So his heart be kind to you forever.

3. Asuit

Asuit is a small town in Upper Egypt, famous for folk singing. This song is about "beautiful Asuit" and her courageous people: a mother is dressing her son for his bright future.

4. *Auminaity Ashufeak Ya-alby*

Oh, Upper Egypt,
Oh, my dearest son
Who loves his country
And sacrifices his life
To protect and build it.

My hope is to see
My dear happiness
But, alas, my love is in Asna
And I am in Armant.

They tell me I'll be engaged
To a girl from Baris
In lower Egypt or Blais –
I ask them how?
For I'm a modest man:
My family, my uncle, and relatives
Are all in Armant.

My hope is to see
My dear happiness.
But, alas, my love is in Garga

And I am in Asuit.
They'd build me a palace
On the Nile – but how?
My sorrow is deep
But can't be deeper than the Nile.

TRACKS 5-9, Instrumental Music:

5. *Samaie Agam*

This piece for the *kanun* was composed by Tawfik el Sabbagh in Samaie form and Agam mode. Agam mode is b flat major in the diatonic scale.

Agam Scale:

Signifies full step half step three quarter step
one and a half steps

6. *Samaie Thakiel Bayaty*

The instruments are the *kanun* and the *oud*. Samaie is a form representative of Arab music. It consists of four parts, and is usually 10-8 in measure. Bayaty is one of the most important scales used and is equivalent to D minor harmonic, but the second note is a quarter-tone higher than that of diatonic D minor scale.

Bayaty Scale:




 signifies full step


 half step

7. *Bayaty Mode Variation*

The music was composed by Hassan Ashmawy, one of the outstanding *kanunists* among the Arabs; his title for it is “Story of Love.” It consists of seven short pieces played on the *kanun* and *rabl*.

8. *Bayaty for the Nai and Kanun*

This melody was written down from Egyptian shepherds’ playing about 180 years ago, and is regarded as the fundamental type of Middle Eastern shepherds’ music.

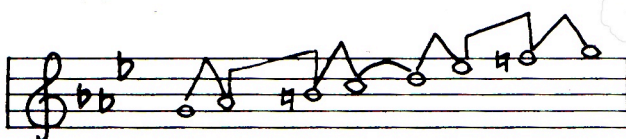
9. *Bayaty for the Oud, Kanan, and Nai*

Another variation in the Bayaty mode, this piece is characterized by the melody played by the *nai* representing shepherd’s music.

Tracks 10 - 16:

10. *Samaie Shad Araban*

Samaie Shad Araban is played by the kanun. Shad Araban in the Samaie form is in the G minor scale, but the third note is 1/2 tone higher than the other pitches. The Shad Araban scale:



11. *Bayaty El Erian*

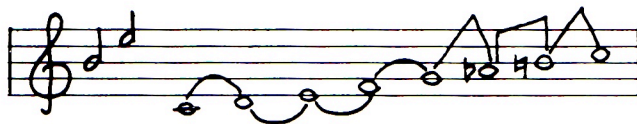
Bayaty El Erian is the principal piece of the Arab Music. Composed by Ibrahim El Erian, it is a piece for the oud, nai, kanun and tabla. It is in the Samaie form of the Bayaty mode. Bayaty is the important scale which is comparable to the B minor of the diatonic scale. However, the Samaie has no such key notation, and the second note of the arbitrary scale is 1/4 tone lower than the pitches of other tones. The Bayaty scale is noted below:

Samaie is a musical form which consists of four movements ending with a part called Taslima. Taslima, the fourth part, is in three-eighth measure and the preceding three movements are in 10-18 measure.



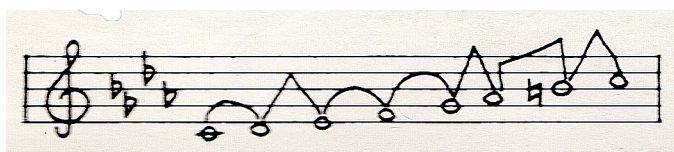
12. *Tahmila*

Different from Bayaty El Erian, Tahmila is in the Suznak mode. Tahmila consists of five movements of A, B, A, C, A. The first part plays the theme with the whole orchestra and in the second part, one of the instruments of the group improvises a different theme; in the third, the group goes back to the theme similar to the first part. In the fourth, another individual instrument (or sometimes the same one as before) plays another theme and the group concludes the music with the theme which appeared at the beginning. The Tahmila form is in a way a musical circle. In the B and C part, solo instruments take their freedom to vary the scale provided that they return to the main scale with which the music started. The group of the instruments which play the main theme of the Tahmila is classified as Takht and this is usually accompanied by Takasim, originally a Turkish scale, played by the kanun. (Refer to Takasim.) The Suznak mode in which the Tahmila is played is shown here:



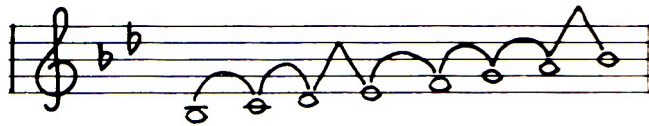
13. *Samaie Nahawand*

Samaie Nahawaqnd is a piece for Oud composed by Safar Ali. The oud usually plays the Nahawand mode as solo instrument. The Nahawand scale may be compared to C minor harmonic scale:



14. *Lastw Adry*

Lastw Adry was composed by Mohamed Abdul Wahhab for singing and kanun. It is played by the kanun only in this album. Lastw Adry is in the Agam mode which belongs to Rahst mode, usually a scale for Arab singing. The Agam scale is comparable to B major. The scale is shown here:

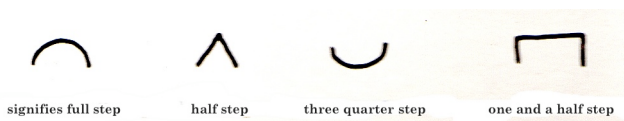


15. *A Piece on Nahawand*

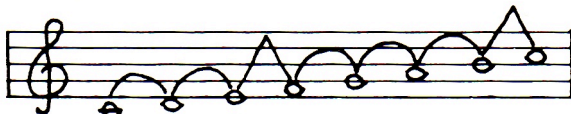
Another Nahawand mode is played by the kanun. This piece was composed by Hassen Ashmawy, the leading kanunist in the Middle East today. (Refer to the Nahawand mode as for scale.)

16. *Variation on Nahawand (Bageia Nahawand)*

This is a piece on the Nahawand mode played by an Arab orchestra which consists of the nai, kanun, oud and tabla. This music is usually called Baheia Nahawand composed by Ahmed Foad Hassan. The Baheia form derives from the Bayaty mode, and in this music, Baheia is followed by the Nai in Saba mode, an important Arab mode similar to Bayaty. The fourth note is 1/2 step lower while in Bayaty the second note is 1/4 step lower. The saba scale:



C major scale written:



About the Instruments:

1. Kanun

The Kanun is a plucking instrument with double strings, somewhat like a horizontal harp. The instrument is of Turkish origin widely used in Greece and the Arab countries. It is played on the lap of the player by both hands with four to eight nail tips.

2. Oud

The Oud or Ud is sometimes called Outi. It is a plucking instrument of Persian origin. It has five double strings and a bending neck classified from Laghouto with a straight neck with four double strings. The oud is often used as solo instrument and plays the Nahawand mode.

3. Nai

The Nai is the oldest Arab instrument, a bamboo flute of about two feet in length with nine joints and no blowing tip. Two holes are placed in the second joint, two in the third joint, two on the fourth, and one on the other side of the fifth joint of the bamboo. The Nai is probably the simplest kind of flute, originated in Egypt many thousands of years ago. This kind of vertical flute, however, can be found in Turkey and Balkan as well as in the Arab countries. In Yugoslavia, especially in Macedonia, this flute is played by gypsies, and is called Kaval (Kavala in Greece). The Kaval is made of wood and has one additional hole on each side of the flute. Egyptian music also has a bamboo flute called Argol somewhat like the nai.

4. Tabla

The Tabla may also be called tempo or tamparin. This instrument is regarded to have originated near Damascus in Syria and is now widely used all over the world.

Track Lengths:

1. Ya Saide ("Night") 4:23
2. Yallel Baladna (The Night in Our Village) 4:13
3. Asuit 3:40
4. Auminaity Ashufeak Ya-alby 6:12
5. Samaie Agam 3:48
6. Samaie Thakiel Bayaty 2:23
7. Bayaty Mode Variation 6:29
8. Bayaty for the Nai and Kanun 3:12
9. Bayaty for the Oud, Kanan, and Nai 10:13
10. Samaie Shad Araban 4:10
11. Bayaty El Erian 2:30
12. Tahmila 7:38
13. Samaie Nahawand 3:10
14. Lastw Adry 4:10

15. A Piece on Nahawand 1:25

16. Variation on Nahawand (Bageia Nahawand) 3:05



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