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CHAPTER 1

Patronage in the Arab Andalusian music of Libya: transformation, growth, and politics

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Abstract: Studies concerning the Arab Andalusian music of the Maghreb have frequently drawn attention to the role of patronage in the support and promulgation of this tradition. Such patronage ranges from the financing of state-owned and private ensembles to wider access to performances of this music on national radio and TV channels, as well as the setting up of festivals that aim to boost emerging ensembles and also assist established ones to maintain their stature and status quo. Over the years, the Arab Andalusian musical tradition of *ma'lūf* in Libya has benefited from patrons and state structures willing to invest in it, as the tradition itself has come to symbolise affiliation, cultural prestige, and on a more national/international level, the state's interest in Arab and indigenous arts and its commitment to promote a sustainable cultural activity that responds well to the country's social and economic strategies.

This essay sheds light on and analyses different forms of patronage of the Libyan *ma'lūf* within a period that stretches from the presence of the Italian Fascists in Libya up until the first few years following the fall of the Gaddafi regime. The essay will show how patronage supported the survival and growth of this tradition and how patrons and institutions used this support in their own interest.

Introduction

The history of the world's music reveals how throughout the centuries musicians have depended on institutions of power as well as on wealthy families and individuals in order to make a living out of music, pursue their musical activity, and see their art flourishing. There are several examples from the history of European art music. In the seventeenth century, for instance, the English monarch was an important musical patron, while at the same time allowing room for direct support of music from the public. This blend of support contributed greatly to the growth of public concerts. In contrast to the position of the English monarch, French aristocratic patronage of music dominated the scene so much that King Louis XIV became the model for artistic patronage in Europe. The aristocratic patronage of music in the French monarchy was so central that the special qualities of French Baroque music, for instance, became strongly linked to the centrality of dance and the important role the arts played in a monarchic environment. Later, serious Italian opera in the eighteenth century remained reliant on royal and aristocratic patronage even if by that time it started undergoing changes inspired by Enlightenment thought. On a more individual note, Joseph Haydn (1732-1809) spent most of his life at the court of the Hungarian Esterházy family in the Habsburg Monarchy, producing music for his patrons and their distinguished guests. This provided him with a life of relative stability. Eventually, in the late nineteenth century, European court patronage gave way to private and public patronage of the arts, a transition considered to be one of the most salient political, cultural, and economic transitions of European modernity. Nevertheless, thanks in great part to the patronage of such wealthy patrons and powerful institutions, European art music contains a plethora of instrumental and choral works, a history of development of musical instruments on which new compositions with highly technical demands could be played, gorgeous concert venues in which musicians perform, and sundry repertoires which over time attracted huge audiences and, in modern times, enticed the interest of the recording industry to make a capital profit out of it.

Similarly, music patronage also exists in the domain of non-western music. There are several examples of patronage in this regard including, for instance, ensembles of horn-blowers in West and Central Africa such as in Ghana, Ivory Coast, Togo, Benin, Nigeria, Cameroon, and the Congo. Amongst the Ashante of Ghana (also known as Asante) royal horn-blowers and bands of court drummers are appointed as part of the ruler's formal entourage and over whose performances he holds control.[1] These musicians along with bells, and *kwadwomfoo* singers perform at royal funerals, at political events, and at inaugural ceremonies of tribal chiefs and elected Ghanaian presidents.[2] Through their performances Asante musicians praise the ancestors as well as their living leaders.[3] Other examples of music patronage come from the Arab world. For example, when referring to the Sultan of Oman's Arab ensemble which was founded in 1976, Majid al-Harthy and Anne K. Rasmussen note that the *Al-firqa As-sharqīy*a (the Eastern Orchestra) was under the direct control of the Royal Court of the Sultan and, hence, under the direct patronage of the supreme leader.[4] This meant that those musicians worked exclusively in the king's service. Artistic initiatives in music and the other arts as supported by the royal kingdom of Oman took place along national progress in infrastructure, health care, business, and civic institutions. All this attests to the potential use of music by patrons to show social progress and, hence, cultural development.[5] Music patronage in the Arab world and the Maghreb in particular also include that in the domain of Andalusian music (or *andalus*) as manifested in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, and Libya.

In the Maghreb, the Andalusian music tradition is principally related to the *nawba* repertoire. A *nawba* is composed of songs organised in a suite with sections varying according to regional traditions. In Morocco, *al-ala*, as the *nawba* repertoire is known, has over the years benefited greatly from recordings and festivals supported by the state. In the 1980s, for instance, the Moroccan Ministry of Culture and Communication, in conjunction with France's Maison des Cultures du Monde, released seventy-three CDs in an anthology called *Anthologie "Al-Âla"* containing a total of one hundred hours of *al-ala* music.[6] To these can be added the festivals of Andalusian music organised by amateur associations in collaboration with the same Ministry. Such festivals aimed at promoting Andalusian music in contemporary Morocco.[7] Through the financing of festivals and other initiatives in the arts the Moroccan state aimed to present itself as a promoter of culture that operates as a means to create jobs, engender urban regeneration, and attract investment and tourism.[8] This is just one of several examples of how cultural patrons steer cultural production in line with their own interests. Other examples of patronage from the Andalusian tradition of the Maghreb come from Tunisia and Algeria.

The Andalusian *nawba* tradition in Algeria is centred in the three major urban centres of Tlemcen, Algiers, and Constantine. In Tlemcen and Algiers this tradition is known as *san'a* (craft) or *gharnātī* (from Granada) whilst in Constantine it is known as *ma'lūf* (well-known or customary). As we will see, the term *ma'lūf* is also used in Tunisia and Libya for the same Andalusian *nawba* repertoire, one reason being that whilst the Constantine *nawba* follows the rhythmic modes of both Algiers and Tlemcen the melodic modes it makes use of follow those employed in the Tunisian and Libyan *nawba*.[9] When referring to examples of patronage in the Algerian tradition, Glasser argues that in Algeria "the patronage of Andalusi music was traditionally the purview of a certain sector of the bourgeoisie" and in most cases it found itself torn between the efforts of elites to promote it as national classical music and the dangers brought by its popularisation which could mean the devaluation of the repertoire.[10] Glasser also states how in the period between the mid-nineteenth and the first decades of the twentieth century performers of the *nawba* repertoire in Algeria were seen performing in cafés producing music in response to audience needs and expectations.[11] In Tlemcen musicians specialising in Andalusi music are still hired to perform in private homes and in wedding halls.[12] Apart from that, festivals of Andalusian music such as the *Festival of Andalusian Music and Ancient Music* held at the Boualem Bessaïh Opera House in Algiers are financially assisted by the state. Such support made possible the invitation to this festival of other ensembles from both the Maghreb and even Europe.[13]

The Tunisian *ma'lūf* presents several instances when the *turāth* (or heritage), as the Andalusian repertoire is also known, depended on patronage for its survival. Ruth Davis, for instance, notes that this music was consumed by aristocratic and bourgeois patrons, performed by amateur musicians in their private homes, employed by Sufi musicians in their lodges, as well as performed in wedding celebrations, circumcisions, religious festivals and pilgrimages.[14] However, in the post-independence years, due to the demise of the principal patrons of this musical tradition, mainly the Sufi brotherhoods, and new commercial repertories, live performances of *ma'lūf* in cafes and communal celebrations became increasingly fewer.[15] She also observes how in this same period the Tunisian *ma'lūf* had benefited from state-sponsored ensembles, the setting-up of intensive courses in this tradition by various educational institutions, as well as from the organisation of festivals and the production of CDs by the Tunisian Ministry of Cultural Affairs in collaboration with international recording labels.[16] This and the other examples referred to above match Tony Langlois's assertion which provides further reasons for the need of patronage in this genre:

> ... *andalus* is a genre which requires patronage, either from elites or from government structures. Unlike the case of more popular genres, the sale of recordings is inadequate to sustain a large industry, and although there is a growing international interest in *andalus* … this is insufficient to give the genre commercial independence. Inevitably then, the music is implicated with regimes of power ….[17]

In the case of Libya, examples of state patronage in the *ma'lūf* go back to the presence of the Italian occupation, that is, to the period between 1911 and 1943. This essay will introduce and discuss examples of state patronage that sustained this musical tradition in Libya from the presence of the Italian Fascists up to more recent times. It will also explain how the Libyan *nawba* in its "authentic" form has over the years been supported by private patrons and Sufi brotherhoods. The essay aims to discuss these examples whilst at the same time highlighting the benefits that the tradition has gained from this over the years and, equally, how patrons and institutions have exploited this support in their own interest.

The present discussion builds on data gathered during my fieldwork in Libya between 2002 and 2005 as well as on material available on social media and through personal communication with Libyan contacts with whom I am still in touch even though at the time of writing Libya's political situation is unstable. Examples from the Italian colonisation of Libya are derived from available literary sources that concern music and colonialism at that time.

Patronage, Sufi rituals, and wedding celebrations

An important distinction made in Libya, and worth pointing out at this stage, is that between the *ma'lūf az-zāwiya*, sometimes also called *ma'lūf at-taqlīdī* and the *ma'lūf al-idhā'a*.[18] Whilst the former refers to performances of *ma'lūf* in the traditional context of Sufi ceremonies and related activities in and outside *zawiya* (Sufi lodge), such as celebrations commemorating the birth of the Prophet (known as *mawlid*), the latter, that is, the *ma'lūf al-idhā'a*, is associated with performances evolving in the domain of the recording industry or broadcasting and related activities such as performances of *ma'lūf* during public festivals.

In Libya, the *ma'lūf* has strong connections with Sufi religious ceremonies although in some lodges this music is sometimes considered by orthodox sheikhs as "folklore" and hence viewed with a strong resentment as they see nothing religious in it. Nevertheless, irrespective of individual views in this regard, the *ma'lūf az-zawya* maintained a strong degree of importance amongst these brotherhoods due to its integration in Sufi rituals even when these had to face orthodox opposition. Most Sufi congregations in Tripoli were and still are the principal patrons of this musical tradition, even in times of war and political upheaval. For instance, it is still a tradition in Tripoli that every Thursday

evening Sufi congregations meet in their respective *zawaya*s for a *hadhrah* (a gathering) during which service they recite parts from the *qurān*, perform *dhikr* (a mystical rite) and end up with a performance of a *nawba*. A *nawba* performance in this context would employ an ensemble composed of a sheikh *ma'lūf* who leads the singing assisted by a *kinji* together with a chorus of participating male singers and players of the *ghayta* (shawm), *darabukka* (single headed drum), *bandir* (a large frame drum), and *naqqarāt* (small kettle drums). Throughout its history, the *ma'lūf* in Libya, especially in the capital Tripoli, has benefited from sheikhs who were willing to transmit this oral repertoire to younger *zawya* followers and perform it outside their lodge, in particular during the forty-day *mawlid* period. On the first day of the *mawlid* period, each of the three Sufi lodges in Tripoli's *medina al-qadima* (old city) holds a cortège made up of *dhikr* singers at the front followed at some distance by a *ma'lūf* ensemble composed as described above with the addition of a cylindrical drum called *nouba*.[19] At this stage, it is worth noting that the playing of music and the celebration of the Prophet's birthday are contentious issues between Sufis and other groups of Muslims. Nonetheless, ensembles such as the one just described are also hired to provide *ma'lūf* services during weddings in a parade known as *tūsīla*.

It is a tradition in Tripoli that on *laylat ad-dakhla* – that is, the night of that week that normally falls on a Thursday – the groom is taken to the *zāwiya* where he joins in a religious service that includes *qasida* and *madih* singing normally provided by a male choir accompanied on the *'ūd* (lute). After this, the congregation moves out of *zawya* in a cortège (*tūsīla*) during which male participants sing *nawba*s to the accompaniment of the instruments just mentioned. The cortège moves slowly and takes the longest route to the bride's parental house. Male relatives and friends of the groom join in the singing of *ma'lūf* to maintain the qualities and expected standards of a mainstream Tripolitan wedding ceremony as well as to express communality and friendship. This cortège also serves to release the groom's apprehension in his path to a new life as well as to bridge the different parts of this particular phase of a Libyan wedding ceremony. The cortège leads the groom to the house of the bride where she will be waiting for him together with her parents, relatives and guests. After readings from the *qurān*, the *ma'lūf* ensemble accompanies the guests to the reception venue, normally a hotel, after which it gets paid and leaves. This kind of private patronage, which is rooted in Sufi practices and the performing skills attributed to them, is still ongoing and, perhaps, is a good substitute for state support which, according to informants, fluctuates with political allegiances and economic circumstances. Patronage coming from the grass roots of a musical tradition rather than from institutions of power may sometimes transpire as so natural and well-ingrained into a tradition that even in times of social and political upheaval the tradition continues to rely on it to preserve itself and even grow.

Radio broadcasts and *ma'lūf* in fascist Libya

In an interview I had back in 2002 with the late Libyan sheikh *ma'lūf* Hassan Araibi he claimed that the Italian Fascists who occupied Libya between 1911 and 1943 were only interested in attaining land and wealth rather than in assisting Libyans to cultivate their tradition. He even blamed the absence of the Libyan delegation from the 1932 Cairo Congress on Arab music on the Fascists' disinterest in Libyan cultural affairs. More recent studies on music and colonialism in Fascist Italy propose contrasting views to this, especially with regard as to what was occurring in the cultural domain towards the last decades of the Italian occupancy of the country. When referring to musical initiatives by the Fascists in Libya, musicologist Isabella Abbonizio notes that Libya was conceived by the Italian regime as a real "showcase" of the Italian domination in Africa.[20] Most of the artistic initiatives taking place towards the later years of the Italian colonisation of the country were generated by policies aimed at expanding tourism which at that time was being given greater importance by the regime. Also, Abbonizio notes that culture, or more precisely, the culture of the colonialist, was considered by the regime as a tool of mediation with the local population.[21] During the years of the Italo Balbo's government (1934-1940) the attitude of the Fascist regime vis-à-vis the indigenous population inclined towards more efforts at prospective assimilation of and collaboration with the

local population which was eventually translated into numerous initiatives of diffusion and preservation of Libyan traditions.[22]

The Italian regime in Libya built theatres with artistic seasonal programmes modelled on those of the motherland. These programmes also included traditional performances by North African artists aimed at both tourists and locals. For purposes of propaganda and to encourage tourism, the ownership and organisation of such Libyan arts were combined in prestigious events such as the Tripoli Fair, which was held annually between April and May, and the construction of three colonial theatres in Tripoli, namely, the Politeama Nazionale, the Real Teatro Miramare, and the Teatro Uaddan.[23] Operatic seasons at the Miramare Theatre gained from the artistic input of Italian impresarios active at that time in Italy or at principal theatres in the Mediterranean such as the Royal Opera Theatre in Malta and the Royal Theatre in Cairo.[24] At the Miramare Theatre in 1932 a "Moorish salon" dedicated for performances of oriental dances and music was inaugurated to complement the already diffused exotic interest in other parts of the city.[25]

Notwithstanding the diffusion of this exotic interest, evidence of performances of *ma'lūf* in this salon is yet to be established, though considering a matching ambience these could well have been integrated in performances of oriental music. Whatever the case, the recognition of Libya's indigenous artistic activities by the Fascists and the integration of these in their theatrical programmes attest to the regime's strategy to present the local exotic through European artistic practices and mediums of transmission. All this became part of the regime's plans to provide more tourist attractions and establish mediation with the local population. This was the kind of tactile patronage described by Bearfield as "a means for bringing political cleavages or gathering support for a particular policy or program."[26]

One other initiative by the Fascist regime was the broadcasting of Arabic music on Radio Tripoli which was established in 1938 as part of the Italian radio EIAR network.[27] In this regard, Abbonizio notes the increased number of traditional Arabic music programmes on this radio channel that eventually required the formation of resident ensembles and, later, the reliance on recorded material that alternated with live music (*see* Figure 1).[28] Collaborating on this project in their role of music directors were renowned Libyan musicians of that time Bashir Fahmi, Mukthar al-Mrabet and Kamel Muhammad al-Ghādiy.[29] Each one of these established his own Arab ensemble, namely, *La Libica* directed by Bashir Fahmi, *L'Orientale* directed by Mukthar al-Mrabet and *La Tripolina* directed by Kamel Muhammad al-Ghādiy.[30] Both Mukthar al-Mrabet and Kamel Muhammad al-Ghādiy[31] were renowned sheikhs of *ma'lūf* active in Tripoli and, hence, their interest in presenting *ma'lūf* slots in their radio schedules might have been a natural inclination. Schedules of programmes at this radio channel provided by Abbonizio give evidence of *nawba* singing directed by Mukthar al-Mrabet alternating with other Arab singing and instrumental music.[32]

The *ma'lūf* during the era of King Idrīs

After the end of World War II in 1945, the Western powers appointed Sīdī Muḥammad Idrīs al-Mahdī al-Sanūsī, eventually King Idrīs I, as the leader of the new unified Libya (1951-1969). Until that time Idrīs was still the religious leader of the Sanūsiyyah Sufi brotherhood (or *tariqa*) which was founded in 1841 by his grandfather Muḥammad ibn al-Sanūsī in Cyrenaica. A priority objective for Idrīs when taking over was the rebuilding of the religious and social network of the Sanūsiyyah order in Libya especially since their *zawaya*s had suffered destruction during the Fascist period.[34] Presumably, this rebuilding also implied more acceptance and integration of Sufi arts and practices in Libyan life and culture. Various instances show state support towards *ma'lūf* during Idris' reign. If this did not come from the king himself, it was surely supported by the government which he had set up.

The year 1964 marks the setting up of the first "modern" *ma'lūf* ensemble under the musical direction of Hassan Araibi. The ensemble was established on models from the innovated Tunisian *ma'lūf* evidenced in the addition of instruments such as the violin,

Figure 1: One of the Islamic choirs of Radio Tripoli [33]

cello and double bass, as well as the addition of other Arab instruments such as the *ūd* (lute), *qanūn* (trapezoidal zither) and *nay* (end blown flute). The first time the new ensemble performed in public was on 21 November 1964 at al-Ḥamra Theatre in downtown Tripoli. The audience attending that first performance disapproved of the inclusion of western instruments in a musical tradition which they felt should not be tampered with. Some members of the audience left the theatre while others ridiculed the musicians playing Western instruments by mimicking their sounds. Moreover, the changes brought by Araibi in his restructuring of the *nawba*, such as in his composed instrumental introductory sections which replaced the more traditional *istikhbār* (announcement) and *istiftāh* (opening), sounded unfitting to the audience and were strongly criticised with Araibi being blamed for distracting the *turāth*. For Araibi and his ensemble, this first performance was a complete failure. The audience expected to hear the traditional sonority of the *ma'lūf az-zāwiya* and instead heard a transformed tradition which they felt devalued the old tradition. This disheartening experience led Araibi to embark on a dialogue with the public through seminars to explain his project which after all had already been in effect years before in Tunisia. These seminars had the backing of the Ministry of Information and Culture of that time which provided the resources for such meetings both to be held and succeed in terms of attendance. Eventually, this paved the way to a repeat of that concert which was held on 24 December of the same year under the patronage of Minister Kalifa Muhammad Tillisi, who between 1964 and 1967 served as minister for information and culture in the cabinets of Mahmud al-Muntasir and Hussein Maziq. Tillisi was a man of letters with an academic interest in

translation, history, and linguistics, hence supportive of cultural projects such as the one by Araibi which not only fell under the remit of his ministry but were also in synch with his academic orientation.

In this repeat performance the presence of Tillisi amongst the audience signified the government's official support for Araibi's initiatives. Indeed, Arabi's efforts for this repeat concert were further assisted by the Broadcasting Centre which was also under the ministerial remit of the same Minister. At this concert, unlike the previous one, the audience reacted positively, offering tremendous applause and calls of approval. According to Araibi, this was the result of the meetings with the public mentioned earlier. Through these initiatives, Araibi's aim was to make the *ma'lūf* more appealing to the public, mainly by "updating it" to the transformed Tunisian *ma'lūf* and, more broadly, putting it in line with changes in the domain of the *musiqa al-arabiya* in Egypt and the Arab world. For Araibi these innovations were aimed at regenerating interest in a musical tradition which according to him was on the verge of extinction. Changes in the Libyan *ma'lūf* could have never occurred if it had not found the right financial support, organisational set-up, and backing from the governmental institutions of that time.

Also in 1964, the same Ministry embarked on a project to document and preserve *ma'lūf* text which was being lost whenever a sheikh *ma'lūf* passed away. For this purpose, the Ministry set up a committee composed of the most renowned sheikhs *ma'lūf* of that time with Hassan Araibi as the Chair. Some *ma'lūf* text brought to the attention of the committee members was completely unknown to even the oldest and most knowledgeable sheikhs. This matches a popular saying in Libya about the abundance of *ma'lūf* text which says *al-ma'lūf kelma 'andek wa miyya 'and āyrak* (the *ma'lūf*: a word belongs to you while a hundred words belong to your neighbour). This documentation and preservation initiative eventually led to the recording of 272 reel-to-reel tapes of *ma'lūf* for the Libyan Broadcasting Centre which Araibi told me had vanished after he stepped down as head of the Centre's music section.

It was in 1967 that Araibi and his ensemble (*see* Figure 2), which till that time was still affiliated to the Libyan Broadcasting Centre, travelled to Algeria to participate in the first Algerian Festival of Andalusian music. When referring to the benefits gained by Algerian musicians from festivals such as the one in 1967, Jonathan Glasser notes that "festivals came to provide a space for Algerian musicians to interact with counterparts from other

Figure 2: Hassan Araibi on the *ūd* with his 1960s ensemble

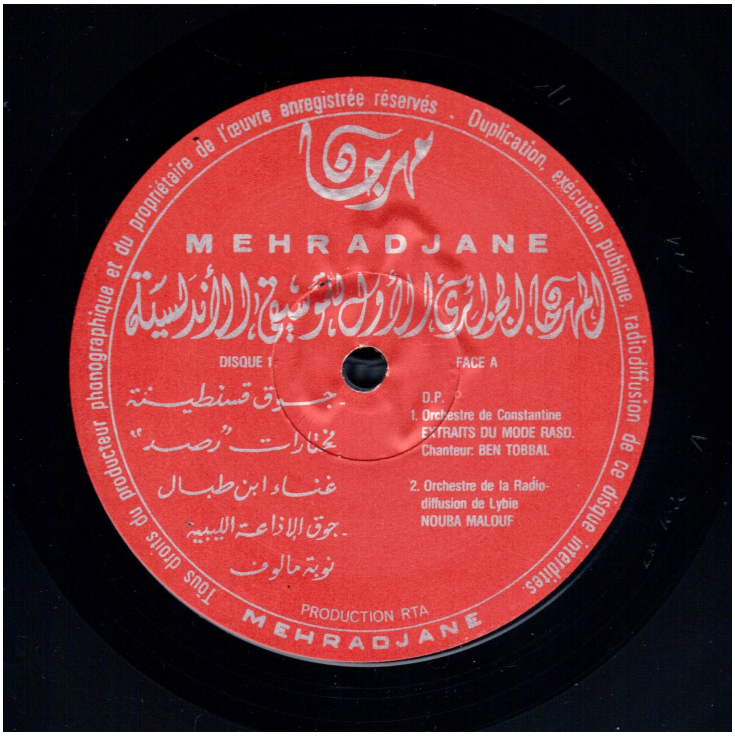
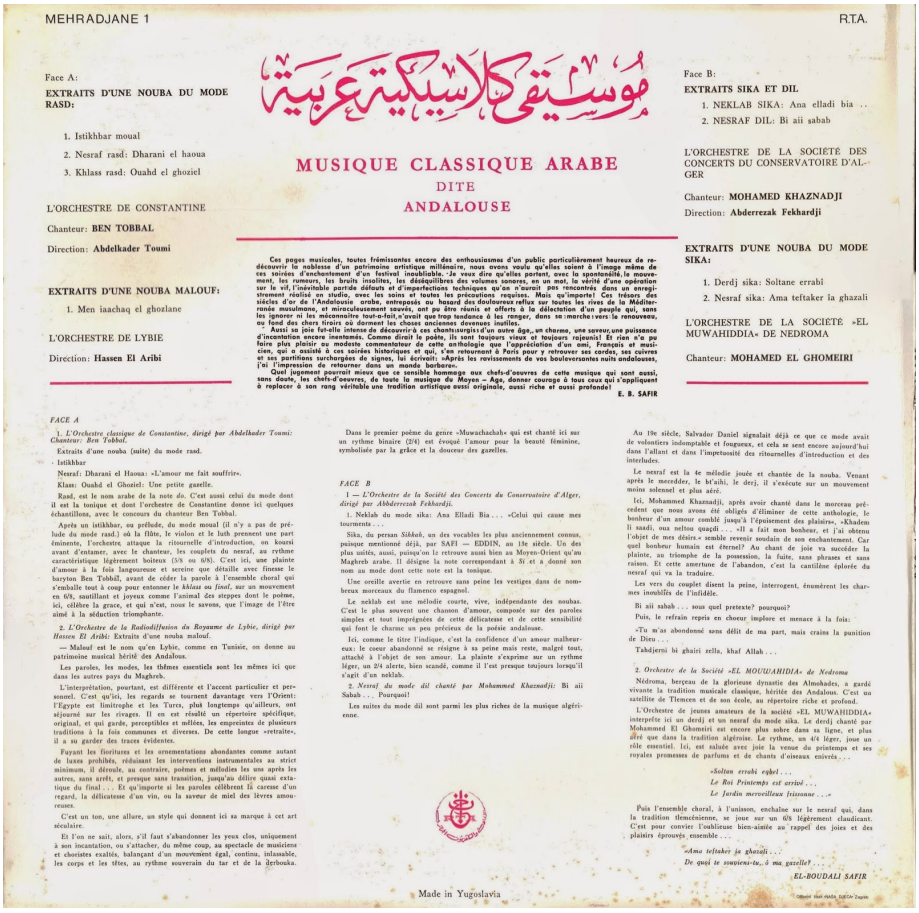


Figure 3a: The LP with recordings of the Libyan *ma'lūf* from the first Algerian Festival of Andalusian music held in 1967.


MEHRADJANE 1

R.T.A.

Face A:

EXTRAITS D'UNE NOUBA DU MODE RASD:

1. Istikhbar moual
2. Nesraf rasd: Dharani el haoua
3. Khlass rasd: Ouahd el ghoziel

L'ORCHESTRE DE CONSTANTINE

Chanteur: **BEN TOBBAL**

Direction: **Abdelkader Toumi**

EXTRAITS D'UNE NOUBA MALOUF:

1. Men iaachaq el ghozlane

L'ORCHESTRE DE LYBIE

Direction: **Hassen El Aribi**

MUSIQUE CLASSIQUE ARABE
DITE
ANDALOUSE

Ces pages musicales, toutes frémissantes encore des enthousiasmes d'un public particulièrement heureux de redécouvrir la noblesse d'un patrimoine artistique millénaire, nous avons voulu qu'elles soient à l'image même de ces soirées d'enchantement d'un festival inoubliable. Je veux dire qu'elles portent, avec la spontanéité, le mouvement, les rumeurs, les bruits insolites, les déséquilibres des volumes sonores, en un mot, la vérité d'une opération sur le vif, l'inévitable partide défauts et d'imperfections techniques qu'on n'aurait pas rencontrés dans un enregistrement réalisé en studio, avec les soins et toutes les précautions requises. Mais qu'importe! Ces trésors des siècles d'or de l'Andalousie arabe, entrepassés au hasard des douloureux reflux sur toutes les rives de la Méditerranée musulmane, et miraculeusement sauvés, ont pu être réunis et offerts à la délectation d'un peuple qui, sans les ignorer ni les méconnaître tout-a-fait, n'avait que trop tendance à les rnnger, dans sa marche vers la renouveau, au fond des chars tiroirs où dorment les choses anciennes devenues inutiles.

Aussi sa joie fut-elle intense de découvrir à ces chantsisurgis d'un autre âge, un charme, une saveur, une puissance d'incantation encore inentamés. Comme dirait le poète, ils sont toujours vieux et toujours rajeunis! Et rien n'a pu faire plus plaisir au modeste commentateur de cette anthologie que l'appréciation d'un emi, Français et musicien, qui a assisté à ces soirées historiques et qui, s'en retournant à Paris pour y retrouver ses cordes, ses cuivres et ses partitions surchargées de signes, lui écrivait: «Après les revissements de vos bouleversantes nuits andalouses, j'ai l'impression de retourner dans un monde barbare».

Quel jugement pourrait mieux que ce sensible hommage aux chefs-d'oeuvres de cette musique qui sont aussi, sans doute, les chefs-d'oeuvres, de toute la musique du Moyen – Age, donner courage à tous ceux qui s'appliquent à replacer à son rang véritable une tradition artistique aussi originale, aussi riche et aussi profonde!

E. B. SAFIR

Face B:

EXTRAITS SIKA ET DIL

1. NEKLAB SIKA: Ana elladi bia . .
2. NESRAF DIL: Bi aii sabab

L'ORCHESTRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ DES CONCERTS DU CONSERVATOIRE D'ALGER

Chanteur: **MOHAMED KHAZNADJI**

Direction: **Abderrezak Fekhardji**

EXTRAITS D'UNE NOUBA DU MODE SIKA:

1. Derdj sika: Soltane errabi
2. Nesraf sika: Ama teftaker la ghazali

L'ORCHESTRE DE LA SOCIÉTÉ »EL MUWAHIDDIA« DE NEDROMA

Chanteur: **MOHAMED EL GHOMEIRI**

FACE A

1. *L'Orchestre classique de Constantine, dirigé par Abdelkader Toumi: Chanteur: Ben Tobbal.*
Extraits d'une nouba (suite) du mode rasd.
- Istikhbar
Nesraf. Dharani el Haoua: »L'amour me fait souffrir«.
Klass: Ouahd el Ghoziel: Une petite gazelle.

Rasd, est le nom arabe de la note *do*. C'est aussi celui du mode dont il est la tonique et dont l'orchestre de Constantine donne ici quelques échantillons, avec le concours du chanteur Ben Tobbal.

Après un istikhbar, ou prélude, du mode moual (il n'y a pas de prélude du mode rasd.) où la flûte, le violon et le luth prennent une part éminente, l'orchestre attaque la ritournelle d'introduction, un koursi avant d'entamer, avec le chanteur, les couplets du nesraf, au rythme caractéristique légèrement boiteux (5/8 ou 6/8). C'est ici, une plainte d'amour à la fois langoureuse et sereine que détaille avec finesse le baryton Ben Tobbal, avant de céder la parole à l'ensemble choral qui s'emballe tout à coup pour entonner le *khlass* ou *final*, sur un mouvement en 6/8, sautillant et joyeux comme l'animal des steppes dont le poème, ici, célèbre la grace, et qui n'est, nous le savons, que l'image de l'être aimé à la séduction triomphante.

2. *L'Orchestre de la Radiodiffusion du Royaume de Lybie, dirigé par Hassen El Aribi:* Extraits d'une nouba malouf.

— Maloul est le nom qu'en Lybie, comme en Tunisie, on donne au patrimoine musical hérité des Andalous.

Les paroles, les modes, les thèmes essentiels sont les mêmes ici que dans les autres pays du Maghreb.

L'interprétation, pourtant, est différente et l'accent particulier et personnel. C'est qu'ici, les regards se tournent davantage vers l'Orient: l'Egypte est limitrophe et les Turcs, plus longtemps qu'ailleurs, ont séjourné sur les rivages. Il en est résulté un répertoire spécifique, original, et qui garde, perceptibles et mêlées, les empreintes de plusieurs traditions à la fois communes et diverses. De cette longue »retraite«, il a su garder des traces évidentes.

Fuyant les fioritures et les ornementations abondantes comme autant de luxes prohibés, réduisant les interventions instrumentales au strict minimum, il déroule, au contraire, poèmes et mélodies les uns après les autres, sans arrêt, et presque sans transition, jusqu'au délire quasi extatique du final . . . Et qu'importe si les paroles célèbrent là caresse d'un regard, la délicatesse d'un vin, ou la saveur de miel des lèvres amoureuses.

C'est un ton, une allure, un style qui donnent ici sa marque à cet art séculaire.

Et l'on ne sait, alors, s'il faut s'abandonner les yeux clos, uniquement à son incantation, ou s'attacher, du même coup, au spectacle de musiciens et choristes exaltés, balançant d'un mouvement égal, continu, infassable, les corps et les têtes, au rythme souverain du tar et de la derbouka.

Dans le premier poème du genre »Muwachachabs« qui est chanté ici sur un rythme binaire (2/4) est évoqué l'amour pour la beauté féminine, symbolisée par la grâce et la douceur des gazelles.

FACE B

1 — *L'Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire d'Alger, dirigé par Abderrezak Fekhardji.*

1. Neklab du mode sika: Ana Elladi Bia . . . »Celui qui cause mes tourments . . .

Sika, du persan *Sikbah*, un des vocables les plus anciennement connus, puisque mentionné déjà, par SAFI — EDDIN, au 13e siècle. Un des plus suités, aussi, puisqu'on le retrouve aussi bien au Moyen-Orient qu'au Maghreb arabe. Il désigne la note correspondant à Si et a donné son nom au mode dont cette note est la tonique.

Une oreille avertie en retrouve sans peine les vestiges dans de nombreux morceaux du flamenco espagnol.

Le neklab est une mélodie courte, vive, indépendante des noubas. C'est le plus souvent une chanson d'amour, composée sur des paroles simples et tout imprégnées de cette délicatesse et de cette sensibilité qui font le charme un peu précieux de la poésie andalouse.

Ici, comme le titre l'indique, c'est la confidence d'un amour malheureux: le coeur abandonné se résigne à sa peine mais reste, malgré tout, attaché à l'objet de son amour. La plainte s'exprime sur un rythme léger, un 2/4 alerte, bien scandé, comme il l'est presque toujours lorsqu'il s'agit d'un neklab.

2. *Nesraf du mode dil chanté par Mohammed Khaznadji:* Bi aii Sabab . . . Pourquoi!

Les suites du mode dil sont parmi les plus riches de la musique algérienne.

Au 19e siècle, Salvador Daniel signalait déjà ce que ce mode avait de volontiers indomptable et fougueux, et cela se sent encore aujourd'hui dans l'allant et dans l'impetuosité des ritournelles d'introduction et des interludes.

Le nesraf est la 4e mélodie jouée et chantée de la nouba. Venant après le mecedder, le bt'aihi, le derj, il s'exécute sur un mouvement moins sstennel et plus aéré.

Ici, Mohammed Khaznadji, après avoir chanté dans le morceau précédent que nous avons été obligés d'éliminer de cette anthologie, le bonheur d'un amour comblé jusqu'à l'épuisement des plaisirs», »Khadem li saadi, ous nelou quaqli . . . »Il a fait mon bonheur, et j'ai obtenu l'objet de mes désirs.« semble revenir soudain de son enchantement. Car quel bonheur humain est éternel? Au chant de joie va succéder la plainte, au triomphe de la possession, la fuite, sous phrases et sans raison. Et cette amertume de l'abandon, c'est la cantilène éplorée du nesraf qui va la traduire.

Les vers du couplet dicnt la peine, interrogent, énumèrent les charmes inoubliés de l'infidèle.

Bi aii sabab . . . sous quel prétexte? pourquoi?

Puis, le refrain repris en choeur implore et menace à la fois:

«Tu m'as abondonné sons délit de ma part, mais crains la punition de Dieu . . .

Tabdjerni bi ghairi zella, khaf Allah . . .

2. Orchestre de la Société »EL MOUWAHIDIA« de Nedroma

Nédroma, berceau de la glorieuse dynastie des Almohades, a gardé vivante la tradition musicale classique, héritée des Andalous. C'est un satellite de Tlemcen et de son école, au répertoire riche et profond.

L'Orchestre de jeunes amateurs de la société »EL MUWAHIDDIA« interprète ici un derdj et un nesraf du mode sika. Le derdj chanté par Mohammed El Ghomeiri est encore plus sobre dans sa ligne, et plus élevé que dans la tradition algérioise. Le rythme, un 4/4 léger, joue un rôle essentiel. Ici, est saluée avec joie la venue du printemps et ses royales promenes de parfums et de chants d'oiseaux enivrés . . .

«Soltan errabi eqbel . . .
Le Roi Printemps est arrivé . . .
Le jardin merveilleux frissonne . . .»

Puis l'ensemble choral, à l'unisson, enchaîne sur le nesraf qui, dans la tradition tlemcénienne, se joue sur un 6/8 légèrement claudicant. C'est pour convier l'oublieuse bien-aimée au rappel des joies et des plaisirs éprouvés ensemble . . .

«Ama teftaker ja ghazali . . .
De quoi te souviens-tu, ô ma gazelle? . . .

EL-BOUDALI SAFIR

Made in Yugoslavia

Figure 3b: Accompanying LP notes containing information about the Libyan *ma'lūf*.

Maghribi and Arab countries."[35] This applies neatly to the Libyan ensemble, as performance practices noted by the ensemble during festivals abroad eventually served as a model for its public performances. Recordings of extracts from the Libyan *nawba Men Iaacheq el ghozlane* on the first volume of music from this festival on the Mehradjane label LP (*see* Figure 3a) not only attest to this participation but also show stronger visibility of the Libyan musical tradition amongst its neighbouring Maghrebi *andalus* music. The accompanying LP notes (*see* Figure 3b) highlight the unique features of this Andalusian tradition, with special attention to aspects such as its particular accents and interpretation.[36] The financial support of the Libyan government of that time for the *ma'lūf* seemed to be in line with the monarch's political efforts which, according to Golino, aimed at preserving and developing Libya's Arab culture and heritage whilst at the same time creating a social and political climate in which national culture prevails over the particularism of the various traditional cultures in the country.[37]

The *ma'lūf* during the Gaddafi era

Following the 1969 coup d'état by a group of Libyan Army officers led by Colonel Muammar Gaddafi and the overthrown of King Idris, the Libyan educational authorities embarked on a project aimed at training enough teachers to replace the large numbers of Egyptian teachers who were teaching in Libya. The plan included the training of Libyan music teachers who were eventually assigned to schools at all levels. Scholarship schemes were also made available for Libyan students to further their studies abroad. Promising Libyan music students benefited from such schemes and furthered their studies at educational music institutions both in Europe and the US. Returning graduates were eventually employed as tutors in music colleges which were set up both in Tripoli and other parts of Libya. Some of these graduates were even employed as tutors at the Department of Art and Music Education, Faculty of Education, at al-Fatāh University (now the University of Tripoli). All these initiatives had a strong impact on Araibi's project for the *ma'lūf*. For instance, over time Araibi's state-financed ensemble came to attract trained graduates from these newly-founded music colleges. Trained musicians, mostly on the violin, cello, *qanūn*, double bass and *nay*, all in possession of a music diploma and hence equipped with a good knowledge of western musical notation, proved to be a great asset in Araibi's ensemble. With their participation Araibi could expand the repertoire both with more compositions of the *nawba* as well as with newly-composed pieces such as *qasaid*, *muwashshahāt* and even arrangements of Libyan folk music. This became possible due to greater reliance on music sheets which these trained musicians could read and eventually memorise, as against the traditional rote method used earlier by Araibi with musicians having no knowledge of western notation. The reading of musical notation by these musicians meant the saving of both time and money especially within an increasingly cost-conscious recording environment.

In the post-1969 revolutionary years, the Libyan Broadcasting Centre increased its airing of Libyan music, including that of *ma'lūf*, in line with the cultural policy of that time, which emphasized the promotion and promulgation of Libyan arts, both in Libya and transnationally. For that purpose, Araibi's ensemble increased its recording output for the same Centre which meant more financial income and exposure for both the ensemble and its musicians. Due to such an increase in demand the Arab Music Institute, which was financed by the state and chaired by Araibi, was able to employ more administrative staff to support its work, and to hire musicians for regular rehearsals and performance commitments. The ensemble had also been sponsored on several occasions by the state to participate in festivals outside Libya, such as during the festival of Andalusian Music in Testour (Tunisia) and other festivals in Morocco, Qatar, Kuwait, Algeria, Lebanon, Gambia, Egypt and, later on, even in Europe such as at the Théâtre de la Ville in Paris in 2006 (*see* Figure 4).[38] Fame and public exposure not only consolidated Araibi's position as an influential figure in Libya's cultural and musical life but also assured him of a continuous subsidy from the state for both the ensemble and the music institute to which it was affiliated. Informants claimed that Gaddafi had a very strong admiration for Araibi and this seemed to be central to the continuation of a project that he had started in 1964.

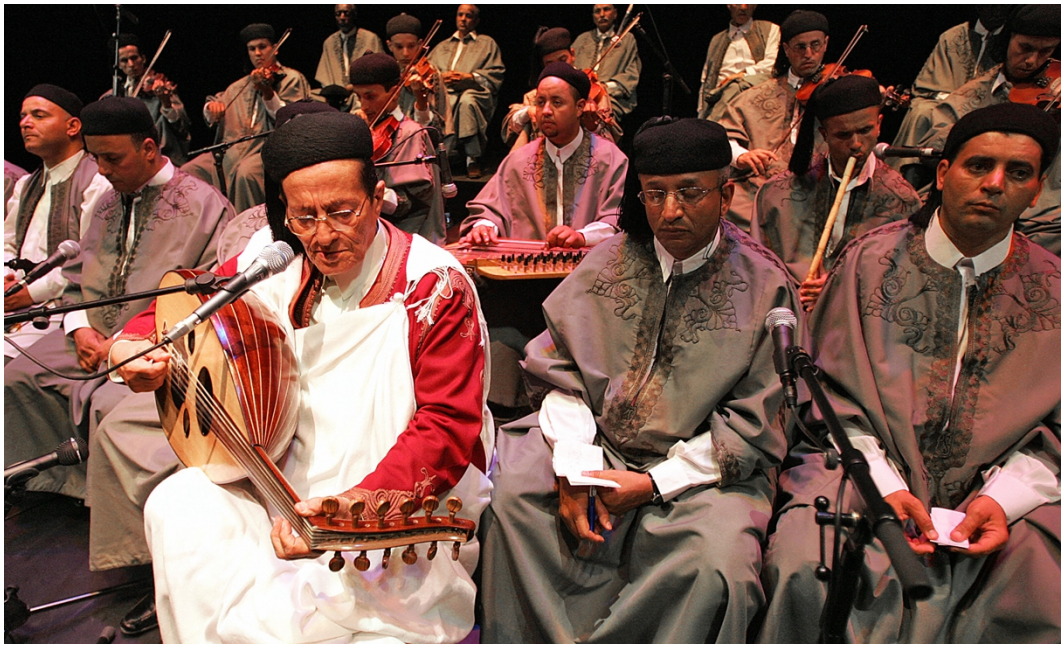


Figure 4: Hassan Araibi's ensemble at Théâtre de la Ville in Paris (2006)

However, patronage may bring with it certain obligations not always in accord with an ensemble's projected stature and status quo. Direct requests by Gaddafi for Araibi's ensemble to perform during state events were quite frequent. One of these was an invitation in the mid-1990s for the ensemble to perform during a state dinner for the diplomatic corps in a central hotel in Tripoli. According to informants, for the ensemble this request sounded like a symphony orchestra being invited to perform a Beethoven symphony whilst guests would be dining. However, since the request came from the head of state it could not be turned down, and hence it had to be accepted. Consequently, performing during an ongoing state dinner led the ensemble to rely more on the lighter pieces of the repertoire such as arrangements of Libyan folk music, with less music from the *turāth*, as well as the playing of music from the latter at the appropriate moments of the event when it might have been possible to pay more attention to the music.

Informants told me how some Libyans on watching the reporting of this event on the TV news felt that this was devaluing an ensemble known for its pioneering work in the *turāth*. They felt that the presence of Araibi's ensemble for political purposes in this event implied indiscreet popularisation of the *turāth*. To some extent, this echoes the Algerian preoccupation discussed previously regarding the popularisation of the *turāth* and the devaluation that this could imply.

Patronage and *ma'lūf* in the post-Arab Spring

The events that led to the fall of the Gaddafi regime and the more recent political situation not only elicited memories from the field but also the need for some kind of ongoing research on what has happened to this musical tradition in times of trouble, even though this could only take place through material available online alongside cellphone messages and emails with those Libyans whose friendship I greatly cherish. News about Libya coalesced with memories of informants explaining to me the historical and cultural value of the *ma'lūf* in their country. I could really see that, as I viewed pictures online of the *ma'lūf* festival being organised in the midst of a political turmoil, with the new Libyan flag flapping on stage at the rear (*see* Figure 5) and, according to informants, distinguished patrons different from those I used to see during fieldwork, sitting in the front rows.[39] The first time this festival was organised was in the summer of 2002 at the gardens of the former royal palace in central Tripoli. At that time, the festival included the participation of Sufi ensembles performing *ma'lūf az-zawya*. This would then be

followed by performances of the *ma'lūf al-idhā'a* by ensembles from Tripoli as well as from other parts of Libya such as Sirte, Misrata, and Benghazi. The professional festival set-up of that time gained from a strong state budget for this purpose, as well as from the collaboration of the Broadcasting Centre which transmitted the whole evening of the festival live on Libyan TV. Such support also meant the participation of guest ensembles from neighbouring countries such as Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria, so much so that the festival started to attain strong exposure regionally in the Maghrebi media. The support for the festival resumed for some years after the fall of the regime until the political situation got worse and the country ended up in a civil war and consequently the festival had to cease.

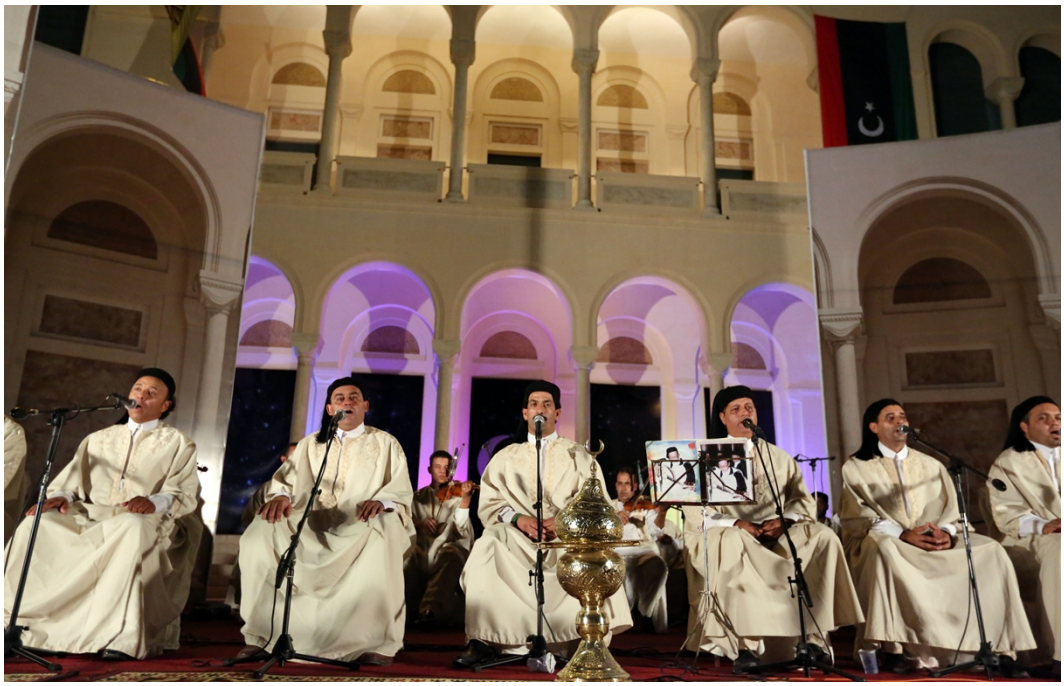


Figure 5: Hassan Araibi's ensemble during the 2013 Festival of *Ma'lūf* held in Tripoli

In the first few years following the fall of the regime in 2011, that is, until the beginning of the civil war in 2014, one notes an increase in the uploading of YouTube videos showing Libyan *ma'lūf* musicians performing in streets during wedding ceremonies [40] and Sufi celebrations as well as outside hotels [41] the last in an attempt to enhance touristic initiatives in the context of an industry that since 2002 had started seeing some hopes of progress, especially after the re-establishment of scheduled flights to Libya by European airlines as a result of the lifting of international sanctions by the UN Security Council in 1992. The online visibility of *ma'lūf* performances has helped to further put the Andalusian tradition on the global stage. All this was happening at the same time that militant songs *shahi al-ḥuriya* ("Tea of Freedom"), *sawfa nabqa huna* ("We Will Stay Here"), and the English-speaking song "We Will Not Surrender" continued circulating widely both in Libya and transnationally via cell phones, computers, and YouTube.[42]

More recent initiatives have seen diplomatic work giving its assistance in this regard. The geographical closeness of Libya and Tunisia has been translated into acts of solidarity between the two countries. In March 2017, what was left of Araibi's ensemble was invited to perform *ma'lūf* in Tunis as part of a weekend-long festival of Libyan culture that also included an art exhibition and the participation of other Libyan bands. The festival, which was called "Min ajel Libya" ("For Libya"), was organised by the French embassies in Tunis and Libya who had united to organise this event. The festival was held at the French Institute of Tunisia under the patronage of Jack Lang, former French culture minister and current president of the Arab World Institute (IMA). In addition, the

festival's programme included a roundtable conference on the ancient heritage in Libya chaired by guest of honour Jean–Luc Martinez, head of the Louvre Museum and author of numerous French proposals on the protection of world heritage.[43]

A glance at online images of the *ma'lūf* ensemble available on Facebook contrasts sharply with images of past performances by this ensemble as I remember them from my fieldwork years.[44] For this festival Araibi's ensemble was minimal in terms of participating musicians compared to the full complement of musicians it used to employ in past performances, especially for concerts abroad. This matches what one member of this ensemble told me a few weeks after this event in a WhatsApp chat I had with him about whether the ensemble was still meeting: "Sometimes," he told me. Music and its related activities are in themselves indicators of what is going on socially, economically and politically and, furthermore, are markers for the priorities that musicians set for themselves in times of social distress and uncertainty. Nevertheless, *ma'lūf* music along with other Libyan music from the other guest bands such as the Zoukra band from Khoms, the Tuareg band from Ghat, and the Tripoli rap band GAB, conveyed a statement that Libya is not all violence and divisions but that there is a different picture hidden within that which is being overshadowed by adversity and the greed for power. Several expressions in this sense and for a new social order in Libya were reported on the media as part of the reportage of this event. For instance, the *Libya Herald* notes that:

> The festival will celebrate Libya and its priceless heritage, its unique identity, its rich culture, its artistic creation and its proliferation of civil society initiatives. This joint initiative with the French institutes of Libya and Tunisia "shows that another Libya is possible," organizers report.[45]

About the same festival, another *Libya Herald* report quotes Libyan businesswoman Fawza Alfaki as saying that:

> There is so much culture in Libya, … and it should be shown to the world. Unfortunately, the country's rich heritage was being totally obscured by the current divisions. We need more events like this.[46]

The same report also notes the presence of Libyans who had travelled specifically to Tunis for this festival, such as Tarek Badri, who was reported as saying that the event "provided a chance for Libyans to come together to change the current image of their country".[47] According to the same article, Badri also notes that:

> … the real image of Libya … had been spoilt by what is going on in the country. The country had been dehumanised in the eyes of the world. The festival was a small step in helping correct that distortion …[48]

Moreover, the events featured in this festival led Alia al-Sanussi (the daughter of Prince Idris Al-Senussi) to admit to the *Libya Herald* that she has never been more hopeful than when hearing the dreams of the artists featured in this festival, and that if this determination to create beauty can remain in such times of adversity, there is no doubt that Libya will have a bright future ahead.[49]

Conclusion

Patronage in the Libyan *ma'lūf* has helped in the continuation and transformation of the tradition. *Ma'lūf* ensembles performing during weddings proliferated as the demand for them increased due to the cultural standing that this art form always had in Libya. Initiatives, such as the radio broadcasting of *ma'lūf* at the Radio Tripoli during the Fascist era, the 1964 setting-up of the first *ma'lūf* ensemble by Hassan Araibi, sponsored tours abroad of the ensemble in the 1960s and later during the Gaddafi era, all led to the transformation of this musical tradition from one solely linked to Sufi ceremonies to one that can be enjoyed by a wider audience in those ceremonies and related activities, as well as on stage within a professional hi-tech set-up. The recording industry had a central role in this development, as it served as an active patron in fulfilling the increasing

demand for this music as shaped by new cultural policies, state willingness to invest in the tradition, and diverse political interests. In this sense, patronage was a means by which the *ma'lūf* in Libya could flourish as well as a means whereby obligations to the patrons could be fulfilled. Through the export of the *ma'lūf* in its professionalised form outside Libya, government bodies could project an image of professional governance and state interest in the arts in an effort to counteract the demonisation of Libya sometimes seen in international media. Furthermore, international solidarity may also play an important role in this, as political and artistic interests may find a way to blend in safeguarding what could be lost if not given enough attention. Music such as the *ma'lūf* is potent enough to act as a medium through which aspirations for a better future can be expressed and communicated to the outside world. Libya's journey towards a new social and political order will hopefully lead to the uncovering of new ways of assisting the arts in the understanding that, in a globalised world, cultural heritage such as the *ma'lūf* is not only local or regional but global, belonging to the whole world as much as to the country or region which has nourished and sustained its growth over the years.

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NOTES

1. Finnegan 2012: 86.
2. Kaminski 2003: 264.
3. Kaminski 2003: 265.
4. Al-Harthy and Rasmussen 2012: 18.
5. Al-Harthy and Rasmussen 2012: 37.
6. Shannon 2015: 99.
7. Shannon 2015: 99.
8. Graiouid and Belghazi 2013: 272.
9. Hachlef 1990.
10. Glasser 2016: 231-2.
11. Glasser 2016: 60.
12. Glasser 2016: 60-61.
13. TheMaghrebTimes.com 2016.
14. Davis 1997: 3.
15. Davis 1996: 424.
16. Davis 1996: 437.
17. Langlois 2009: 216-7.
18. For an extensive discussion about the Libyan *ma'lūf* see Ciantar 2012.
19. Due to security issues, this *mawlid* cortège was suspended from being held for four years or so (c.2014-18). For more about this see https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tjgDbkL6h-w. [accessed 25 September 2020]
20. Abbonizio 2011: 106.
21. Abbonizio 2011: 106.

22. Abbonizio 2011: 106.

23. Abbonizio 2011: 110.

24. Abbonizio 2011: 117.

25. Abbonizio 2011: 119.

26. Bearfield 2009: 7.

27. This perspective contrasts with Carola Richter's position when noting that "the Italians set up a brutal colonial regime that left no place for indigenous social development not to mention the development of a Libyan broadcasting sector" (Richter 2013: 151).

28. Abbonizio 2008/2009: 120.

29. Abbonizio 2008/2009: 120.

30. Abbonizio 2008/2009: 120-1.

31. For more information about Sheikh Kamel Muhammad al-Ghādiy see Ciantar 2012: 52-3.

32. Abbonizio 2008/9: 287.

33. This photo is retrieved from https://www.pinterest.com/pin/863917140993511725/ [accessed 22 September 2020]. The accompanying note states that the picture shows a Libyan *ma'lūf* ensemble of the 1920/30s. The present author is not in a position to corroborate this, as normally a *ma'lūf* ensemble includes instrumental accompanists. Unaccompanied *ma'lūf* is normally performed during burial rites and, hence, it is hardly the case that the male choir in this picture was recording this kind of *ma'lūf*.

34. Morone 2017: 117

35. Glasser 2016: 196

36. Figures 3a and b are reproduced from https://oriental-traditional-music.blogspot.com/2014/08/1er-festival-algerien-de-la-musique.html [accessed 24 September 2020].

37. Golino 1970: 350.

38. Figure 4 credit: Jack Guez/AFP via Getty Images.

39. Figure 5 credit: Mahmud Turkia/AFP/GettyImages.

40. See, for instance, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=drGU9jA_IHw [accessed 25 September 2020].

41. A *ma'lūf* ensemble performing in front of Hotel Waddan, Tripoli: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K64BcF2mYXk [accessed 26 September 2020].

42. For an insightful discussion of these three songs see Tayeb 2017.

43. Zaptia 2017.

44. For pictures of this event see https://www.facebook.com/AMFRLI/posts/libyan-cultural-show-in-tunis-viewed-as-success-calls-for-more-such-events-by-ha/354312718299331/ [accessed 26 September 2020].

45. Zaptia 2017.

46. Fornaji 2017.

47. Fornaji 2017.

48. Fornaji 2017.

49. Fornaji 2017.