

programme UPDATED 21 March 2026 - TXT

List of papers for

THE MUWASHSHAH CONFERENCE 2026

To be held at the

Higher Institute of Music, University of Sousse,  
RJCP+23Q, Rue Abou Kacem Echabi, Sousse, Tunisia  
Wednesday 25 to Thursday 26 March 2026

CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

Admission to the conference is free and open to all.

Online link for the conference:

<https://meet.lisa.tn/muwashshah>

[The programme may be subject to changes. Please check the website for updates.]

[www.geocities.ws/muwashshah2026](http://www.geocities.ws/muwashshah2026)

For all inquiries:

[ed.emery.soas@gmail.com](mailto:ed.emery.soas@gmail.com)

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Wednesday 25 March 2026

Morning - 10.00 to 12.45

10.00 - WELCOME

10.30 - Tunisian malûf in the context of digital humanities  
Anas Ghrab [Higher Institute of Music, University of Sousse]

11.00 - The muwashshah and the zajal in Arabic music: literary and musical  
structures  
Imed Messaoud [Higher Institute of Music, University of Sousse]

Coffee Break

11.45 - The subversive power of the zajal in the Moroccan cultural polysystem. Five  
poems by Nas El Ghiwane as a case study  
Abdelkebir Elalouani [Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco]

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12.15 – The muwashshah in the Eastern Mediterranean from the seventeenth century: Interactions of stanza, metrical and modal structures, compositional genres.  
Dorit M. Klebe [Independent researcher]

Lunch – 12.45 – 14.30

Afternoon – 14.30 to 17.00

14.30 – The muwashshah as Arabic theory of form  
Amal al-Jubouri [SOAS, University of London]

15.00 – Voices of two shores: the influence of Arabic music on Sicilian folk singing and flamenco singing  
Maria Morena Farina [Conservatory of Maastricht]  
Coffee Break

15.50 – Was the author of the Razos de trobar Jewish?  
Ed Emery [SOAS / The Free University]

16.20 – Muwashshahaat: Not past, but present  
Mez van Slageren [King's College London]

Thursday 26 March 2026

Morning - 10.30 to 13.30

9.30 – The Catalan goigs. An approach to the historical context and musical form  
Bàrbara Duran Bordoy [Universitat de les Illes Balears]

10.00 – Reinvigorating the art of muwashshah in contemporary practice  
Ahmad Ali, Albert Agha and Imed Nsiri [American University of Sharjah]

Coffee Break

11.00 – Sounding the Andalusian ecumene: Transcultural continuities in early Mediterranean music and performance

Ronnie Malley [University of Chicago]

11.30 – Beyond transmission: the muwashshah and Early European polyphony considered in terms of poetic morphology and musical structure  
Lorenzo d'Erasmus [Independent researcher] and Francesco Magaro' [Conservatorio "L. Perosi" – Campobasso]

Lunch – 12.00–14.00

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14.00 – Musical structure in the muwashshahat of Tunisian ma'luf

قراءة في البنية الموسيقية لموشحات المالوف التونسي

Ali Sayari [Independent researcher] [in Arabic]

14.30 – The beginnings of the Hebrew muwashshah and the embrace by the kharja

Micah Newberger [Harvard]

15.00 – Exhuming Sulayma through song: tracing the genealogy of muwashshah forms through a legendary love story

Marwan Kamel [Independent researcher]

Ends

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#### CONFERENCE ABSTRACTS

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#### 1. The muwashshah as Arabic theory of form

Amal al-Jubouri [SOAS, University of London]

ABSTRACT: This paper reconsiders the origins of the muwashshah by challenging dominant literary histories that situate its emergence exclusively within the cultural milieu of al-Andalus or frame it as a hybrid form produced through belated intercultural contact. Such narratives, whether celebratory or comparative, displace theoretical innovation from Arabic intellectual centers and subtly recast Andalusian production as legible only in relation to Europe. Against this historiographical tendency, the study argues that the muwashshah should be understood as the culmination of a theory of form articulated within Abbasid intellectual and musical culture—developed in Baghdad and only later embodied in Córdoba.

Drawing on Abbasid lyrical fragments, courtly anecdotes, and the literature of akhbār al-qiyān, the paper demonstrates that non-linear composition, rhythmic condensation, patterned repetition, and melodic circulation were already being theorised and practised in Baghdad through the deliberate entanglement of poetry, music, and performance. Close readings of selected poetic materials—alongside engagement with musical theory (al-Fārābī), poetic criticism (Ibn al-Mu'tazz), and documented court practices associated with figures such as Ibrāhīm al-Mawṣilī and his student Ziriyāb—reveal a sustained Abbasid investment in form as a mode of knowledge rather than as decorative embellishment.

From this perspective, the Andalusī muwashshah does not mark an origin or rupture, but a sensuous and environmental crystallisation of earlier Abbasid formal

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experiments. By re-centering Baghdad as a rhythmic and theoretical laboratory, this study reclaims the muwashshah as an autochthonous development within Arabic intellectual history. More broadly, it calls for a decolonial reassessment of Arabic form theory as theory proper – an epistemological production in its own right, rather than precursor, influence, or raw material awaiting European modernity.

CV: Pending

E-mail: aa230@soas.ac.uk

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## 2. The Catalan goigs. An approach to the historical context and musical form

Bàrbara Duran Bordoy [Universitat de les Illes Balears]

ABSTRACT: According to Josep Massot i Muntaner, there are two typical genres of religious Catalan literature: goigs and nadales. Since at least the 12th century, medieval Latin literature has offered a wide collection of verse and prose pieces praising the 'goigs' (gaudia in Latin) of the Virgin Mary. A direct translation into English might be 'joys'. These so-called 'Gaudia Beatae Mariae Virginis' were widely translated and imitated in different countries. In Catalonia, there have been verse pieces since the 14th century related to the Virgin's 'earthly' joys. The most famous of these is the Ballada dels goigs de nostra Dona en vulgar catalan a Ball Rodó, included in the Llibre Vermell de Montserrat.

The 'heavenly' goigs emerged later and most of them are derived from a Latin hymn attributed to St Thomas of Canterbury which begins with the words 'Gaude flore virginali...'. Early goigs focused on praising the Mother of God, whereas later ones centred on more specific devotions, such as the Goigs de la Verge Maria del Roser. Composed in the 15th century, these pieces have the typical structure of the dansa provençal with a greater number of stanzas.

This musical and poetic form has travelled through time and territories and is still very much a part of some traditional festivities, including those involving a young generation (see the Sant Antoni festival in Mallorca, for example).

This paper intends to examine the historical context, early beginnings and development of Catalan goigs, as well as analysing the first poetic and musical structures in relation to zejel and muwashshah.

CV: Doctor of Art and Musicology (UAB). Professor in the Department of Musicology and Pedagogy at the Conservatori Superior de les Illes Balears between 2003 and 2015 and former Secondary School teacher, she is currently dedicated to performance, research and writing. She has won several awards for her essays on music: Alexandre Ballester 2018, Ciutat de Manacor 2019, Font i Roig 2020

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Castellitx de investigació 2022 and Premi Mallorca d'Assaig 2024. She also writes the program notes for the Balearic Islands Symphony Orchestra season and the Pollença International Festival, as well as music reviews for national media.

E-mail: bduranbordoy@gmail.com

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3. The subversive power of the zajal in the Moroccan cultural polysystem. Five poems by Nas El Ghiwane as a case study

Abdelkebir Elalouani [Cadi Ayyad University, Morocco]

ABSTRACT: The direct long of Arabic, Iberian, Hebraic, Amazigh and African cultures in Al-Andalus lasted for about eight centuries and ensued in the emergence and flourishing of novel forms of literary expression. The acculturating impact of this intercultural contact on the literary traditions involved is still felt more than five centuries after the fall of Granada (1492). The inception of zajal or colloquial poetry in Darija (the Moroccan Arabic dialect) could be traced to different sources. It bears the traces of the Andalusian muwashshahat, Almalhun, Gnawa music, and Sufism (mysticism). Zajal has evolved over centuries and has recently imposed itself as a fully recognised component of Moroccan culture.

Prior to the 1980s, the official cultural establishment and the dominant literary canon had banished non-standard Arabic creativity to the margin. Despite their contradictory ideologies, the Moroccan nationalist movement and the postcolonial state converged on consecrating Arabic Fusha (modern standard Arabic) as the norm. In its heyday, pan-Arabism promoted a monolithic view of an assumedly pure Arabic culture that disdained vernacular expressions as inferior, which goes counter to the de facto prevalent multilingualism and multiculturalism, especially in North Africa (the Maghreb). The advent of the popular musical group Nas El Ghiwane during the early 1970s constituted a counterculture that sought to destabilise the Moroccan and regional canons, asserting the merits of a new aesthetic that expressed the people's discontent, disillusionment with the post-independence state, and aspirations.

Furthermore, the eloquence and ambivalence of the lyrics composed by the lead vocalist, Larbi Batma, appealed to different tastes and managed to evade censorship. The band's output was a cry against tyranny during the Years of Lead, which provided an outlet for the oppressed masses and reinvented the literary canons in the Moroccan cultural polysystem and beyond. Five vernacular poems by Nas El Ghiwane with their English translations constitute the corpus of this paper. Its findings will hopefully benefit policy makers, educators, literary translators, and other culture producers.

Keywords: zajal, counterculture, reinventing aesthetics, political dissidence

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CV: Abelkebir Elalouani is a Moroccan lecturer in English studies. He holds a BA in English literature, a postgraduate degree in secondary teaching, a Master degree in Translation Technology and Specialised Translation, and a PhD in literary translation. He contributed to compiling three specialised dictionaries : Translation Studies Terms and Terminological Terms of Terminology, and Linguistic Terms. He has published three academic articles on translating linguistic terms, rendering humour, and translating conceptual metaphors. He also co-translated a book on the history of Indian cinema in Morocco. His main interests are literary translation, literary theory, cultural studies, linguistics, terminology, history and second language teaching.

E-mail: a.elalouani@ced.uca.ma

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4. Was the author of the Razos de trobar Jewish?

Ed Emery [SOAS / The Free University]

ABSTRACT: Historical veracity requires us to view the geographic area of the Iberian peninsula and Southern France (Occitania, Provence, Languedoc, extending as far as Italy) as a unified area in terms of medieval lyric production, with specific lyric artefacts and modes of poetic production held in common and diffused across the region. This is the “trans-Pyrenees hypothesis”. Verification of the hypothesis can only be achieved through a detailed historical and geographical mapping, a prosopography, of individual poetic forms and individual poet-performers (joglars, troubadours, minstrels etc).

A key area of critical discourse was the establishment of “the best language” for poetic production, and the need for grammatical and expressive “correctness” in the writing of poetry. We find this in the *De vulgari eloquentia* of Dante Alighieri, and earlier in the *Razos de trobar* of the troubadour poet Ramon Vidal of Besalù. The proposals advanced by Ramon Vidal, both in his poetry and in the prose of the *Razos*, bear a striking similarity to the concerns of the Jewish literary community in al-Andalus in the preceding hundred years. The similarities are sufficiently pronounced as to suggest that Vidal may have been Jewish. This paper then goes on to raise the general question of Jewish troubadours in the medieval period and their possible role in the circulation of lyric forms.

CV: Ed Emery (m. 1966, Peterhouse, Cambridge) completed his Masters in Ethnomusicology at the School of Oriental and African Studies [SOAS] in London in 2011. He has organised two international conferences on the muwashshah and zajal and their relationship to the Early European lyric, and he is now pursuing a PhD on the same subject (“Re-writing the sonnet: Poetics in an age of nakba and imperial construction”) at the Autonomous University of Barcelona. About ten years ago he was appointed as a Research Associate in the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies at SOAS; he also directs his own personal academy at

## 5. Voices of two shores: the influence of Arabic music on Sicilian folk singing and flamenco singing

Maria Morena Farina [Conservatory of Maastricht]

ABSTRACT: The topic that I am presenting is based on my Master's thesis, completed in 2024-25 at the Conservatorium Maastricht (Netherlands), within the Jazz Vocal programme. My research focuses on the musical legacy left by Arab culture in flamenco singing and in Sicilian folk and work songs, with particular attention to the Mediterranean as a space of long-term cultural circulation.

Rather than concentrating on formal musical structures, the proposed contribution centres on the way of singing, examining vocal characteristics such as melismatic phrasing, ornamentation, microtonal inflections, vocal timbre, and expressive intensity. Through a comparative perspective, it explores how these features appear in Arabic vocal traditions, selected flamenco styles, and Sicilian traditional repertoires, suggesting a shared aesthetic shaped by historical Arab presence in both Andalusia and Sicily.

The research combines historical inquiry with ethnomusicological fieldwork, including research travel, listening and analysis of recordings, and interviews with musicians and scholars in Sicily and Andalusia. Rather than proposing linear models of influence, the contribution highlights processes of oral transmission, memory, and local adaptation, and considers the human voice as a living archive through which Arab musical heritage continues to resonate within Mediterranean vocal traditions.

CV: Maria Morena Farina is an Italian vocalist and researcher with ancestral roots in Sicily through her grandfather, currently based in Granada, Andalusia. She completed her Master's degree in Jazz Vocal Performance at the Conservatorium Maastricht (Netherlands) in 2024-2025. Her artistic and academic work focuses on Mediterranean vocal traditions, with particular interest in the legacy of Arab musical culture in flamenco singing and in Sicilian folk and work songs. Her research combines ethnomusicology, historical inquiry, and practice-based artistic research, including fieldwork, interviews, and vocal training in Arabic and flamenco singing. Alongside her research activity, she is active as a performer and vocal teacher.

E-mail: morenafarina2001@gmail.com

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## 6. Tunisian malûf in the context of digital humanities

Anas Ghrab [Higher Institute of Music, University of Sousse]

ABSTRACT: This paper presents the maluf.tn platform, a digital tool dedicated to collecting, organising, and showcasing resources related to Tunisian Malûf. Designed to bring together dispersed materials – text corpora of muwashshahât and their draft-critical editions, audio recordings, videos, digitised archives, and scattered online documentation – the platform, currently under development, provides a structured environment for research, teaching, and transmission.

The presentation will discuss the technical and methodological choices that have guided this initiative: managing and indexing heterogeneous sources, documenting chains of transmission, and consolidating a reliable and searchable corpus. By situating Malûf within the broader heritage of Andalusî music, the talk will also show how maluf.tn, while currently focused on the Tunisian tradition, lays the groundwork for future comparative investigations with other Andalusî musical traditions across the Maghreb.

CV: After completing his studies in music and musicology at the University of Lyon 2, he earned his PhD from the University of Paris-Sorbonne. He previously served as the director of the Center for Arab and Mediterranean Music at Ennejma Ezzahra Palace and currently teaches at the University of Sousse's Higher Institute of Music. Additionally, he is a researcher at the L3S laboratory (ENIT) and leads several interdisciplinary projects in digital arts and humanities. Notably, he was involved in the Musée du Patrimoine Écrit project, in collaboration with the National Library of Tunisia and the Tunisian Academy Beït al-Hikma-Carthage and the Digitisation of Rashidiyya Maluf-Association archives. He also recently co-founded LiSa-Digit, an initiative aimed at enhancing digital databases for cultural heritages.

E-mail: [anas.ghrab@lisa-digit.com](mailto:anas.ghrab@lisa-digit.com)

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## 7. Exhuming Sulayma through song: tracing the genealogy of muwashshah forms through a legendary love story

Marwan Kamel [Independent researcher]

ABSTRACT: The Andalusî muwashshah's genesis remains obscure, appearing abruptly as a lyrical form distinct from the early Umayyad and Abbasid court's monorhyme, qaṣîda-based prestige traditions like sawt or nashîd. Although early primary sources, such as Dâr al-Ṭirâz, offer little insight into origins, they already document a shift away from the colloquial Arabic of the Maghreb/Andalusî corpus.

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This research re-examines muwashshah's development, tracing its lineage from Eastern poetic experiments, migration to Al-Andalus, subsequent syncretisation within Eastern nūba, and reemergence as a prestige genre through textual and musical examples.

Shaykh 'Alī al-Darwish's notebooks, compiled in Tunisia in preparation for *La Musique Arabe*, prompted this inquiry and reveal a rare melody in the later muwashshah nātiq form that cycles through multiple maqāmāt--including one already considered uncommon in Cantemir's seventeenth-century works. Transmitted orally, and nearly lost by the 1930s, it only survives today amongst a handful of performers in Aleppo. Its lyrics allude to the hyperbolic love story of Umayyad Caliph al-Walīd ibn Yazīd and his qayna Sulayma. Analysing poetic structures, rhythmic patterns, and forms in poetic retellings, we dust off the muwashshah's reconstructed biography - from Eastern prototypes to Andalusī-Maghrebi transformations, and its subsequent reintegration into post-Abbasid and early Ottoman nūba developments.

CV: Marwan Kamel is a researcher, multi-instrumentalist, and composer who plays and performs on oud, nay, buzuq, guitar, violin, and hand-percussion. His work's lifelong vision explores the colloquial textures of Western punk and experimental musics and their boundaries and interaction with melodically-complex maqam modalities. He has composed original music for small-scale films and has performed internationally with various projects at festivals such as Richard Thompson's Meltdown Festival in London, South by Southwest, Berlin Social Muscle Club, and Sundance Film Festival. He also hosts a weekly live looping show on Istanbul-based Root Radio. He completed his studies at the Rachidia in Tunis.

E-mail: [dailymaqam@gmail.com](mailto:dailymaqam@gmail.com)

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The muwashshah in the Eastern Mediterranean from the seventeenth century:  
Interactions of stanza, metrical and modal structures, compositional genres.

Dorit M. Klebe [Independent researcher]

ABSTRACT: At the beginning of the 16th century, the Islamic Near East underwent a fundamental transformation, caused by the Ottomans. In respect to the muwashshah in Syria and especially in Aleppo Walter Z. Feldman writes: "The muwashshah was already in existence in Syria in the seventeenth century, and spread from here to Egypt (Racy 1983). ... On the other hand, compositional, usul and modal structure in the muwashshah items reveal strong Ottoman influence as well" (1990/91: 80-81). Later, the Arabian music culture came into interactions with Turkish and Persian music cultures. In the same geographic area there existed contacts with Armenians, Jews, Syrians and other residents. They exchanged musical styles, forms, and lyrics with each other (see Habib Hassan Touma 1989: 35-36, 39).

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In my paper will be demonstrate and compare by means of selected printed or transcribed as well as audio-video examples of specific music genres. While the muwashshah uses Classical Arabic, the zajal are written in colloquial Arabic (Touma: 105). The muwashshah is contrasted to Ottoman-Turkish vocal genres that were part of the concert cyclus fasıl from the beginning of 17th century; to name here beste, nakş, kâr, semâ'î. The zajal is contrasted to the vocal genre şarkı (see Klebe 2013: 70–198); the şarkı became part of the fasıl not before the middle of the 18th century at the Ottoman court (see Feldman 1996: 180–183). The musammat poetry is quasi a connecting link within the genres above mentioned, and will be investigated in all the examples being demonstrated.

CV: Dorit Klebe studied Historical and Comparative Musicology/Ethnomusicology and Turcology in Berlin and Göttingen; received her doctorate in Musicanthropology in Wrocław (Poland). She specialises in vocal traditions, makâm practice of the Mediterranean and Central Asia; urban ethnomusicology in Berlin. Teaching activities at the Berlin University of the Arts. Chair of ICTMD for Germany.

E-mail: dmklebe@zedat.fu-berlin.de

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8. Beyond transmission: the muwashshah and Early European polyphony considered in terms of poetic morphology and musical structure

Lorenzo d'Erasmus [Independent researcher] and Francesco Magaro' [Conservatorio "L. Perosi" – Campobasso]

ABSTRACT: Debates on the origins of the medieval European lyric and its musical forms have long acknowledged possible links with Arab-Andalusian song traditions. Early twentieth-century music historiography postulated direct connections between medieval European polyphony and Arab-Spanish cultures, largely on the basis of geographical proximity and shared organological features (Ribera, 1929; Farmer, 1929). This paper reassesses such assumptions by asking whether formal similarities necessarily imply processes of transmission, or rather reflect parallel yet functionally independent developments.

By combining analytical tools such as “poetic viability” (Emery, 2004) with criticism of performance praxis (Haines, 2001), and by comparing selected musical and discographic sources (notably Afif Bulos, 1976), the study situates poetic and musical structures within their performative and lyrical contexts. A comparative framework is proposed between the mensural organisation of rhythmic modes in *Ars Antiqua* polyphony and the microtonal linearity and rhythmic circularity (īqā'āt) described in Arabic and Andalusian theoretical sources, notably al-Fārābī's *Kitāb al-Mūsīqā al-Kabīr*.

Focusing on the relationship between Arabic-Andalusian muwashshah and zajal and early European lyric and polyphonic forms, the paper explores the tension between

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morphological osmosis and functional independence from metrical, melodic and prosodic perspectives, contributing to current debates on the circulation of song and poetic forms across the medieval Mediterranean.

CV: Lorenzo D'Erasmus (1993) is a versatile percussionist specialising in contemporary repertoire, early music, and frame drums. Trained in Milan and Freiburg, he collaborates with renowned ensembles such as Sentieri Selvaggi, MDI Ensemble, Divertimento Ensemble, and La Reverdie. He has performed at major international festivals, including the Venice Biennale and the Monteverdi Festival.

An expert in historical and Mediterranean percussion, Lorenzo teaches at the "Tamburi Mundi" Festival and the Milan Conservatory. He is also active in the electronic and Arabic music scenes and holds several recording credits (Stradivarius, Arcana), distinguishing himself with a dynamic approach that bridges classical percussion and historical traditions.

CV: Francesco Magaro' is Professor of Traditional Music at the L. Perosi Conservatory in Campobasso. With a diploma in Piano and Traditional Music and a degree in Economics specialising in Marketing of Artistic and Cultural Heritage, he holds master's degrees in Ethno-Popular Music Analysis and Theory and in Composition and Improvisation in Educational Contexts. Specialising in frame drums, he has studied repertoires and techniques from diverse traditions through international academic and artistic pathways. His research explores creative, performative, and transmission processes in different musical practices and their intersections, with a focus on contexts of practice, stylistic and performative dynamics, and audiotactile music.

E-mail: francesco.magaro@gmail.com

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9. Sounding the Andalusian ecumene: Transcultural continuities in early Mediterranean music and performance

Ronnie Malley [University of Chicago]

ABSTRACT: This paper explores transcultural performance practices emerging from musical traditions that descend from Al-Andalus, framed through what I term the "Andalusian Ecumene," a historical and aesthetic network where early "Western" and "Eastern" repertoires intersected and continued to inform one another. Focusing on modern interpretations of muwashahat in Egypt and the Levant, the maluf and nuba suite traditions in North Africa, and the Cantigas de Santa Maria and Sephardic repertoires of medieval Spain, the study examines how performers today navigate authenticity, adaptation, and exchange across cultural and historical boundaries. Through an ethnomusicological lens, it considers how these repertoires' interwoven poetic and modal languages rooted in Arabic, Hebrew, and Spanish manifest in performance as sites of cultural negotiation and continuity. By comparing

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interpretive practices in diverse contemporary settings, the paper argues that the Andalusian Ecumene provides a productive framework for understanding early music as an inherently transcultural phenomenon. It repositions early Western and Eastern art music traditions not as parallel or oppositional canons but as mutually constitutive forms of expression whose shared performance legacies continue to resonate within modern artistic and academic discourses on revival, heritage, and identity.

CV: Ronnie Malley is a musician, producer, and educator specialising in performance traditions of the Middle East, North Africa, South Asia, and medieval Spain. He is executive director of Intercultural Music Production and a PhD student in Ethnomusicology at the University of Chicago, where he earned an MA in Arabic and Hebrew. Malley's work integrates scholarship and practice through intercultural collaboration, pedagogy, and performance. He has performed with ensembles such as Apollo's Fire, Folger Consort, Lute Legends Collective, Newberry Consort, and Surabhi and received the 2023 Chamber Music America Michael Jaffee Visionary Award for his contributions to intercultural music-making.

Keywords: Andalusian Ecumene; transcultural performance; early music; Muwashahat; maluf; nuba; Cantigas de Santa Maria; Sephardic music; Mediterranean music; cultural exchange

E-mail: ronnie.malley@gmail.com

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## 10. The muwashshah and the zajal in Arabic music: literary and musical structures

Imed Messaoud [Higher Institute of Music, University of Sousse]

ABSTRACT: We often approach the muwashshah and the zajal from various perspectives, some historical, others purely literary. The musical approach is often overlooked when discussing the muwashshah and the zajal as a dominant element in the formation of these two forms as literary and musical creations, characterised by a profound historical, artistic, and technical interconnectedness. We believe it is impossible to analyze them from a single perspective or with an approach that separates the literary from the musical.

This presentation falls within this framework, aiming to shed light on the completeness of the muwashshah and the zajal as two forms in which the literary and the musical are inseparable.

ABSTRACT:

الموشح والزجل في الموسيقى العربية / البنية الأدبية والموسيقية

Le mouwachah et le zajal: fondement et figures/ structures littéraires et musicales

كثيرا ما تتناول الموشح والزجل بمقاربات متنوعة، بعضها تاريخي، وبعضها أدبي صرف. وتُستثنى المقاربة الموسيقية من ولوح مجالات الحديث عن الموشح والزجل كعنصر مهيم على تشكل هاذين القالين كإبداع أدبي وموسيقي على غاية من الترابط التاريخي والفني والتقني. ولا يمكن في اعتقادنا تحليله من وجه واحد و بمقاربة تفصل بين الأدبي والموسيقي. في هذا الإطار تنزل المداخلة، التي يُفترض أن تسلط الضوء على كلية الموشح والزجل كقالبين لا ينفصل فيهما الأدبي عن الموسيقي.

CV: Pending

E-mail: imed.messaoud@gmail.com

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## 11. The beginnings of the Hebrew muwashshah and the embrace by the kharja

Micah Newberger [Harvard]

ABSTRACT: This paper examines one of the first Hebrew girdle poems that has come down to us and is complete. Attributed to Shmuel Ha-Nagid (993-1055), it is known to have inspired several mu‘araḍat, which we possess, although the poem it imitated has not been found. Through a close reading of the poem and its central motif of the “embrace” of lovers in the poem and in the kharja, paired with a review of the classical Arabic rhetorics of the muwashshah form, I argue that the poetics of such “embracing” are self-reflective of (a) the function of the aqfāl in the poem, and (b) the relationship between the original poem and the mu‘araḍa, and (c) Hebrew imitations of Arabic poetry in general. It reflects on the possibility that al-Mulk’s kharja is a precise term, describing not the “end of the poem,” as Agamben might call it, but the space of exiting or threshold shared—“encompassed”—between one version and another.

CV: Micah Newberger is a doctoral student at Harvard. He is focused on the problematic of poetry and philosophy in the medieval period, especially Hebrew Spain. He is also interested in Jewish Studies, Talmud, psychoanalysis, Classics, and German-Jewish studies.

E-mail: micah.newberger@gmail.com

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## 12. Reinvigorating the art of muwashshah in contemporary practice

Ahmad Ali, Albert Agha and Imed Nsiri [American University of Sharjah]

ABSTRACT: The muwashshahaat are among the most intricate and expressive song-poems of the Arabic tradition, born in medieval Andalusia and celebrated for their poetic form and musical richness. Yet today, this art form is largely confined to heritage ensembles or academic archives, rather than thriving as a living genre of contemporary Arab music. This project seeks to research the synchronic and

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diachronic aspect of the muwashshahaat in order to revive the muwashsha? as a dynamic creative practice. By reimagining its poetic and musical structures, we will compose and professionally record new works that honor its traditional essence while embracing modern sounds and themes. The recordings will be disseminated through public media and distribution channels, the professional music industry, and academic circles, positioning the muwashshah once again as a relevant and evolving form. Ultimately, the project aims to bridge historical artistry with modern creativity, ensuring the muwashshah reclaims its place in today's world of Arab music-making. The project will focus on the synchronic and diachronic aspect of the muwashshahaat. This project is a collaboration between three colleagues, Drs Ahmad Ali, Albert Agha, and Imed Nsiri.

CVs

Ahmed Ali

PhD, Durham University, United Kingdom

Ahmed Ali is a Professor of Translation Studies at the Department of Arabic and Translation Studies, AUS. He is a poet in both Fusha and Ammiya. He is also the current President of Arabic Translators International (ATI). At the University of Durham, UK, he taught undergraduate courses in Arabic and translation, and at King Khaled University, Saudi Arabia, he was one of the founding members of the Translation Department. He is also the General Editor of ATI Academic Series, and ATI Literary Series (Arabic Literature Unveiled).

Albert Agha

PhD, University of California Los Angeles,

Albert Nasser Agha earned his Ph.D from UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music, studying under the direction of renowned professor and composer A.J Racy. As an accomplished performer of the classical Arab repertoire, Agha has performed at many notable venues such as the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Berklee Music Center in Boston, Chicago Cultural Center, and the Montreal Festival for the Arab world. As a scholar of ethnomusicology, Agha's areas of interest include music and Islam in contemporary Southeast Asian societies, where he has conducted extensive fieldwork among Indonesian Muslims in Java. His other areas of interest include contemporary aesthetics of Arab music, and the music of the Arab diaspora.

Imed Nsiri

PhD, Indiana University, Bloomington, United States

Dr. Nsiri holds a Double PhD in Arabic and Comparative Literature. He has published two books and several articles. His most recent publication is Arabic Heritage in the Post-Abbasid Period (2019). His research interests include Arabic studies, especially modern Arabic poetry and music, and comparative literature of the modernists

E-mail: [insiri@aus.edu](mailto:insiri@aus.edu)

### 13. Musical structure in the muwashshahat of the Tunisian ma'luf

قراءة في البنية الموسيقية لموشحات المالوف التونسي

Ali Sayari [Independent researcher] [in Arabic]

#### ABSTRACT:

قراءة في البنية الموسيقية لموشحات المالوف التونسي تسعى هذه المداخلة لتقديم قراءة في البنية الموسيقية للموشحات في رصيد المالوف التونسي، والتي عادة ما تُؤدّى ضمن وصلات غنائية مستقلة بذاتها خارج إطار النوبات، وقد سمّاها أهل الصّناعة من القدماء بملحق النوبات. سنحاول من خلال المقاربة التحليلية تسليط الضوء على هذه الممارسة الموسيقية من خلال تفكيك البناء الشعري والنغمي والإيقاعي والتعبيري لنماذج من أشهر الموشحات ورصد شبكة التفاعل بين هذه المكونات البنيوية ونهدف بذلك إلى ضبط أهمّ الخصائص الشعرية والموسيقية والجمالية لقالب الموشح في تقاليد المالوف التونسي والتي تميّزه عن غيره من الموشحات المشرقية. علي السيارى

ABSTRACT: This presentation aims to offer an analysis of the musical structure of muwashshahat within the Tunisian ma'luf repertoire. These muwashshahat are typically performed as independent vocal pieces outside the framework of nawbat, and were termed by the ancient masters of the art as an appendage to nawbat. Through an analytical approach, we will attempt to shed light on this musical practice by deconstructing the poetic, melodic, rhythmic, and expressive structures of some of the most famous muwashshahat. We will also examine the network of interaction between these structural components, aiming to identify the most important poetic, musical, and aesthetic characteristics of the muwashshah form within the Tunisian ma'luf tradition that distinguish it from other Eastern muwashshahat.

CV: Ali Sayari is a music professor and independent researcher specialising in the traditions of Tunisian malûf. He is a former member of the working team on sound archives linked to mâlûf at the Ennejma Ezzahra Center for Arab and Mediterranean Music, and a member of the working team on the Rachidia archives. He also teaches malûf, its theory and practice, at the Maison du Ûd Tunisien.

E-mail: sayariali72@gmail.com

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### 14. Muwashshahaat: Not past, but present

Mez van Slageren [King's College London]

ABSTRACT: The history of muwashshah and zajal is assuredly a rich source of developmental and comparative reflection for music and lyric alike. However, muwashshahat as a tradition are still very much alive, particularly in the Levant. Contemporary practice is an equally important (but presently less documented) window to look through. This paper, based on my ongoing PhD research, therefore argues that contemporary Syrian muwashshah practice is subtly refocussing it's

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cultural value from a link with a medieval al-Andalus 'golden age' to the much more recent image of Aleppo. Aleppo as a cultural heavyweight, especially musically, is an image that is gaining traction through the work of people such as Ibrahim Muslimani and Khaled al-Hafez. Both musicians from Aleppo, their migration away from the city and indeed their country was due to the outbreak of the civil war. While my PhD considers the different roads they have taken in pursuit of their goal to safeguard this musical heritage, my paper looks at what binds them together: the fore-fronting of Aleppo as THE cultural image for contemporary muwashshahat practice. History has been written, but the present will dictate the future.

CV: Mez van Slageren is a PhD candidate working with Martin Stokes at King's College London. She started her PhD during the pandemic in 2020. Now part-time, her work focuses on Arabic music with a specific interest in Syria and the Levant. Using the song-form muwashshah as a case study, she is investigating how the valuing, performance, and transmission of heritage music is influenced by migration. This PhD was preceded by a Master of Arts at the Open University in the UK, where her dissertation considered Fairouz, her music, and the connection to listeners' perception of 'peace'.

E-mail: [merel.dubois-van\\_slageren@kcl.ac.uk](mailto:merel.dubois-van_slageren@kcl.ac.uk)

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