

Mp3 Issa Boulos & Nermin Kaygusuz - Rif



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This recording features Nermin Kaygusuz on kemence (Turkish fiddle) performing original compositions by Issa Boulos. The work explores conceptual, technical and interpretational aspects of maqam music making. 11 MP3 Songs WORLD: Middle East, WORLD: World Traditions Details: Rif (Countryside) The little things that our senses got used to interacting with since childhood, at first seemed a little out of place for a little boy who is supposed to be paying attention to matters other than those claimed by most to be irrelevant, or non-inspiring. However, my observations as to how these elements interacted with each other grew to become an intense fascination with their general movements, rhythms, sounds, patterns, reactions, conflicts and harmony. A different usage-area of my senses has accordingly emerged and later constituted the bases for nearly all my instrumental compositions, regardless of instrumentation or musical tools incorporated. The idea behind this mechanism of energy extraction remained the same, and simple. Hence the search for the inner energy of the self was much more complex in its own way. The idea behind Rif is to musically integrate the internal energy of the little things: leafs, dew, insects, birds; with everything else that comes with them! During a quiet evening at our Ramallah home veranda, one physical spot set the main theme for Rif ; the fig tree, the oldest artichoke plant in the neighborhood, the Mediterranean scenery, the color of soil, and the feeling of coziness and unity with everything that exists in that little corner. I carefully observed all the events that were taking place within that spot and started moving inward, towards the alienated one! It wasn't my intention to tell their stories, or mine for that matter. I was, rather, telling stories through them, and with them. At that point, music started popping up and I started transcribing it. The musical key that I used to unwrap the complexities of the inner self while articulating the sense of being through other beings has become the obsession that followed me throughout the journey of observing my own sounds and transcribing them. The issue of instrumentation

was one of the technically most difficult to resolve. I wanted an instrument that immediately gives the impression of versatility and simplicity, while rich. I also wanted an instrument that can hold up to the technical challenges that were evidently coming up as reflection of other types of complexities. Although my sketches were nearly complete, good fortune found its way to me and was able to meet with Turkish kemene master Nermin Kaygusuz through Martin Stokes, a mutual friend. We got together the following week and I was mesmerized by the energy of her instrument. It was the kemene that I wanted; its tone characteristics, simplicity, depth and sophistication. It reminded me of how things really are rather than how things may become. As for percussion, using the simplest form of all percussion instruments, the bendir, was the way to go. The final result is an open-ended mixture of experimentations with maqam and some vague drawings of melodies that ceased to exist. I was able to resurrect an old man who danced in a wedding in his village the day after his wife passed away in Raqsat al-Khityar, and to make the southbound Chicago bus dance for an immigrant on his way home in Raqs al-Janub; I witnessed the birth, transformation and return of a dew in Radhadh and confessed my surrender to alienation in Gharib; tasted the smell of olive trees in Zaytun; calmed down the elements in Tahlilah; reminded myself of mortality in Murur; wondered about whom we have become in Suual; made promises to loved ones in Wad; bridged the roughness of exile in Masafa; and prayed for a better world while touching the morning breeze in Sabah. Issa Boulos Issa is a composer, 'ud performer, critic, researcher, writer and lyricist, his works have covered various genres and acquired worldwide recognition. He is featured in many recordings and festivals throughout the world as both composer and performer and covered by virtually all media major networks including CNN, PBS, CBS, NBC, CLTV, CAN TV, Chicago Tribune, the Suntimes, the Reader, Chicago Weekly, RedEye. His latest commission was by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra where he wrote four pieces for orchestra and takht. His works include Kawkab Akhar, Shortly After Life, Lysistrata, Catharsis, Sama, al-Hallaj, Rif, Being Peace; A Palestinian Memoir, and the music for the PBS documentary "The New Americans," and most recently for the critically acclaimed documentary "Nice Bombs." Issa writes music reviews for Four Magazine and This Week In Palestine and is a recipient of several awards and fellowships including most recently an Artists Fellowship Award by the Illinois Arts Council and the 2006 Palestinian Cultural Fund Award. He is a lecturer at the University of Chicago where he directs the Middle East Music Ensemble. Nermin Kaygusuz (Ph.D 1992) Nermin is an Associate Professor at Istanbul Technical University, in the Social Science Institute. She was born in Ankara, and

studied with many masters including Tlin Korman, zdal Orhon, Erdoan Saydam , Sadettin Heper, Yaln Tura, Demirhan Altu, Bekir Stk Sezgin, hsan zgen, and Ercmend Berker. She is a member in several Turkish groups including Trk Mziinde Yeni Araylar. She is a highly celebrated performer and scholar, both locally and internationally. Nermin has two recordings out: Gnlden Damlalar and Kemene ve Gitarla Saz Eserleri.

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