

Mp3 Kareem Roustom & El-zafeer Ensemble - Almitra's Question



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El-Zafeer Ensemble combine the lush tones and driving rhythms of Arabic music with the bright hued colors of jazz. "If you love jazz and world music, you just may believe Kareem Roustom and the El-Zafeer Ensemble to be musical prophets." Connected Magazine 6 MP3 Songs WORLD: Middle East, JAZZ: World Fusion Details: Mature and beautiful... Communicates on more than one level Reviewer: Jamil Farah (Paris, France. February 4, 2005) While Kareem Roustom and El-Zafeer Ensemble are not the first to blend jazz and Arabic music, they do this in a way all their own. Indeed, improvisation, a common characteristic of both jazz and Arabic music, has inspired musicians and singers from Europe, America and the Arab World to blend styles over the last thirty years or so. However, while Ziyad Rahbani improvises little, Rabih Abou Khalil settles for the lazy notion that harmony has no role to play in Arabic music, Anouar Brahem reduces the rhythm section and Fawzi Al-Aiedy softens the edges and discards complexity (quarter-tones, complex rhythms...), El-Zafeer take up all these challenges and produce rich textures and a variety of modes and moods. "Almitra's Question" strikes a delicate balance - between composition and improvisation, between the rough edges of an ever-present electric bass and the softness of the acoustic guitar (though sometimes they trade these roles), and finally between the more traditionally "Arabic" sounds of the violin and the adventurous, sometimes hauntingly eerie, guitar chords. The centerpiece, "Almitra's Question" epitomizes this balance while moving the listener through different moods, images and beats. The secret does not lie only in the diverse experience of each of the musicians but also in the fact that they let their tastes and experiences run free. Influences do not seem to scare them. In fact, this is more than a jazz/Arabic fusion. Even Messiaen is at home here! Finally, Kareem Roustom and El-Zafeer avoid the pitfall of the merely intellectually fascinating works of the genre. They

often, though not always, manage to reach the feelings of the listener. This is music which communicates on more than one level.

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