An Ode to the Rose

by Missak Baghboudarian

Director of the Syrian National Symphony Orchestra

Musicians:

Mirna Kassis, *Voice*

Valentina Corsi, *Voice*

Tareq Abu Salameh, *Oud*

Salah Namek, *Cello*

Lorenzo D'Erasmo, *Percussions*

Missak Baghboudarian, *Piano*

Concert programme:

The Hymn to Nikkal
The oldest song in the World (1400 A.C.)
Translated by: Iyad Rimawi, Solista: Mirna Kassis

Syriac Hymns
Songs in the Syriac language, spoken during Christ's era
Solista: Mirna Kassis

She moved through the fair
Herbert Hughes and Wayne Shorter
Arr: Nareg Abadjain, Solista: Valentina Corsi

Fairouz Medley
Arr: Nareg Abadjian, Solista: Mirna Kassis

Lamma bada yatathanna (When she begins to sway)
Mwashash from Andalusia
Arr: Nareg Abadjain Solisti: Valentina Corsi e Mirna Kassis

Aatini el Ney wa ghanni (Hand me the Flute and Sing)
by Jubran Khalil Jubran e Najib Hankash
Arr: Nareg Abadjain Solisti: Valentina Corsi e Mirna Kassis

Medley of Syrian folk songs
Solista: Mirna Kassis

Lu rusciu te lu mare (The Sound of the Sea)
Italian folk song
Arr: Nareg Abadjain Solista: Valentina Corsi

Ya ashikatal wardi (Lover of the Rose)
by Zaki Nassif
Arr: Nareg Abadjian, Solista: Mirna Kassis

Bardezoum vart e patzvel (A Rose has Bloomed in the Garden)
by Ruben Matevosyan
Arr: Nareg Abadjain, Solista: Valentina Corsi

Naili ahla zahra (Pick me the sweetest Rose)
by Zaki Nassif
Arr: Nareg Abadjian, Solista: Mirna Kassis

Ya zahratan fi khayali (Rose of my Imagination)
by Farid Al Atrash
Arr: Nareg Abadjain Solisti: Mirna Kassis e Valentina Corsi

An Ode to the Rose

Join us on a captivating journey with the Damascene Rose, sharing the vivid stories and experiences she has witnessed throughout her timeless existence on this planet. This remarkable rose's roots reach back more than 3000 years, encompassing a rich and prosperous history.

These roots bind us to the origins of significant human achievements. They connect us to the earliest known alphabet discovered in Ugarit, as well as to the first musical notation dating back to 1400 BC. One notable composition from this era is a poignant hymn, sung by an Ugaritic woman beseeching the goddess Nikkal for the blessing of a child. Among the numerous interpretations of this melodic masterpiece, we present to you a rendition thoughtfully prepared by the talented Syrian composer, Iyad Al-Rimawi.

The Hymn to Nikkal

Iyad Al-Rimawi's translation of this hymn stands out for its distinct utilisation of 'Maqam al-Bayat', or the Bayat scale, deviating from the conventional Minor and Major scales. This artistic approach embraces the essence of Maqams, incorporating quarter-tones that are intrinsic to the musical traditions of the region. It draws inspiration from Syriac music, which has deeply influenced the local musical landscape and is intertwined with the ancient Syriac language.

The Syriac language, spoken in the time of Christ, has been preserved through the ages in numerous hymns sung during religious rituals. These hymns have endured in Syria to the present day, carrying the cultural and spiritual heritage of Syrian believers.

In this collection of Syriac hymns, listeners are captivated by the profound melodies and lyrical expressions that have traversed time, resonating with the faith and devotion of generations. Iyad Al-Rimawi's translation showcases a profound understanding of the musical nuances and cultural significance embedded within these sacred hymns, inviting us to experience the timeless beauty and spiritual depth they offer.

A collection of Syriac hymns

On our journey, we'll encounter a tapestry of captivating stories that traverse time and space. These narratives delve into the essence of humanity, exploring the depths of our emotions, concerns, and moments of elation. These stories know no bounds and are not confined to any specific geographical region. Instead, they resonate across cultures, illustrating that the human voice has always been the most profound and universal medium of expression.

Within this rich tapestry, we find a traditional Irish song—a testament to the power of music and storytelling. This song, steeped in the heritage of the Irish people, carries echoes of their history, hopes, and shared experiences. It serves as a poignant reminder that music has the extraordinary ability to transcend boundaries, connecting individuals across generations and continents.

Through this Irish folk song, we are invited to immerse ourselves in the melodies and lyrics that have woven themselves into the fabric of Irish culture. The lilting tunes and heartfelt verses transport us to the emerald landscapes of Ireland, evoking a sense of nostalgia and celebration. Join us as we embrace the enchanting

strains of this timeless melody, appreciating its ability to touch our hearts and bridge the gaps between us.

She moved through the fair.

These melodic treasures, intertwined with the collective memory of our communities, have seamlessly woven themselves into the tapestry of daily life. These songs have become cherished companions, accompanying Syrians in their routines and forging an inseparable bond with their hearts.

As the sun gently rises, casting its golden glow upon the Levantine homes, Syrians would often find solace in the timeless melodies of Ms Fairouz. With a cup of morning coffee in hand, they would gather in the tranquil courtyards, permeated with the fragrant essence of jasmine and rose. There, amidst the serenity of the surroundings, is the enchanting voice of Fairouz.

This medley of Fairouz songs, like a mesmerizing symphony, evokes emotions, stirs memories, and unites souls. Each melodic piece carries its own unique story, reflecting the joys, sorrows, hopes, and aspirations of a nation. From the nostalgic tunes that harken back to bygone eras to the anthems that rally hearts in unity, this medley encapsulates the essence of Fairouz's illustrious career.

Fairouz Medley

Nourished by its profound historical heritage, the Damascene Rose has gracefully extended its branches, disseminating art and knowledge to distant corners of the globe. Within its blossoming realm, a multitude of tales unfold, recounting the remarkable Umayyad legacy that reached the shores of Andalusia. In this

vibrant chapter of history, the Muwashahat, a form of poetic expression, played a pivotal role, enthralling hearts and minds. These poetic compositions, imbued with a melodic allure, captivated listeners and stirred emotions, transporting them to realms of beauty and contemplation.

Amidst the ebb and flow of history, there were moments when this rich cultural heritage seemed to be obscured or overlooked. However, just like the inherent resilience of the Damascene Rose, its essence persists, finding avenues to re-emerge and flourish, ensuring its profound influence would not be forgotten.

Andalusian Muwashahat

"Have you bathed in my fragrance?" queried Gibran Khalil Gibran, as he gracefully wove his words into a captivating poem, accompanied by the melodic composition of Najeeb Hanakash. Within this poetic masterpiece, the enigmatic question touched upon the essence of existence, interlacing it with the ethereal power of song.

Immerse me in the sweet melodies of life, and hand me the flute, beckoned by the poet's longing. Let me partake in the symphony of existence, where the secrets of the universe unfold in harmonious vibrations. With every breath, let the flute's enchanting notes dance upon the air, echoing the profound connection between music and the human spirit.

In this enchanting realm, the poet's question resonates, inviting us to delve deeper into the mysteries of existence. Through the divine union of words and melodies, we discover the transformative power that music holds, as it intertwines with our very being.

So, **Hand Me The Flute and Sing.**

As we traverse along our path, a moment of respite awaits us in the embrace of a tranquil Syrian abode. Within its walls adorned with vibrant hues and intricate embellishments, a tapestry of social narratives unfolds, painting vivid tales of love, the beloved, and the sacred bonds of matrimony. These cherished rituals continue to hold significance in our contemporary Syrian society, representing pivotal milestones in our collective social fabric.

Accompanying these cherished customs are the melodies passed down to us from our ancestors, their timeless echoes resonating through the ages. These Syrian traditional songs, borne of an illustrious heritage, rely upon the soulful notes of the oud and the rhythmic cadence of percussion instruments as essential elements in their performance.

Immerse yourself in this enchanting ensemble of Syrian traditional songs, as they transport us to a realm where time stands still. Through each melodic composition, we are invited to connect with the essence of our cultural legacy, relishing the profound emotions and narratives interwoven within the music. Let the tunes carry us on our journey, evoking nostalgia, joy, and a profound sense of belonging.

Traditional Syrian songs

Aboard a boat sailing from the picturesque Syrian Mediterranean coast, bound for the sun-kissed shores of Italy. This voyage traces the footsteps of our ancestors who, for countless centuries, undertook similar odysseys. These voyages, far beyond mere commerce, forged bridges of exchange, fostering profound connections on human and cultural levels.

With the gentle sway of the waves, we traverse the azure waters, guided by the whispers of the winds. Our vessel carries the echoes of shared histories and the intermingling of diverse traditions. In this harmonious convergence, we find a treasure trove of Italian folk songs—expressions of the people, their joys, sorrows, and tales of love that have resonated throughout generations.

These timeless melodies, passed down through the ages, embody the spirit of a nation and evoke the vibrant tapestry of Italian culture. Through the lilting tunes and heartfelt lyrics, we are transported to sun-drenched landscapes, where ancient customs and rich heritage intertwine.

Italian folk songs

Within our voyage, a wave of new rhythms washed ashore, cascading into our music. Inspired by these enchanting rhythms, a multitude of songwriters were stirred to compose melodies that permeated the airwaves of the twentieth century, resonating with hearts far and wide.

Hey, O lover of the rose! Join us on this melodic odyssey. Just as the rose unfolds its delicate petals, revealing its innermost beauty, these melodies unfurl, weaving tales of passion, longing, and the bittersweet dance of love.

Join us, dear rose lover, as we delve into these rumba melodies that have woven themselves into the fabric of our collective consciousness. Let the music transport us, for within its harmonies, we find solace, celebration, and a connection that surpasses boundaries. May the melodies of the twentieth century guide our steps, breathing life into cherished memories and illuminating the path forward.

O' Lover of the Rose

From the dawn of time, Syria has stood as a crossroads, a place where civilisations, cultures, and peoples converge and intertwine in a harmonious embrace. Its lands have offered solace and sanctuary to many, transforming it into a sprawling garden of resplendent roses. Among these blossoms, we encounter the Armenian rose, radiating its unique essence and lending its melodic voice to the symphony of Syrian songs. 'Barzedoum Vart E Patzvadz' is a romantic and nostalgic ode to the past and to love. The first verses describe a garden where the flowers have bloomed without being watered.

In the realm of music, the Armenian song emerges as a poignant testament to the shared heritage between Syria and Armenia. Like a delicate bud unfurling its petals, these melodies carry with them echoes of a vibrant culture, bearing witness to the enduring spirit and resilience of the Armenian people.

Barzedoum Vart E Patzvadz

As our journey draws to a close, we find solace in the realisation that the message of the rose shall endure. This magnificent blossom, with its enchanting fragrance and captivating essence, has woven us together, uniting us in its delicate embrace. Its essence permeates every corner it graces, spreading a gentle aura of peace and love, fostering harmony wherever its petals unfurl.

In this final moment, let us revel in the beauty of two exquisite songs that accompany us on this parting voyage. **"Pick Me the Sweetest Rose,"** a tender melody that speaks of cherished

connections and the pursuit of the most delightful moments in life. In its gentle notes, we find a reminder to seek beauty in every step, to cherish the sweetness that life offers, and to gather the most precious blooms that grace our path.

And as our journey concludes, we encounter the heartfelt strains of **"Rose of My Imagination,"** transporting us to a realm where dreams converge with reality, where the ethereal and the tangible merge in a sublime dance.

Together, let us savour these melodies, allowing them to linger in our hearts as a testament to the transformative power of music. As we bid farewell, let the essence of the rose continue to guide us, reminding us of the eternal bonds we share, the unity fostered by its grace. May its message of peace and love resonate within us, blooming in the gardens of our souls long after our journey's end.