

Co-composed by Sara AlHajali, Tasneem Walid Kaakeh, Bayan Shaker Obeid, Majd Al Sabbagh, Zaid Sameer

Responding to **To My Brother** by [Taysir Batniji](#) (2012)

Performed by Sara AlHajali (vocals, piano1, derbakeh), Tasneem Walid Kaakeh (oud1), Yasmeen Walid Kaakeh (oud2), Bayan Shaker Obeid (piano2), Majd Al Sabbagh (piano3), Zaid Sameer (violin)

### Composer's statement:

The composers' statement below is a reimagining inspired by the artwork.

*This composition brings together different cultures and traditions, blending traditional Arabic instruments (oud and derbakeh) with classical western instruments (piano and violin), creating a piece that aims to both celebrate and mourn life. A Palestinian wedding that has joyful music and traditional dancing starts with the traditional 'zaghareet,' or ululations. While the wedding takes place, a military general enters and shouts ferociously, stating that there is an emergency and enlisting in the military is mandatory for all men to stop the attacks. Thus, the joyful music shifts to a more frightening mood. The groom follows suit and enlists to protect his pride. Even on the day of his wedding, his country comes first. The bride waits anxiously in the wedding hall until one of the military men chimes in. His head low and voice cracking, he informs the new bride that she is now a widow and that her brave husband gave his life for his country. "Why is your voice low while you should be shouting? Raise your head and let the whole world hear", the widow screams while crying. Her tears are a mix of pride and hurt. She then watches her groom entering their wedding one last time. Carried in his casket by his friends while the music continues to play to celebrate the forsaken war hero.*

"Alas, the lemon trees will never perish. We are Akka. We are Haifa, Al Jaleel mountains and Lattron. Every lemon will birth a child. And the lemon trees will never dry out."

- *Gold inlay on a Damascus sword* by Nizar Qabbani

عرس فلسطيني تردد فيه الأغاني المفرحة والأهازيج الجميلة والدبكات الشعبية.

وفي هذه الأثناء يدخل أحد عناصر الجيش ويقوم بتبليغ العريس بضرورة الالتحاق الفوري بالجيش لحد هجوم العدو، فتتحول الأغاني إلى أغاني وطنية وقومية.

ومن ثم يلتحق العريس بالجيش مباشرة وبعد الانتهاء من مراسم الزفاف. وبعدها بيومين، يأتي خبر استشهاد العريس. فيدخل أحد الشباب ليخبر زوجة الشهيد التي لم تفرح بعريسها أبداً، ويخبرها بصوت خفيف ورأسه نحو الأرض.

وعندئذ تصرخ وتقول له: "أيش عبتقولها بصوت واطي يا (نايف)، ارفع راسك وعلي صوتك وخلي كل الدنيا تسمع". (تقولها وهي حزينة وتبكي)، وتتطلق الزغاريد.

وعندها يدخل بعض الشباب وهم يحملون الشهيد على أكتافهم، فتبدأ الأغاني والموسيقى الحزينة.

Compositions: Commissioned by Art Jameel in collaboration with Da Coda Musiqaa, 2020

ولكن محال أن ينتهي الليمون كما قال الشاعر السوري نزار قباني في قصيدة  
" ترصيع بالذهب على سيف دمشقي " :

نحنُ عكا ونحنُ كرمل حيفا.... وجبال الجليل واللطرونُ  
كل ليمونة ستجذب طفلاً.... ومحال أن ينتهي الليمونُ

### **Sara AlHajali, Co-composer, vocals, piano1 (Al Ain)**

Sara is from Syria and was born in Al Ain in 2012. At seven years old, Sara sings in Arabic and English, has played piano since the age of three and composes music. In 2019, Sara joined the Abu Dhabi Department of Education and Knowledge's (ADEK) Mawhibaty Program for Talented Students in the Arts and holds accolades such as third prize at Al Fujairah International Piano Competition and second prize in Aldar's Battle for the Title of the Finest Young Musician in Abu Dhabi. In 2020, Sara successfully passed the Grade 3 ABRSM piano exam and is currently preparing for her Grade 5 exam. When not playing music, Sara enjoys drama, ballet, and playing football.

### **Tasneem Walid Kaakeh, Co-composer, piano2 (Al Ain)**

Born in Al Ain, Tasneem is fifteen years old and very proud of her Syrian heritage. She started learning the piano only two years ago. Her musical passion has inspired her to learn other instruments, including cello, ukulele, guitar and oud as well as composing. In 2019, she was accepted into ADEK's Mawhibaty Program for Talented Students in the Arts. Besides music, Tasneem loves math and enjoys playing basketball, swimming, drawing, painting, writing and learning new languages. She has published two Arabic books with her siblings.

### **Bayan Shaker Obeid, Co-composer (Al Ain)**

Bayan is a Syrian musician and was born and raised in Al Ain. She began learning piano online at the age of twelve and has since participated in various school events. She was delighted when she was accepted into ADEK's Mawhibaty Program for Talented Students in the Arts on her sixteenth birthday. Bayan is currently a freshman at Khalifa University and is balancing her music passion and practice with her studies in chemistry.

### **Majd Al Sabbagh, Co-composer, piano3**

Majd is from Syria and is currently a Grade 11 student. Born into a family of music lovers, Majd had been self-taught until he joined ADEK's Mawhibaty Program for Talented Students in the Arts in Al Ain. Today, Majd not only loves playing piano, but also composing.

### **Zaid Sameer, Co-composer (Al Ain)**

Sixteen-year old Zaid was born in Jordan and lives in Al Ain. He was introduced to the violin by his music teacher at twelve years old. With his music teacher and the school band, Zaid's musical talent grew. In 2019, Zaid won first place in his school music competition and was also

accepted into ADEK's Mawhibaty Program for Talented Students in the Arts, where he excels in performance and composing.

**Yasmeen Walid Kaakeh, Oud (Al Ain)**

Born in Syria, thirteen-year-old Yasmeen lives with her family in Al Ain. Two years ago, she started learning the oud, followed by the cello and ukulele. Inspired by her older sister, Tasneem, she also learned piano. Currently, she plays oud, cello, ukulele, guitar and piano. When not playing music or studying, Yasmeen finds time for her other passions - painting, drawing and basketball. She has published two Arabic books with her siblings.

**Jolnar Abo Khair (Drawings)**

Born in 1992 in Syria, Jolnar graduated with a degree in Fine Arts from Damascus University in 2014. In 2016 she opened her studio, Atelier, to teach and practice drawing, painting, sculpture and printmaking. She has worked as an archaeological illustrator with the Syrian National Archeological Expedition and volunteered with Children of Tomorrow Association providing art therapy to children. Jolnar currently teaches fine arts at Damascus University. Her works have been exhibited in Damascus and As-Suwayda (Syria).



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