

A Note from the Arranger

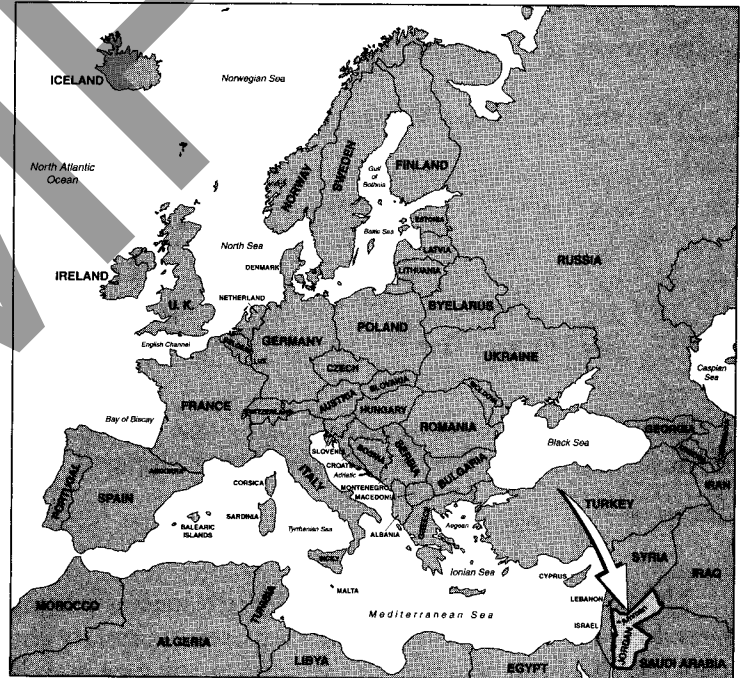
During the summer of 1991, my wife, Margot, and I were invited by the United States Information Agency (USIA) as “American Cultural Specialists” in the Arts America Program to work with the teachers and students of the National Conservatory of Music in Amman, Jordan. The music school began in the 1980’s as the fulfillment of a dream of Queen Noor. Although strings are used in Arabic music, western instrumental methods do not contain examples of Arabic music. During our stay in Jordan, we discovered that when the Arabic children were taught western instruments, they did not play music from their own country or culture. Consequently, I asked the Jordanian teachers and the Conservatory Director to suggest a popular song that the children would know and enjoy playing. *Ahlan Sabaya Alfarah* was one of the recommended songs and I composed an arrangement of this song to be played by the Conservatory String Orchestra, which I conducted on a showcase concert at the conclusion of the project in August, 1991 in Amman. A 12-year old Jordanian boy, who was a student at the Conservatory, played the Arabic drum with the string orchestra at the concert.

In December 1998, I finished the current revision of my *Ahlan Sabaya Alfarah* setting including the addition of the drum and finger cymbal parts by Robert Amchin. The work received its premiere in Charlotte, North Carolina on May 6, 1999. I conducted the McClintock Middle School String Orchestra as part of a weeklong residency at East Mecklenburg High School at the invitation of orchestra director, Dr. Anne Grady.

Kevin S. Smith

Jordan

Fact Board
JORDAN
Formal Name: Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan
Location: Southwest Asia
Government: Constitutional Monarchy
Head of State: King
Head of Government: Prime Minister
Capital & Largest City: Amman
Official Language: Arabic
Religion: Islam (Sunni), Christianity
Area: 35,475 sq. miles (slightly smaller than Indiana)
Climate: mostly arid desert
Chief Minerals: Phosphates
Agriculture: citrus fruits, vegetables, olive oil
World’s Lowest Point: Dead Sea 1,296 ft. below sea level



Jordan is an Arab nation located in the heart of the Middle East. The land has been inhabited for thousands of years and was the site for some of the earliest settlements known to historians. Today, Jordanians highly appreciate many traditional values and customs such as hospitality, personal honor, and loyalty to kin. Approximately one in four Jordanians live in small farming villages. Urban dwellers (the majority of Jordanians) live in small family dwellings or apartments. The small group of Bedouin tribesmen (nomads) lead a simple life living in temporary desert encampments. They tend to roam the desert in search of water and suitable pastureland for their flocks of sheep and other livestock.

Jordanians enjoy a variety of sports including basketball, camel racing, and soccer. Folk dancing is a favorite activity and is often included during large family picnics and other social gatherings. They enjoy a variety of foods—chicken and lamb are popular meats. Many local recipes include yogurt. Favorite desserts include honeyed baklava.

The Composition

Jordanian music consists mostly of songs. Happy or sad songs, work songs, love songs, religious songs, and songs dealing with social issues. Most of the songs are descriptive.

Ahlan Sabaya Alfarah, which means “We are the Girls of Joy,” is based on a song that describes the beauty of rural life in Jordan including the feeling of respect and love for neighbors. The song also describes beautiful young girls as they arrive at the water fountain to fill their jars. The melody was written by Jamil El-’Ass to words by Abdul Rahim Omar. Salwa, the wife of the composer first sang this popular Jordanian song in 1963 at the summer festival in Ramallah. Later, it was sung by Taroub, a very famous female singer of Syrian origin who was popular in the 60’s and 70’s. This is the text of the song:

*We are the girls of joy carrying jars,
We are the girls of joy, a garden of blossoms.
Water like honey and the jar made of clay,
The eye suggests flirtation and the cheek has the color of fire.
Summer in our habitation: Water, air, flowers.
People in our land: neighbors – the neighbor is valued.*

Arabic children listen to songs similar to *Ahlan Sabaya Alfarah* throughout their childhood that are based on modes having quarter tones. Children are accustomed to quarter tones in the same way that western children are used to diatonic scales. Arabic mothers sing their children to sleep with songs based on these quarter tone modes. Not all Arabic modes have quarter tones, some contain only whole tones and semi tones. Dr. Sarch decided to notate the song using a western scale so that young players not used to quarter tones could play it. The quarter tone is used in the 1st Violin part as a tone color suggesting the Arabic influence. Dr. Sarch relates with a smile that when he played *Ahlan Sabaya Alfarah* for the Jordanian teachers with his best diatonic intonation, they all complained that it was missing the quarter tones and sounded “out of tune!”

The mode of *Ahlan Sabaya Alfarah* is called *Bayyati* and is notated:

4 = 1/4 tone flat

Above program notes based on information provided by Mr. Kifah Fakhoury, Director of the National Conservatory of Music in Amman, Jordan and Mr. Sakher Hattar.

NOTE: This composition may be performed as a string orchestra work without the added drum or finger cymbal parts. However, the percussion parts represent a primary characteristic commonly found in Arabic music. Page 3 of this score has also been provided in the parts to enhance interdisciplinary learning opportunities.

Ahlan Sabaya Alfarah

Arabic Dance

Full Conductor Score

arr. by Kenneth Sarch

Approx. time - 4:05

Percussion by Robert A. Amchin

1 *Slowly, misterioso* (♩ = 56) 2 *senza vib.* 3 *senza vib.* 4

1 Violins 2 *p*

Viola *senza vib.* *p*

Cello *p*

String Bass *poco sul pont.* *p*

Finger Cymbals (May be played with a small triangle with light beater) *sfp* *Let vibrate* *mf*

Doumbek or Tof (May be played with two congas with the hands) High pitch/edge low pitch/center

5 6 7 8 9 *vib.*

1 Vlns. *vib.*

2 *vib.*

Vla. *vib.*

Cello *poco sul pont.* *vib.*

Str. Bass *sfp* *(poco sul pont.)* *vib.*

Fing. Cyms. *mp*

Drum

Allegretto (♩ = 108)

10 11 12V 13

Vlns. 1 *mf*

Vlns. 2 *mf*

Vla. *mf*

Cello *pizz.* *mf*

Str. Bass *pizz.* *mf*

Fing. Cyms. *mp*

Drum *mp*

14 15 16> 17>

Vlns. 1 *pizz.*

Vlns. 2 *pizz.*

Vla. *pizz.*

Cello *pizz.*

Str. Bass *pizz.*

Fing. Cyms. *simile*

Drum

18 19 20 21

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Fing. Cyms.

Drum

simile

simile

22 23 24 25

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Fing. Cyms.

Drum

arco

f

arco

non div.

30

f

arco

div.

f

arco

f

(tutti)

f

mf

f

sim.

Musical score for measures 26-28. The score includes parts for Violins 1 and 2, Viola, Cello, String Bass, Finger Cymbals, and Drum. Dynamics include *mf* and *sim.* (sustained). Performance markings include accents (>) and breath marks (v). A large watermark 'SAMPLE' is overlaid on the score.

Musical score for measures 29-31. The score includes parts for Violins 1 and 2, Viola, Cello, String Bass, Finger Cymbals, and Drum. Dynamics include *mf* and *sim.* (sustained). Performance markings include accents (>) and breath marks (v). A large watermark 'SAMPLE' is overlaid on the score.

* ↓ optional
roll finger $\frac{1}{4}$ tone lower for complete measure
and back on pitch next measure

Musical score for measures 32-34. The score includes staves for Vlns. 1 & 2, Vla., Cello, Str. Bass, Fing. Cyms., and Drum. Measure 32 starts with a box containing '32'. Measure 33 has a box with '33' and a downward arrow with an asterisk above it. Measure 34 has a box with '34'. Dynamics include *f*, *f marcato*, and *pizz.* (pizzicato). There are various articulation marks like accents and slurs.

Musical score for measures 35-37. The score includes staves for Vlns. 1 & 2, Vla., Cello, Str. Bass, Fing. Cyms., and Drum. Measure 35 starts with a box containing '35'. Measure 36 has a box with '36' and a musical notation for a roll. Measure 37 has a box with '37'. Dynamics include *sim.* (simile). There are various articulation marks like accents and slurs.

* ↓ optional
roll finger $\frac{1}{4}$ tone lower for complete measure
and back on pitch next measure

38 39 40

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Fing. Cyms.

Drum

41 42 43

Vlns. 1

Vlns. 2

Vla.

Cello

Str. Bass

Fing. Cyms.

Drum

ff *mf* *mf* *div.*

ff *mf* *mf*

ff *mf* *arco* *mf*

Freely, slowly, misterioso

Fine 46

44 45

Vlns. 1 *sfz*

Vlns. 2 *sfz*

Vla. *sfz*

Cello *sfz* *sfz*

Str. Bass *sfz* *sfz*

Fing. Cyms. *f* *sfz*

Drum *f* *sfz*

Solo, as you feel *f*
poco sul pont.

fp
poco sul pont.

fp
mp

sfz *p*

Strict rhythm (♩ = 60) Freely, very slowly

47 48 * 49 50

Vlns. 1 *f*

Vlns. 2 *f* Solo arco as you feel

Vla. *f* * tutti

Cello *fp* (*poco sul pont.*)

Str. Bass *fp* (*poco sul pont.*)

Fing. Cyms. *mf*

Drum

f *f* *fp* *mf*

3 6 3

* Knock on body of instrument with knuckles.

Strict rhythm (2+3)
(bow behind the bridge on the A string.)

Slowly (♩ = 46) (2+3)

51 A □ 52 V 53 54

Vlns. 1 *mf* (bow behind the bridge on the A string.) *knock f*

Vlns. 2 *mf* *tutti* V *knock f*

Vla. * *f* *snap pizz.* *sfp* arco - ord. *f* *knock f*

Cello * *f* *sfp* Solo V *(f) wide, slow vibrato (slide finger)* V

Str. Bass * *f* *sfp* *sul pont.* V

Fing. Cyms. *f*

Drum *mf* *mp*

* Knock on body of instrument with knuckles.

Solo - as you feel *f* *arco sul tasto* *f* *with the solo sul tasto tutti* *f* *with the solo sul tasto* *f* *with the solo* *f*

55 56 57 V *tutti* *D. S. al Fine breve*

Vlns. 1 *f* *sfp* *pizz.* *breve*

Vlns. 2 *f* *pizz.* *breve*

Vla. *f* *breve*

Cello *f* *ord.* *Solo* *breve*

Str. Bass *f* *ord.* *Solo* *mf* *breve*

Fing. Cyms. *f*

Drum *f*