



navona

KAREEM ROUSTOM | KINAN ABOU-AFACH

THE CROSSING | DONALD NALLY | AL-BUSTAN TAKHT | DALAL ABU AMNEH



Words Adorned

Kareem Roustom — Embroidered Verses: Songs on Andalusian Poetry

Translations by Ahmad Al-Mala

Commissioned by Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture with the support of the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

Premiered December 5, 2015 at Bryn Mawr College with the Al-Bustan Takht ensemble, directed by Hanna Khoury and The Crossing, conducted by Donald Nally.

Embroidered Verses is a work that is steeped in tradition but also looks ahead. Tradition is a troublesome word when it comes to music. There is often this sense that there is a 'purity' to it. However, even a cursory investigation will show that any tradition is anything but pure. Rather it is an amalgamation of, what was at some point, current practices that built on past practices and added to them. So this is the sense of tradition that I hoped to imbue in my *Embroidered Verses*. The work is cast in four movements and each is based on a poem that is based on a theme that was common in the muwashshah. The first text is a descriptive text dealing with nature and extolling the beauty of Al-Andalus. The second text is simply a drinking song. However it is a text that has already been set to music and is a well-known muwashshah by Aleppan composer Omar Al-Batsh; *Qum Ya Nadim* or *Arise oh Drinking Companion*. This re-setting of already-set text to new music is also part of the tradition and is a nod to Aleppo's rich musical heritage. The third text is a love poem composed by a poetess, Umm Al-Kiram, and the final text is a war-themed poem. Each setting tries to give a sense of the text but also pushes it to its emotional limits. The settings also showcase the virtuosic capabilities of the *takht* (Arabic chamber group composed of *oud*, *qanun*, violin, cello, and percussion) and requires the choir to sing intricate harmonies as well as long embellished lines that use quarter tones.

I. Ya 'ahla 'andalusen lilāhi darrukum / *Oh people of Andalusia, what beauty you have* / يا أهل أندلس لله دركم

Poet: Ibn Khafāja (1058 - 1138 -9 CE), Alzira

Ya 'ahla 'andalusen lilāhi darrukum
mā'un wa zilun wa 'ashjārun wa 'anhāru
mā jannatul khuldi 'illa fi diyārikum
wa law takhyartu hadhā kuntu 'akhtāru
lā takhtashu ba'dahā an tadkhulu saqaran
fa laysa tudkhalu ba'dal jannati nāru.

Oh, people of Andalusia,
What how blessed you are
Water, shade, trees, and rivers
There is not an everlasting heaven
except in your lands,
and if the choice was mine
this is what I would choose.
So, do not fear going to hell after this,
For there is no entrance to hell
after having been in heaven.

يا أهل أندلس لله دركم
ماء وظل وأشجار وأنهار
ما جنة الخلد إلا في دياركم
ولو تخيرت هذا كنت أختار
لا تخشوا بعدها أن تدخلوا سقراً
فليس تدخل بعد الجنة النار

II. Qum yā nadim / *Arise oh drinking companion* / قم يا نديم — Poet: Anonymous

Qum ya nadim 'imla wa him
al-laylu ṭāl wal ḥibbu 'al
maḥlal wiṣāl wel 'ittiṣāl
rākḥil shu'ūr yaḥkil budūr

dawer aqdāḥi
'ilas ṣabāḥi
ma'-'al milāḥi
zahral aqāḥi

Arise, oh drinking companion,
drink your fill and fall in love
pass around my wine goblets
The night has grown long and love speaks so
till the coming of dawn.
How sweet it is to unite and be
with those of beauty
with tranquil feelings telling the moons
of the coming bloom.

قم يا نديم أملا و هيم دور أقداحي
الليل طال و الحب قال إلى الصباح
محلا الوصال و الإتصال مع الملاح
راخي الشعور يحكي الدور زهر الأقاح

III. Yā ma'shara al-nāsi alā fa'jabū / *Oh people, stop and wonder* / يا معشر الناس ألا فاعجبوا

Poetess: Umm Al-Kirām 11th century CE, Almeria

Yā ma'shara al-nāsi alā fa'jabū
mimma janathu law'a tul hub bi
lawlā hu lam yanzel bi badri dujā
min ufquḥil 'ulwiyi litturbi
ḥasbi bimen 'ahwāhu law'annahu
fāraqani tāba'uhu qalbi

People, can you stop and wonder
at the gains of love's ardor:
without it,
the moon of the dark
would not descend
from the highest horizons to the Earth
It's enough for the one I love, that if
he abandons me
my heart will follow him.

يا معشر الناس ألا فاعجبوا
مما جنته لوعة الحب
لولا لم ينزل بيدر الدج
من أفقه العلوي للثرب
حسي من أهواه لو أنه
فارقني تابعه قلبي

IV. Qul lil'īdā / *Tell the enemy* / ق للعدى — Poet: Muḥamad bin abada al-qazaz 11th century CE, Almeria

Qul lil'īdā qul salla seyfyehi
dinul hudā min 'azmi malkeyhi
wa 'akadā wudda muḥibbeyhi
shamlun nuẓem
ḥablun 'uqed
bunyān
lā tanhadem
lahul 'abad
'arkan

*
kullul 'anām bithāka ya'taddu
fafil kirām kilāhuma fardu
'innal ḥa māḥ f'eykihā tash du

qul, hal 'ulem
'aw hal 'uhed
'awkān
kal mu'taṣem
wal mu'taḍded
malkān

Tell the enemies, tell them, "he
unsheathed his two swords,"
(religion's guidance is from the will of
his two kings),
and he confirmed the love of his
supporters.
The union is composed
the rope is tied:
a structure,
(Do not fall!)

Eternity is
its columns.

*
All the people, take pride in this
Among the generous, these two
are one,
and the doves sing in their thickets:
has there been known,
has there been witnessed,
or has there been (anyone)
like Al-Mu'tasim
and Al-Mu'tadid
Two kings!

قل للعدى
دين الهدى
وذكر محتبيه
واكدًا

شمل نظم
حبل عقد
بنيان
لا تنهدم
له الأبد
أركان

*
كل الأنام
ففي الكرام
إن الحمام
في أيكها تشدو

قل هل علم
أو هل عهد
أو كان
كالمتصم
والمعتض
ملكان

Kinan Abou-afach — **Of Nights And Solace: Fantasia on Andalusian Muwashshah Poetry**

Translated by Ahmad Almallāh

Commissioned by Al-Bustan Seeds of Culture with the support of the Pew Center for Arts & Heritage.

Premiered December 5, 2015 at Bryn Mawr College with the Al-Bustan Takht ensemble, directed by Hanna Khoury and The Crossing, conducted by Donald Nally.

As is commonly said in Arabic literary tradition, "The poet is entitled to what others are not" / يحق للشاعر ما لا يحق لغيره.

This is not a surprise when we look at the pre-Islamic era (*Al-Jahiliyya*) in the Arabian Peninsula, where poets were the "rock-stars" and tribes used to celebrate having a poet among them, for the power of words that they possess, and the entertainment value that they provide. When looking into the classical poetry from the pre-Islamic era until Islam's Golden Age, it is fascinating how much passion can be skillfully embedded in a single verse of poetry. The Andalusian era wasn't an exception; poetry was still a valid art form, and entertainment was definitely needed in the society. That is, among other reasons, why

the muwashshah developed and flourished during that era. The same powerful/meaningful words, but in modified rhythmic meters (*buhur*) and forms, to make a poem that fits in musical sung form: a hint to the Verse-Chorus form.

Of Nights and Solace: A Fantasy on Andalusian Poetry, is a virtual trip to Andalusia, a dive into love, passion, and beauty. Love and lament for parting with the beloved one as in the first poem by Ibn Zuhri; love and tearful longing for the Creator, almost reproachful, by Sufi poet/philosopher Ibn Arabi; undeclared love and the difficulty of keeping this love in Ibn Isā Al-Khabbaz's poem. A beautiful rhythmic poem by Al-Qazzaz, like a word play; and Sahl Bin Malik's poem which gives a beautiful image about sunrise. It is as if the whole piece is telling a story that begins at sunset and ends at the break of day, featuring multiple characters, progressing from classical *muwashshah* style to a broken form that still hints to the *muwashshah*.

Musically speaking, it was hard to imagine this composition without the use of harmony and polyphony. Although harmony is usually not used in traditional Arab music, when quarter-tones are used with the right voicing it creates a very pleasant mass of sound. Polyphony is more forgiving, and the structure of Arabic Maqams (scales) welcomes something that is close to poly-tonality (when using Maqam's ajnas simultaneously). The piece uses a wide range of harmony styles, from simple to a complex/thick texture to reflect the mood of the piece, and has a canon-like section that begins and ends the piece along with a fugue in the middle of piece.

II. Ḥayyī-l wujūh (Greet These Faces) — Poet: Ibn Zuhri al-Hafid b. 1110-11 CE, Seville

ḥayyī-l wujūha-l milahā,
wa ḥayyī nujla-l 'uyūnī.
hal fi-l hawā min junāḥī?
aw fi nadimin wa rāḥī?

rāma-n naṣūhu salāḥī.
wa kayfā arjū ṣalāḥā
bayna-l hawā wa-l mujūnī.

yā rāḥilan lam yuwaddī!
raḥalta bi-l unsi ajmī!
wa-l 'ajzu ya'u'ti wa yamna':

marrū,
wa akhfū-r ruwāḥā ṣiḥran
wa mā waddā'ūnī.

Greet these beautiful faces,
Greet these big-wide eyes.
Could there be sin in love?
Could there be sin in wine and its companion?

The one who gives me advice seeks my salvation.
But how can I wish for salvation
when I am in-between my love for love and the love of drinking.

You journeyed away without goodbyes.
You parted away with all.
Helplessness gives and prevents:

My lovers passed,
hiding their passing at dawn
without goodbyes.

حَيِّ الْوُجُوهُ الْمَلَا
وَحَيِّ نُجُلُ الْعُيُونِ
هَلْ فِي الْهَوَى مِنْ جُنَاحٍ
أَوْ فِي نَدِيمٍ وَرَاحٍ

رَامَ النَّصُوحَ صِلَاحِي
وَكَيْفَ أَرْجُو صِلَاحَا
بَيْنَ الْهَوَى وَالشُّجُونِ

يَا رَاحِلًا لَمْ يُودَعْ
رَحَلْتَ بِالْأَنْسِ أَجْمَعِ
وَالْعَجْزُ يُعْطِي وَيَنْفَعُ

مَرُّوا
وَأَخْفُوا الرُّوَا
سَحْرًا وَمَا وَدَّعُونِي

III. Forsaken — Poet: Muhyi Ibn al-Arabi b. 1165 CE, Murcia

'indamā laḥa li'aynī-l muttakā
dhubtu shawqan lilladhī kāna ma'ī.
ayyuha-l baytu-l atīqu-l mushrifu:
jā'aka-l 'abduḍ-ḍa'ifu-l musrifu

'aynuhu bid-dam'ī shawqan tadhrifu
ghurban minhu wa makran fa-l bukā'
laysa mahmūdun idhā lam yanfa'

ayyuha-s sāqī-sqini lā ta'tali
falaqad at'aba fikrī 'ādhilī
wa laqad anshadahū mā qila li

ayyuha-s sāqī ilayka-l mushtakā
dā'ati-sh shakwā idhā lam tanfa'i

When the resting place came in sight
I dissolved in longing for the one I was with.
I call upon this old abode, looming:
There comes to you a servant weak and wasteful.
His eyes, flowing with the tears of longing.
But how can there be praise for a weeping,
when weeping brings no benefit.

"O you who pours the wine"
Pour me a drink, and do not be weary of me.
My thoughts made him tired,
the one who blames me.

"O you who pours the wine
to you are my complaints"
But complaints are lost when complaints bring no benefit

عندما لآخ لِعَيْنِي الْمُتَكَ
ذَبَيْتُ شَوْقًا لِذِي كَانُ مَعِي
أَيُّهَا النَّيْتُ الْعَتِيقُ الْمَشْرِفُ
جَاءَكَ الْعَبْدُ الضَّعِيفُ الْمَشْرِفُ

عَيْنُهُ بِالذَّمْعِ شَوْقًا تَدْرِفُ
غَرِبَةٌ مَعَهُ وَغَرًّا فَالْبُكَ
لَيْسَ مَحْمُودًا إِذَا لَمْ يَنْفَعِ

أَيُّهَا السَّاقِي اسْقِنِي لَا تَأْتَلِ
فَلَقَدْ أَتَعَبَ فِكْرِي عَادِلِي
وَلَقَدْ أَنْشَدَهُ مَا قِيلَ لِي

أَيُّهَا السَّاقِي إِلَيْكَ الْمَشْتَكِي
ضَاعَتِ الشُّكْوَى إِذَا لَمْ تَنْفَعِ

V. Yā man 'adā (You Who Left and Passed) — Poet: Abu al-Walid Yūnis bin Ṭsā al-Khabbaz

yā man 'adā wa ta'addā
law kuntu amliku ṣabrī

katamtu 'anka-l ladhī bī
fa'nta tadri wa tadri

hayhāta katmu-l gharāmi
ṣa'bun 'alā man yarūmo

wa habka anna malāmī
yudimuhu man yudīmo.

mādhā 'ala-l mustahāmi
filḥubbi mimman yalūmo.

nadhartu li-lāhi ṣiyāma shahrini
wa 'ashri

lammā arāka habībī
mā bayna ṣadrī wa nahrī

You who left and passed,
If only I owned my patience

I kept my love from you,
while you pretended not to know, though you know.

Love is impossible to hide
and difficult for those who seek it

Can you consider how the blame
I get for loving you never ends.

Though what has one, lost in love,
done wrong to be blamed.

I swore to god that I would fast
one month
and ten day

Maybe I'll be granted to see you my love
close to my chest,
in front of my eyes.

يَا مَنْ عَدَا وَتَعَدَّى
لَوْ كُنْتُ أَمْلِكُ صَبْرِي

كَتَمْتُ عَنْكَ الَّذِي بِي
فَأَنْتَ تَدْرِي وَتَدْرِي

هَيْهَاتَ كَتَمَ الْغَرَامِ
صَعِبَ عَلَى مَنْ يَرُومُهُ

وَهَلْكَ أَنْ مَلَامِي
يُدِيمُهُ مَنْ يُدِيمُهُ

مَاذَا عَلَى الْمُسْتَهَامِ
فِي الْحُبِّ مِمَّنْ يَلُومُهُ

نَذَرْتُ لِلَّهِ عَهْدًا صِيَامَ شَهْرٍ
وَعَشْرٍ

لَمَّا أَرَاكَ حَبِيبِي
مَا بَيْنَ صَدْرِي وَنَحْرِي

VI. Sunrise — Poet: Muḥammad 'Ubāda al-Qazzāz b. 902 CE

badru tamm
shamsu ḍuḥā
ghusnu naqā
misku shamm

mā atamm
mā awḍaḥa
mā awraqā
ma anamm

lā jarama
man lamahā
qad 'ashiqā
qad ḥaram

fa-l wiṣāl
mā qad khalā
min amalin
fā'iti

wa-l khayāl
mā qad 'alā
min nafasin
khāfiti

Poet: Abu al-Hasan Sahl bin Mālik

kuḥlu-d dujā yajri
min muqlati-l fajri
'alā-ṣ ṣabāḥ

wa mi'sami-n nahrī
fi ḥulalin khuḍri
'alā-l biṭāḥ

a full moon
a morning sun
a straight young branch
a beautiful scent

isn't full
isn't clear
didn't sprout
didn't waft

it must be
that he who glimpsed,
is in love
and deprived

companionship
is what is free
of any past hope

and imagination
is the loudness
of a soft respiration

The black of night runs
From the eye of dawn
Upon the break of day

Upon the river's wrist
In garments of green
It runs upon the valleys.

بَدْرُ تَمَّ
شَمْسٌ صُبْحِي
غُصْنٌ نَقَا
مِسْكٌ شَمَّ

مَا أَتَمَّ
مَا أَوْضَحَا
مَا أَوْرَقَا
مَا أَنَمَّ

لَا جَرَمَ
مَنْ لَمَحَا
قَدْ عَشِقَا
قَدْ حَزَمَ

فَالْوَصَالَ
مَا قَدْ خَلَا
مِنْ أَمَلٍ
فَأَنْتَ

وَالْخَيَالَ
مَا قَدْ عَلَا
مِنْ نَفْسٍ
خَافَتَ

كُحْلُ اللَّيْلِ يَجْرِي
مِنْ مَقْلَةِ الْفَجْرِ
عَلَى الصُّبْحِ

وَمِعْصِمِ النَّهْرِ
فِي حُلَّالِ الْخَضْرِ
عَلَى الْبِطَاحِ

BIOS



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Rooted in Arab arts and language, **AL-BUSTAN SEEDS OF CULTURE** offers artistic and educational programming that enriches cross-cultural understanding and celebrates diversity. "Al-Bustan," Arabic for "The Garden," serves youth and adults of all ethnic, religious, and socio-economic backgrounds, while supporting the pursuit and affirmation of Arab American cultural identity and playing a constructive civic role within broader American society. www.albustanseeds.org



DALAL ABU-AMNEH is a singer, producer, neuroscientist, and a mother of two. Born in Nazareth in 1983, Abu-Amneh has been fascinated by both science and music since being a little child. Abu-Amneh has gained fame and praise for her ability to perform a wide variety of different musical styles, while crafting a global Palestinian identity through her music. Abu-Amneh also produced all of her musical projects including her three albums: *An Balady*, *Ya Sitti*, and *Nur*. She emphasizes the value of musical heritage and glorifies the role of old women in preserving folklore through integrating them into her musical projects.

PHOTO CREDIT: CHIP COLSON



Syrian-American **KAREEM ROUSTOM** is an Emmy-nominated composer whose genre crossing collaborations include music commissioned by conductor Daniel Barenboim and the West-Eastern Divan Orchestra, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, as well as projects with pop icons Shakira and Tina Turner, and with acclaimed British choreographer Shobana Jeyasingh. Known for his orchestral works, Roustom's music has been performed by ensembles including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, the Boulez Ensemble, the Deutsch Oper Berlin, The Crossing, the Kronos Quartet, Lorelei Ensemble, A Far Cry, and at renowned festivals and halls such as the BBC Proms, the

Salzburg Festival, the Lucerne Festival, Carnegie Hall, the Verbier Festival, the Pierre Boulez Saal in Berlin, and the Teatro Colon in Buenos Aires. He has been composer-in-residence at the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago, the Grand Teton Music Festival in Wyoming, and with the Württembergische Philharmonie Reutlingen in Germany. Roustom's music has also been recorded by the Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester (Berlin), and the Philharmonia Orchestra (London). Current commissions include a large-scale orchestral work for the Malmö Symphony Orchestra (Sweden), and a trumpet concerto for the Düsseldorfer Symphonkier. PHOTO CREDIT: JOHN ROBSON



KINAN ABOU-AFACH is a cellist, oud player, composer, and recipient of the Pew Fellowship in 2013. The Syrian-born musician began his musical studies at the age of seven studying at the Arabic Institute of Music in Damascus, where he eventually joined the National Syrian Symphony Orchestra and performed with the Middle Eastern Ensemble. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in cello and oud performance from the Higher Institute of Music where he studied with Fayez Zahril-Din, Rasi Abdullaiev, and Valery Volkov. He also holds a Master's Degree in Cello Performance from DePaul University where he studied with Stephen Balderston.

As a composer, he is described as “a Journey in Sound”; Abou-afach composes music that is saturated with unique scales, rhythmic grooves, and improvisation-esque progressions. He works on creating a sound that is based loosely on the Arabic modal traditions known as maqam, while using elements from the western traditions (Classical, Jazz, Electronic, Musique concrète). He has composed for concert, film, live theater, and live visual art. Notable commissions were performed by Grammy award-winners Jason Vieaux and The Crossing; Other works include: *The Long Night*, a film directed by Hatem Ali; for Wendy Clinard Dance Theater, “Jondo Portraits,” and for a 2014 film *Maskoon – Haunted* by Liwaa Yazigi. Recent works includes: “Nomads” for Cello and String Quartet; “Exodus” for Brass Sextet, “Munajat” for SATB and cello, and “Speak” for Orchestra. Abou-afach has performed as a soloist and ensemble musician throughout the Middle East, Asia, Europe, and North America, and with such musicians and ensembles as the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, Youssou N'dour, The Crossing, Concertante de Chicago, and the Ducati Piano Trio. He has also worked with conductors and soloists like: Solhi Al-Wady, Daniel Barenboim, Cliff Colnot, Roberto Abbado, Sir Andrew Davis, Pinchas Zuckerman, and soloists like Jason Vieaux, Yo-Yo Ma, Alex Klein, and Larry Combs.



DONALD NALLY conducts The Crossing, the internationally acclaimed, Grammy-award-winning professional choir that commissions, premieres, and records only new music. He holds the John W. Beattie Chair of Music at Northwestern University where he is director of choral organizations. Nally has served as chorus master at the Lyric Opera of Chicago, Welsh National Opera, Opera Philadelphia, and for many seasons at the Spoleto Festival in Italy. Nally has commissioned over 100 works and, with The Crossing, has produced 20 recordings, winning two Grammy Awards. He was the American Composers Forum 2017 Champion of New Music and received the 2017 Michael Korn Founders Award from Chorus America; his ensembles have

twice received the Margaret Hillis Award for Excellence in Choral Music. He has worked closely with the artists Allora & Calzadilla and composer David Lang on projects in London, Osaka, Cleveland, Edmonton, Houston, and Philadelphia. In recent seasons Nally has been a visiting resident artist at the Park Avenue Armory, music director for the world premiere of Lang's The Mile-Long Opera – directing 1000 voices on the High Line in Manhattan – as well as chorus master for the New York Philharmonic for world premieres by Lang and Julia Wolfe. PHOTO: BECKY OEHLERS

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