



Music in the Middle East!

Jordan Johnson



Historical Information

- The Middle East is home to some of the world's earliest and most important civilizations.
- In fact, most of Europe's instruments can ultimately be traced to Arabic sources.
- Europe-and European music in particular-would be unthinkable without Arab influence.

The Middle East is home to some of the world's earliest and most important civilizations. The middle east is dotted with extensive Greek and Roman Ruins, testaments to the early spread of Greek learning and culture and the development of sophisticated urban areas. In fact, most of Europe's instruments can ultimately be traced to Arabic sources. Europe-and European music in particular-would be unthinkable without Arab influence. (Miller & Shahriari, 2017)



George Dimitri Sawa

- Born in Alexandria, Egypt
- Egyptian Musician and Historian
- Extremely Educated and Loves ethnomusicology!
- Began his musical career by playing Egyptian popular songs by ear on the piano.

George Dimitri Sawa – Egyptian musician and historian

"After completing degrees in piano, qanun, and yes, electrical engineering I emigrated to Canada to study musicology and ethnomusicology. Arabic music was to be my career, and there was no turning away from it. I was most interested in its performance history, which led me to research the medieval sources on theory and ethnography. No music program in North America could provide the training for this type of work, so I created my own program by doing a PH.D. in two departments, Music and Middle Eastern studies...The medieval Arabic world that unraveled before my eyes was stunning. There was a fusion of musical styles, Arabic, Persian, and Byzantine; court patronage that generously maintained practitioners and scholars; a scholarship that combined the writings of the practitioners with Greek music theory and Middle Eastern humanities. In short, it was a discipline that predates modern ethnomusicology by a thousand years. I was hooked for life."(Miller & Shahriari, 2017)

George Dimitri Sawa is an independent scholar with a PhD in Music and Middle East Studies, from the University of Toronto. He taught Middle Eastern Music History: medieval, modern and sacred music, at the University of Toronto (1987-1995) and York University (1982-1986, 1994, 2006-2007).

George Sawa:

Qanun taqsim



George Dimitri Sawa – Qanun taqsim

Listening Guide: George Sawa – Qanun taqsim

Time	Listening Focus
0'00"	George begins improvising the arrangement on a Qanun
1'00	This is a great example of his graceful pauses, then he resumes improvising.
2'38"	In this moment as I watch him play through YouTube I see him smile and really go to town! I like seeing how much he enjoys playing the Qanun!
4'30	Everyone in the room joins in by clapping and having a good time!

Youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6Q6Bqi1eT8w>



Amr Diab

- Born in Port Said, Egypt
- Diab is called, "father of Mediterranean music"
- Diab has released an album almost every year since 1983!
- He has been awarded the World Music Award for Best Selling Middle Eastern Artist four times.

Amr Diab, is an Egyptian singer, composer and actor. He has established himself as an acclaimed recording artist and author in most Mediterranean countries. According to a research by Michael Frishkopf, he has created his style termed as "Mediterranean music", a blend of Western and Egyptian rhythms.

Amr Diab was born on 11 October 1961 in [Port Said](#),^[6] to a middle-class [Muslim](#) family originally from the Egyptian [country side](#) of Menia Elamh, in [Sharqia Governorate](#), Egypt. His father, Abd Elbaset Diab, worked for the Suez Canal Corporation and was the chairman of Marine Construction & Shipbuilding in Suez Canal. Diab's father played a huge role in igniting the early sparks of musical inspiration, in the early stages of Diab's professional music career. Diab, at the age of six, had his first shot at fame when he sang the [Egyptian National Anthem](#) "[Bilady, Bilady, Bilady](#)" at the annual 23 July Festival in Port Said in the presence of the late [Gamal Abdel Nasser](#). As a result, he was rewarded with a guitar from the governor of Port Said, and began to become recognised nationally.^{[[citation needed](#)]} Diab graduated with a bachelor's degree in Arabic Music from the Cairo Academy of Arts in 1986.

Amr Diab:

Tamally Maak



Amr Diab - Tamally Maak عمرو دياب - تملى معاك

Listening Guide: Amr Diab – Tamally Maak

Time	Listening Focus
0'00"	Melody begins with a familiar middle eastern instrument sound
0'46	Amr begins his first verse with lyrics that sound intriguing and clearly from the soul
1'30"	Amr begins to "break it down" and creates a rhythm that is easy and fun to dance to.
3'33	He sings beautifully and releases long sustaining notes.

Youtube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EgmXTmj62ic&list=PL_iG5KFB6DZVDICp8FfGA1b4Y7yHXvEL9&index=16



Summary

- I have really enjoyed further exploring Middle Eastern Music!
- I chose to explore Middle Eastern Music because my father's family is from Lebanon. The middle east is vast and has constantly been the center of meaningful historic events. I am proud to have such a rich heritage. I look forward to continue to listen to Middle Eastern Music!
- I hope you had fun and learned more about Middle Eastern Music!

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Reference List

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