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Inside Arabic Music: Arabic Maqam Performance and Theory in the 20th Century. By Johnny Farraj and Sami Abu Shumays. Pp. 448. (Oxford University Press, New York and Oxford, 2019. ISBN 978-0-19-065836-6 (hard cover), £81; -065836-6 (paperback), £25.99.)

This book, based on the personal experiences and fieldwork of two authors, Johnny Farraj and Sami Abu Shumays, is an excellent starting point for those who wish to explore *maqām*. Yet the authors do not take a vital step in their approach: in the USA, the theoretical frameworks that have been established around the study of music in al-Mashriq need to be revisited, challenged, and reassessed. Labels such as ‘Arab Music’ or ‘Arab classical music’ are too thin, misrepresenting both the diversity of music-making in Arab-language regions and the complexity of the roots, history, and influences—Ottomanism and colonial discourses included—that are part of such music. Baldly stated, the descriptor ‘Arab’ (or ‘Arabic’) music reduces a huge and complex repertory to the authors’ domain of research: the music in al-Mashriq (the Near East), primarily in Egypt. Farraj and Abu Shumays scale up their theoretical model to vaguely include the whole Arab world and *maqām* theory generally.

Farraj and Abu Shumays do contribute to the growing corpus of studies on *maqām* practices in al-Mashriq, providing a monograph in clear prose accessible to non-specialists. The authors’ focus is the role of musicians in creating conditions for the kaleidoscopic variety of *maqām* practices within urban musical forms in the Near East during the early to mid-twentieth century. Farraj and Abu Shumays also explore certain musical traditions and genres in al-Mashriq. The introduction outlines the book’s premiss and theoretical ambitus: according to the authors, besides drawing musicians into its music, *maqām* produces a socially inclusive space, where creative processes facilitate encounters with, and engagement between, the musicians and listeners.

Following the introduction, the book is divided into two parts. In chapters 1–9, the authors chronicle the *maqām*’s most common instruments, rhythms, ensemble formations, musical arrangement schemes, and vocal and instrumental forms. In the remaining chapters 11–24, they focus on *maqām* practices. In each chapter, a brief background section is illuminated through several music examples and explanatory notes about the music. Explanations include detailed information about melodic contours, modulations, performance practices, intonation schemes, and rhythms. Typically, the authors

present their theoretical approach to *maqām* practices and support their arguments with examples from the repertory. They contend that in addition to creating musical aesthetics through performance practice, musicians utilize and renew cumulative knowledge of *maqām*.

As Farraj and Abu Shumays delve into *maqām* theorizations, the cogency of their argument and analysis begins to fray. For example, in Mikhāil Meshāqa’s treatise about Arab music, which Eli Smith published in 1847, he describes *maqāmāt* as scales that consist of series of seven pitches and does not mention *ajnās* (tetrachord/pentachord). Although the tetrachord/pentachord theory is useful to explain scales and modulations, Farraj and Abu Shumays neglect compositional methods used to create this repertory. Instead, they often define *ajnās* as the building blocks of compositions. In taking up this twentieth-century argument, they perpetuate a hypothetical model of a ‘universal’ *maqām* system, which has dogged academic discussion about music in the region and ought to be laid aside.

Maqām is in fact a dynamic practice that adjusts to shifting social and political conditions and individual needs. Theory must recognize and, when appropriate, reconcile the distinctions between practices, rather than letting practice be pressed into the service of scholars to explain their theories. To achieve this, a thorough study of the compositional devices that composers use to write their songs or pieces must be accounted for; at that point, theory will shed light on the nature of melodic construction in Arab music. The *maqām* repertory reveals that Arab composers contemporaneously viewed *maqāmāt* in different ways, and distinctions are evident in their compositions and in their compositional methods. For instance, there are several examples in al-Shaikh Imam’s works where he challenged the ‘rules’ of *maqām* to create a contrasting narrative to the notion of *tarab*. In his song *Qrdū Sham’a*, he composed the instrumental introduction in *maqām rast* but on two different scale degrees simultaneously.

Generalizations that characterize *Inside Arabic Music* risk marginalizing alternative traditions that may or may not rely on *maqām*. These generalizations also risk validating a method of appropriation and annexation of all musical traditions within the region towards a particular urban domain or model. Apart from nationalism and politics, we can quickly identify Ottoman, Persian, Assyrian, Byzantine, Turkish, Greek, and Armenian music types in the many urban centres across the region that this book covers. We can also observe the syntheses that took place within a location’s various musical traditions.

Although Johnny Farraj and Sami Abu Shumays strive constantly to connect their findings to their theorizing, their arguments for the links they create are largely unpersuasive. To represent appropriately the region's vast geography, cultural diversity, and the concomitant musical styles and contexts found in both, the authors should have explored *maqām* music through the lens of a composer. Historians or anthropologists interested in al-Mashriq's post-First World War history and practices would expect any book to account for colonialism, nationalism, modernization, and globalization as significant determinants in music-making. Unfortunately, *Inside Arabic Music* fails to do so.

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Musicians' Migratory Patterns: American–Mexican Border Lands. Ed. by Mauricio Rodríguez. CMS Cultural Expressions in Music. Pp. 110. (Routledge, Abingdon and New York, 2020. ISBN 978-1-1383-2534-0 (hardcover), £45; -0-4294-5044-0 (ebook), £13.59)

Mauricio Rodríguez's edited volume *Musicians' Migratory Patterns: American–Mexican Border Lands* is a most exciting book in that it splendidly illustrates the potential of a new format in academic publishing that we might tentatively term a short edited collection. Halfway between a special issue and a full-length edited collection, the book is comprised of a short preface, six articles, and no conclusion; we might describe it as a close cousin to the 'minigraph'—which in itself is halfway between a long article and a monograph. The articles themselves vary in length (from ten to twenty-nine pages) and also, as we shall see, in tone and approach. Such alternative academic formats have found a home in recent years in the Routledge Focus imprint, as well as other initiatives such as the Royal Musical Association's monograph series, and it is encouraging to see examples like this starting to explore their possibilities.

In terms of its subject matter, the book inserts itself in a relatively long-standing current in scholarship focusing on how musics and musical practices shape, and have in turned been shaped by, the complex dynamics of the US–Mexico border. Key examples include Alejandro L. Madrid's edited volume *Transnational Encounters: Music and Performance at the U.S.–Mexico Border* (New York, 2011), Helena Simonett's *Banda: Mexican Musical Life across Borders* (Middletown,

Conn., 2001), and Mark Edberg's *El Narcotraficante: Narcocorridos and the Construction of a Cultural Persona on the U.S.–Mexico Border* (Austin, Texas, 2004). Perhaps because of the limitations imposed by the need to write a short preface, Rodríguez does not explicitly mention or engage with this scholarly tradition in his introduction, and his goals might therefore come across as rather modest and somehow haphazard, as he writes: 'I primarily wanted to depict some of the current artistic and researching voices that, with their everyday work, shape and enrich the multi-cultural diversity of both countries. . . . If there is a general concept that somewhat ties together most of the present essays, it is something that I loosely define as New Immigrant Mexican Music, and this collection is written with the research and experiences that directly (or indirectly) try to understand contemporary Mexican expressions at the border and beyond. The adjective "New" in this context should be understood in its literal meaning, including musics that are always new as the result of the emerging works of improvisation, experimentation, and listening.' There are no promises—as is often the case in the prefaces of edited collections—to revisit, challenge, problematize or revolutionize the field of study, or systematically to tackle the matter at hand using a range of well-defined perspectives. This might come initially as a bit of a shock to a reader expecting a more conventional academic text; what Rodríguez and his co-authors propose here instead can be described as a less regulated, more serendipitous journey across the border—and one that delivers no shortage of pleasures indeed.

The first chapter (Álvaro G. Díaz Rodríguez's 'Sound through the Looking Glass: An Approach to the Dimensional Sonology on the Tijuana–San Diego Border') skilfully confronts us with the very physicality (and aurality) of liminal spaces: the contribution takes the shape of a sonic journey around the beach shared by Tijuana and San Diego. The journey—despite the obligatory mention to Murray Schaefer's 'soundscapes' and Pauline Oliveros's 'deep listening'—comes across as descriptive rather than critical, but delivers numerous intriguing insights as Díaz Rodríguez superimposes Dante and Calvino on his wanderings along the beach. Chapter 2, Rossana Lara Velázquez's 'Network Platforms, Electronic Scenes, and Cultural Activism at the Tijuana–San Diego Border: The Performance of Border Critical Thinking in Young Artistic Movements in the Early 21st Century', is a short yet theoretically rich and spatially specific variation on a theme that has been at the foundation of border music studies from its

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