The Palestinian music-making experience in the West Bank, 1920s to 1959: Nationalism, colonialism, and identity

Boulos, I.I.

Chapter 3

3.1 The 1950s

As a direct result of the events of 1948, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled their homes and became part of a large refugee population in primarily neighboring countries. These countries, including Israel, signed regional and international agreements to secure their borders and halt further hostilities or escalations.[52] In this new reality, Palestinians were no longer able to function coherently as collective political and social units, even when such units before 1948 were already uneven. They were geographically displaced, with the components of their collective identity pulled to pieces. Also, Palestine lost its place as a cultural mediator, a bridge, and a pioneer of cultural exchange. For intellectuals, poets, artists, and musicians who were at the center of a Palestinian national discourse, their sense of loss was particularly dramatic. These pioneers, including musicians, faced the difficulty of retaining the level of connection they had with their homeland, and they were forever limited in their ability to transfer their skills to the next generation of Palestinians in Palestine.

With such losses, the promising musical scene that once existed before 1948 lost most of its infrastructure, not only in the context of PBS and NEBS but also in terms of traditional musical practices among ordinary Palestinians. Some PBS musicians stayed behind and moved to Ramallah, while some NEBS musicians moved with the station to Cyprus (al-Jūzī 2010). Musicians were at that point geographically separated from each other in Israel, Gaza, West Bank, Transjordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt. Some of them started to explore music-related work options leading several to join the radio ensembles in Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq,

[52] See the 1949 Armistice Agreements.

which were all governmental establishments. Others pursued different opportunities, including teaching. Nuwayhiḍ notes that Arab radio stations accepted Palestinian artists because of their talents, musical knowledge, and literacy (Nuwayhiḍ 1993). They collaborated with other artists in different environments and styles and were versatile and highly skilled (ibid.); unlike most Palestinians who ended up in refugee camps and were unable to assimilate, unskilled, with no means to maintain a livelihood.

After 1948, Arabs and media portals expressed sympathy towards Palestinians. During the same period, some Palestinian musicians composed songs that reflected the traumatic experiences that they have witnessed. Those include al-Bandak, al-Rūmī, al-Khammāsh, and al-ʿĀṣ. The radio stations of Cairo, Damascus, and Lebanon broadcast such songs regularly and even commissioned new ones (Nuwayhiḍ 1993; al-Ḥaj 2017; ʿAbbās 1999). The songs, however, were still carefully crafted in terms of their text and continued to offer a generic display of patriotism and nationalist sentiments, just like the songs produced by PBS and NEBS. Being adaptable and pragmatic, Palestinian musicians navigated urban music scenes as an attempt to affirm their bridging nationalistic vision and reiterate their ability and willingness to embrace the various types of music within the region. However, while they navigated these scenes well, they adhered to the dynamics of their new environments. An example of this is the famous patriotic poem entitled "Irādat al-Shaʿb" by renowned Tunisian poet Abū al-Qāsim al-Shābbī (1909-1934). The poem is in standard Arabic and fifty-three verses long. Al-Rūmī selected and composed fifteen verses in 1951 as a reflection of the events of 1948, illustrated in recording 16 in al-Rūmī's voice (al-Ḥaj 2017). The first three consecutive verses of the poem, which al-Rūmī included in his composition, set the theme for the whole poem:

"Irādat al-Shaʿb," the three verses of the refrain:

إذا الشَّعبُ يوْمَاً أرَادَ الحَياة فلا بُدَّ أن يستجيب القَدرْ

ولا بُدَّ لِلَّيلِ أنْ ينْجَلِي وَلا بُدَّ للقَيْدِ أَنْ ينْكَسِر
وَمَنْ لمْ يُعَانِقْهُ شَوْقُ الْحَيَاةِ تبَخَّرَ في جَوِّهَا وَانْدَثَر

"Irādat al-Shaʿb," the three verses of the refrain, translation:

If people yearn to live the odds shall be in their favor
It is then when darkness vanishes, and chains break
Those who do not long to live shall fade and dwindle

Al-Shābbī wanted to inspire people to be hopeful, not to despair or be discouraged by the dreadful tasks ahead of them. The poem is not inciteful and does not directly reference violent resistance. Instead, it speaks of pride, achievement, triumph, resistance, commitment, self-belief, respect, and the fulfillment of noble goals. Al-Rūmī's selection of which verses to compose was careful and seemed mindful of hinting resistance, a position that many Arab countries feared will impact their local political stability. He, therefore, picked verses that are uplifting and emphasize hope, pride, and commitment, messages that do not necessarily provoke resistance or violence. Musically, the song is in *maqām rāst*, and al-Rūmī kept faithful to the Palestinians *qaṣīda* style. The pronunciation of certain alphabets such as the *ja tha dha* appears in standard Arabic, not Egyptian.

By the mid-1950s, patriotic repertoire started to take political shape, depending on where the songs were produced. An example of this is also a song by al-Rūmi entitled "Arḍ Falasṭīn" (The Land of Palestine), which he also composed as a reflection of the events of 1948, but over a decade later.[53] The poem is in standard Arabic and written by ʿAbd al-Karīm al-Karmī, known as Abu Salma, a prominent Palestinian poet born in Tulkarm, a northern Palestinian town (al-Karmī 1978). The poem was first published in Beirut in 1959 in a poetry collection entitled *Ughniyāt*

[53] The exact date of the recording has not been confirmed.

Min Bilādi (Songs from My Homeland). The poem itself is thirty-four verses long, but al-Rūmī set to music only twelve (al-Karmī 1959). As illustrated in recording 17, the melody is in *maqām ḥijāz* with much more dramatic renditions in comparison to the uplifting character of "Irādat al-Shaʿb," his earlier composition.

Interestingly, al-Rūmī's singing maintained a level of nasal quality, a much older Egyptian vocal style whose foundations lie in Qurʾanic chanting and Islamic religious songs (Racy 1982; Danielson 1997). The technique was still enduring during the 1950s among many mainstream singers in Egypt but had been fading out since the 1940s.[54] In contrast to "Irādat al-Shaʿb," al-Rūmī chooses to pronounce certain alphabets of standard Arabic following the Egyptian dialect, especially the *ja,* which he sang as *ga*. The chorus consisted of Egyptians, who were struggling with pronouncing which alphabets according to which dialect. Occasionally, they sang the same word in two different ways simultaneously, and then differently during repeats. Al-Rūmī took his patriotic expression farther from its generic state to making political statements, as the translation below shows.

"Arḍ Falasṭīn," the poem as used in the song:

زَحَفْتُ ألتُم أرضي وَهْيَ باكِيةٌ والقَلْبُ باكٍ وراحَتْ تنتَشي القُبَلُ
وَعُدتُ أنْشَقُ مِنْ عِطرِ التُرابِ هَوَىً في ظِلِّه التقَت الأجدادُ والرُسُلُ
أهلي عَلَى الدَهرِ تُدْميني جِراحُهمُ في ظِلِّهِم (حُبِّهم) يتَساوَى العُذْرُ والعَذَلُ
خِيامُهُم في مَهَبَّ الريحِ مُعْوِلةٌ ودورُهُمْ مِنْ وَراءِ الدَمْعِ تبتَهِلُ
تَقاذَفَتهُمْ دُروبُ العُمْرِ دامِيةً وأنْكَرَتُهُمْ رُبوعُ الأهْلِ والمِلَلُ
في كُلِ أرضٍ شَظاياهُمْ مُشَرَّدَةٌ وتحْتَ كُلِ سَماءٍ مَعْشَرٌ ذُلُلُ
أطوفُ أحملُ أنَّى سِرْتُ نَكْبَتهُمْ كأنني طَيفُ ثأرٍ والِحمَى طَلَلُ
هذي فلسطينُ!.. هل أشْجَتْكَ ترْبتهَا تَبكي الأحبَّاءَ .. مَنْ غابوا ومَنْ رَحلوا
تبكي المروءاتِ مُرخاةً غدائرُها وما انتخَتْ للجهادِ البيضُ والأسَلُ
تبكي العَذارى وأذيالاً مُطَهَّرةً لَمْ يَحمِ تلكَ الذُيولَ .. الفارِسُ البَطَلُ
يا فِتيةَ الوطنِ المسلوبِ!.. هَلْ أمَلٌ عَلى جِباهِكُم السَمراءِ يكْتَبِلُ
إن الطريقَ الى العلياءِ مُظلِمَةٌ ولن نَضِلَّ وفي أيديكم الشُعَل

[54] For more about this see Racy (1982).

"Arḍ Falasṭīn," the poem translation as used in the song:

I cringed to the homeland as it was weeping,
my heart as well. It enfolded my kisses.
Imagined breathing the smell of soil and sensed the shadow of a breeze
where our ancestors and profits met.
I am forever bleeding over the wounds of my people.
In their love, excuses and ignorance become equal.
Their tents barely stand in the wind.
Their lost homes concealed by their tears and reach out.
My people were thrown by the bloody predicament of time and space
and denied by clans and religions.
Shredded into homelessness on foreign lands
and under the skies, they face harsh companionships.
I travel around carrying their catastrophe like a shadow of revenge,
with rage more like mist.
It is Palestine! Did its soil bring joy to you?
It now cries for its lovers, the departed, and the absentees.
It pities the braids of your clumsy courage
and the swords and arrows that stayed put.
It pities those with clean rears, looking for excuses.
You did not come or protect us, you heroic knights!
O, the youth of our people,
is hope upon your hard faces?
The path to greatness is dark,
but we shall not be lost if you carry the torches.

The poem itself went much further than al-Rūmī's selection. The climax of the poem is when al-Karmī directly addressed the rigor of the situation and says:

"Arḍ Falasṭīn," verses not included in al-Rūmī's song:

قال ألملوكُ غداً نَحْمي ديارَكُمُ ليتَ الأذِلاَّء ما قالوا وما فعلوا
وعَلَّلونا بِساحِ المجْدِ نَنْزِلها إذا بهم، ساعَةُ الجُلى، هم العلَلُ
قالوا: الكرامةُ! .. قلنا: أينَ صاحبُها؟! قالوا: الرُجولةُ.. قلنا: أيهُمْ رَجُلُ
باعو "فلسطين" فلتهنأ ضمائرُهم أما تراها على الدولار تَشْتَعِلُ
وكيفَ تُنقَذُ أرض العُربِ **"جامعةٌ"** يَسودُها مَبدأ التفريقِ والَجدَلُ
أُنظُر إليها وقَدْ شالَتْ نَجائبها كأنَّها موكبٌ للعارِ ينتَقِلُ

"Arḍ Falasṭīn," translation of the verses not included in al-Rūmī's song:

The Kings said that they would protect the homeland,

but I wish that the bastards did not say or do anything.
They claimed they would fight the battle of glory but came the moment of truth;
they proved to be the problem.
They said: Dignity! We said: Whose?! They said: Manhood.
We said: Who among you is man enough?
They sold "Palestine" to satisfy their conscious;
cannot you see how your dollars operate?
How would the homeland be saved by a "League,"
dominated by the principals of division and divergence?
Just look at you as you represent your offspring countries
like a traveling parade of shame.

In the fifth verse, in bold, al-Karmī places the word Jamiʿat in quotation marks and then refers to its dysfunctionality and shameful stands, referring to Jamiʿat al-Duwal al-ʿArabiyya, or the Arab League. This song was released when Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir was in office. Although it is not clear where exactly al-Rūmī recorded it, the production points to Egypt. This song shows al-Rūmī having some political agency and control over his art, despite his accommodating attitude to the Egyptian dialect. Out of the hundreds of songs that he composed throughout his career, not in any other song did al-Rūmī express his political thoughts this clearly. However, he treated the poem with caution and did not go all the way with the rest of the poem, where al-Karmī expressed with clarity his political position from monarchies and harshly criticized Arab regimes. Faced with decisions about dialect, style of composition, place of production, politics, pronunciation of the text, al-Rūmī's most intense challenges were just around the corner in Lebanon, his country of origin.

His first song that I used as an example, "Irādat al-Shaʿb," points to the generic patriotic productions that the British and their Arab allies did not object to in principle. The second song, however, demonstrates the rise of political activism and establishes a strong position from both local and regional leaderships concerning the events of 1948 and its ramifications. The first song points to a specific musical approach that embraced standard Arabic the way it is pronounced in

Palestine while incorporating a more modern singing style that utilizes the diaphragm instead of the old nasal method. The second song seems to have more political agency but leaned towards the Egyptian dialect and vocal style. As for having relative control of one's political opinion, it is likely due to the atmosphere in Egypt which placed Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir at the forefront of pan-Arabism, the struggle for Palestine, as well as the efforts to undermine Arab monarchies, which the song coincidently advocated.

Moreover, al-Rūmī's two songs, although a decade or so apart, seem to contrast each other concerning Palestine. The first song was indeed more in tune with what al-Rūmī was working on at NEBS, along with others, which is to establish local styles centered around al-Mashriq, in this case, the Palestinian *qaṣīda*. The second song takes a step back from regional forms. It moves deeper into Egyptian territory, embracing not only Egyptian compositional techniques, which both songs utilize but also the Egyptian dialect. Such examples point to how agency and national discourses created a significant navigation challenge to Palestinian musicians.

From the available recordings, it is evident that Palestinian composers and singers faced serious questions, including how they expressed themselves musically and nationally, which form of song or dialect they used, and about which topics they might or might not have sung. To examine how Palestinian musicians navigated the various music scenes, other than the ones they lost, and how they contributed, borrowed, impacted, and navigated those scenes, I examine the works of al-Bandak, al-Rūmī, al-Khammāsh, and the contributions of Ṣabrī al-Sharīf. For Riyad al-Bandak, I take a closer look at a good number of his works after 1948 that were kept at Radio Lebanon. NAWA obtained a copy of these recordings, which totaled twenty-six, including twenty-two songs, and four instrumental pieces. For al-Rūmī, I explore his career at Radio

Lebanon and his contributions, influence, and impact on the Lebanese music scene as well as some of his works. I also examine al-Khamāsh's career in Iraq. I briefly discuss their lives before 1948 as well as reference some of their earlier works when available, and then focus on their careers after 1948. First, I examine the role of Ṣabrī al-Sharīf.

3.2 Ṣabrī al-Sharīf

Ṣabrī al-Sharīf (1922-1999) was born in Yāfā to a well-off family (Sabri 2012). His father was a renowned textile merchant who established business ties with England. Al-Sharīf grew up listening to recordings of Um Kulthūm and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahāb as well as the broadcasts of Radio Cairo, which was extremely popular and dominating at the time. He attended the Collége des Fréres in Yāfā, a French international school that is part of the La Sallian network of educational institutions.[55] According to his son Munjid, al-Sharīf took private piano lessons with a piano teacher in Yāfā since he was a child (personal communication, 2020). After graduating from high school, he headed to London to study musical theater.

Al-Sharīf recalls that one day he and his family were listening to the radio and heard a buzuq playing a piece of music. When the piece finished, an announcement followed, declaring that the piece was brought to audiences by NEBS; the whole family was astonished. Al-Sharīf was enthused by this new station and eventually sent them a letter expressing interest in applying for a job there (Sabri 2012). The station replied to him, agreed to hire him, and subsequently, he became its music director. According al-Sharīf's son, the main objective of NEBS at the time was to recruit, encourage, and grow talent in the areas of music, theater, and other fields. The station also invited renowned musicians including Um Kulthūm, and ʿAbd al-Wahāb as guest

[55] Opened in 1882; see http://www.collegedesfreresjaffa.org/AboutUs.php retrieved 10/22/2019.

artists. As head of music at NEBS, al-Sharīf used to travel to Egypt to buy recordings or the rights for specific productions and to invite artists to produce their works in Yāfā (ibid.).

Little is known about that period in al-Sharīf's life at NEBS, but his name appears in the program of NEBS as a host of an occasional song-variety program, which was mentioned in the *Qāfila* on August 15, 1947 (no. 20, 18-19). In April 2014, Nādir Jalāl interviewed Ilyas Saḥāb on video. Jalāl was collecting information about al-Sharīf as part of NAWA's regional effort to gather narratives about Palestinian musicians who left or fled Palestine after or before 1948. When asked about al-Sharīf, Saḥāb recalls that al-Sharīf started implementing his vision of modernizing Arab music at NEBS since the mid-1940s (Jalāl 2014). Al-Sharīf's aim was also to revolutionize local music by utilizing the various compositional tools that were available to composers through European musical traditions (Sabri 2012; Burkhalter 2014; Jalāl 2014). He even hired two Egyptian composers to implement this vision, ʿAbd al-Ḥalīm Nuwaira (1916-1985), and Midḥat ʿĀṣim (c. 1909-1989) (Jalāl, 2014). During the same period, he also began his efforts to collect local peasant songs. To achieve this, he commissioned a Lebanese poet by the name of Asʿad Saʿīd (1922-2010) to carry out the fieldwork and collect songs from Palestine, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq, intending to use this material as the foundation for modernizing the music of the region (Abū Fakhr 2015). In his book, *al-Zajal fī Aṣluh wa Faṣluh* (The Origin and Variations of Zajal), Saʿīd attests that, based on his extensive research and collection efforts, the traditions of Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine are all shared. He argues that the differences between them do not go beyond the differences that one would find from one village to another within the same country (Saʿīd 2009).

The vision was clear in al-Sharif's mind. He wanted to create music that is based on indigenous musical material and incorporate various musical compositional devices, including

harmony, new forms, and orchestral textures. According to Saḥāb, al-Sharīf's attempts at NEBS were successful (Jalāl 2014). The closest example I found of what al-Sharīf was possibly working on is a NEBS recording that I obtained from the British Library belonging to the Rex Keating Collection. The note attached to the record says that it is a recording of a waltz performed by an unidentified small orchestra, presumably that of NEBS. At that time, NEBS had approximately seventy staff members based in Cyprus, and many news correspondents throughout the Arab world (Boyd 2003). The recording took place on September 14, 1949 and is four minutes long (see recording 18).

It is apparent that the skills of the members of the orchestra were not at the same level, and the overall sound of the orchestra was modest. Their intonations, harmonies, and time sensibilities are not tight, as would be the case in professional orchestras. The composition itself resembles Johann Strauss II's waltzes, but it is not clear who wrote the music. Any of the two composers, Nuwaira or ʿĀsim, fit the profile. Nuwaira and ʿĀṣim were already active during that period in Egypt's booming music scene, and some of the recordings of their works are still available, especially those that were part of films.[56] ʿĀṣim was a pianist and composer trained in both Arab and European music and supported innovation in Arab music, especially through the means of European music (Castelo-Branco 1993). According to Muḥammad Fatḥī, both were members of the Western-educated Egyptian intellectual elite whose primary goals "were to educate, inform, and entertain the audience" (Fatḥī 1984, 93). In addition to incorporating European musical elements into Arab music, they believed that exposing audiences to different styles of music would improve their taste (Castelo-Branco 1993). They composed primarily for

[56] For additional listening, see Nuwaira's opening score for the film "al-Māḍī al-Majhūl" (1946), and the song "Sallam ʻAlay" as an example of local music with certain harmonized phrases; see the music for the film "Rajul Lā Yanām" (1948) by ʿĀṣim.

the new generation of Egyptian singers and wrote the music scores for dozens of Egyptian movies. An example of Nuwaira's compositions that seems to represent this approach is a song that he composed for Nādya Fahmī. The title of the song is "Fākir Yā Ward al-Ginaina" (O Garden Flowers, Do You Remember?), lyrics by ʿAlī Sulaymān, recorded on October 13, 1954, as shown in recording 19.[57] The song is set to a slow Latin lounge rhythm, rumba. It resembles songs that were commercially available on LPs for artists such as Xavier Cugat, Rosa Carmina, María Antonieta Pons, and many others. The persistent Latin percussion section with castanets gives the song a Spanish flair. The song is essentially a lushly orchestrated sentimental ballad. Nuwaira also wrote several songs for a female trio called al-Thulāthī al-Mariḥ (The Humorous Trio).

Al-Sharif had reasons to invest in Nuwaira and ʿĀṣim as early as the mid-1940s. During that period, the musical influences that affected composers, regardless of where musicians worked or lived, were similar. On the one hand, the geographic and artistic reach of both NEBS and PBS was prominent in the whole area, especially among artists, intellectuals, and urbanites. For example, during the same period in Lebanon, the Raḥbānī Brothers composed songs that were influenced by the same genres, that is short, dance, romantic, humorous, and light. Examples of this include the following three songs: "Ḥabbadhā Yā Ghurūb" (1951), recording 20; "Anti Yā Mai Zahra" (1952), recording 21; and "ʿUnfuwān" (1952), recording 22.[58]

However, in 1947 and due to heightened tensions and fighting in the coastal region and near Yāfā, NEBS moved to Jerusalem. Two months before the events of May 1948, the British

[57] In the recording, the voice of Ibrahim Ḥafnī, host of the radio program "Fī Yūm, Fī Shahr, Fī Sana" (Once Upon a Day, Month, Year) introduces the song on October 13, 2017, episode 46. The program was broadcast through Idhāʿit al-Aghānī (Songs Radio), a governmental station that opened in 2000 in Egypt.

[58] For further listening, see "Bukra Byījī Nīsān," and "Yā Im al-ʿAyn al-Kaḥla" by Raḥbānī Brothers.

moved it to Cyprus and al-Sharīf, and many others relocated with it. Since al-Sharif's vision was interrupted due to the events of 1948, while still at NEBS in Cyprus he started looking for opportunities to implement his idea of creating new music elsewhere. He shifted his prime focus to the musical traditions of Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine, or what he described as al-Mashriq (Burkhalter 2014). After 1948, while still in Cyprus, the station considered relocating to a new site in the Arab world to attract talent and connect its productions to the Arab world. Between 1949 and 1953, Ṣabrī al-Sharif and Ghānim al-Dajānī used to visit Beirut periodically often to obtain recordings and to commission productions. Meanwhile, Kamil Qustandi used to frequently travel to Egypt since he was the one responsible for the drama section in the radio, and Subḥī Abū Lughud would visit Iraq seeking reality shows. As for ʿAbd al-Majīd Abū Laban who was responsible for the entertainment section at the radio, he focused on Beirut. Eventually, NEBS decided to open an office in Beirut, and another in Cairo. Aḥmad Jarrār established the Beirut office and Sayyid Budair the Cairo's.

In 1950, Muḥammad al-Ghusain, who was the head of NEBS at the time specifically requested al-Sharīf to visit Lebanon and scout for musicians (Shūmān 2018; Sabri 2012). He encouraged al-Sharīf to pursue the Raḥbānī Brothers, ʿĀṣī and Manṣūr, and assess their willingness to merge local repertoire from al-Mashriq with European music (Burkhalter 2014; Sabri 2012). According to Manṣūr Raḥbānī, the two songs that brought the attention of al-Ghuṣain and al-Sharīf were Zawraq al-Ḥubu Lanā and Bard Bard. Al-Ghusain described the songs as short and catchy, just like the ones al-Sharīf was implementing at NEBS and promoting heavily. Al-Sharīf traveled to Beirut and met with the Raḥbānī Brothers, and according to Kāmil Qusṭandī, upon his return to Cyprus from Beirut, al-Sharīf mentioned hearing a promising young female singer by the name Nihād Ḥaddād. He seemed able at this point to relate to the general

approach of creating a national style that is distant from that of Egypt and implemented by local composers.[59]

Al-Sharīf abandoned the Egyptian musicians that he depended on before 1948. The reasoning behind this shift appeared in his lecture at al-Nadwa al-Lubnaniyya (Lebanese Lecture Series) in 1957, which was a renowned series of lectures intended to discuss pressing issues. In this lecture, he expressed how troubled he was with both the domination of certain musical cultures, referring to Egypt, and the notion of having governments taking over radio stations and turning them into governmental tools, referring likely to Jordan, which took over PBS (al-Sharīf 1957).

Impressed with the Raḥbānī Brothers, al-Sharīf was ready to build around them what he envisioned as the future of Arab music (Zughaib 1993). Therefore, he and Ghānim al-Dajānī, now program supervisors at NEBS started to work with the Raḥbānī Brothers and various other promising Lebanese composers (ibid.). The Beirut office, through Aḥmad Jarrār, would ensure the implementation of the productions agreed upon, and the same process would apply with small administrative variations to the Cairo productions (Bakīr 1998). Once the productions were ready to go, the reels then head to Cyprus for broadcasting (ibid.).

Al-Sharīf was strategic about who to focus upon in terms of collaboration and support. He did not pursue al-Rūmī, al-Bandak, al-Khammāsh, al-Saʿūdī, or Ghāzī. He instead settled for the Raḥbānī Brothers not only because of their ability to compose but also because they were both poets who proved that they could transition to writing colloquial lyrics for songs while adding literary, philosophical, and intellectual dynamics.

[59] Nihād Ḥaddād who was previously discovered by Ḥalīm al-Rūmī, would go by her stage name of Fayrūz.

Hoping to take full advantage of the influx of musicians coming from PBS and NEBS and settling in Beirut, al-Sharīf's started to relentlessly advocate to transfer the central production unit of the station with its big-budget from Cyprus to Beirut; he finally succeeded in 1952 (Zughaib 1993). Between 1953-1956, al-Sharīf put at the disposal of the Raḥbānī Brothers, Tawfīq al-Bāshā, Zakī Nāṣīf, ʿAbd al-Ghanī Shaʿbān, and Tawfīq Sukkar an orchestra of over forty musicians. It included many foreign musicians who were carefully selected by al-Sharīf (Jalāl 2014; Burkhalter 2014). Most of the musicians were working in Lebanon's casinos at the time (Zughaib 1993). The Raḥbānī brothers recorded their songs and broadcast them through NEBS (ibid.). The orchestra comprised of strings, brass, accordion, woodwinds, piano, guitar, and percussion.

After the station established its production studios in Beirut, al-Sharīf continued his quest to discover and nurture new talent. He invested in the renaissance of local traditional culture within the vision of modernizing it based on European models and away from the aesthetics and performance practices of *takht* or improvisations. In resemblance to the "Russian Five," al-Sharīf founded and sponsored ʿUṣbat al-Khamsa, or the League of Five. It was an informal group of composers who shared the same vision about making music in al-Mashriq (al-Rūmī 1992). The focus of the group was to: 1) use colloquial dialect rather than Egyptian in their songs; 2) focus on conciseness and brevity; and 3) employ functional instrumentation, which consisted of flute, piano, violin, double bass, occasional accordion, strings, and *riq* and *darbukka* as percussion instruments. They also utilized the buzuq more so than the ʿūd and used a modified version of the *nāy* that was developed by Joseph Ayyūb (Ballūṭ 2015).

According to al-Rūmī, the birth of this group was announced in the *Ṣafāʾ* newspaper in mid-April 1954 (al-Rūmī 1992). It consisted of three composers and arrangers: ʿĀṣī Raḥbānī, his

brother Manṣūr, Zakī Nāṣīf, pianist and arranger Boghos Gelalian, and artistic director and manager Ṣabrī al-Sharīf (ibid.). Some sources name Manṣūr and ʿĀṣī Raḥbānī, Zakī Nāṣīf, Tawfīq al-Bāshā, and Tawfīq Sukkar as members of the League, as well as Abdel Ghani Shaʿbān, replacing Zakī Nāṣīf at some point (Manṣūr 2006). Their objective was to resurrect, modernize, and develop local traditional musical heritage in a fashion that enabled it to reach the world through publishing and distribution of recorded works. The announcement created an atmosphere of excitement and anticipation in the field at the time. According to Karīm Muruwwa, Ṣabrī al-Sharīf was the person behind the League and was considered its engine (Muruwwa 2015). The Lebanese director, composer, and lyricist Romeo Laḥḥūd recalls that era and remembers Ṣabrī al-Sharīf being at the

> […] core of a big renaissance in music in Lebanon. He bought together a very diverse group of artists, musicians, and composers and gave them the possibility to discuss and produce their work. It was in his radio studio in Cyprus where Fairuz [Fayrūz] and many others were discovered. This radio station was more important than any Lebanese station, as it covered almost the whole Middle East. (cited in Burkhalter 2014, 154-5)

Manṣūr Raḥbānī recalls that al-Sharīf used to put together an orchestra of over thirty experienced musicians, mostly foreigners, and ask the Raḥbānī Brothers to compose and arrange music with the orchestra in mind (Zughaib 1993). When the Raḥbānī Brothers finished the song and record it, the notion of whether the recording would move to the next production phase was typically up to al-Sharīf to decide (ibid.). If al-Sharīf did not like the recording, he would say that it is okay to toss it and aim for another that is better (Sabri 2012). Manṣūr Raḥbānī described al-Sharīf in this regard as someone who believed in the possibility of achieving something better and more beautiful (Zughaib 1993). According to Nicūlā Abū Samāḥa, al-Sharīf's sound engineer, al-Sharīf was the only one who was knowledgeable about how musical instruments worked with each other in the context of orchestration, acoustics, and arrangements. He was also

the only one who knew how such components would work together in the context of vocal music (Sabri 2012). When he heard something wrong, al-Sharīf would first point to it, and then instruct composers and orchestrators to go back and fix their work. He would correctly point to the areas that had issues with their arrangements (ibid.). Manṣūr Raḥbānī refers to a tape that is still in his procession where al-Sharīf kept interrupting the recording of a song that involved the whole orchestra. He remembers that al-Sharīf captured a clean recording of it after thirteen trials.

In 1955 Fayrūz and ʿĀṣī got married and, together with al-Sharīf and ʿĀṣī's brother Manṣūr, reaffirmed the bond and legal partnership between them and became a central force that drove Lebanon's music scene. Upon the 1956 war against Egypt, NEBS was overtaken by BBC, which took a stand against Egypt (Zughaib 1993). Its employees were given a choice to either stay or leave, and most chose to leave, including al-Sharīf. Due to the exceptional circumstances, Badīʿ Būlus, a wealthy Palestinian businessman and an aristocrat, asked al-Sharīf and Kāmil Qusṭandī to put together a production company and to operate the same way as NEBS (Zughaib 1993; Bakīr 1998). Al-Sharīf wanted to continue this approach to music-making, so he agreed. Subsequently, the Lebanese Recording Company (LRC) was born. The company signed contracts with all the artists that NEBS had dealt with before 1956 (Bakīr 2014).

In 1957, local Lebanese newspapers grew critical of Bʿalbak International Festival due to its lack of focus on local talent. That year, the first lady of Lebanon, Mrs. Zelfa Chamoun, had decided to add the Lebanese Nights into the Festival. The Festival Committee decided to dedicate two shows to showcase Lebanese traditional arts, and selected Ṣabrī al-Sharīf to direct the shows (Zughaib 1993). Al-Sharīf became superintendent of Bʿalbak's Lebanese Nights, a charge that constituted a historical moment in the modern history of the Lebanese song.

3.2.1 The Manifesto

Since the mid-1940s, al-Sharīf has been commissioning composers and singers and discovering major talents through NEBS as attested to by Manṣūr Raḥbāni, Ilyās Sahāb, and many others. His position was central to the creation of song styles that synthesized various elements and techniques, including local ones. His approach was observed by many intellectuals, including Mishail Asmar, founder of al-Nadwa al-Lubnāniyya. On May 13, 1957, and after several persistent invitations from Asmar, al-Sharīf agreed to deliver a lecture. He chose the title "The Confusions of Arabic Music and its Hopes." In this lecture, al-Shaīf articulated his vision and philosophy and played back songs that demonstrated what he had in mind. The lecture came at a time when al-Sharīf was under pressure to make a case for the Lebanese Nights as superintendent of Bʿalbak. He had to confront the accusations and fears of the elite classes that any traditional presentation would lack the stature, elegance, and artistic quality of Western music, and therefore unworthy of the prestigious podium of Bʿalbak.

Asmar took the stage of this medium-size room, which was full of enthusiasts and colleagues, and introduced al-Sharīf to the audience (Chamseddine 2018). He first posed the question, "What is missing from our music?" and then answered, "Care and guidance" (ibid., par. 3). Asmar then noted that al-Sharīf cared for Arab music relentlessly and silently and with absolute dedication during his tenure at NEBS, and currently through a new record label. He wished him success in all his endeavors to supply the music scene with musicians and players who know how to read music and educated in its sciences (al-Sharīf 1957). Al-Sharif was meanwhile in front of a radio microphone sitting on a small table with some loose papers (Chamseddine 2018). Well-dressed and looking profoundly serious, he started by giving some historical background on Arab music (ibid.).

Al-Sharīf started by highlighting his main argument. He argued that, since its early days, Arab music did not have the means to separate itself from language, and therefore sustained its monophonic status to this day (al-Sharīf 1957). From there, he expressed his appreciation of the *muwashshaḥ* and *qaṣīda* song types. He highlighted that they encourage group singing and offer a balance to the dominant role of single vocalists. They also incorporate literary components and devices that are necessary for the evolution of songs. Referring to earlier attempts to modernize Arab music, including the recommendations of the 1932 Cairo conference, al-Sharīf examined the gap between theoretical, historical, and artistic conceptualizations on the one hand and the musical realities by practitioners on the ground on the other. In his opinion, there were two significant problems: 1) public perceptions of music as a constant partner of alcohol or short-lived pleasures, and 2) a shortage of artists who can make emotional sense of their surroundings.

To the first problem, al-Sharīf described such pleasures as negative and connected them to the notion of *ṭarab*. He argued that getting stuck on the idea of *ṭarab* prevented Arabs from understanding the true nature of music nor its true purpose. Referring to the popular song types of the day, he argued that such songs were seasonal products that fulfill their purpose quickly and do not leave a lasting impression because there was little effort and thought invested in creating them. He discussed the issues of creativity and mediocrity and differentiated between musical improvisation and composition. He argued that musicians who improvise instead of composing tend to produce consumable music. In his opinion, making music requires knowledge, whereas negligence of the systematic aspects of music-making is just a reflection of this state of negative pleasures (al-Sharīf 1957).

To the second problem, al-Sharīf expressed serious concerns regarding the dominant-at-this-time naïve manifestations that overrepresent love as the main issue that societies face. He

argued that “if this says anything about the current discourse, it says a great deal about our sexual oppression, and deprivation” (al-Sharīf 1957, 436). Furthermore, he described the current musical displays being reflective of how burdened, deprived, gloomy, and unhappy Arab people feel. He described songs as often depressing, discouraging, and full of sorrow, and described other songs as being imposed on people by their governments as if they are laws. In his words, al-Sharīf said that he wanted “music to add a positive component to our lives. To take us from the music of nights to the music of daylight, from desires and deprivation to honest expression of intellectual and spiritual properties” (439).

Furthermore, al-Sharīf harshly criticized Arab music scenes and the popular styles that they inject into the area at the time. The lecture was a guideline of what they, him, and few other composers, including Raḥbānī Brothers, had done so far concerning the modernization and rejuvenation of Arab music. He argued in favor of shorter melodies that were spontaneous and honest. He believed that honesty and spontaneity are the foundation of progress and constitute the most reliable and robust link to the past, upon which music-making must be built. He also believed that al-Mashriq’s new song should emerge from the humanistic cultural values rooted in traditional literature. It must, meanwhile, be enhanced through adding literary devices and intellectual and spiritual dimensions. At the end of his lecture, he stated that the right path has started in Lebanon, only because of a handful of talented composers who are educated, dedicated, courageous, honest, revolutionary, and insightful (al-Sharīf 1957).

In the summer of 1957, the Bʿalbak Festival launched the Lebanese Nights show. The Raḥbānī Brothers, Zakī Nāṣīf and Tawfīq al-Bāshā handled the music, and Fayrūz and Naṣrī Shams al-Dīn were featured as the principal singers. The dance component, which occupied a sizable portion of the show, was handled by Marwān and Wadīʿa Jarrār, husband and wife, who

did the choreography and trained the dancers, both Palestinians. Al-Sharif directed "Ayyām al-Ḥaṣād," a traditional display of a wedding in a village, which was the first musical of the Raḥbānī Brothers, specially produced for the festival (Zibawī 2017).

The premier at the historic Bʿalbak featured Fayrūz at the opening standing on the base of one of the columns of the temple of Jupiter while projecting blue directional spotlights from bottom to top and from different angles; she appeared as if she was floating in the sky (ibid.). She then sang "Libnan Yā Akhḍar Yā Ḥilu" ("Oh Lebanon, the Green and Beautiful"). Al-Sharīf intended to impress the audience and create a memorable display to make a strong statement about this new beginning, a demonstration that sought to turn the past and present into a moment of significance to shape the future, just as he described in his lecture earlier. The musical was performed twice on August 31 and September 1, 1957, with over 5,000 people in the audience every time (Zughaib 1993). Upon this success, the Brothers established al-Firqa al-Shaʿbiyya (Popular Arts Band), and al-Sharīf became its director (ibid.).

President Camille Chamoun invited the organizers to his summer palace in Bait al-Dīn and granted them the Lebanese Golden Medal of Merit. Among them were Ṣabrī al-Sharīf, Tawfīq al-Bāshā, Fayrūz, Badīʿa Jarrār, and Marwān Jarrār; as shown in Figure 44 (Zibawī 2017). The translation of the text is as follows:

> The president of the republic granted the organizers of Bʿalbak Festivals the Golden Medal of Merit. A special event was hosted in Bayt al-Dīn Palace during which the medals were distributed. In the photo appears his excellency the president with the honored artists, to his right Mrs. Jarrār [Wadiʿa], Ṣabrī al- Sharīf, Tawfīq al-Bāshā, and Muḥyi al-Dīn Salām. To his left is Fayrūz, senator Khalīl al-Habrī, Marwān Jarrār, and Muḥammad Shāmil.

انعم فخامة رئيس الجمهورية على الفنانين الذين اشرفوا على تنظيم مهرجانات بعلبك بوسام الاستحقاق اللبناني المذهب لكل منهم ... وقد اقيمت حفلة خاصة في قصر بيت الدين ،وزعت خلالها الاوسمة ...
ويرى في الصورة فخامة الرئيس مع الفنانين المنعم عليهم وهم عن يمينه السيدة جرار والاساتذة صبري الشريف توفيق الباشا ومحي الدين سلام ،وعن يسار فخامته فيروز ، النائب خليل الهبري ، مروان الجرار ومحمد شامل

Figure 44. Lebanese Golden Medal of Merit Awards (1957)

As director and producer working closely with Raḥbānī Brothers, al-Sharīf was the machine that the Brothers depended upon most of their careers. Their music and engagement in music-making evolved and progressed quickly and surely through and with al-Sharīf, as attested to by all those who witnessed this era, including the Raḥbānī Brothers themselves.

In the following decades, Ṣabrī al-Sharīf provided the means to Lebanese music-making and paved the road for the renaissance an emergence of the Lebanese song. He offered a vision as to how to inject literary and artistic value into the Lebanese local music scene. Al-Sharīf's focus on the core values of the culture as exhibited through traditional colloquial poetry, offered the lyricist and poets of the time a solid starting point. Before al-Sharif's engagement in the scene, standard Arabic was the primary method for writing sophisticated songs. As an extension of the ideals of the Arab Renaissance, the revival of conventional Arabic poetry was in motion and considered to be a much more eloquent method of expression. Those who consumed this

type of poetry were considered sophisticated and enlightened. However, al-Sharīf recognized that the domination of standard Arabic could also be problematic because it may infer a religious text, specifically the Qurʾan (al-Sharīf 1957).

Before partnering with al-Sharīf, the Raḥbānī Brothers experimented with colloquial lyrics by adding vernacular vocabulary and imagery. The incorporated vocabulary came from various dialects, depending on which term would better serve the purpose. Therefore, some of their early hybrid songs would sound Lebanese/Palestinian/Syrian/Egyptian all at the same time. Despite their ability to write lyrics that resemble peasant music and sound authentic (Zughaib 1993), they seem to have consciously tried not to include direct peasant vocabulary in their new lyrics. Furthermore, most of their early songs were in standard Arabic, not colloquial. The turning point in their careers was Bʿalbak. It was then when they arranged peasant tunes and wrote lyrics in the peasant style but injected some dramatic and philosophical renditions known to be part of standard Arabic poetry into their lyrics. This concept was one of al-Sharīf's leading intellectual and spiritual contributions.

The practice of writing lyrics in local dialects in song form emerged with Badīʿ Khayrī in Egypt, Nūḥ Ibrāhīm in Palestine, ʿUmar al-Zaʿnī in Lebanon, and Salāmaih al-Aghwānī in Syria, among others. Songs revolved mainly around love, social, political, and satirical topics. Such songs were typically light, such as *ṭaqṭūqa* (or *ihzūja*), or *shaʿbī* songs. However, the Arab Renaissance, in musical terms, was dominated by either Egyptian or standard Arabic lyrics and poems, including Andalusian poetry used in *muwashshaḥ* songs, which often incorporated some colloquial vocabulary. Motivated to express themselves in their dialects, poets, and lyricists of al-Mashriq wrote poetry in standard Arabic. They chose one or more colloquial dialects to write lyrics, including peasant and Bedouin. As they wrote lyrics, they utilized both standard and

colloquial poetic meters. However, their songs revolved around the same topics but were packaged or staged differently. Ṣabrī al-Sharīf's vision was an attempt to revitalize this literature and stimulate it with ideals that extended its reach to expressing more sophisticated characteristics of urban life as well as the emerging middle class. The new song that al-Sharīf envisioned would involve a variety of topics that would eventually contribute to the imagined future and form the basis on which al-Mashriq's legacy could be founded. In a process that can be seen as decolonization, al-Sharif attempted to go beyond the separation strategies of the British, which defined traditional music and treated it as an artifact. He rebelled against much older stigmas and institutionalized positions and attitudes that religions, specifically Islam, invoked towards music-making and song. Therefore, when it came down to actual practical solutions to the notion of progress in music after 1948, it appears that the geopolitical forces when comparing Jordan to Lebanon were at play and the visions of several men, including Ṭūqān, Nuwayhiḍ, al-Nashāshībī, and al-Sharīf were about to be tested.

3.3 Riyad al-Bandak

Al-Bandak was born in 1924 in Bethlehem, Palestine, to a prominent Greek Orthodox Christian family known for its political activism (al-Jūzī 2010; Haiduc-Dale 2015).[60] He attended elementary school at a governmental school called al-Madrasa al-Amīriyya.[61] From an early age, al-Bandak expressed interest in music and started playing *ʿūd* at age eight. The elementary school principal at the time was Faḍīl Nimir, who was also a violinist and a music lover from Ramallah (Shūmalī 2010). Nimir established a choir at the school in 1937, and to encourage

[60] He is the son of 'Īsa al-Bandak (see Chapter 2).

[61] Currently a high school from tenth to twelfth grade. Its name changed to Bethlehem High School for Males; for more information see http://blbss.blogspot.com

students to join; he selected then eleven-year-old al-Bandak to sing to students every morning (ibid.). Al-Bandak sang songs by Egyptian masters such as Sayyid Darwīsh, Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahāb, and Abū al-ʿIlā Muḥammad and became popular at school and in town and started to sing in parties and weddings (al-Jūzī 2010). Bethlehem, at the time, was a village of around seven thousand people (Haiduc-Dale 2015). His father was not content with the path his son has chosen, so he sent him to a boarding school called al-Nahḍa near al-Baqʿa region, Jordan (Shūmalī 2010). However, when his father was arrested by the British and sent into exile to Cyprus in 1938, young al-Bandak left al-Nahḍa boarding school and transferred to the Terra Sancta College in Bethlehem, a Catholic school (ibid.).[62] It was at Terra Sancta where he found a nurturing musical environment under al-Batrūnī and learned how to read music (ibid.). At age twelve, he joined PBS and was named as one of its singers.[63]

By 1943, al-Bandak was already composing songs for PBS singers, including ʿĀmir Khaddāj and his wife Sanāʾ, Mary ʿAkkāwī, Fahid Najjār, Kāẓim al-Sibāsī, Ghāzī, and others (al-Jūzī 2010). He joined NEBS from 1944 to 1946, and during this period, he taught music at various private schools in Yāfā (the *Dhakhīra* magazine, 1946). Al-Bandak rejoined PBS in 1946 and remained there until the events of 1948, and then left for Syria (al-Jūzī 2010; al-Shūmalī 2010). At age twenty-two, al-Bandak got featured as a composer/singer at Radio Damascus and in a special concert at the station; he sang a new song entitled "Ah Min ʿAynayk." The song left a lasting impression on Mary Jubrān, who was one of the best singers in Syria at the time. Jubrān

[62] For more information see https://www.custodia.org/en/custody-and-its-history

[63] In an interview via Facebook messenger, Majdi al-Shūmalī mentioned that he obtained this information from Riyāḍ al-Bandak directly. He also collected some information about him from an article in the *Jīl* magazine, which was published in Syria by Riyāḍ's brother, Māzin. Al-Shūmalī also interviewed Riyāḍ's sister Su'ād (al-Shūmalī [Interview], 2017).

approached him immediately after the event and asked to cover the song, and al-Bandak agreed. Within days, Jubrān sang it live on the radio, and the song became an instant hit. Subsequently, they were both invited to Radio Lebanon to record it, and it was then when the station offered al-Bandak to become the head of the music section, a position that he held until 1950 (al-Shūmalī 2010).[64] During this period, he reorganized the structure of the Arab music section at the station (al-Jūzī 2010).

He returned to Radio Damascus in 1950 while under the direction of Aḥmad ʿAssah (al-Jūzī 2010) and was appointed as supervisor of the music section and established the station's first music ensemble (al-Shūmalī 2010). He was responsible for all music ensembles, as well as overseeing all recordings at the station. During this period, he composed for Karawān, Mary Jubrān, Zakiyya Ḥamdān, Nūr al-Huda, Suʿād Muḥammad and Fāyza Aḥmad (ibid.). Content with his new role as composer, not singer, he retired from singing and dedicated all his time to composing and arranging, as well as focusing on the establishment of music ensembles at the station (al-Shūmalī 2010).

After the Free Officers Movement in Egypt in 1952, the new government established in 1953 a new radio station and called it Ṣawt al-ʿArab (Voice of Arabs). Al-Bandak was asked to become one of the founders of its music section (al-Shūmalī 2010). At Ṣawṭ al-ʿArab, al-Bandak composed many patriotic songs that became extremely popular throughout the region to the level the promoted Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, the future President of Egypt, to ask to meet with him (ibid.). The songs he wrote fell in the context of pan-Arab ideology, for which he was an advocate. An example of this is "Abṭāl al-Ghad," which was written by Muḥammad Riḍa al-Shabībī (1889-

[64] The only recording available of this song is a recent one by Mayada Bseliss at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KTvV7jwDPn8.

1965), an Iraqi politician and national symbol of the struggle for Iraq's independence. Al-Bandak wrote the song in 1953 in Egypt, and it was heard on Ṣawt al-ʿArab by Kārim Maḥmūd, a renowned Egyptian singer.

Al-Bandak's tenure at Ṣawṭ al-ʿArab Radio feeds into his direct association with the pan-Arab nationalist movement led by Egypt, a position that would summon various conflicts in his career to emerge. An example of this is the Baghdad Pact, which was formed by Iran, Iraq, Pakistan, Turkey, and the United Kingdom in 1955. As a military alliance, the Pact was fought fiercely by Jamāl ʿAbd al-Nāṣir (Abū Dayya [Awwal] 2010). King Ḥusain of Jordan, meanwhile, found himself in a situation facing internal turmoil if he chooses to join the Pact as well as increasing pressure to enter it; but essentially decided to be neutral (ibid.). However, Ḥusain implemented various measures to prevent any backlashes in the street, including heightened security and censorship, which included banning all Jordanians from listening to Ṣawṭ al-ʿArab Radio (ʿAwwād 2009; Buṭrus 2019). All those who challenged this ban subjected themselves to imprisonment (al-Shūmalī 2010). Because of the evolving hostilities between Egypt and Jordan, al-Bandak's songs did not reach Jordanian audiences, including all Palestinians in the West Bank, a sacrifice that he repeatedly lamented (ibid.). Both Jordan and Lebanon had positions that were not favored by ʿAbd al-Nāṣir, and therefore, their relationships with Egypt were becoming increasingly more intense (ʿAṭiyya 2015; Abū Dayya [Awwal] 2010). Although his father, ʿĪsa al-Bandak, occupied a high governmental position in the Jordanian government during the same period, between 1957 and 1961, al-Bandak restricted his activities around Syria and Egypt.

When the United Arab Republic (UAR) was founded in 1958 as a political union between Syria and Egypt, the union reflected a sense of Arab nationalism and solidarity and was driven mainly by a desire to overcome dividing borders, which was viewed by many as an artificial

creation of European colonial powers. However, the union eventually collapsed in 1961, when Syria, following a military coup, withdrew its membership. After the dissolution of the UAR in 1961, al-Bandak moved to Beirut until 1967.

According to al-Rūmī, al-Bandak became a contracted composer at Radio Lebanon in 1962 (al-Rūmī, 1992). It was during this period when he composed and recorded several songs for the station. The songs were short and lightly arranged, in line with the common modernizing trends in Lebanon at the time. A group of female and male singers sang all 22 songs, and no solo vocalists were featured. Up to this point, al-Bandak favored extended forms in terms of length and approached modernization of Arab music based on the aesthetics of *maqām* rather than Western devices. The following table shows the general categories of such songs and the dialects used:

Table 6. Riyāḍ al-Bandak songs at Radio Lebanon (1962)

Subject or Theme	No. of Songs	Dialect
Countryside, and Nature Nostalgia	15	3 Standard Arabic
Patriotic	3	Standard Arabic
Religious	2	Standard Arabic
Children Religious Holiday	2	Lebanese
Total time	62 minutes	2.8 minutes average duration per songs

Of the fifteen songs themed after the countryside, nature, and nostalgia, eight songs featured the buzuq as the main instrument, as shown in “Ghizlān al-Wādī” (recording 23), and “Ṣabāḥ al-Khair” (recording 24). A feature that was strongly presented in PBS and NEBS before 1948 and was a significant fixture in the post-PBS era at the Jerusalem Radio through al-ʿĀṣ.

The strategic objective of such productions, however, was not only manifested through the duration of the pieces but in the themes of the songs. Such ideals were previously laid out by Ṣabrī al-Sharīf in his manifesto. Including the notion of the imagined place, which is a deliberate

attempt to separate local music from Egyptian styles in terms of function, cultural value, performance, harmony, and general approach to music-making (Stone 2010; al-Sharīf 1957). The establishment of a Lebanese national style was adopted by Radio Lebanon primarily through the initiatives and restructuring efforts that al-Rūmī, who was commissioned to design and lead the implementation in 1950, after al-Bandak's departure.

Although al-Rūmi, al-Bandak, and al-Sharīf worked at the NEBS in the music section, al-Sharīf collaborated with ʿUṣbat al-Khamsa, not with any of the other Palestinian composers. It is likely that while al-Sharīf shifted his interest towards utilizing local music, he also wanted to distance himself from the composers who were associated with the Arab Renaissance school of composition, especially that of Egypt, to which many continued to be faithful. He also wanted to collaborate with composers who would reflect this approach through the lyrics, which the Raḥbanī Brothers fulfilled but not al-Rūmī or al-Bandak.

After 1967, al-Bandak composed several songs for Ṣawt Falasṭīn Radio Station. In this repertoire, he shifted to making clear political statements. An example of this is the anthem song "Ngātil Wiḥnā Wagifīn" (We Fight While Standing; recording 25). The lyrics are by Muḥammad Ḥasīb al-Qāḍī (1935-2010), who was born in Yāfā and fled with his family to Gaza in 1948 (al-Qāḍī).[65] The song is about two minutes long and set to *maqām huzām* over a fast 10/8 *samāʿī thaqīl* rhythm, which is commonly used in *muwashshaḥ* and is unusual for the anthem genre. A male chorus singing with a forceful demeanor carried the vocal line. The lyrics are in a local Palestinian dialect from Gaza. Based on the date that was attached to the recording by Arab the

[65] More information about his is found at his official website https://haseebalkadi.net/about/

Organization for Education, Culture, and Science (ALECSO), it was recorded in 1968, and thus al-Bandak did not compose in the Palestinian dialect for almost two decades.

"Ngatil Wiḥnā Wagifīn," lyrics:

نقاتل وِحْنا واقفين تنْحَقِّق النَصر المُبين
ولا نِعيشَ خاضعين ولا نِعودَ لاجئين
حِنَا بجِبال خْيامنا شْنَقْنا جوعنا وذُلّنا
بِكفينا هالعشرين سَنة وحِنَّا بقيود مْكَبَّلين
بارودتي ذْراعي اليَمين ورْصاصي حَبَّاتِ العُيون
وأبويا قال لي يوم ما ماتْ إتعلموا مِن الزَتون
وقاتلوا وانتو واقفين ولا تِعيشوا خاضعين
ولا تِعودوا لاجئين تنْحَقّق النصر المُبين

"Ngātil Wiḥnā Wagifīn," translation

We fight while standing until victory
Better than living as subordinates and refugees
Using the ropes of our tends We hung hunger and humiliation
Twenty years are enough being handcuffed in chains
My rifle is in my right arm and bullets are my mates
My father told me just before he passed: "Learn from olive trees, and
fight while standing, and do not submit.
Do not go back to being refugees, and pursue victory."

Throughout his career, al-Bandak favored *maqām*-driven compositions that were in line with the practices of the Arab Renaissance, which revolved around the musical arts of Egypt and Syria in terms of melodic contours, modulations, and form. Like many Palestinian composers of his generation, he could compose in pure Egyptian or Syrian styles in both vocal and instrumental contexts as well as combining the two. His ability to navigate the two schools earned him high visibility in both countries. An example of his mastery of the Egyptian approach to composition is "Yā Lail," a song that he composed for Mary Jubrān in 1954, illustrated in recording 26. The song is set in colloquial Egyptian and fits comfortably in the "classic" Egyptian song types of the time. The eighteen-minute-long song is in *maqām* Rāḥit al-Arwāḥ

and modulates to *maqām bayātī* in the B section and explores the upper range of *bayātī* in the C section and introduces *rāst*, all connected with instrumental parts and fillings. The song moves to *maqām kurdī* in the D section and then returns to the original *maqām* of Raḥit al-Arwāḥ.

The song covers a wide melodic range. Its melodic contour, ensemble work, intonation, ornamentation, embellishments, and use of passing and neighboring tones follow through on the traditions of the contemporary classical composers of Egypt such as Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahāb, Muḥammad al-Qaṣabji, Zakariyya Aḥmad, and Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī. Jubrān's singing style also matches the style of Egyptian female masters of the day, such as Um Kulthūm, Fatiḥiyya Aḥmad, Asmahān, and Layla Murād.

Many patriotic songs about Palestine that al-Bandak composed for singers after 1948 were in standard Arabic or local dialects. For example, the song Um al-Shahīd (Martyr's Mother) was produced after 1967 and was sung by Muṣṭafa Fuad, an Egyptian singer, who pronounced standard Arabic based on standard pronunciation, not Egyptian. The song calls upon various aspects of Syrian musical arts, which pertain to the use of rhythm, instrumentation, as well as the application of fewer embellishments and ornamentations when pertains to the vocal line, as shown in recording 27.[66] The "Ṭalaʿat Layla Maʿ al-Fajr" qaṣīda song that he composed for Lūr Dakkāsh demonstrates how al-Bandak took his composition closer to the Aleppo *muwashshaḥ* in terms of the usage of rhythm as well as the vocal style (see recording 28).

Al-Bandak was a prolific composer with over two thousand compositions (al-Jūzī 2010). Most of his songs revolve around love, and despite his many patriotic songs, he mostly sustained

[66] This file was obtained through the Project of Reviving Palestinian Written and Audiovisual Heritage as part of the Palestine National Archives. The project is sponsored by Palestinian National Committee for Education, Culture and Science; and supported by the Arab Organization for Education, Culture and Science (ALECSO). Executive manager Huṣain Nāzik.

an apolitical attitude during and after his tenure at PBS, NEBS, and for the rest of his career. He was able to compose in multiple styles and mastered the Palestinian *qaṣīda* song type, as well as patriotic songs. He sustained a consistent level of engagement in composing Palestinian *qaṣīda* songs, a trend that flourished during his years at PBS, NEBS, and continued with him for the rest of his life. There are hundreds of references to his performances on PBS and NEBS. The range of music that he composed includes vocal, instrumental, film, and musicals. Al-Bandak wrote the score for the 1946 Palestinian film "Umniyatī." Ṣalāh al-Dīn Badirkhān directed the film, which was noted in the *Muntada* on August 16, 1946 (no. 28, 18) and in Maḥmūd Qāsim's *Mawsūʿit al-Aflām al-ʿArabiyya 1927-2006* (Arab Movies Encyclopedia 1927-2006).

3.4 Ḥalīm al-Rūmī

In his memoir, Ḥalīm al-Rūmī states that his family is originally from Ṣūr (Tyre), Lebanon. Palestinian and Lebanese sources point to ʿAwaḍ al-Rūmī, Ḥalīm's father, moving to Haifa sometime during or after World War I and opened an art studio. Ḥalīm attended the Episcopate School of Melkite Catholics in Haifa under principal Father Joachim Qirdāḥī. The school was reputable for its high level of education and a model for the rest of the schools in town. It was, however, considered a destination for low-income families (Turkī 2019). Meanwhile, the College des Freres in Haifa, which is one of the Lasallian educational institutions, was considered the destination for wealthy families (ibid.). The two schools would fight over a magnitude of reasons, including over tensions between the poor and the wealthy (ibid.). Al-Rūmī started singing at school by joining the choir. Qirdāḥī was not keen on young al-Rūmī singing Um Kulthūm songs to fellow students during recess. However, the school's Assistant Principal, Father Jibrāʾīl Mṣūbiʿ encouraged al-Rūmī to sing and got him engaged in various school activities that involved music (Ḥassūn 2007).

A town of over 20,000 people at the time, Haifa was vibrant, overgrowing, and offering many opportunities (Manṣūr 2015). With a network of trains that covered the most important urban destinations in the region, Haifa was becoming a hub for business and culture. The Damascus-Haifa train line opened in 1905, a 161-kilometer track when Haifa was only a town of 7,000 residents (ibid.). Trains served both passengers and merchants and made multiple stops along the way. The lines included modern passenger coaches, sleeping and dining cars, luxury cars, and day and night entertainment cars.

In 1930, the Haifa Music Club, which was established by Salīm al-Ḥilu, and al-Rūmī started to take ʿ*ūd* with a teacher by the name Yūsif (al-Ḥaj 2017).[67] Al-Rūmī was not satisfied with the pace of his studies and considered finding another instructor. He stumbled upon a musician by the name Fawzī Salīm, an upholster. Al-Rūmī became fond of his new teacher, who taught him what he knew about music without reservations. Al-Rūmī said, "Today, and after 30 years, I must say that the biggest gratitude goes to my teacher Fawzī Salīm, whose kindness I shall never forget to the day I die" (16).

Al-Rūmī wanted to take his interest in music a step further in Egypt but did not have the financial resources to pursue it. In a visit to Haifa in 1934, Qadrī Ṭūqān (1910-1971), who was a science teacher in al-Najāḥ College in Nablus, heard al-Rūmī's singing and invited him over to sing in a private gathering in Nablus.[68] The get-together took place at the house of ʿAbd al-Rāziq Ṭūqān, who was mayor of Nablus at the time. After the encounter, a close friend of al-Rūmi's by the name of Muṭlaq Abd al-Khāliq, a poet, suggested to al-Rūmi that he try to sing to Prince

[67] Only the teacher's first name is mentioned.

[68] Qadrī Ṭūqān appeared regularly in PBS programming. He became Jordan's Foreign Minister in 1964.

ʿAbdullah of Transjordan at the time.[69] Al-Rūmī pursued his friend's suggestion, and upon his meeting with Qadrī Ṭūqān, he asked him to write a letter of recommendation, and Ṭūqān agreed (al-Ḥaj 2017). Al-Rūmī took the note and traveled to Amman, and upon arrival, he gave it to ʿAlāʾ al-Dīn Ṭūqān, Qadrī's uncle, who was mayor of Amman. The very next day, al-Rūmī was received at Raghadān Palace by the Prince's entourage. After dinner, al-Rūmī accompanied himself on the ʿūd and sang one of his compositions, with poetry by his poet friend Muṭlaq ʿAbd al-Khāliq (ibid).

Al-Rūmī got well paid for his performance, and immediately tried to utilize the opportunity by heading to Egypt, but he was not able to obtain a visa (ibid.). It was in 1937 that al-Rūmī was finally able to receive a visa to Egypt upon recommendation from Muḥammad al-Qasmāwī, the Egyptian Deputy Minister of Education at the time who he met in Sūq al-Gharb (West Market), Lebanon while vacationing in the summer (ibid.).

In November 1937, al-Rūmī headed to Cairo, Egypt, and enrolled at the Royal Institute of Arab Music, known as King Fuad I Institute of Arab Music.[70] In 1938, he appeared on Radio Cairo and sang one of his compositions "Yā Ḥabīb al-Rūḥ," poetry by his late friend Muṭlaq ʿAbd al-Khākiq (Ḥassūn 2007). Within a short period, he became well known both as a singer and composer (Ḥaj 2017). Al-Rūmī graduated with a diploma in music in a record two years (al-Jūzī 2010). During this period, he joined the group Samar al-Lail with Zakariyya Aḥmad, Muḥammad Ṣādiq as its singer, al-Sunbāṭī, Yaʿqūb Ṭatyus, and Muḥammad al-Baḥr (ibid.).

[69] Abd al-Khāliq was born in Nazareth in 1910. He received his education in Nazareth and Jerusalem and then worked in Haifa for local newspapers. He became an activist and advocated for the right of Palestinian political prisoners in British jails; died in a car accident in 1937 ('Abd al-Khāliq 1938).

[70] Currently the High Institute of Arab Music.

In 1941, al-Rūmī headed back to Haifa to help his family, which was struggling financially (Ḥassūn 2007). At first, al-Rūmī approached PBS and asked for a job as a composer and singer. The PBS director at the time asked al-Rūmī to audition by composing a poem. According to Jan Ḥassūn (2007), when al-Rūmī delivered the song the director did not like it. He requested that al-Rūmī either re-compose it or concede and accept a position at PBS as a member of the chorus. Al-Rūmī was offended and declined the offer. He told the director that he would regret this unjust decision and described him as an outsider to music-making (12.). He was likely referring to Nuwayhiḍ. However, al-Labābīdī, the director of the music section at NEBS at the time, invited al-Rūmī to join the new station. He offered him to be the principal singer, composer, and ʿūd player and subsequently joined NEBS on November 17, 1941 (ibid.).

In 1945, al-Rūmī explored acting in two Egyptian films where he played minor roles. However, his success was minimal, so he headed back to Haifa and got promoted to assistant director of the music section and then, within a few years, to director of the music section. Based on his many contributions to NEBS in terms of its structure and organization as well as its artistic course, he was eventually promoted to music consultant, a position that he held until he moved to Cyprus after the events of 1948 (Ḥassūn 2007).

Al-Rūmī did not last long in Cyprus and instead headed to Egypt, where he contributed a few songs to two films, "Amar Arbaʿtaʿsh," and "Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ayyūbi." While in Egypt, in 1949, he married Mary Luṭfī, who he met early on in Haifa (al-Ḥaj 2017). In January 1950, al-Rūmī was heading back to Cyprus to resume his duties as a music consultant for NEBS and made a quick stop in Lebanon to spend what remained of his honeymoon. During his visit, he visited Radio Lebanon. He was received by Fāʾiz Makārim, former General Director of the News Ministry, who was accompanied by his assistant Ḥāfiẓ Taqy al-Dīn. They had a conversation

about the station and the developments that were taking shape. During this conversation, Makārim asked al-Rūmī to work for Radio Lebanon and re-establish and organize the music section to the same methods that al-Rūmī implemented at NEBS's music section (al-Rūmī 1992). Al-Rūmī refused given his permanent contract with NEBS, which required him to return to his post immediately. Makārim insisted and pressured him to accept, but al-Rūmī reiterated his refusal.

Makārim issued an informal decree to force al-Rūmī to accept the offer. He threatened to inform the Lebanese Directorate of National Security about al-Rūmī's refusal to serve his country of origin at times of need. The Directorate would then issue an ordinance that would, by law, ban al-Rūmī from traveling out of Lebanon. The ordinance would be valid until the needed duty of a patriotic nature was concluded and fulfilled (al-Rūmī 1992). Al-Rūmī took his threat seriously and feared to lose everything he so hard worked for, so he reluctantly accepted (ibid.). The initial contract lasted for three months, during which he took a leave of absence from NEBS.

In his memoir, al-Rūmī describes in detail the condition of Radio Lebanon, its music section, and the state of music-making in Lebanon at that time. He started to offer contracts to musicians and composers, including those from PBS and NEBS. Not long after he took charge of restructuring the music section at Radio Lebanon, he managed to put together a big ensemble (ibid.). In May of the same year, upon the expiration of his contract with Radio Lebanon, he was given a choice to extend it or head back to Cyprus to resume his duties at NEBS. Al-Rūmī was enjoying his lifestyle in Beirut, where he would meet with friends and was by then well established as Lebanon's most prominent singer. He was at the center of music-making and got attention from audiences, so he accepted the offer and stayed.

Al-Rūmī recalls that at the time, he wanted to settle, start a family, and have some stability in his life, and this would not have been possible in Cyprus. He thought about this position as allowing him to achieve what he always dreamed of as well as secure his profession as a composer, singer, and producer. In 1953, after several renewals of his contract, al-Rūmī was offered a permanent position as Head of the Music Section at Radio Lebanon. By then, he acknowledged that he had achieved everything that he wanted, including becoming the singer who everyone admired, a respected composer, and an avid producer, as well as having established a family.

As Head of the Music Section, al-Rūmī believed that local music must free itself from the constraints of reliance on other types of music, including Egyptian. He believed that it must occupy a prominent and independent international spot and evolve on its own. In 1950, he started writing a column in the *Radio Lebanon Weekly* magazine to review the radio programming and songs. He seemed to have realized early on that for music to progress in Lebanon, an effective mechanism to comment on the scene must be in place. Therefore, he reached an agreement with Badīʿ Sarbiyyaih, the editor of the magazine, to sign the column as al-Nāqid al-Majhūl (the anonymous critic) (al-Rūmī 1992). Al-Rūmī encouraged Lebanese artists to find their voice, especially those who, in his own words, rebelled and revolted against imported music. He argued that the overwhelming control of imported music over music-making in Lebanon undermines the possibilities that can emerge from Lebanon's soil. One of those that he praised as early pioneers of local style is al-Lababīdī, the one who first offered him a position in 1941 at NEBS.

The detailed accounts that al-Rūmī included in his memoir also include information about the technical nature of the whole operation as well as listing the names of musicians and

administrators and their positions and salaries. He also described the state of the Lebanese song at the time as follows:

> Up until 1950, Lebanese music was generally still a submissive art, not a regional art with a character that is distinctly free and independent. Egyptian dialect was the main component in most of the repertoire and dominated its personality and style. Except for a handful of songs set to a hesitating Lebanese dialect, or in bold Bedouin dialect, which was yet another current trend. (al-Rūmī 1992, 16)

Al-Rūmī's engagement in music-making took multiple forms. He discovered and trained new singers, including Fayrūz, and composed for many singers in a wide variety of styles, including the *qaṣīda* song, a song type that he brought with him from Palestine. Moreover, he appeared in various formal settings such as forums and conferences, where he addressed issues of intonation and use of harmony, instrumentation, form, and *maqām* (al-Rūmī 1992). He presented his vision through his compositions and management style of the music section at the station.

According to his memoir, al-Rūmī composed over 560 pieces, both instrumental and vocal, and encompassing various genres. Many of his songs continue to live on to this day. Most of his works, except for a few published in Egypt, he recorded for Radio Lebanon. However, the remaining songs he either recorded at NEBS and their whereabouts are unknown to this day or were live broadcasts that never got recorded.

Al-Rūmī had dozens of hit songs, including "Qabiltu min Ghair Miʿād," which he composed for Mary Jubrān in 1950. Another is the song "Yarnū Biṭarfin" (recording 29), one of three *muwashshaḥāt* that he wrote in 1971, when he won the *muwashshaḥ* composition competition in Tunisia (Hassūn 2007). His song "Irādat al-Shaʿb" (1951; recording 16), is one of his most known as well (discussed earlier in the chapter).

Al-Rūmī prestigious win of the *muwashshaḥ* composition competition in Tunisia was a source of great pride to him, one that he repeatedly mentioned in various places in his memoir. The event was highly respected throughout the Arab world, and governments used to provide champions with comprehensive media coverage and official recognitions and medals. Although Palestinian composers and singers were the ones to champion the *muwashshaḥ* tradition in Lebanon as attested to by Manṣūr Raḥbānī and several others, they also brought the *qaṣīda* song. This Arab Renaissance genre evolved in a different direction from its Egyptian parallel at PBS and NEBS through mainly Palestinian composers. Over a fifth of al-Rūmī's vocal compositions are *qaṣīda* songs, exceeding the number of *qaṣīda* songs composed by al-Sunbātī, Muḥammad al-Qaṣabji, and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahāb combined.[71]

3.4.1 The Claims Over al-Rūmī

As to where and when al-Rūmī was born, this piece of information was not mentioned in his published memoir. The evidence that Palestinian and Lebanese sources present in this regard is questionable, conflicting, inconclusive, and exhibits various gaps, inconsistencies, as well as nationalistic biases from both sides. Al-Ḥaj points to al-Rūmī's family as arriving in Palestine in 1922, while Ḥassūn points to 1923. Al-Rūmī himself does not clarify this issue, but rather mentions 1917 and 1919 as his birth years in two separate interviews (al-Ḥaj 2017). However, both Palestinian and Lebanese sources seem to agree that al-Rūmī was born towards the end of the second decade of the twentieth century. Palestinian sources point to al-Rūmī being born in Nazareth, while Lebanese sources indicate that he was born in Ṣūr (Tyre). In his 2017 book

[71] Muḥammad ʻAbd al-Wahāb composed around 70 songs in standard Arabic. Almost 30 were patriotic. Riyāḍ al-Sunbāṭī composer about two dozen songs in standard Arabic, including a handful of patriotic songs. Muḥammad al-Qasabjī composed around ten songs in standard Arabic.

about al-Rūmī, the author Badīʿ al-Ḥāj included images of an official document that stated al-Rūmī's place and year of birth. The document is a handwritten reproduction of earlier records and was stamped formally in 2016. The birthdate of al-Rūmī's on it refers to 1915, not 1917 or 1919. Nevertheless, al-Ḥaj argues that al-Rūmī's birth year is 1919.

Some Palestinian sources point to an older brother of al-Rūmi's who was born in 1915 but died while still a young child. While the story cannot be verified, it is a viable possibility given that it was common during that period to use official records of a deceased sibling as well as his/her name for a newly born. This practice was common to avoid the hassle of obtaining official records, a task that often called for long-distance travel to the closest governmental facility that issued such documents.[72]

To add a different perspective to this strife, I feel it is necessary to note that the physical distance from Ṣūr to Haifa is 56 kilometers. Until the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the region that is now Palestine (and Israel), Lebanon, Syria, and Jordan was divided into Ottoman administrative units. Each was called *vilayet,* meaning province or state (Arsalān 2011). Both Haifa and Ṣūr were part of the Beirut *vilayet* since 1888 (ibid.). Despite such divisions, the people who lived in the region for centuries continued to sustain familial lineage (Manṣūr 2015). Haifa and Ṣūr have had a tight connection for centuries, not only as two essential business hubs, but also through kinship, marriages, customs, and culture (ibid.). Therefore, I see no value of approaching al-Rūmī's citizenship as the basis for labeling his musical contributions in nationalistic terms. Instead, I argue that since al-Rūmī's education and career were conceived and took off while residing in Haifa, I approach his work in Palestine as the first station in his

[72] Records and testimonies in my own family attest to this practice.

career and based on that context. I approach his works after 1948 in a similar fashion. Meanwhile, I examine the sensitivities surrounding the issue of local nationalisms in al-Rūmī's life while residing in Lebanon because they seem to relate to how geopolitical tensions were shaped.

I also argue that if al-Rūmī's birth year is somewhere in the vicinity of 1919, that still makes him at the peak of his adulthood and career when he fled Palestine in 1948. Therefore, for his published memoir to start only from the moment he laid foot into Radio Lebanon in 1950 is questionable. His career in Palestine before 1948 was covered in newspapers, magazines as well as in PBS and NEBS publications. Hundreds of entries and articles mention his name and include titles of his song as well as his photos. He was referred to as NEBS's most prominent singer and composer, and he was acknowledged locally and in Egypt well before he joined NEBS.[73] Also, a considerable portion of programming at NEBS was allocated to him regularly where he would primarily sing his compositions, and possibly some popular covers. He would appear three to four times per week and perform from fifteen to thirty minutes each time, occasionally longer. Al-Rūmī was extremely popular to the level that he was nicknamed Kawkab al-Idhāʿa (the planet [star] of NEBS). Yet, the fact that the published memoir of al-Rūmī made no mention of any of this is doubtful. Besides, in his memoir, the word Palestine was mentioned only once in a statistical context. Even when he briefly mentioned the events of 1967—when Israel defeated the Arab armies and occupied the West Bank—the term Palestine was not mentioned.

To this issue, I examined Jan Ḥassūn's book about al-Rūmī, which he also published through al-Kaslik. The author adds a footnote on page fourteen, referring to details about al-

[73] See *Falasṭīn* newspaper February 8, 1942 (2), and the *Muntada* May 31, 1946.

Rūmī's family in Haifa. He labeled the information as from al-Rūmī's memoir, and in parentheses he added the word "unpublished." Al-Ḥaj also refers to receiving written and typed material from al-Rūmī family for his book, courtesy of al-Kaslik University. The details that al-Ḥaj included about the early years of al-Rūmī's life offer a strong hint that al-Rūmī has indeed written about his life in Palestine. I reached this conclusion based on the type of details that al-Ḥaj included about al-Rūmī, the schools he attended, the people he met, the places he had been, and other bibliographic information as well as anecdotes and clear chronological order of events. While all indicators point to an unknown period in al-Rūmī's life, al-Ḥaj dedicated five pages of his book to cover al-Rūmī's life before 1948, including mostly bibliographic information.

In his memoir, al-Rūmī leaves sporadic hints or shares certain emotions about certain things that prompted me to investigate further. For example, upon settling in Lebanon, al-Rūmī expressed that he paid a high price for making such choices, referring to his position at Radio Lebanon and settling permanently in Lebanon (al-Rūmī 1992). It is not entirely clear why al-Rūmī felt that way. Moreover, it is not clear why al-Rūmi signed his column as the Anonymous Critic instead of his real name, given his status and high profile. He also insisted that the details surrounding his identity remain secret. Some pointers in his memoir may offer a glimpse as to what he possibly meant. For example, while describing the state of Radio Lebanon at the structural and production levels, al-Rūmī sheds light on favoritism in hiring practices and political appointments and drew a detailed picture of some of his struggles at the station. It is, therefore, likely that al-Rūmī just wanted to stay out of trouble. An example of what kind of trouble he feared is an incident that took place in 1958. Upon the conclusion of the violent events and skirmishes of 1958 in Lebanon, on November 4, al-Rūmī was heading back to his office for the first time since July of the same year. When he arrived at the station, an armed individual

attempted to shoot him. This incident could have cost al-Rūmī his life if it were not for colleagues of his who protected him and prevented the shooting from taking place. Al-Rūmī complained about the encounter, and the man who attempted to kill him approached al-Rūmī and apologized. He claimed that it was all a "misunderstanding" (82).

Despite his official title as Head of Music Section at Radio Lebanon, he was forcefully removed from the position, while keeping the title on paper, and becoming the Acting Head of Recordings in 1962 (al-Rūmī 1992). Al-Rūmī was repeatedly denied from reclaiming his position. Throughout his memoir, he made references to the correspondences and interactions related to his complaint about this continuous denial and was convinced that some officials were working discretely against him. One unusual detail that stood out in his memoir is his repeated references to what he called *al-rajul al-thālith,* or The Third Man. Such references occurred at times of dire frustration, which he often encountered while on the job. Some relate to matters of recognition, respect, acknowledgment, entitlement, and some to obstacles and conspiracies against him. He continuously claimed that such attempts intended to prevent his career advancement and to keep him away from any decision-making capacity. The phrase *al-rajul al-thālith* is mentioned on pages 122, 120, 125, 126, 131, and 133. As I went through his memoir several times over, I could not help but hypothesize that al-Rūmī was indirectly referring to al-Maktab al-Thāni, or Second Office [bureau], the unofficial name of the Lebanese Military Intelligence Service. It seems that al-Rūmī's references, both direct and indirect, were not merely his impressions or feelings regarding his life and career. Instead, they were potentially statements about how political considerations were primarily the reason for the difficulties that he experienced.

After winning the *muwashshaḥ* competition in Tunisia in 1971, he returned to Beirut, anticipating a warm welcome and official acknowledgments. Unfortunately, none took place, and he was quite disappointed and felt that it was deliberate (al-Rūmī 1992). According to Jalāl, Saḥāb recalled that al-Rūmī called him on the phone and sounded furious and wanted to meet with him urgently. Saḥāb was a journalist at the *Muḥarrir* newspaper at the time, a local leftist daily newspaper known for its sympathy towards Palestinians. Al-Rūmī trusted Saḥāb for being candid, understanding, and honest. He felt that he understood the dynamics of what he was going through (Jalāl 2014), because Saḥāb himself was born in Palestine and left it at age ten in 1948 (al-Muqaddim 2014). During that period of the beginning of the 1970s, tensions and clashes between the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) and right-wing Lebanese factions were visible. To the extent that Saḥāb himself did not sign his name as editor of the Palestinian *Shʾūn Falasṭīniyya* (*Palestinian Affairs* magazine), a job that he took on after his brief tenure at the *Muḥarrir* (ibid.). Al-Rūmī met with Saḥāb, and at some point during this meeting, with bitter frustration, al-Rūmī said that they [the state] did not want to celebrate his achievement because he is Palestinian (Jalāl 2014).

On page 152, al-Rūmī recalls ambiguously that in mid-1978, he was still in survival mode and rigorously combating strong currents that were pulling him down very harshly. It was when his opponents managed, once more, to work the system for their favor, and subsequently, his hope of landing higher positions was permanently over. On the back-cover page of his memoir, a non-signed three short paragraphs synopsis reads:

> In this book, the late *mūsiqar* [maestro] Ḥalīm al-Rūmī tells the story of his thirty-year service at the Lebanese Radio, which he spent between the bitterness of official career and creative artistic and musical works. The experience of *ustādh* [master] al-Rumi in this field is a rich one, during which he accompanied the development of music-making in Lebanon and the Arab World and did a decent job disclosing its caches and secrets. This memoir by al-Rūmī came as a statement of account where he exhibits his

> achievements and frustrations with soreness and unprecedented honesty, an approach that we rarely encounter from a talented artist who is tender and sensitive. (1992, back cover)

It seems that, as a Lebanese returnee, the notion of Palestinians and Palestine was bringing tensions into his life and career. According to Jalāl, if it were not for the events of 1948, al-Rūmī would have never left Palestine (Jalāl 2014).

The memoir was published nine years after his death in 1983, and nine months after all the Lebanese militias agreed to recognize the official end of the civil war in Lebanon. Therefore, I could not help but think that the timing of the publication, as well as Palestine's omission from its story, raised some serious questions about its composition and inclusiveness. Reading through his memoir felt at times superficial and disconnected, and often pointed me to other peculiar aspects that were potentially at play, including some heavy editing.

Although al-Rūmī was considered Lebanese at the time of hire, the notion of Lebanese and Palestinian as two independent national identities at that time was not rigidly viewed as such. Al-Ḥaj claims that al-Rūmī's family lost its Lebanese citizenship at some point after immigrating to Palestine. The documents that he used to confirm al-Rūmī's birthplace show that his application to obtain Lebanese citizenship was approved in 1952 (al-Ḥaj 2017). In a televised interview with Bayān Nuwayhiḍ-al-Ḥūt, she recalls that the whole notion of canton national identities—that is, Palestinian, Lebanese, Syrian, and so on—was not on anyone's mind during most of the first half of the twentieth century. Her father arrived in Jerusalem in 1920 as a Muslim Ottoman citizen, initially as a station before getting to Iraq. He, however, ended up pursuing a law degree in Jerusalem, settled, and practiced law, and occupied various other positions until the events of 1948. He obtained Palestinian citizenship when Palestine became officially under the British Mandate. He then got Jordanian citizenship after 1948 when he settled in Jordan. His daughter confirms that when her father permanently went back to Lebanon,

his birthplace, he was denied Lebanese citizenship despite his continuous attempts and died a Jordanian citizen (Abū Raqtī 2012). Al-Ḥūt claims that he was not the only one. During that period, many former Lebanese subjects, even those with birth certificates, were not granted Lebanese citizenship upon their return to Lebanon. Especially those who were politically active in the Arab World (ibid.). They were viewed suspiciously depending on their level and type of engagement outside their homeland.

Historically, Lebanon's political climate and religious sects have contributed to making it unstable, fragile, and at times explosive. Adding Palestinian refugees and Lebanese returnees to the equation altered its political landscape. Eventually, the presence of Palestinians became a destabilizing variable. Al-Rūmī probably realized early on that with matters that pertain to cultural policy, local nationalism, and identity, his input was perceived differently, coming from someone who is regarded by many as Palestinian, or not fully Lebanese.

It was not until nation-states started to get defined in terms of their politics, alliances, and makeup that canton identities began to become commonplace over collective Arab ones. It was then when geopolitical tensions began to manifest themselves on the ground. During that period, the presence of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was considered an emergency and temporary. The main concern in handling such an influx of refugees was to control the refugees' physical movement and monitor their political involvement, not to address their economic and social conditions. It was not until 1959 when the Legislative Decree no. 42 was issued, and the administration of all matters relating to Palestinian refugees in Lebanon was assigned to the Ministry of Interior. The Presidential Decree number 927 that was issued the same year defined the extent of the tasks involved and the nature of this administration as strictly a security matter. Subsequently, implementation was designated to the military security agency, al-Maktab al-

Thani (al-Ḥūt 2004, 37), the one at which al-Rūmī was presumably hinting. For high profile individuals such as al-Rūmī, who became a Lebanese citizen by the mid-1950s, to associate with other nationalities, identities, organizations, ideologies, or countries could be easily be interpreted as a threat to national security.

3.5 Rawḥī al-Khammāsh

Ḥabīb Ẓāhir ʿAbbās and Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Ḥāmīd ʿŪdaih (also Hishām ʿŪdaih) each wrote a book about al-Khammāsh, published in 1999 and 2015, respectively. ʿAbbās was one of al-Khammāsh's students, and ʿŪdaih was his friend and biographer. The two books offer different perspectives on his life. ʿAbbās's approach focused on various aspects of his musical life, while ʿŪdaih offered a perspective about his surroundings and encounters.

Al-Khammāsh was born on July 1, 1923, in Nablus, a city in the northern West Bank, approximately forty-nine kilometers north of Jerusalem. From a very young age, he showed interest in music, so his father bought him a little *ʿūd* and arranged for him to start taking lessons with a relative of his by the name Aḥmad ʿAbd al-Wāḥid al-Khammāsh, who studied ʿūd in Turkey (ʿŪdaih 2015). Within a year, he was able to perform intricate instrumental pieces such as "Bashraf Rast" by ʿĀṣim Baik, and "Bashraf Rast" by Yaʿqūb Ṭatyus and "ʿSamāʿī Bayātī Qadīm" by Sāmī al-Shawwā. At the age of nine, he had his first stage appearance on ʿūd in 1932 at the Arab Gallery in Jerusalem. The prominent violinist Sāmī al-Shawwā was present and encouraged him to pursue formal training in music (ibid.). It was by then apparent that he was a prodigy.

During that period, his father arranged for him to meet with various PBS visiting artists such as Sāmī al-Shawwā, as well as Um Kulthūm and Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahāb, all were well accomplished at the time (ʿŪdaih 2015). In 1933, Um Kulthūm got invited to perform in Yāfā at

the Abū Shākūsh Café Theater. In an informal gathering after the concert in the presence of Um Kulthūm, al-Khammāsh sang "Sakat wi al-Damʿ Tkallim," a song that was written by prominent Egyptian poet and lyricist Aḥmad Rāmī in Egyptian dialect and composed by Muḥammad al-Qasabjī for Um Kulthūm. Um Kulthūm was impressed by al-Khammāsh's performance and accuracy and kissed him on his forehead and had him sit on her lap (ibid.). By that time, his vocal abilities seem to have already developed. He was accompanying himself on the *ʿūd* while singing the most difficult songs of the period (ʿŪdaih 2015).

News spread fast about al-Khammāsh, and newspapers described him as a phenomenon. Subsequently, he got invited by ʿAbdallah bin al-Ḥusain, the Prince of Transjordan, to perform in his court (ibid.). After his performance, al-Khammāsh got invited by the Prince's nephew, King Ghāzī of Iraq. Al-Khammāsh traveled to Iraq and spent six months roaming the country as a guest of the Iraqi government and performing mainly at schools. In 1936, at age thirteen, he started working at PBS as a singer and an *ʿūd* player, and shortly after, in 1937, he enrolled at the Royal Institute of Arab Music, known as King Fuʾād I Institute of Arab Music, when he was 14.[74] He graduated in 1939 and returned to PBS in Jerusalem to his previous post but with much more at hand (ibid.).

Records show that al-Khammāsh was active at PBS as an *ʿūd* player, singer, composer, and bandleader with weekly appearances on air. He presented a wide variety of vocal and instrumental repertoire and in various formations, including solos, duets, trios, quartets. He also heavily engaged in composing *qaṣīda* songs. Records also show that al-Khammāsh collaborated with singers, choirs, lyricists, poets, and visiting artists. There are hundreds of entries in PBS

[74] Ḥalīm al-Rūmī joined at the same time, and they both were in the same cohort.

programs that include titles of his songs as well as the names of the lyricists and poets and singers who worked with him. There are also several short articles about him in PBS publications.

Based on the recordings and transcriptions that survived, al-Khammāsh seems to have found his voice early on, despite his early influences and exposure to Egyptian music. This characteristic was apparent to those who heard his music and subsequently attested to his originality, as shown in the *Muntada* issue of October 4, 1946 (no. 35, 15; Figure 45). The caption reads:

> Mr. Rawḥī al-Khammāsh. People knew him since he was little. Artistically nurtured since the day he was born, he now composes, plays, and sings in his style and method that is now known to all. Once you listen to his music, you shall recognize any of his pieces after that, the same as the great masters who established their schools and never imitated others. He realized how important music was for him, so he studied at the Egyptian Institute. An artist in his methods, and a man of character. The big heading here is that every generation has its ways in everything, and Rawḥī al-Khammāsh is a role model in how he behaves, and in how he lives, and in how he makes art. (15)

السيد روحي الخماش

عرفه الجمهور وهو صغير ، فقد رضع لبان الفن منذ عرف الدنيا . يلحن ويعزف ويطرب فى اسلوب خاص وطريقة معروفة . تسمع له بضعة الحان ، فاذا ما سمعت له بعد ثذ عرفته من لحنه وهـذا شأن اصحاب الطرق الاصيلة الذين لا يقلدون . ادرك الميل في نفسه، فدرس الموسيقى في المعهد المصري. فنان في طريقته وفنان في خلقه . والسيد روحي قدوة الفنان الذي ادرك ان الفن غاية الحياة ، وان عنوان ذلك لاسلوب الجيل في كل شيء — اسلوب السلوك واسلوب الحياة .

Figure 45. Rawḥī al-Khammāsh (1946)

While his works indeed were fixated on *maqām*, his attempts to contribute to its modernization were significant. Not only that he synthesized specific trendy characteristics that marked the period such as the short instrumental and vocal melodies that Muḥammad al-Qaṣabjī was known for, but also in terms of opening up to various other genres and cross-referencing them in a single piece or song. Examples of his innovations include the usage of *samāʿī* or *bashraf* as preludes, and injecting *mawwāl* and *muwashshaḥ* rhythms in *qaṣīda* songs, as well as writing in a vocal style where the lyrics and poetry are composed right on the beat with as little as possible of *tarḥīl*, or hovering over the beat or improvisation. An example of this would is the song "Insānī Yā Ḥub Kifāya," aired on PBS on Friday, June 6, 1947; al-Khammāsh likely carried Ḥasan ʿAbd al-Wahāb's lyrics in Egyptian dialect (the *Qāfila*, May 30, 1947, no. 9, 20). The

available recording, however, is by Narjis Shawqī, an Egyptian singer who worked the Iraqi music scene and sang in the Iraqi dialect. This song is in her native Egyptian tongue, and according to sources, she recorded this song in Iraq, presumably in the late 1940s (al-Maʿāḍīdī 2013). The duration of this recording and the time allocated for it in the PBS program are almost identical, which means that it possibly was performed the same way. In this case, the song begins with an instrumental prelude, *samāʿī*, the Ottoman instrumental musical form, on *maqām huzām*, as demonstrated in recording 30. This *samāʿī* is a stand-alone piece composed by Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahāb in 1933 (ʿAfīfī 2015). The ensemble played the first two sections of it, A and B, as well as the refrain R between them: AA RR B RR (retardation at the end).[75] This section took two minutes and 20 seconds total, followed by *taqāsīm* on *ʿūd* by al-Khammāsh for thirty seconds; then an instrumental opening melody in *huzām* for one minute and thirty seconds including the repeat, likely composed by al-Khammāsh for this song. The total instrumental position up to this point is four minutes and twenty-five seconds. His evolved organization was lengthy and included different *maqāmāt*, rhythms, ranges, and melodic hooks, while always returning to the main melodic theme from the A vocal section after every vocal verse as illustrated in table 7 below. The instrumental sections in the song are lengthy. At the opening, the ensemble played an instrumental melody twice, lasting over double the duration of the A vocal section (40 seconds long). No repeats occur in subsequent occurrences of the instrumental melody. Instead, it was played once lasting for forty-five seconds to keep the balance with the following vocal sections. As shown in the table below, the D2 section is where the vocalist freely improvised over an ostinato figure:

[75] The full *samāʿī* is AA RR B RR C RR D RR.

Table 7. Form, *maqām*, and rhythms, "Insānī Yā Ḥub Kifāya" (1947)

	I x 2	A	I	B	I	Ib	C	Ib	C	I	Ic	D	D2	A
Maqām	hu	hu	hu	hu ba hu	hu	ʿaj	ʿaj	ʿaj	ʿaj, ḥij hu mawwāl	hu	ṣa	ṣa	ṣa hu	hu
Rhythm	r1	r2	r1	r2	r1	r3	r3	r3	r3	r1	r1	r1	r1 r2 r3	r2

Legend: I = instrumental; A, B, C, D = vocal sections; r = rhythm; hu = *huzām*; ʿaj = *ʿajam*; ba = *bayātī*; ṣa = Ṣaba; ḥij = *ḥijāz*

Al-Khammāsh's conception of form seems versatile and inclusive of various configurations, a feature that he sustained in all his subsequent works. Based on the recordings of the time, the inclusion of an instrumental piece such as *samāʿī* or *bashraf* was not standard in this particular song type. Such instrumental pieces were typically performed in full or partially as preludes to *dawr* or *muwashshaḥ* and often in the context of a series of consecutive parts forming a suite or *waṣla*, but seldom as a prelude to a single relatively short song. However, it was not feasible for such long instrumental pieces to be included in the early vocal recordings given the available space on each side of the discs (see Racy 1976, 2004). Therefore, early vocal recordings seem to have included shorter musical instrumental forms such as the *dūlāb*; al-Jawhariyyeh and Racy attest to the existence of this practice. Nonetheless, al-Khammāsh's configuration points to how Palestinian composers utilized Egyptian and Ottoman compositional devices and forms and incorporated aspects of favored local practices such as the performance of muswashshaḥ in their songs. Since al-Khammāsh's first *ʿūd* teacher in Nablus studied *ʿūd* in Turkey, it explains his interest in playing Ottoman forms such as *samāʿī* and *bashraf*. Since he also studied in Egypt and became a master in its musical arts, bringing several musical arts

together in one configuration seemed natural to him. His roots, explorations, and early exposures helped him view music-making as a creative endeavor.

In July of 1948, al-Khammāsh headed to Iraq with the Iraqi military, which was stationed in Nablus after 1948. The number of Palestinians who settled in Iraq as refugees in 1948 is estimated to be around 10,000, but no real figures are available. Al-Khammāsh, however, was one of the lucky ones to obtain a permit that enabled him to distinguish himself from other refugees and avoid being drafted into the Carmel Brigades, a Palestinian unit within the Iraqi army, and he instead landed a job at the Iraq Radio. Al-Khammāsh was looking for job security, stability, and wanted to stay away from conflicts.

Upon his arrival to Baghdad, it was not long before he was acknowledged for his superb abilities to transcribe music, write, and read music, lead ensembles, and teaching skills. It was there when he met the master of *muwashshaḥāt* ʿAlī al-Darwīsh for the second time (ibid.). In his 2011 book, *al-Mūsiqa fī Sūriyya, Aʿlām wa Tārīkh* (Music in Syria: History and Icons), the author Ṣamīm al-Sharīf refers to ʿAlī al-Darwīsh's invitation by PBS in 1944 to record traditional Aleppo *muwashshaḥāt*. The invitation was also extended to a famous singer from Aleppo by the name Aḥmad al-Faqsh (al-Sharīf 2011). Both Darwīsh and Faqsh traveled to Jerusalem and worked with ʿAjāj Nuwayhiḍ, and met with al-Batrūnī, al-Saʿūdi and al-Khammāsh (ibid.). During his visit to Jerusalem, al-Darwīsh taught al-Khammāsh many muwashshaḥāt and coached him on muwashshaḥ structure, compositional devices, *maqāmāt*, and rhythms (al-Sharīf 2011; ʿŪdaih 2015). Al-Darwīsh went back to Aleppo a few months before the French mandate of Syria ended on April 17, 1946 (ibid.). Their second meeting in Baghdad was fruitful and kicked off several initiatives.

In 1948, just before al-Khammāsh's arrival to Baghdad, al-Darwīsh established the Andalusian Muwashshaḥ Ensemble for the Baghdad Radio. However, al-Darwīsh was already in his eighties, and his health was not all that well. He was looking forward to heading back to Aleppo, his hometown, and al-Khammāsh was just twenty-five years old (ʿŪdaih 2015). Al-Darwīsh recommended al-Khammāsh to coach the singers in muwashshaḥ songs and to take the lead eventually. In the summer of 1949, al-Darwīsh headed back to Aleppo and entrusted al-Khammāsh with leading the group (ibid.).

Previously, in 1936, the Iraqi Ministry of Education commissioned *ʿūd* master and composer Muḥyī al-Dīn Ḥaydar to lead the efforts set forth by the ministry to establish Iraq's first conservatory where he relied on teaching Western music theory. Born in 1892 in Istanbul, he was the son of ʿAlī Ḥaydar, an Arab, and the Emir of Mecca from 1916-1919 (Murād 1972). According to ʿAbbās (1999), when Ḥaydar settled in Turkey in 1949, al-Khammāsh started to teach *maqām* theory and focus on popularizing the *muwashshaḥ* and *qaṣīda* as well as local types of music. He advised which compositional devices and sensibilities to utilize while making new music and used the Conservatory as a platform for teaching and performing these types, old and new (ʿAbbās 1999). Essentially, al-Khammāsh started to steer music-making in Iraq towards a middle ground, rather than towards Turkey and the West.

In 1953, al-Khammāsh was appointed as faculty of Arab music theory, Arab music history, sight-reading, dictation, musicianship, and composition at the Baghdad Arts Institute (ʿAbbās 1999). During his tenure at the Institute, he taught various courses and was instrumental in updating the curriculum and creating new curricula. He immediately developed a specialized course for teaching *muwashshaḥ* and *nashīd* and initiated a training program to prepare new

faculty members for teaching the same classes. To understand music and performance practice, he believed that students must engage in performance through choirs and ensembles.

Al-Khammāsh was situated to influence and transform Iraqi music through a wider range of influences and methods. He achieved this through not only curricula and teaching, but also by being active in composing new music that integrated various influences with Iraq's musical fabric. His encounter with ʿAlī al-Darwīsh in PBS and later at Radio Baghdad was an opportunity for him to use the *muwashshaḥ* as the base for this transformation. The *muwashshaḥ* was not a popular genre in Iraq in comparison to other regions. Al-Khammāsh not only taught and composed this genre but added Egyptian and Syrian *maqām* sensibilities while intertwining with Iraqi *maqāmāt* and rhythms and taste, and he enhanced the then-Turkish instrumental methodology (Abbās 1999). He also managed to sustain a strong sense of originality, a pre-1948 distinctive trait that he carried to Iraq from Palestine. In technical terms, he achieved this by:

1. utilizing rhythmic cycles freely across genres;
2. using chromaticism to modulate to distant *maqāmāt* instead of relying on traditional tetrachord relationships;
3. using local melodic characteristics as well as short melodic phrases that mimic traditional music;
4. intertwining local Iraqi musical practices with Egyptian and Syrian ones and working across genres not only in terms of *maqām* but also through form, intonations, and performance practices (as shown in recording 31, "Mā Bālu ʿAynayka Tasʾal," poetry by Iraqi poet Nizār Jawād); and

5. sustaining the syllabic approach of composing muwashshaḥ, a compositional device that employs the use of short melisma on vowels.[76]

ʿAbbās (1999) mentions several of the ensembles that al-Khammāsh established and directed including Abnāʾ Dijlah (Sons of Tigris*),* and Firqit al-Inshād (Anthems Choir) which was under the Iraqi Radio and Television Agency. One of the most ambitious ensembles that he established in 1975 was the Institute Quintet, which was the formal group representing the Institute. Members of the group were the top professors at the Institute: Ghānim Haddād, violin; al-Khammāsh, *ʿūd*; Sālim al-Ḥusain, *qānūn*; Ḥusain Qaddūrī, cello; and Ḥusain ʿAbdallah, percussion. Their first public performance took place on January 6, 1976 in Baghdad and the group continued to be active until 1987. The quintet focused entirely on performing vocal compositions but with no vocals, only instrumentally. It also performed al-Khammāsh's instrumental compositions. This approach to performance was new, and it was probably yet another attempt to alter the public's love affair with vocal music and promote instrumental music as an alternative tool of expression. The Quintet pursued a wide range of pieces from light to elaborate, complex compositions. For the vocal parts that they covered, they were primarily already popular songs from Iraq, but the group would add improvisations and melodic hooks and fillings between sections. During that period, al-Khammāsh collaborated with the most prominent *ʿūd* maker at the time, Muḥammad Fāḍil, and advised a new seventh string for the *ʿūd*. He based his measurements on al-Fārābī's description. The seven-string *ʿūd* covered the range of three octaves, and al-Khammāsh used it to perform pieces that were composed in accommodation of its abilities such as Samāʿī Ḥjāz Kār Kurd (ʿAbbās 1999). In this piece, al-

[76] A characteristic that distinguishes the Aleppo *muwashshaḥ* from the long melisma and improvisatory nature of early Egyptian vocal music.

Khammāsh also integrated components of Iraqi music. While the last section of any *samāʿī* is set to a different compound meter, al-Khammāsh kept the tradition intact but used *jurjīnā*, a 10/16 rhythm that is most popular in Iraq.

Through his efforts, the heritage preservation movement in Iraq flourished. Iraq's government initiated several projects to preserve its musical culture, leading to various publications, transcriptions, and research. Al-Khammāsh contributed to providing a consistent pipeline of educated and skilled musicians capable of sustaining a vibrant music scene and high-quality productions. As for his views regarding the modernization of Arab music, al-Khammāsh viewed modernizing Arab music through the lenses of *maqām*, not Western music. He explored the properties of *maqām* and various compositional devices based on *maqām* methodologies and repertoire. Although his cohort al-Rūmī shared the same values and position with regards to preserving *maqām*; he believed that the inclusion of harmony was imperative to the development of Arab music.

Essentially, the Aleppo *muwashshaḥ* became a symbol of how al-Khammāsh transformed the Iraqi music scene. Moreover, his patriotic songs (*anāshīd*) became universal in Iraq's schools. His transcriptions of Iraqi repertoire, including peasant, *shaʿbī*, Arab, and the Iraqi Maqām genre, were published through various collaborations with Iraq's Ministry of Education and were incorporated in every academic setting, and performed during national celebrations (ʿAbbās 1999). Some of the songs were recorded and aired on radio and television at various times during his lifetime. Some of his religious songs, (*ibtihālāt*, sing. *ibtihāl*) continue to appear on Iraqi radio and television during religious and national holidays (ʿŪdaih 2015). Throughout his career al-Khammash composed over 100 compositions, including thirty *muwashshaḥāt*, fifteen Islamic religious songs, a dozen or so anthems, and over fifty instrumental pieces. His

patriotic songs were also generic but often fall in the realm of the Baʿth Party ideology, which advocated for a unified Arab World. The songs that we have a record of after 1948 are all in standard Arabic, and throughout his career in Iraq, there is no record of him composing in Egyptian. To this day, al-Khammāsh is considered among the most highly respected *ʿūd* masters, singers, composers, as well as educators in Iraq's modern history. His efforts and contributions and impact are appreciated and acknowledged to this day. He was not interested in competing with other musicians or composers. Instead, he depended entirely on his skillset and musicianship, which he believed were needed and would make him indispensable (ʿAbbās 1999; ʿŪdaih 2015).

At the personal level, al-Khammāsh kept a distance from the outside world and did not socialize much with individuals outside the music and art scenes. Never married, he retired in the mid-1980s but kept his engagement with the Institute, Radio and Television, and his audiences. He maintained the status of adjunct faculty and taught various courses at the Institute in addition to keeping ties with various other organizations. During the last twelve years of his life, al-Khammāsh spent more time at his 40-acre farm that he had bought earlier in the outskirts of Baghdad. Throughout his life, he sustained himself financially and supported his family in Nablus, Palestine.

Al-Khammāsh believed in Arab unity, but never committed himself to any political party. ʿŪdaih claims that al-Khammāsh always kept a distance from Palestinian factions that started to roam Iraq as early as the 1960s. An indication that by the time the PLO was gaining ground in the Arab world. It is also an indication that the PLO's version of Palestinian identity did not necessarily resonate with every Palestinian. On December 27, 1954, he obtained approval for acquiring Iraqi citizenship and attended the citizenship granting ceremony in January 1955. In

1955, the Iraqi government issued a law that prohibits giving Palestinian refugees Iraqi citizenship. He remained in Iraq until he died on September 1, 1998 (ʿŪdaih 2015).

3.6 From One Emerged Many

Several ideas about the future of music-making emerged from PBS and NEBS and were put to work and essentially gave rise to various new types of music. Such transformations can be seen in instrumentation, lyrics, dialects, form, intonations, harmony, texture, and song types. Ṭūqān, Nuwayhiḍ, al-Nashāshībī, and al-Sharīf believed that traditional material strengthens identity and patriotism and articulates the collective sentiment of most people. Therefore, the two stations contributed to transforming certain traditional song types into contemporary song types. These songs, however, still adhered to an apolitical intent.

PBS's nationalist vision under Ṭūqān, Nuwayhiḍ, and al-Nashāshībī was based on Arabic as a language, geography, and Islam (Nuwayhiḍ 1993). The PBS under them promoted *enhanced* peasant and Bedouin song types, patriotic, and religious programming. While little is known about the specifics of NEBS's vision, their broadcast programs point to certain trends favoring specific types of music as well as reflecting regional hierarchies, as shown earlier (see Chapter 2.10). Furthermore, and in contrast to PBS, NEBS put lesser emphasis on Islamic religious programming. The program of the week of April 6, 1947 in the *Qāfila* shows that NEBS allocated 6.5 hours per week for readings of the Qurʾan. That is 10.6% of its total programming, which was 61 hours per week at that time. PBS, on the other hand, allocated 7.25 hours per week to readings of the Qurʾan and religious songs, 19.8% of its programming. Their total broadcasting per week was 36.5 hours at that time.

In his 1957 lecture, al-Sharīf shed some light on the reasons behind such a wide difference. He harshly criticized the realities that Islam had created at the cultural level and

argued that before Islam, music was significant in both religious and worldly settings. He references the book *A Literary History of the Arabs* by Reynold A. Nicholson, first published in 1907. Nicholson did extensive research on this topic and based his findings on early writings, including *Kitāb al-Aghānī* by Abū al-Faraj al-Isfahānī (Nicholson 1953). Al-Sharīf argued that musical practices in the pre-Islamic era, despite their presence in religious contexts, used to "focus on mundane matters such as love, sex, entertainment, alcohol, gambling, hunting, listening, instant enjoyment, flirting while appreciating of witty lyrics" (al-Sharīf 1957, 426). He reiterated that Arabs sang as they prepared for war, when they were victors, and when they worked and socialized (ibid.). The arrival of Islam to the Arabian Peninsula, however, offered a new basis and guidelines for building societies, al-Sharīf argued. Therefore, the focus from worldly practices shifted towards religious ones, and the cultural impact of the prominent cultures of Yemen and Iraq subsided substantially during the first one hundred years after the arrival of Islam (ibid.). He attributes this to the fact that

> Worldly music fluctuated critically and could not evolve into musical heritage. Since Islam did not specify its position from mundane music; musicians had to fight their battles against Islamic ultraconservatives and their fierce anger. (428)

While both PBS and NEBS agreed that traditional materials were to be embraced and promoted as essential ingredients in building nations, both seem to have had contrasting visions concerning the nature of this approach. However, despite its inability to fully reflect the intellectual/emotional/social/spiritual properties of al-Mashriq, it is the best they had (al-Sharīf 1957). He believed that such material needed some honing if it is to become spiritual, humanistic, and subsequently offer a solution to the problems of Arab music. Nuwayhiḍ's vision, on the other hand, either displayed such material as is while editing the lyrics or expanding the tunes musically while still censoring the lyrics.

Al-Sharīf acknowledged that the 1932 Cairo conference was a constructive attempt to *organize* Arab music upon a *solid scientific and artistic basis*. He argued that the gap between theoretical frameworks and reality was, however, not addressed during the conference, instead just laid out and left to be sorted out on its own. Al-Sharīf also criticized the notion of *ṭarab* and described it as a "negative pleasure" (al-Sharīf 1957, 435). He argued that negative satisfaction is never lasting; instead, it remains seasonal and would instantly invalidate its purpose.

Except for the modernization attempts of Muḥammad ʿAbd al-Wahāb, al-Sharīf considered the Arab Renaissance repertoire as trivial, drenched in negativity, destitute, peripheral, and passive. Despite their optimism and boldness, such modernization attempts by ʿAbd al-Wahāb were incomplete and lacked knowledge and education, al-Sharīf argued.

Al-Sharīf argued that since solutions to the problems of Arab music have been in motion several decades before, the audiovisual outcomes coming out from Egypt and Syria did not reflect the humanistic and culturally evolved status or image of the Arab. In 1942, Anṭūn Saʿādih argued that such outcomes display imagined realities, mirroring the West, and reflecting the vision of the notable families and rulers (Saʿādih 1942). Those who defended this repertoire claimed that it demonstrated to ordinary people how refined Western societies behave, think, act, and interact (Castelo-Branco 1993). They believed that adopting such values would help them achieve an elevated status in society (Saʿādih 1942). Saʿādih argued that such displays of Western culture were not reflective of local culture because they were made by people who were not patient enough to learn, evolve, and reflect on their surroundings (ibid.). He argued that since such presentations demonstrated Western practices and culture, they were culturally, historically, theoretically, and technically distant from ordinary people (ibid.). Before their partnership with al-Sharīf, the early songs of the Raḥbānī brothers and Zaki Nāṣīf were in standard Arabic but

followed the style of Western genres. Such representations can be seen in “Samrāʾu Maha” (recording 32); “Bilādunā Lanā” (recording 33); and “Ahla Layālī al-Muna” (recording 34). The following are some other points that al-Sharīf strongly believed (437):

1. music must live on, not be created for quick consumption;
2. spontaneity and talent are not enough to make music culturally and historically relevant; rather, education and hard work;
3. for music to evolve and get out of its troubled past, presence and potentially future, it must face its problems;
4. artists must have agency and be able to work freely and express themselves openly;
5. music must be cared for spiritually and intellectually; and
6. the approach to making-music must change from pessimistic to optimistic, dark to light, and from negative to positive.

To achieve this, al-Sharīf wanted to apply Western musical advancements on this material as well as injecting the lyrics with the devices of literary poetry. In the last paragraph in his manifesto, al-Sharīf claimed that this was becoming a reality in Lebanon through the Raḥbānī brothers, Zakī Naṣīf, Tawfīq al-Bāshā, and few others. In his opinion, these composers presented new works that demonstrated the development of Arab music as a viable possibility.

As the Raḥbāni Brothers started to gradually move away from adopting or covering pre-composed forms, songs, and arrangements, they began to utilize their knowledge to create works that reflected their spiritual, intellectual, emotional, social, and national capacities. They achieved this not only through the lyrics and poems but through the music as well. Using indigenous resources, such as mythology, historical events, ancient history, and peasant material, the Raḥbānī Brothers started to write and compose new songs and arrange peasant songs. During

his lecture, al-Sharīf played some of the recordings that he produced through LRC, such as "Hayk Mashq al-Zaʿrūra" (Recording 35); and "ʿal-Rūzānā" (Recording 36), where the lyrics and the main melody were mostly traditional. The Brothers modified the words and added new ones, adjusted the original melodic theme, and composed a B section. The songs were arranged presumably by the Brothers, however, possibly with input from members of ʿUṣbat al-Khamsa or any of the foreign arrangers working in Lebanon at the time.

The previous examination of PBS's programs, as well as the works of various Palestinian composers, also point to rapid growth in local dialects. Al-Rūmī's reconstruction of the music section at Radio Lebanon was an extension of such trends. Thomas Burkhalter quotes Manṣūr Raḥbānī talking about some of the necessities that drove the Raḥbanī Brothers towards finding their voice:

> In Lebanon and throughout the Arab world, Egypt was dominant in music and literature. Contents in Egyptian poems, however, were always fragile and smooth like rosewater. Lebanon is the opposite, full of thorny bushes, wild nature, rocks and mountains, wind and snow. This is reflected in our music. The earth, its vegetation and dust, the mountains, and the climate five our music its spirit. We were always open towards other cultures because of the sea. So our poems became the opposite of the Egyptian ones: cliffy, dusty, stinging. In addition, our society was not so conservative. Lovers were allowed to go to the movies together. That is why we needed our own poetry and music. (Burkhalter 2014, 155)

While Manṣūr Raḥbānī was referring to Lebanon, the same indeed applied to Palestine, not only in terms of parallel analogies between Beirut and Yāfā but also in terms of the shared histories. In Lebanon, al-Rūmī and al-Sharīf implemented their visions through Radio Lebanon, a governmental institution, and LRC, representing the private sector. The institutionalization of their efforts is attributed to the following reasons:

1. NEBS's initiatives to create meaningful music based on local song types;
2. the growth of local nationalism in Lebanon;

3. the growth of pan-Arab and Syrian nationalist ideologies;
4. Western music education and genres were already accessible in Lebanon, so using Western methodology and influences may distinguish Lebanon from Egypt; and
5. the availability of talented individuals who were able to relate to Ṣabrī al-Sharīf's vision of creating a new world based on traditional culture but catering to the newly emerging middle class and urban lifestyles.

Musical analysis and examination of the poetry and lyrics in Lebanese songs during the 1950s point to various transformations. At first, using Western covers was a common practice in Lebanon among composers, especially by Raḥbānī Brothers. They set pre-composed Western songs to standard Arabic poems that they mostly wrote themselves. By the mid-1950s, the practice started to fade in favor of composing original songs, rearranging peasant melodies, as well as composing *qaṣīda*. Standard Arabic was nonetheless the main compound before and after the shift. Songs also witnessed a shift from subjects matters such as nature, love, pride, and patriotism, to more humanistic topics that addressed issues such as the human condition, nationalism, resistance, and justice. Moreover, Western covers and original songs of the early to mid 1950s were short and trendy and resembled the Western dance styles of the day. By the late 1950s, the trend faded in search of local devices that can be utilized in songs projecting more original sounds as well as colloquial poetry, and locally inspired dances.

Despite the contrast and similarities between the visions of PBS and NEBS, there is substantial evidence that points to the multifaceted contributions of Palestinian professionals to the music scenes of Lebanon, Jordan, and Iraq, not only musically, but also intellectually and philosophically. Such influences include expertise in performance, mixed ensembles, children's music programming, choirs, *qaṣīda* song, instrumental music, *muwashshaḥ*, Bedouin songs,

composition, peasant songs, administration, production, and cultural awareness. Several main musical influences can be easily tracked back to Palestine in the region, including colloquial songs, the *qaṣīda* song, and instrumental music.

As illustrated in Table 8 and Figure 46 below, I examined al-Rūmī's songs in terms of which ones he composed in Egyptian dialect, local, or standard Arabic from the 1930s to the end of the 1950s. The two books about al-Rūmī list 559 titles, but about 280 of which had no year mentioned. Therefore, I only used the ones that had the year mentioned next to them. The graph in table 8 below shows how al-Rūmī shifted interest to composing more songs in local dialects during the 1950s, but, more substantially, how much more engaged he became in composing *qaṣīda* song. The data also suggests that *qaṣīda* song was the second-most favored by him, even before his arrival to Beirut in 1950.

Table 8. Ḥalīm al-Rūmī songs, 1930s to 1950s

	Egyptian Dialect	Local Dialect	Standard Arabic
The 1930s and 1940s	20	3	1677
1950s	11	11	46

[77] From NEBS programs I was able to date two additional songs: "al-Ḥusn Fī al-Shām" (1947); see the *Qāfila* September 12, 1947 no. 24, 23, Poetry by al-Makhzūmī], and "Sā'at al-Aṣīl" which appeared in *Falasṭīn* newspaper on Sunday February 8, 1942, poetry by Maḥmūd Ismā'īl.

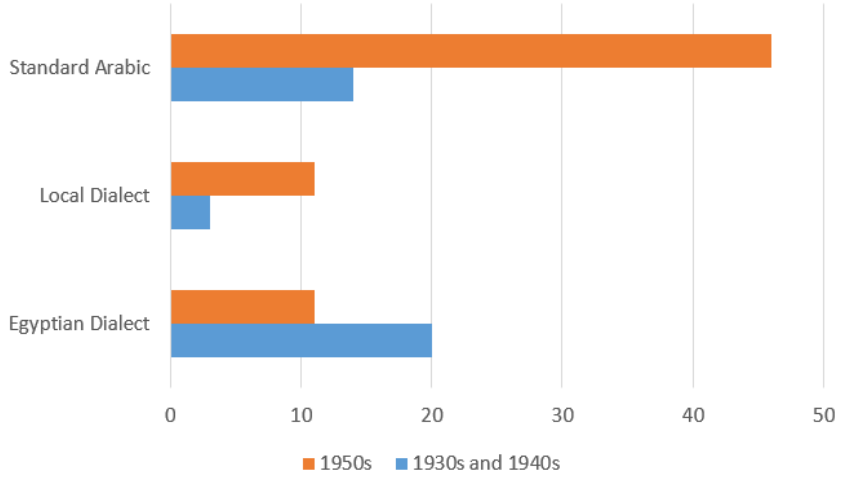

Figure 46. Ḥalīm al-Rūmī songs, 1930s to 1950s (cont.)

Similar numbers are found in table 4 (PBS), which I discussed in Chapter 2. Table 4 shows that within a week of programming, Palestinian musicians occupied 38% of the total programming allocated for music, equivalent to 260 minutes of music. Based on the titles of the songs, 130 minutes of which were all in the *qaṣīda* song type. This figure translates to 19% of total programming, and 50% of Palestinian songs. The remaining 50% consisted of peasant and *shaʿbī* songs in the local dialect. The Palestinian composers who appeared in the PBS program explored in table 4 are al-Khammāsh and al-Saʿūdī, both of whom composed qaṣīda. Three of al-Khammāsh's *qaṣīda* songs fall under the *muwashshaḥ* category. Al-Bandak, Ghāzī, and Wajīh Badirkhān also appear in PBS programs during the same period composing *qaṣīda* songs and collaborating with various renowned poets such as Kāmil al-Shinnāwī, and Maḥmūd al-ʿAqqād.

In an interview with Sāmī al-Shawwā that appeared in the *Muntada* issue of August 16, 1946 (no. 28, 17), al-Shawwā was asked about the music in Palestine, and the following is what he said:

> There is no doubt that Palestinian musicians are talented both as composers and singers more than any other country. For example, the compositions of Yiḥya al-Saʿūdī and

> Ḥalīm al-Rūmī and many others often exceeded the quality of compositions by renowned Egyptian composers. […] All Egyptian musicians know as a matter of fact that Palestinians are superb singers, and I vividly recall those who were invited to visit Egypt to sing and praised for their proper singing, precision, and mastery. (17)

Al-Rūmī, al-Bandak, al-Saʿūdī (settled in Syria), al-Khammāsh, and Ghāzī engaged and interacted with Lebanese, Syrian, and Iraqi musicians and instigated various collaborations. Some of the collaborations were new, but some were established from before. For example,

1. al-Rūmī was acknowledged for spotting talent, singing and voice training, and compositional mastery of various styles especially *qaṣīda*;
2. Ghāzī was recognized as an authority in *muwashshaḥ* and *qaṣīda* as well as educator and composer;
3. al-Saʿūdi was a master singer, and *ʿūd* master, an expert in *muwashshaḥ*, *qaṣīda*, and composer and educator;
4. al-Bandak was known for his versatility and mastery of various compositional styles especially *qaṣīda*; and
5. al-Khammāsh was known for *qaṣīda*, *muwashshaḥ*, instrumental mastery, and education.

All of them had a profound knowledge of the *maqām* system, performance practice, and extensive experience in leading ensembles and building institutions. Manṣūr Raḥbānī recalls that it was Ghāzī who trained Fayrūz in *muwashshaḥ* and then joined her as the corresponding male vocalist (Zughaib 1993).

3.6.1 Instrumental Music

In his memoir, al-Rūmī describes the state of instrumental music composition in Lebanon as nonexistent when he arrived in 1950. He noted that some composers experimented with

various forms, but most works, if not all, lacked a strong foundation in music composition (al-Rūmī 1992). In contrast to this, references to instrumental music in PBS and NEBS programs are in abundance. Instrumental music appeared in PBS programs since its establishment in 1936 and grew exponentially to encompass various solo and ensemble formations and genres. For example, Figure 47 shows a *rabāba* trio described in the caption as performing songs of nature and peasant music. Figure 48 shows al-Batrūnī conducting a chamber group, specified in the caption as "Western music orchestra." From the image, the following instrument are present: flute, oboe, clarinet I, clarinet II, violin I, violin II, viola, cello, double bass, trumpet, piano, and drum set. Images in the *Muntada* on September 27, 1946 show even a bigger orchestra of twenty people, including a more extensive string section (including two double basses), and accordion. In an announcement of a concert of instrumental music and songs that appeared in the December 13, 1946 issue of the *Muntada*, the advertisement described a fifty-member orchestra conducted by al-Batrūnī performing a major concert on December 14 from 8 PM to 10:30 PM at the YMCA in Jerusalem.

Figure 47. Rabāba trio, PBS (1944)

Figure 48. Yūsif al-Batrūnī directing a Western Ensemble, PBS (1944)

Figure 49 shows al-Batrūnī playing piano, likely playing an instrumental piece. The ensemble consisted of violin, accordion, trumpet (muted), alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, piano, and two percussionists.

Figure 49. Yūsif al-Batrūnī on piano, PBS (Between 1936 and 1946)

The titles and descriptions in PBS programs often offer direct hints as to the types of genres performed, vocal and instrumental. For example:

1. titles that incorporate the terms rumba, tango, *samāʿī,* and so in, refer to the kind or general feel of the music, such as "Rumba Liqāʾ" by al-Bandak, an instrumental piece (see the *Muntada* September 27, 1946, no. 34, 20-21);
2. titles that generically describe the instrumental repertoire being Turkish, Armenian, such as "Turkish tunes performed by Artin Tiryaqian on *santūr*" (the *Qāfila*, July 4, 1947, no. 14);

3. titles that refer to the type of ensembles or instrumentation or the leader of the group, such as mandolin ensemble, studio quartet, solo organ, *takht* quintet, solo qānūn, solo accordion, as well as solos on clarinet, *santūr*, *ʿūd*, *nāy*, piano, organ, violin, guitar, and so on; ensemble, Mansī trio, PBS septet, and so on; and
4. indirect references such as: Accompanied by the Orchestra, Accompanied by *Takht*, Jaʿnīnaih Playing *Taqāsīm* on Harpsichord, Western Tunes, The Station Orchestra, and Instrumental Eastern Music.

Between al-Rūmī, al-Bandak, al-Batrūnī, ʿArniṭa, al-Saʿūdī, al-Khammāsh, and Ghāzī, they were veteran composers of instrumental music, each specializing in either Eastern or Western styles. Their compositions appeared daily on PBS and occupied a large portion of the programming. Of the 260 minutes of total Palestinian music broadcast on PBS, 140 minutes were performances of instrumental music, mostly pieces that were composed locally (see Table 4).